THIRTY-SIX COMMUNITY COLLEGES JOIN PROGRAM TO TRAIN 10,000 OLDER WORKERS FOR NEW JOBS

Baby boomers to earn certificates or degrees in healthcare, education or social service occupations

WASHINGTON – Thirty-six additional community colleges have been chosen to join the Plus 50 Encore Completion Program offered by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). The program is designed to train 10,000 baby boomers over the next three years for new jobs in healthcare, education and social service while helping them complete certificates or degrees.

With many adults age 50 and over out of work or seeking to transition to a new career, the program offers skill updates and career makeovers for baby boomers. Participating colleges will offer workforce training programs that prepare older adults for such careers as: dental hygienist, diagnostic medical sonographer, dialysis technician, EKG technician, health information technologist, nurse, ophthalmic dispenser, pharmacy technician, physical therapy aide, radiographer, respiratory therapist, sign language teacher, social work assistant, substitute teacher, or teacher’s aide.

The 36 colleges selected join 11 colleges chosen in August 2012 for the program and 17 chosen in December 2012.

The 36 newly-selected colleges are: Atlanta Technical College (Atlanta, Ga.), Blue Ridge Community College (Weyers Cave, Va.), Belmont College (St. Clairsville, Ohio), Bristol Community College (Fall River, Mass.), Cedar Valley College (Lancaster, Texas), College of Southern Maryland (La Plata, Md.), The Community College of Baltimore County (Baltimore, Md.), George C. Wallace Community College (Dothan, Ala.), Gloucester County College (Sewell, N.J.), Grayson College (Denison, Texas), Hinds Community College (Raymond, Miss.), Indian Hills Community College (Ottumwa, Iowa), Indian River State College (Fort Pierce, Fla.), Jones County Junior College (Ellisville, Miss.), Lone Star College System (The Woodlands, Texas), Miami Dade College (Miami, Fla.), Middlesex Community College (Middletown, Conn.), Middlesex County College (Edison, N.J.), Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College (Perkinston, Miss.), Mohawk Valley Community College (Utica, N.Y.), Naugatuck Valley Community College (Waterbury, Conn.), Northeast Alabama Community College, (Rainsville, Ala.), Northern Oklahoma College (Tonkawa, Okla.), Palo Verde College (Blythe, Calif.), Patrick Henry Community College (Martinsville, Va.), Pima Community College (East Campus, Tucson, Ariz.), Raritan Valley Community College (Somerville, N.J.), Richland Community College (Decatur, Ill.), Rhodes State College (Lima, Ohio), Schenectady County Community College (Schenectady, N.Y.), St. Petersburg College (St. Petersburg, Fla.), Terra State Community College (Fremont, Ohio), State College of Florida Manatee-Sarasota (Bradenton, Fla.), Vance-Granville Community College (Henderson, N.C.), Virginia Western Community College (Roanoke, Va.), West Shore Community College (Scottville, Mich.)
Since 2008, AACC and its network of Plus 50 Initiative colleges have worked with baby boomers and helped them prepare for new careers. An independent evaluation of AACC’s Plus 50 Initiative found that 89 percent of students agreed that college work force training helped them acquire new job skills, and 72 percent attributed landing a job to such training.

“Many adults age 50 and over want to train for new jobs that help others and are hiring, but they need to update their skills. Community colleges offer a supportive environment where baby boomers can train for new jobs quickly and affordably, while completing a marketable degree or certificate,” said Mary Sue Vickers, director for the Plus 50 Initiative at AACC.

In addition to grant funds to augment training programs, participating colleges gain access to toolkits and extensive marketing resources tailored to reach baby boomers. They’ll also benefit from the advice and support of staff at other community colleges that have successfully implemented programs for older learners and understand the unique needs of the plus 50 student population.

The Plus 50 Encore Completion Program is funded with a $3.2 million grant to AACC provided by Deerbrook Charitable Trust. The Plus 50 Encore Completion program supports AACC’s work to increase the number of students who finish degrees, certificates, and other credentials. In April 2010, AACC committed alongside other higher education organizations to promote the development and implementation of policies, practices and institutional cultures that will produce 50 percent more students with high quality degrees and certificates by 2020.

For more information about the Plus 50 Initiative at AACC, see http://plus50.aacc.nche.edu

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Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the American Association of Community Colleges is a national organization representing the nation’s close to 1,200 community, junior, and technical colleges and their over 13 million students. Community colleges are the largest sector of higher education, enrolling almost half of all U.S. undergraduates. For more information about AACC and community colleges, visit www.aacc.nche.edu.