

June 15, 2022

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Chair  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health, and Human Services, and  
Education  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health, and Human Services, and  
Education  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chair  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health, and Human Services, and  
Education  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health, and Human Services, and  
Education  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair DeLauro, Ranking Member Cole, Chair Murray, and Ranking Member Blunt:

As you consider appropriations for Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23), we urge you to include at least the same level of funding proposed in the President's FY23 budget request for the Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grant (SCCTG) and the Strengthening Institutions Program (SIP).

With more than 1,000 institutions across the country, community colleges meet the unique needs of rural, suburban, and urban communities alike. As such, these institutions are at the epicenter of local and regional job training efforts, business and industry development, and educational and economic opportunity throughout the United States. SCCTG and SIP strengthen this role and enhance the ability of community colleges to meet the needs of their students to the benefit of the entire community.

Specifically, the Strengthening Community College Training Grant program increases the capacity of community colleges to work, either in consortium with other institutions or as single actors, with local governments, workforce development systems, business and industry to meet local and regional needs for a skilled workforce. This collaboration has already yielded positive results. In January 2021, the Department of Labor (DOL) awarded \$40 million in grants. This funding was used to meet worker and industry needs in healthcare, cybersecurity, advanced manufacturing, supply chain and logistics, construction, and other sectors. Yet, although over 150 community colleges applied for funding, DOL was only able to award 11 grants. Providing at least the level included in the President's budget request would allow more institutions to meet the unique needs of their communities.

Similarly, the Strengthening Institutions Program also expands the reach and capacity of community colleges. Authorized under the Higher Education Act of 1965, this program helps under-resourced institutions, including community colleges, to serve low-income students. This program provides funds for academic enrichment, improving instructional facilities, supportive services, financial literacy, counseling, and other services. In fiscal year 2019, this program received approximately \$100 million. The Department of Education (ED) received 194 applications, but could only fund 64 grants. Funding in fiscal year 2020 was used to award an additional 62 grants from the fiscal year 2019 competition. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is even greater need for SIP grants to bolster community colleges and the student populations and communities they serve. At \$209 million, this program could support 250 new development awards.

We are grateful for your continued support of community colleges and hope you take advantage of this opportunity to increase funding for SCCTG and SIP. We look forward to working with you and serving as a resource on this issue.

Sincerely,

American Association of Community Colleges  
Association of Community College Trustees  
Alliance for Youth Action  
Association of Young Americans  
Center for American Progress  
Center for Law and Social Policy  
Consumer Action  
Future Coalition  
Higher Learning Advocates  
Hope Center  
Institute for Higher Education Policy  
Jobs for the Future  
National Education Association  
National Skills Coalition  
National Young Farmers Coalition  
New America  
Public Citizen  
Rise  
The Institute for College Access & Success  
Third Way  
Young Invincibles