**Request For Proposals**

**Issue Date:** May 21, 2012

**Purpose:** Award of AACC Plus 50 Encore Completion Program Grants, through support from the Deerbrook Charitable Trust.

**Primary Objectives:** To enhance and expand credential completion possibilities for plus 50 students in high-demand, social impact fields of healthcare, education and social/human service.  
To utilize the proven Plus 50 planning and implementation process.  
To participate in the Plus 50 Completion learning community.

**Award Schedule:** One Hundred grants, each in the total amount $15,000:  
Year 1: $6,000 awarded in 2012.  
Year 2: $5,000 awarded in 2013.  
Year 3: $4,000 awarded 2014.  
Awards are contingent upon evidence of adequate yearly progress. In addition, a travel allowance of $1,200 will be provided for the Plus 50 Encore Completion Program Coordinator to attend a Plus 50 convening on April 19, 2013, as well as marketing collaterals, evaluation expertise and implementation toolkits and resource materials.  All grants will terminate on September 30, 2014.

**Allowable Activities:** Training and retraining, career development, and support activities that enhance successful workforce training and retraining credential completion for adults over the age of 50. Political or religious programming is not supported by this grant.

**Proposal Deadline:** June 22, 2012, 5:00 p.m. ET

**Background**

More than ever, people aged 50 and older need to develop and update their career skills to remain viable in a rapidly evolving job market. Healthier and living longer, they are less interested in traditional retirement. In 2008, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) began an effort to expand and enhance opportunities at community colleges for plus 50 students through the Plus 50 Initiative.

Through the work of pilot colleges and a commitment to developing a knowledge base that community colleges across the country could use to design and develop programming for plus 50 learners, the Plus 50 Encore Completion Program Grant—Request for Proposals—page 1
50 Initiative’s success received national attention and a great deal of interest. Evaluation of the program showed enrollment in courses associated with the Plus 50 program more than doubled, increasing by over 15,000 students. There was an approximate 20-fold increase in the workforce training courses for plus 50 students and 72% of plus 50 students agree that their workforce training program has helped them to get hired into a job. AACC also benchmarked standards of excellence to help other colleges design programs that work for baby boomers.

AACC has received a capacity building grant from the Deerbrook Charitable Trust to scale up workforce training in the social impact fields of healthcare, education and social service for plus 50 students using the extensive knowledge base, toolkits and resource materials that have been developed. Experienced Plus 50 Champion Colleges will serve as evaluators and guides assisting new Encore Completion grantees with program implementation.

Working with experts in scaling up social impact programs at Duke University, AACC has now consolidated into a 5-step process a Plus 50 model by and for community colleges. The Plus 50 Encore Completion Program will serve 10,000 plus 50 students at 100 community colleges, with the specific focus on advancing 40% of them to completion of a degree or certificate or obtainment of a not-for-credit credential by 2015 in high-demand fields of healthcare, education, and social service, enabling them to increase their labor market competitiveness while improving their communities. The program also advances institutional priorities relating to increased credential completion rates.

Introduction

AACC seeks proposals from 100 community colleges committed to enhancing or expanding their existing workforce training programs for students 50 years of age and older to ensure that they obtain the degrees, certificates, and not-for-credit credentials sought by employers in the high-demand, high-growth fields of education, social service and healthcare. Enhancement or expansion may be defined as:

- Redesigning workforce training programs to meet specific needs such as offering noncredit and credit, compressed, fast-tracked, or accelerated courses.
- Offering career development and other support services that foster completion. Examples include
  - Financial aid assistance.
  - Computer technology skill-building.
  - Math and English refresher courses.
  - Flexible scheduling options.
  - Tailored career advising.
  - Completion coaches or advisors.
- Recruiting and reaching out to the plus 50 population.
- Offering professional development to faculty to enhance their effectiveness in working with plus 50 students.
- Assessing prior learning; capturing previously earned credits.
- Establishing or enhancing collaboration and partnerships with local employers.
- Increasing access and success at community college for plus 50 students.
Eligibility Requirements

Respondent must meet these minimum requirements:

1. Be an AACC member college in good standing.
2. Have well-defined existing programs that serve adults over 50 and experience in workforce development programming for this population group.
3. Be able to demonstrate that they have applied standards of excellence identified by AACC’s Plus 50 Initiative (see http://plus50.aacc.nche.edu/Documents/Standards_of_Excellence.pdf).
4. Have compelling ideas for how to enhance or expand workforce training programs for the plus 50 market.
5. Be able to demonstrate that they have established successful partnerships with employers that support programs and hire plus 50 students.
6. Link service to this population to advancing your institution’s completion priorities.
7. Secure written authorization from the college’s CEO to participate.
8. Has not been a former AACC Plus 50 or Civic Ventures’ Encore Career grant recipient.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

AACC welcomes proposals from AACC member colleges in good standing that are committed to strengthening existing programs for adults over age 50, providing training/retraining and services that enhance the successful completion of degrees, certificates, and not-for-credit credentials. Applicants should have a strong existing program for learners age 50 and older. Proposals must identify programs and services to be offered, approaches to be taken, expected outcomes, and a commitment to participate in evaluation and sustainability plans. Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Effectiveness of Existing Programming for Plus 50 Learners—20%

- Description of what is already in place for plus 50 learners.
- Institutional commitment to programming for adults over the age of 50.
- Experience in providing tailored programming to meet the needs and interests of students over 50.
- Description of resulting institution change and supports provided to enhance workforce development training for adults over 50.

Program Design—25%

- Sound concept and clear explanation of the college’s need to enhance or expand its workforce training programs for plus 50 learners.
- Well-conceived and well-organized activities and initiatives that promote Plus 50 completion program objectives and lead to demonstrable and measurable outcomes.
- Discussion of application and use of materials and resources available from the Plus 50 Initiative.
- Timeline and budget.
Institutional Capacity and Sustainability—20%

- Personnel, partnerships, facilities, and other indicators of capacity to manage the project.
- Demonstration of leadership and faculty support.
- Clear statement of the Encore Completion Coordinator’s roles and related experience.
- Identification and role of business partners and collaboration with community-based organizations.
- Professional development for faculty and staff on meeting the interest and needs of plus 50 learners.
- Plan for sustaining efforts beyond the 3-year grant period.

Evidence about Additional Scaling Capabilities – 15%

- Willingness to conduct marketing and outreach using AACC–provided templates.
- Ability to forge new, productive partnerships with companies, community organizations, and governmental bodies.
- Ability to leverage and attract resources in support of Plus 50 programming.
- Commitment to replicate effective programs and to disseminate knowledge about what works.

Evaluation—20%

- Institutional support to participate in evaluation by AACC.
- Clear explanation of processes and mechanisms for monitoring quality and reporting.
- Contributions to meeting measurable goals and tracking effectiveness of interventions.
- Use of data to inform decision making, program design, and improvement.
- Ability to collect program services and completion data.
- Collaboration and coordination with institutional research division.

Proposal Requirements

Required elements for proposals are detailed in the proposal guidelines, and you are required to submit your proposal using the proposal form. In Part 2, the guidelines instruct you to include a narrative in which you describe in detail why your college is uniquely qualified to receive a Plus 50 Encore Completion Program Grant and how the grant would help you meet your institution’s completion priorities. As shown above, program design is the most heavily weighted criterion considered in the evaluation of proposals, so please take care to describe in detail the programs you propose to support with grant funds.

Questions?

- See the Plus 50 Encore Completion Program Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document.
- Contact Mary Sue Vickers, director, AACC Plus 50 Initiative, at mvickers@aacc.nche.edu or 202-728-0200 ext. 248. If leaving a message, be sure to include your name, college name, telephone number, best time to reach you, and question.