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SEVENTEEN 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 – Seventeen additional community colleges have been chosen to join a national program designed to train 10,000 baby boomers over the next three years for new jobs in healthcare, education and social service.

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. The participating colleges will offer workforce training programs that prepare older adults for such careers as pharmacy technician, clinical dental assistant, early childhood educator, medical billing and coding specialist, certified nursing assistant, substance abuse counselor, adult basic education instructor, human resources specialist, and other in-demand fields.

The Plus 50 Encore Completion Program is offered by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) in cooperation with its member colleges and will ultimately comprise 100 colleges with special training programs for students age 50 and older. The 17 colleges selected join 11 colleges chosen in August 2012 for the program.

The 17 newly-selected colleges are: Blue Ridge Community and Technical College (Martinsburg, W. Va.), Elgin Community College (Elgin, Ill.), Guam Community College (Mangilao, Guam), Halifax Community College (Weldon, N.C.), Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana, Northwest (Valparaiso), Lake Region State College (Devils Lake, N.D.), Lenoir Community College (Kingston, N.C.), Montgomery County Community College (Blue Bell, Pa.), Northern Wyoming Community College District (Sheridan, Wyo.), Norwalk Community College (Norwalk, Conn.), Salt Lake Community College (Salt Lake City, Utah), Seminole State College of Florida (Sanford, Fla.), Tallahassee Community College (Tallahassee, Fla.), Tarrant County College District (Fort Worth, Texas), Tri-County Technical College (Pendleton, S.C.), Wayne County Community College District (Detroit, Mich.), and Zane State College (Zanesville, Ohio).

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,” said Mary Sue Vickers, director for the Plus 50 Initiative at AACC.
Vickers says the program expects to add additional colleges in 2013 that will help it reach 10,000 baby boomer students. The next round of grant funding applications for AACC member colleges will be accepted between January 2 and February 15, 2013. Applications are available now at www.aacc.nche.edu/plus50rfp.

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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The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) is a national organization representing close to 1,200 community, junior and technical colleges nationwide. Community colleges are the largest and fastest growing sector of higher education, enrolling more than 13 million credit and non-credit students annually. More information is available at http://aacc.nche.edu