



Community College Workforce Development Priorities

Enact Pell Grant Eligibility for Shorter-Term Workforce Education Programs

Community colleges urge Congress to extend Pell Grant eligibility to students in shorter-term higher education programs that help them quickly gain employment, earn increased wages, and advance within a career pathway. Currently, only programs at least 600 clock hours in length or its equivalent are Pell Grant-eligible.

Congress has been on the brink of passing this bipartisan legislation for over a year and should finally enact it in 2022, possibly by including it in Fiscal Year 2023 (FY 23) omnibus appropriations legislation. Proposed language limits eligibility to programs that will lead students to jobs in high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors and includes strict “guardrails” to ensure that only high-quality programs will receive funding. In fact, the standards that would apply to these programs are far more rigorous than those applied to other higher education programs.

Reauthorize the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program

The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program provides support for workers that have lost their jobs due to international trade, including funding education and training services. This vital program’s authorization lapsed earlier this year, and Congress should help American workers by reauthorizing this program immediately. TAA reauthorization should reauthorize the TAA Community College and Career Training Grant (TAACCCT) program for at least \$1 billion per year.

The initial set of TAACCCT grants, which were phased out in 2017, had a documented positive impact on workers, local economies, and communities. It also helped strengthen community colleges’ overall program infrastructure and enhanced cooperation between institutions for regional and state economic development. The program is a top priority for community colleges.

Bolster the Community College Role in the Federal Workforce Development System

In early 2023, Congress should reauthorize the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which governs the federal workforce development system, adult basic education, and other vital workforce initiatives. This legislation should strengthen the community college role in the system by:

- Authorizing the Strengthening Community College Grants, which are currently supported through the appropriations process.
- Prioritizing expenditure of WIOA funds on training activities.



- Ensuring that community colleges are represented in the system's governing apparatus, including state and local workforce development boards.
- Increasing authorized funding levels to better reflect that workforce development is essential to the nation's economic health and that investments in this area have declined dramatically. In fact, at present, more workforce education is supported through Title IV of the Higher Education Act than through WIOA.

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