



30 April 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representative



Re: Federal Stimulus

Community College State Executives

On behalf of the Community College State Executives Association (CCA) - comprised of the Executive Directors of the nation's community college state associations – we wish to express our appreciation for your support of public community colleges in these extraordinary times and to respectfully request that any future federal resources to support our critical work reflect and communities that we serve.

As the nation's largest sector of public higher education, community colleges educate and train the majority of nurses, respiratory therapists, public safety officials and myriad other professions identified as essential critical infrastructure workforce by the Department of Homeland Security's [CISA](#). Additionally, with adequate resources, our colleges possess the capacity to educate and retrain the millions of individuals who have suffered dislocation and job loss by this public health crisis.

Yet, with low tuition and open access, community colleges are our lowest per-student funded public educational institutions and are largely unable to absorb reductions in funding from our respective states without cutting programs and services to the approximately 5.6 million students that we serve. During this pandemic, our colleges have adapted quickly by shifting our substantial resources to avoid disruption and the continuity of education for our students.

The tremendous expenditure of resources to maintain our programs and services during the COVID-19 crisis includes funds to: migrate in-person courses to remote instruction, provide virtual counseling and mental health services, and to transform other student supports to remote platforms; maintain payroll to avoid increasing the unemployment rate and reducing

educational capacity; furnish laptops and mobile hotspot devices and other technologies to students and employees lacking the means and access to broadband and other technology necessary for online learning and work; deep-clean our campuses and centers; enhance food banks and other basic needs services to students, and much more.

The Department of Education's limitations on the most recent CARES Act funding for higher education diminished the Act's potential utility for students and the nation's community colleges. Therefore, the CCAE respectfully requests that future higher education stimulus efforts include the following:

Increased institutional flexibility for deploying federal resources. Community colleges serving students and communities in rural areas with inconsistent or non-existent broadband expend resources differently from a large, multicampus district serving an urban population lacking basic needs including nutritious meals and affordable housing conducive to study. The existing limitations on institutional dollars impedes the necessary backfill of expenditures on many essential services and lost revenue required to meet payroll. Maximizing local flexibility ensures that resources are tailored to the specific needs of our richly diverse institutions and communities.

Resources directed to students should reflect the latter's exceptional diversity. Students at the over 1,100 public community colleges in the U.S. reflect the demographic diversity of the nation. As open access institutions, not only do we offer access and acceptance to the top 100 percent of graduating high school students, but the recently unemployed factory worker, Iraq war veteran, and the single mother seeking a career change and a better life for her family. Restricting CARES Act funds to full-time Pell Grant recipients excludes the approximately 65 percent of Americans enrolled part-time at one of our institutions, including those in short-term career programs leading to promotional opportunities and advanced technical knowledge and skills. Those same students are more likely to be low-income, first-generation, and students of color. Our request for the next federal aid package is that it recognize our expansive and diverse student bodies and communities, and provides support for part-time, noncredit, DACA, fully online, and other student populations excluded in the most recent aid package.

Substantially increase the total dollar amount to reflect the true cost of the COVID-19 crisis. As institutions that run countercyclical to our state and national economies, we are vulnerable to reductions in state resources at the very time when demand for our services increase. Increases in unemployment have historically led to higher enrollment at our colleges as individuals seek retraining or a career change. Yet state funding cuts during recessions reduce our capacity to provide these in-demand programs at the very time when they are most needed. This is another reason increased federal support is essential during the recession triggered by this global pandemic.

The nation's community colleges stand ready to serve as the educational destination of first resort for unemployed Americans if funded to do so. Yet without federal resources to compensate and backfill for the costs we have already absorbed, and the inevitable cuts we will endure as our state economies suffer, we will lack the capacity to offer the required quality instruction and training necessary for our nation's economy recovery. Therefore, we respectfully request \$50 billion of investment in the nation's 1,100 community colleges in recognition of our essential role in confronting the current iteration of the crisis, as well as to support workforce development and the road to recovery.

The nation's community colleges proudly educate and train many in the essential workforce infrastructure including those on the front lines in healthcare, public safety, law enforcement and many other critical occupations confronting us during this pandemic. And as the largest providers of workforce development in the U.S., provided with sufficient resources we have the capacity to play an essential role in our nation's economic recovery.

We respectfully urge you to take full advantage of the critical capacity of our nation's community colleges in confronting this public health and economic emergency by investing sufficient federal resources and offering institutions the flexibility to respond to local and regional needs of our shared constituencies.

We are grateful for your continued leadership and support of the nation's public community colleges.

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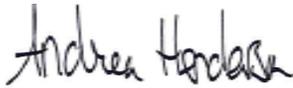


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