

# JOINT LEGISLATIVE AGENDA FOR THE 117th CONGRESS (2021-2022)

Advancing America's Community Colleges





# COMMUNITY COLLEGE FACTS & STATS

<p><b>Total Number of Community Colleges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,050</li> </ul>	<p><b>Representation of Community College Students Among Undergraduates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 41% All U.S. Undergraduates</li> </ul>
<p><b>Total Enrollment (Fall 2018)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6.8 million Credit</li> <li>• 5.0 million Non-credit</li> <li>• 11.8 million Total</li> </ul>	<p><b>Degrees and Certificates Awarded (2017-2018)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 881,119 Associate Degrees</li> <li>• 618,772 Certificates</li> </ul>
<p><b>Students Enrolled for Credit (full-time and part-time)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.4 million Full-time (36%)</li> <li>• 4.4 million Part-time (64%)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Student Demographics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 57% Women</li> <li>• 43% Men</li> <li>• 28 - Average Age</li> <li>• 29% First Generation</li> <li>• 26% Parents</li> <li>• 5% Veterans</li> </ul>
<p><b>Race and Ethnicity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 45% White</li> <li>• 13% Black or African American</li> <li>• 26% Hispanic or Latino</li> <li>• 6% Asian/Pacific Islander</li> <li>• 1% Native American or Alaska Native</li> </ul>	<p><b>Working Students</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 31% Full-time</li> <li>• 37% Part-time</li> </ul>
<p><b>Average Cost of Attendance (Full-Time, 2020-2021)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$3,770 Tuition and Fees</li> <li>• \$9,080 Room and Board</li> <li>• \$1,460 Books and Supplies</li> <li>• \$4,240 Transportation and Other Expenses</li> <li>• \$18,550 Full Cost of Attendance</li> </ul>	<p><b>Percentage of Students Receiving Aid (Grants, Loans, State, Institutional)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 59% Any Aid</li> <li>• 34% Federal Grants</li> <li>• 15% Federal Loans</li> <li>• 22% State Aid</li> <li>• 7% Institutional Aid</li> </ul>

**SOURCES:**

- [https://www.aacc.nche.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/AACC\\_Fast\\_Facts\\_2020\\_Final.pdf](https://www.aacc.nche.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/AACC_Fast_Facts_2020_Final.pdf)
- <https://research.collegeboard.org/pdf/trends-college-pricing-student-aid-2020.pdf>
- <https://nces.ed.gov/datalab/powerstats/percentdistribution.aspx> (Undergraduates 2015-16)

# COMMUNITY COLLEGE FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) support the following legislative priorities for the 117th Congress.

## Federal Pell Grants

- Preserve and enhance the Federal Pell Grant program, which is the foundation of student aid for millions of financially needy undergraduate college students.
- Extend Pell Grant eligibility to short-term training programs offered by institutions of higher education.
- Increase the maximum Pell Grant annually to maintain its purchasing power.
- Extend Pell Grant eligibility to incarcerated students, also known as Second Chance Pell.
- Increase lifetime Pell Grant eligibility to 14 semesters (full-time equivalent).
- Ensure Pell Grant reserve funds remain dedicated to the Pell Grant program to safeguard the program's future financial stability.

## Funding for Federal Student Financial Aid and Institutional Aid Programs

- Support federal investments in higher education by providing sufficient funding allocations for domestic discretionary programs.
- Support the Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG) and Federal Work-Study (FWS) programs, which enhance community college student enrollment and success.
- Increase funding for vital institutional aid programs, including the Strengthening Institutions (Title III-A of the HEA), Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Tribal Colleges and Universities, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions, and Predominantly Black Institutions programs.
- Strengthen TRIO, GEAR UP, CCAMPIS, and other student support programs that help community colleges meet the needs of diverse, historically underrepresented, and economically disadvantaged populations.

## Higher Education Act (HEA) Reauthorization

### Student Financing, Access, and Affordability

- Support responsible student borrowing by tying borrowing limits to enrollment intensity, giving institutions more authority to limit borrowing in defined circumstances, and allowing institutions to require additional loan counseling.

- Simplify the FAFSA process to support greater community college student participation in federal student aid programs.
- Examine the federal needs analysis system to ensure that working students, particularly those providing for families, receive adequate support.
- Reform the allocation formulas for the FSEOG and FWS programs to distribute funds based on student and family finances.
- Restore full Title IV student aid eligibility for community college students who lack a high school diploma or its equivalent but have demonstrated their ability to benefit from postsecondary education through successful coursework.
- Create a federal-state partnership that provides federal support to states that make community college tuition-free for all students.

## Institutional Accountability and Promoting Student Success

- Create a federal student unit record system to collect and generate accurate and meaningful student-level data on postsecondary outcomes and earnings.
- Establish more accurate measures of community college success by counting in the graduation rate students who complete within six years and those who transfer to other colleges.
- Replace the current Cohort Default Rate with an institutional accountability metric that reflects rates of student borrowing.
- Reject risk sharing proposals that impose financial penalties on community colleges.
- Support an independent accreditation process that provides necessary quality assurance for the federal government and other stakeholders without limiting autonomy or hindering innovation.

## Innovation and Compliance

- Streamline federal reporting and disclosure requirements and lighten the federal regulatory burden wherever possible; ensure that the Department of Education works with colleges in a positive, partnership-oriented fashion.
- Develop Title IX policies that enhance student safety and clarify institutional responsibilities, while taking into account the unique features of community college campuses.

# COMMUNITY COLLEGE FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

- Encourage quality innovations in higher education, including competency-based education, dual enrollment, guided pathways, new credentials, and other educational advancements.
- Uphold certain student protections such as the “90/10” rule, which requires that for-profit institutions derive at least 10% of their overall funding from non-Title IV sources.

## **Access to Basic Needs Services for Low-Income Students**

- Enact policies that allow severely financially disadvantaged community college students with unmet need to access programs providing food, housing, medical care, including mental health services, and other basic needs. Due in large part to a lack of information and work requirements for non-parenting students, less than half of food-insecure students receive help from SNAP.

## **Workforce Development, Adult Basic Education and Career and Technical Education**

- Increase funding for the Strengthening Community College Training Grants program.
- Increase funding for state grants under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (CTE), the occupational and adult basic education programs in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Advanced Technological Education (ATE) program at the National Science Foundation, and include community colleges in efforts to bolster America’s competitiveness in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.
- Foster rural economic development by providing adequate federal resources for essential programs addressing rural education, rural health care, renewable energy, and rural workforce development.
- Ensure that community colleges and their students, can access technology equipment, including high-speed broadband internet services.

## **Higher Education Tax Benefits for Low-Income Students**

- Improve the Lifetime Learning Credit for community college students by covering 100% of the first \$2,000 of expenses for technical education programs.
- Enhance the targeting of the American Opportunity Tax Credit (AOTC) on students with the greatest financial need and increase the refundable portion of the credit.

- Ensure that community college Pell Grant recipients fully qualify for the AOTC by making Pell Grants non-taxable.

## **Veterans**

- Fund new and existing programs to help institutions better serve the needs of veteran students.
- Ensure that active duty personnel and their dependents can fully participate in community college educational programs.
- Enact reforms that help veterans choose the educational program best suited to their needs and to prevent their exploitation.

## **DREAM Act and Immigration Policy**

- Enact legislation that would establish a path to citizenship for qualifying undocumented students who entered the U.S. as minors.
- Eliminate federal restrictions on states that offer in-state tuition to undocumented students.
- Make DREAM Act students eligible for federal student financial aid.
- Ensure that Title IV student aid is not included in the “public charge” test applied to individuals seeking admission into the U.S. or seeking to change their current immigration status.

## **International Education Programs**

- Increase opportunities for community college students to study abroad and encourage international students to enroll in community colleges.
- Increase funding for the HEA Title VI and Fulbright Hays undergraduate international education programs, which are vital to national security and economic productivity.
- Improve the F1 student visa approval process to ensure all international students have the opportunity to access U.S. education and training programs.

## **Infrastructure**

- Ensure that a portion of any federal infrastructure package is dedicated to community college facilities and workforce training programs to expand the number of skilled workers necessary to upgrade our nation’s infrastructure.



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