



Advancing  
America's  
Community  
Colleges

# JOINT LEGISLATIVE AGENDA FOR THE 118th CONGRESS (2023-2024)



# COMMUNITY COLLEGE FACTS & STATS

<p><b>Total Number of Community Colleges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,039</li> </ul>	<p><b>Representation of Community College Students Among Undergraduates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 38.1% All U.S. Undergraduates</li> </ul>
<p><b>Total Enrollment (Fall 2021)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6.1 million Credit</li> <li>• 4.1 million Non-credit</li> <li>• 10.2 million Total</li> </ul>	<p><b>Degrees and Certificates Awarded (2017- 2018)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 877,240 Associate Degrees</li> <li>• 592,863 Certificates</li> </ul>
<p><b>Students Enrolled for Credit (full-time and part-time)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.1 million Full-time (36%)</li> <li>• 4.1 million Part-time (64%)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Student Demographics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 58.6% Women</li> <li>• 41.4% Men</li> <li>• 27 - Average Age</li> <li>• 29% First Generation</li> <li>• 23% Parents</li> <li>• 4% Veterans</li> </ul>
<p><b>Race and Ethnicity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 44.5% White</li> <li>• 12.2% Black or African American</li> <li>• 27.2% Hispanic or Latino</li> <li>• 6.0% Asian/Pacific Islander</li> <li>• 1.0% 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>• \$3,860 Tuition and Fees</li> <li>• \$9,610 Room and Board</li> <li>• \$1,460 Books and Supplies</li> <li>• \$4,300 Transportation and Other Expenses</li> <li>• \$19,230 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>• 56% Any Aid</li> <li>• 42% Federal Grants</li> <li>• 15% Federal Loans</li> <li>• 25% State Aid</li> <li>• 6% Institutional Aid</li> </ul>

**SOURCES:**

AACC Analysis of Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Surveys (IPEDS) 2021 Fall enrollment survey (<https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds>)  
 AACC Analysis of Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Surveys (IPEDS) 2020-21 Completions File (<https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds>)  
 College Board Trends in College Pricing and Student Aid 2022 - <https://research.collegeboard.org/media/pdf/trends-in-college-pricing-student-aid-2022.pdf>



# 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 118th Congress.

## Federal Pell Grants

- Restore and maintain the purchasing power of the Federal Pell Grant, which is the foundation of student aid for millions of financially needy undergraduate college students.
- Extend Pell Grant eligibility to high-quality, workforce-oriented short-term programs offered by community colleges.
- 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 funding allocations for domestic discretionary programs sufficient to support the broad community college mission.
- 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, Postsecondary Student Success Grants, Basic Needs Grants 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.

- Reform the allocation formulas for the FSEOG and FWS programs to distribute funds based on current student and family finances rather than previous allocations.
- Create a federal-state partnership that provides federal support to states that make community college tuition-free for all students.
- Restore full Title IV student eligibility for community college students who lack a high school diploma or its equivalent but can benefit from postsecondary education.

## Institutional Accountability and Promoting Student Success

- Create a federal student unit record system to generate accurate, 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 with or without a credential or degree.
- Ensure that the Cohort Default Rate measure or any institutional accountability metric reflects rates of student borrowing.
- Evaluate any risk-sharing proposals in terms of financial impact on community colleges, particularly since risk-sharing generally penalizes institutions that enroll high percentages of low-income students and that have relatively few resources.
- Support an independent accreditation process that provides necessary quality assurance for the federal government and other stakeholders without limiting autonomy or hindering innovation, including in the dual enrollment context.

## Innovation and Compliance

- 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.
- Encourage quality innovations in higher education, including competency-based education, dual enrollment, guided pathways, new credentials, and other educational advancements.
- Uphold institutional gatekeeping and anti-fraud 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.

# COMMUNITY COLLEGE FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

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

- Enact policies that allow community college students with unmet need to access programs providing food, housing, medical care, including mental health services, and other basic needs. If such policies already exist, streamline the application process to improve student access and eligibility.
- Alter the CCAMPIS program to provide grant funding of adequate size to maintain high-quality, broadly available campus childcare; provide limited funding for facilities upgrading.
- Allow community college students to substitute work requirements with postsecondary enrollment to qualify for safety net programs such as SNAP.

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

- Substantially 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.
- Enhance the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to bolster the role of community colleges in workforce development by ensuring community colleges are part of the leadership apparatus, prioritizing credential attainment, and streamlining reporting requirements.
- Foster rural economic development by providing adequate federal resources for essential programs addressing rural education, rural health care, renewable energy, and rural workforce development.
- Create federal funding streams for community colleges to provide programming targeting rural economic development, particularly in the agricultural sector.

## Higher Education Tax Benefits for Low-Income Students

- End the taxation of Pell Grants
- Alter the eligibility criteria for the American Opportunity Tax Credit (AOTC) so that low-income community college students, particularly Pell Grant recipients, qualify for the credit

- Improve the Lifetime Learning Credit for business and community college students by covering 100% of the first \$2,000 of expenses for technical education programs.

## DREAM Act and Immigration Policy

- Pass comprehensive immigration reform that creates a path to citizenship for qualifying undocumented students and that allows them to be eligible for federal student aid.
- Allow DACA/TPS participants to be eligible for federal student aid.
- Eliminate federal restrictions on states that offer in-state tuition to undocumented students.
- Provide a pathway for students with Temporary Worker Visas and their families to stay in the U.S. while enrolled in higher education, providing a pathway for these students to obtain other visas for high-need skill areas in H1B or H1C areas.

## 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 that best suits their needs and prevents their exploitation.

## 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 can access U.S. education and training programs.

## Infrastructure

- Invest in upgrading and modernizing the community college facility infrastructure, as they are integral to the nation's economic vitality.
- Ensure that community colleges and their students can access technology equipment, including high-speed broadband internet services.



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