Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Why is NASPA undertaking this project now?
Many higher education systems made significant investments in holistic advising and pathways between 2015 and 2020. While much has been learned about implementation, far less is known about what it takes to sustain and evolve these reforms over time. This project seeks to understand how systems have maintained advising redesign efforts beyond initial funding and leadership cycles, and to document practices that can inform systems and institutions at earlier stages of this work.

2. Who is eligible to apply for this project?
Eligible applicants are U.S.-based state higher education systems or statewide coordinating or governing entities that oversee multiple postsecondary institutions. This includes, but is not limited to, university systems, community college systems/associations, technical or applied education systems, boards of regents, and statewide coordinating or governing boards, regardless of institution type or size.

To be eligible, applicants must represent a system-level entity with executive authority and include three to five participating institutions within the system. Single institutions, including those with multiple campuses, are not eligible to apply.

Applicants must demonstrate that their system:
- Implemented a multi-institutional, holistic advising or pathways redesign initiative between 2015 and 2020.
- Has sustained, adapted, and institutionalized resulting elements and/or reforms.
- Can show, at the system and institution-level, evidence of improved student success outcomes (such as retention and completion) connected to advising redesign.
- Is able to share existing student-level and/or system-level data related to the impact of the effort.

3. What types of advising redesign efforts are eligible?
Eligible efforts include large-scale, system-level initiatives focused on holistic advising, pathways, or related student success reforms. These may include centralized or distributed advising models, pathway alignment, advising technology adoption, or policy and staffing changes designed to improve student outcomes. Large-scale efforts that include multiple simultaneous initiatives are eligible.

4. How many systems will be selected?

NASPA will select between three and five systems to participate in this project. Selection will also seek to ensure representation across system types, institutional contexts, and advising models.

13. How will applications be reviewed?

Applications will be reviewed based on:
- Alignment with the project's goals as laid out in the [evaluation rubric](#)
- Evidence of sustained advising redesign
- Availability of outcome data
- Readiness to participate in a 1-year research effort
- Diversity across system types, institutional contexts, and advising models

Final selections will be based on rubric scores and consideration of cohort balance across system types, institutional contexts, and advising models. The goal is to assemble a diverse and informative group of systems that can contribute meaningfully to shared learning.

5. What is required of participating systems?

Selected systems will be expected to:
- **Designate a system-level lead** responsible for student success or advising initiatives who will serve as the primary point of contact for the project. This individual should plan to dedicate approximately four hours per month over the course of the project and will:
  1. Coordinate institutional engagement,
  2. Participate in a virtual, in-depth interview and self-assessment,
  3. Attend regular meetings,
  4. Share materials and data,
  5. Support and promote a state convening, and
  6. Review case studies and practitioner resources as they are developed and support their dissemination.
- **Identify three participating institutions** that took part in the advising or pathways redesign and designate one institutional lead from each. Institutional leads should plan to dedicate approximately 25 hours total over the course of the project, inclusive of attendance at the state convening.
- **Support institutional participation** by coordinating scheduling, communications, and engagement. Institutional leads will participate in a virtual in-depth interview and self-assessment, attend the state convening, help coordinate institutional representation at the convening, and share relevant materials and data.
- **Secure senior leadership acknowledgement and sign-off at the system level (President, Chancellor, or Provost)** confirming awareness of and support for participation in the project.

- **Participate in interviews with NASPA staff,** representing both system- and campus-level perspectives. Interviews will focus on the sustainability of advising redesign, with particular attention to fiscal responsibility, staffing, and policy.
- **Participate in one in-person state convening** hosted by the participating system between April and July 2026, and one virtual final convening in February 2027 with all participating systems.
- **Share relevant documentation and existing deidentified student outcome data,** where available, related to advising redesign, evaluation, staffing, policy, and student success outcomes (e.g., retention, completion, credit momentum). Systems may note any data-sharing limitations.
- **Support the development and dissemination of project outputs,** including reviewing materials for accuracy and helping communicate findings within and beyond the system.

Additional details about timelines, roles, interview protocols, convenings, and data-sharing expectations will be shared with selected systems during onboarding.

6. Who should serve as the system-level lead?
The system-level lead should be a senior administrator responsible for student success or advising initiatives at the system level. This individual will serve as the primary point of contact for the project and should have sufficient authority and knowledge to coordinate institutional participation, share system-level information and data, and represent the system in interviews and convenings. The system-level lead should plan to dedicate approximately four hours per month over the course of the project.

7. Do participating institutions need to be finalized at the time of application?
No. Systems are asked to identify three institutions they expect may participate and answer preliminary questions about their redesign activities, but final confirmation of participating institutions will occur after system selection and during project onboarding.

8. What data will systems be expected to share?
Systems should be prepared to share existing student-level or system-level data related to advising redesign and student success outcomes (e.g., retention, completion, credit momentum) at the system level, and participating institution level if available. Data sharing expectations will be discussed in more detail after selection, and systems may note any restrictions in the application.

9. Is student-level data required?
De-identified student-level data is preferred but not required. Systems may also share aggregate data, dashboards, evaluation reports, or other evidence of impact. The application includes a space to note any data-sharing constraints.

10. What funding is provided to participating systems?
Each selected system will receive $15,000 to support participation in the project. Funds are expected to support a state convening, and may also be used to support staff time, data analysis, coordination with participating institutions, and engagement in project activities. Funds will be provided to the system lead, who will be responsible for coordinating any funds to participating institutions.

11. How long is the commitment, and what does participation look like over time?
The project will take place over one year (March 2026-March 2027). Participation is not continuous or full-time; instead, engagement will occur at key points, including interviews, data sharing, state convenings, and a final virtual convening. A detailed timeline and expectations will be shared with selected systems during onboarding.

12. How will systems benefit from participating?

Participating systems will receive:
- Funding to support participation
- National visibility through published case studies and practitioner resources
- Opportunities for peer learning and structured reflection
- Early access to findings and tools that can support ongoing student success work

14. Is senior leadership approval required?

Yes. Applications must include a signed letter of support from a system or state-level senior leader (such as Chancellor, President, Provost, or similar executive position).

15. When will applicants be notified of selection decisions?

Applicants will be notified no later than March 4, 2026.

16. Where can I learn more or ask additional questions?

Questions about the application or eligibility may be directed to Elise Newkirk-Kotfila at enewkirk-kotfila@naspa.org. Interested systems may also consult the project website or attend an informational webinar on Friday, February 6, 2026 at 2 p.m. ET [Register]