JOINT LEGISLATIVE AGENDA FOR THE 119th CONGRESS (2025-2026)

Advancing America's Community Colleges

ACCT
ASSOCIATION OF
COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEES

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COMMUNITY
COLLEGES
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COMMUNITY COLLEGE FACTS & STATS

COMMUNITY COLLEGE STATS

Total Number of Community Colleges
- 1,024

Representation of Community College Students Among Undergraduates (Fall 2023)
- 39%

ENROLLMENT

Enrollment
- Credit Seeking: 6.4 million
- Non-credit Seeking: 4.1 million

Degrees and Certificates Awarded (2022-2023)
- Associate: 800,958
- Bachelor's: 22,104
- Certificates: 628,838

Attendance Status (Fall 2022)
- Full-time: 2 million (32.7%)
- Part-time: 4 million (67.3%)

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Student Information
- Women: 57.5%
- Men: 42.5%
- Average Age: 27
- First Generation: 32%
- Single Parents: 13%
- Veterans: 4%
- Nonresident Alien: 2%

Race and Ethnicity of Students Enrolled for Credit
- White: 42%
- Hispanic/Latino: 28%
- Black/African American: 12%
- Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian: 6%
- Two or more races: 4%
- Other/Unknown: 4%
- Native American/Alaska Native: 1%

Employment Data
- Full-time students employed full-time: 43%
- Full-time students employed part-time: 30%
- Part-time students employed full-time: 59%
- Part-time students employed part-time: 23%

AFFORDABILITY

Average Cost of Attendance (2024-2025)
- Tuition and Fees: $4,050
- Housing and Food: $10,390
- Books and Supplies: $1,520
- Transportation and Other Expenses: $4,610
- Total Cost of Attendance: $20,570

Percentage of Students Receiving Aid (2019-2020)
- Any Aid: 55%
- Federal Grants: 36%
- Federal Loans: 12%
- State Aid: 22%
- Institutional Aid: 8%

SOURCES:
AACC Analysis of 2019-20 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study
AACC Analysis of Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). *Fall 2023 Enrollment Survey*
AACC Analysis of Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). *Fall 2023 Enrollment by Age Survey*
AACC Membership Database. January 2024
AACC Analysis of Membership Database & Jacoby, T. *The Indispensable Institution: Taking the Measure of Community College Workforce Education*. 2021
ACCT Analysis of IPEDS, 12-month Enrollment Component 2022-23 Provisional Data. (https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/TrendGenerator)
ACCT Analysis of IPEDS, *Undergraduate Enrollment by Degree/certificate Seeking Status and Attendance Status*. 2023 (https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/SummaryTables)
College Board. *Trends in College Pricing and Student Aid 2024*. https://research.collegeboard.org/media/pdf/Trends-in-College-Pricing-and-Student-Aid-2024-ADA.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 119th Congress.

Federal Pell Grants

- Substantially increase the maximum Federal Pell Grant, which serves as the foundation for millions of financially needy community 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 or its full-time equivalent.
- Help safeguard the Pell Grant program's future financial stability by ensuring Pell Grant reserve funds remain dedicated to the Pell Grant program.

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 multi-faceted 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

- Ensure that loan subsidies are targeted on those borrowers who need them the most; focus repayment flexibility on students who borrow smaller amounts; tie borrowing limits to enrollment intensity; give institutions more authority to limit borrowing in defined circumstances.

- Reform the allocation formulas for the FSEOG and FWS programs to distribute funds based on current student and family finances rather than previous allocations; extend authority to use these funds for emergency aid.
- 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-level data system to generate accurate, meaningful information on postsecondary outcomes and earnings, which will inject great accountability across higher education.
- 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.
- Oppose risk-sharing proposals because they penalize institutions with the fewest resources who serve the neediest students.
- Allow institutions that qualify under multiple MSI designations to receive simultaneous funding if selected.
- 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

- Ensure that Title IX policies enhance student safety and clarify institutional responsibilities, while considering 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.
- Target anti-fraud measures on institutions that have historically abused the Title IV programs, and strengthen the "90/10" rule, which requires that for-profit institutions derive at least 10% of their overall funding from non-Title IV sources.
- Ensure that the Department of Education effectively implements the FAFSA Simplification Act and Title IV programs generally without undue regulatory burdens, while ensuring that the agency has adequate administrative funding for this purpose.

Access to Basic Needs Services for Low-Income Students

- Streamline access to key public benefits programs for eligible community college students, including SNAP, WIC, Medicaid, TANF, and public housing programs.

- Create new federal support for campus and community-based programs that provide food, housing, transportation, child care, technology access, medical care, including mental health services, and other basic needs services to community college students.

- Alter the CCAMPIS program to provide grant funding of adequate size to maintain high-quality, broadly available campus childcare; allow for a portion of funding to be used for facilities upgrades.

Workforce Development, Adult Basic Education and Career and Technical Education

- Authorize and substantially increase funding for the Strengthening Community College Training Grants program as a means of addressing severe skilled workers shortages in key industries.

- 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) and other programs at the National Science Foundation to include community colleges in efforts to bolster America's competitiveness in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.

- Enhance the Workforce Investment 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.

- Support a National Apprenticeship Act that recognizes the role of community colleges and the value of multiple types of apprenticeships.

- Foster community development by providing adequate federal resources for essential programs addressing education, health care, renewable energy, and workforce development needs across the country, including in rural communities.

Higher Education Tax Benefits for Low-Income Students

- End the taxation of Pell Grants, which disproportionately and unfairly impacts low-income community college students

- 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.
- 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.
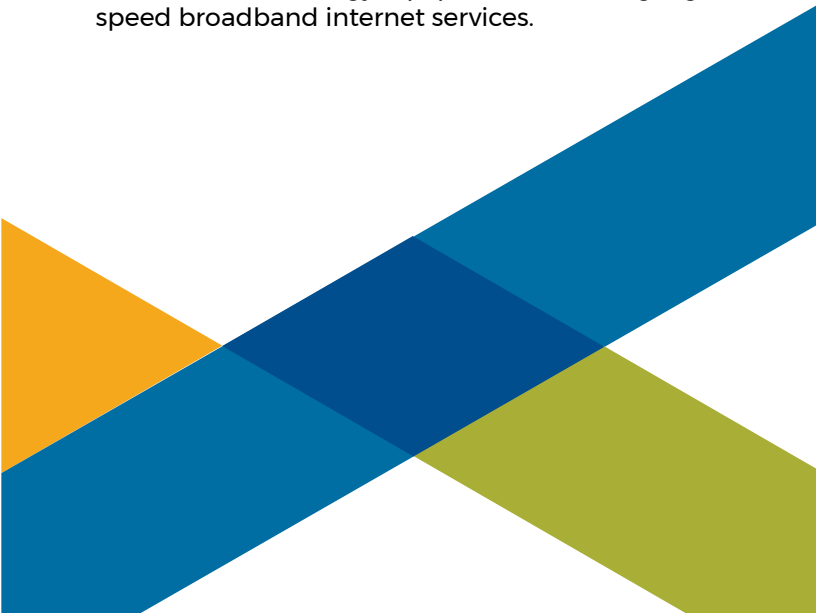
Veterans

- 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, through outreach as well as improvement of F1 student visa approval access, 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.

Infrastructure

- Invest in upgrading and modernizing the community college facility infrastructure, including physical plant and equipment, 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.