



Community College Legislative Priorities – August 2023

Congress will return after its August recess to a packed legislative agenda, in particular the FY 2024 appropriations bills. Community colleges call on Congress to make policy changes and investments to support their mission to educate America's workforce. These locally oriented institutions of higher education provide millions of Americans with the skills and education they need to thrive in today's economy and society. The following are top community college legislative priorities for the remainder of 2023.

- **FY 2024 Funding:** Pass final appropriations legislation that at least level-funds key education and workforce development programs. Community colleges urge Congress to
 - Fund Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants at \$65 million (as in pending House legislation) or more.
 - Provide at least \$122 million for the Higher Education Act Title III-A Strengthening Institutions Program.
 - Increase the Pell Grant maximum award by \$250 (as in the Senate legislation).
 - Reject the House's elimination of the Federal Work Study, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, and WIOA Youth and Adult funding streams.

- **Workforce Pell:** Shorter-term workforce development programs are increasingly necessary for Americans looking to quickly obtain a new or improved job, while laying the groundwork for further education. However, the lack of Pell Grant eligibility prevents many students from taking advantage of them. Legislation to extend Pell Grant eligibility to financially needy students in shorter-term workforce education programs enjoys broad bipartisan support. Congress should wait no longer to enact legislation in this area.

- **Farm Bill:** The bicameral, bipartisan Community College Agriculture Advancement Act acknowledges the role of community colleges in building the agriculture workforce by authorizing \$20 million for new USDA capacity-building grants for agriculture, agrobusiness and renewable resources programs. The legislation should be included in the next Farm Bill. Simplifying and expanding student eligibility for SNAP will support students' basic needs and furthers the SNAP program's goal of matching individuals with opportunities that lead to self-sufficiency, economic security, and workforce and community development.



- **Tax Free Pell Grants:** The key Tax-Free Pell Grant Act (H.R. 3000) has been introduced in the House with bipartisan support. The bill makes non-taxable those portions of Pell Grants that are used for expenses beyond tuition and required fees, which benefits hundreds of thousands of community college students nationwide. The legislation also fixes a provision in tax law that prevents many community college Pell Grant recipients from receiving the \$2,500 American Opportunity Tax Credit. All legislators are urged to co-sponsor this common-sense legislation, which will also be introduced in the Senate in early September, and to ensure its inclusion in any tax legislation that Congress acts on.

For more information, visit aacc.nche.edu/advocacy or contact David Baime, Senior VP for Government Relations, dbaime@aacc.nche.edu