

# Around the Regions



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**CENTRAL  
 REGION**  
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A House bill in **Minnesota** would create a free grant program for the state's two-year colleges. If enacted, the program would cover 100 percent of tuition and fees for students of families with an adjusted gross income of less than \$100,000 and 50 percent of college costs for families with incomes between \$125,000 and \$150,000.

In **Iowa**, the Hawkeye Community College (HCC) board authorized a \$5 million smart automation concept at the public-private TechWorks center supported by HCC and the University of Northern Iowa. The center would train students for jobs in robotics, computer-aided design, hydraulics, and more.

**Michigan** Gov. Gretchen Whitmer announced that 91,000 residents are in the process in earning a tuition-free postsecondary credential as part of the Michigan Reconnect scholarship program. The program is a key part of Whitmer's goal of ensuring that 60 percent of Michigan residents have a postsecondary degree or credential by 2030.

The **Illinois** House and Senate approved a bill prohibiting colleges and universities from refusing to provide copies of transcripts to current and former students who still owe money to the institution.

**Indiana** lawmakers advanced a bill intended to increase the number of high school students who complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by providing high school seniors and their parents with more information about the process.



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**NORTHEAST  
 REGION**  
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**Maryland** Gov. Larry Hogan eliminated the four-year degree requirement for thousands of state jobs. Hogan believes the move will ease labor shortages in the state.

**Maine** Gov. Janet Mills proposed a plan to make two years of community college free for qualified students.

**New York** Gov. Kathy Hochul announced this week that State University of New York (SUNY) campuses will expand opportunities for people to get short-term certification for specific, in-demand skills to help them land jobs or advance

their careers. Nearly half of the system's institutions currently offer a total of more than 400 microcredentials in more than 60 areas of study, including workplace safety, leadership coaching, grant writing, healthcare, and automotive skills.

Two dozen New York community colleges have joined the state's bid for a federal grant that would provide \$25 million in training for green economy jobs in the green economy. The grant would support the training of 2,000 new workers and retraining another 1,500 working in fossil fuel industries.

Starting in March, Holyoke Community College in **Massachusetts** began offering drop-in childcare for student parents. The program is free and covers students between the ages of 6 weeks to 12 years.

Kezia Rodriguez, a general science major at Bergen Community College in **New Jersey**, attended the State of the Union Address as a guest of First Lady Jill Biden.



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**PACIFIC  
 REGION**  
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Diné College in **Arizona** and the University of Arizona received a \$500,000 grant from the U.S.

Department of Agriculture to tackle clean water issues in the Navajo Nation.

Maricopa County Community College District in Arizona is introducing baccalaureate programs in seven areas, including programming and data analysis, nuclear medicine technology, computed topography, early childhood education, and dual certification in elementary/special education. The new degree programs, which were made possible by legislation passed last year, will become available in Fall 2023.

A new program in **California** will give up to 6,500 low-income college students \$10,000 grants for performing community service, including tutoring and mentoring.

The California Community College system released a new study demonstrating the financial benefits of attending community colleges. The "Economic Value of the California Community College System" report states that students gain \$5 in future earnings for every dollar invested in its institutions.

The city of Los Angeles has launched California's largest universal child savings program, opening more than 40,000 college savings accounts with balances of \$50 for every first grader in the Los Angeles Unified School District.

University of **Hawaii** Community Colleges are using more than \$2 million in funding to offer a

free training and employment program to more than 1,000 unemployed and underemployed Hawaii residents.

Yakima Valley College in **Washington** opened a community food pantry for students and staff when the campus reopened in spring 2020. "When we came back to campus in January, this was our number one priority," said Laura Yolo, the college's manager for student life and government.

**Oregon** Gov. Kate Brown signed into law the Future Ready Oregon bill, a \$200 million package focused on education and training to help Oregonians in their careers in key industries across the state. "Approaching workforce development with an equity lens really is the heart and soul of this legislation," Brown said. "That means identifying barriers to career advancement for underserved communities, providing support services to help individuals overcome those barriers, and viewing those supports—such as childcare access, or broadband—as critical infrastructure."

Portland Community College received an \$800,000 grant for artificial intelligence (AI) career training for students. Outgoing PCC President Mark Mitsui said the funding will "democratize access to AI technology" while

helping Portland students from marginalized communities get trained on modern and emerging technology. Mitsui said the curriculum will be "grounded in principles related to ethics and methods of rooting out implicit bias and algorithmic inequities in AI."



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**SOUTHERN  
REGION**  
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Piedmont Technical College in **South Carolina** received a \$1.6 million grant to expand career outreach to high school students. The funding includes a new position whose sole purpose is to make students aware of the dual-enrollment and career pathways available to students.

The **Alabama** Community College System is launching an innovation center to train residents for jobs in high-demand industries. The center is a partnership between the colleges and business.

Ten **North Carolina** community colleges are participating in the Rural College Leaders Program

(RCLP), sponsored by the Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research, in partnership with Achieving the Dream. The three-year program is an immersive learning community designed to close equity gaps and improve student outcomes in rural-serving institutions.

Northwest **Mississippi** Community College has raised more than \$4 million for its Investing Today, Impacting Tomorrow capital campaign.

South **Louisiana** Community College has opened pantries on three of its campuses to support students struggling with food insecurity. The efforts build on earlier efforts to create "Little Food Pantries" from refurbished newspaper bins on its campuses.



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**WESTERN  
REGION**  
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A **Colorado** bill would provide free college tuition at all public higher education institutions in

the state for students who had previously been in the foster care system.

Aims Community College in Colorado received a \$100,000 donation from Juniper Unmanned, a company that provides aerial analytics and drone operations. In 2021, the college launched an Unmanned Aerial Systems Basic Operator Certificate program.

Western **Wyoming** Community College will begin offering the state's first powerline technology degree and certificate programs. The program is supported in part by the Wyoming Innovation Partnership, which was launched late in 2021 with federal American Rescue Plan Act dollars.

**New Mexico** Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham signed Senate Bill 140, also known as the New Mexico Opportunity Scholarship Act. The bill will waive tuition for any student attending an in-state public or tribal college.

*Around the Regions provides an opportunity to share what's happening in the states and around the regions. This section focuses on state legislative and budgetary issues, economic development, and finance. Please e-mail items from press releases or newsletters to ACCT at [jbray@acct.org](mailto:jbray@acct.org).*