

## Final Stimulus “4.0” Community College Priorities

As the Senate moves to act on coronavirus stimulus legislation “4.0,” community colleges urge inclusion of two top priorities.

### **1) Provide Federal Stabilization Support for Community Colleges Using Headcount-Based Formula**

Higher Education Emergency Stabilization Grants should be funded consistent with current needs (at minimum \$74 billion) and allocate funds according to head count. Without substantial federal support many community colleges will be precluded from safely serving all students this fall, and may well experience financial crises that will cause widespread layoffs. In the midst of the pandemic, maintaining community college viability is essential to sustaining local economies and providing essential educational opportunity. Funding must be structured to ensure that state and local government support is sustained. Any funding should be sufficiently flexible for institutions to address student and institutional needs.

In allocating any formula funds to institutions, the Senate and conference legislation should use the per-student, headcount based formula in H.R. 6800 as well as the Coronavirus Child Care and Education Relief Act, S. 4112. This reflects student populations and relative institutional needs better than the CARES Act because:

- Colleges serve whole individuals, not fractions of students. At community colleges, all students receive the same administrative, academic support, counseling, technology and other services regardless of enrollment status. Many part-time students require even more services than those who enroll full-time.
- An FTE formula, which reduces support based on part-time status, financially disadvantages community colleges, which serve higher percentages of Black and Latino students, as well as low-income students, than four-year institutions. Overall, community colleges enroll 46.4% of all undergraduate students in America, but 64% of them are enrolled part-time, primarily because they work.
- Community colleges educate students less expensively than other types of institutions. They do not have the same level of facilities, student amenities, and administrative personnel characteristic of many four year institutions. Community college faculty are paid significantly less than four-year faculty, and carry much heavier teaching loads. These facts simply underscore the chronic underfunding of community colleges – which charge on average tuition and fees of \$3,730, compared to \$10,440 at four-year public colleges (College Board, fall, 2019) – and does not justify its reinforcement in the coronavirus legislation.

- In addition to their credit students that are counted in the formula, community colleges also serve millions of non-credit students pursuing workforce credentials that are not counted in the formula. Community colleges face significant costs in serving these students safely and hope to be able to provide these students with emergency grant assistance when needed with additional stimulus funds, which they have been prevented from doing by ED's faulty interpretation of the CARES Act.

## **2) Support Workers and Local Economies Through Community College Training**

Community colleges strongly support inclusion in stimulus "4.0" legislation of the community college-led workforce education program contained in the Murray-Schumer child care and education relief proposal (CCCERA), S. 4112. The program reflects longstanding community college principles and AACC supports it for the following reasons:

- The program meets an immediate and pressing need for citizens and business and the colleges that exist to serve them. With targeted training driven by local demand, even in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic community colleges can offer programs that will get individuals into jobs in short order.
- Even in a vibrant economy, the federal government has an important role in supporting community college training. In the current environment, federal financing for this function is essential, as job training programs are costly and neither colleges nor state governments have the resources to support them. Yet, economic recovery is predicated upon a more fully-skilled workforce
- The CCCERA is modeled on bipartisan legislation, S. 3273, introduced by Senators Young, Kaine, and Smith. This Department of Labor program has the needed flexibility to respond to local business needs while prioritizing individuals impacted by the pandemic. It requires formal cooperation with a state level workforce or higher education entity.
- Grants would be made for four years, with a possible two year extension, which would allow quality programs to get developed and be sustained. Programs for health care, cybersecurity, contact tracing, and transportation, among others, could be supported. Short-term training as in the bi-partisan JOBS Act should be encouraged.

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