

March 24, 2022

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Across the United States, in rural areas and urban centers alike, we depend on the nation's 1,000+ community colleges to provide educational and economic opportunity in the communities they serve. As such, each community college is strategically positioned to help the United States emerge from the COVID-19 national emergency and contribute to the nation's sustained economic growth and recovery. As you stated in your recent State of the Union address, we must "invest in ... America's best-kept secret: community colleges."

In addition to the investments made through the American Rescue Plan and the fiscal year 2022 appropriations process, the Federal Government can take immediate steps to support the nation's community colleges through executive action. As such, we ask that you issue an Executive Order supporting community colleges. This Executive Order could be used to:

1. Establish a White House Initiative Supporting Community Colleges: Consistent with other White House initiatives, this initiative could be used to develop and coordinate policy-making efforts across the Federal Government, provide advice and recommendations to the President and other senior officials, disseminate best practices to stakeholders, and host White House events and convenings related to community colleges.
2. Provide Technical Assistance: As noted in a [Center for American Progress](#) analysis, "community colleges receive \$8,800 less in education revenue per student enrolled than four-year institutions." Moreover, this gap in funding does not account for the funding four-year institutions receive through federal research and development. Many community colleges do not have the resources it takes to navigate federal funding opportunities. Through technical assistance and targeted outreach to community colleges, the Federal Government can help these institutions overcome obstacles in the federal procurement and grantmaking processes. In addition, this requirement should not be limited to the Departments of Education and Labor; it will have maximum effect if it is applied across the Federal Government.
3. Encourage Partnerships: Through this Executive Order, the White House should encourage partnerships between the Federal Government, State and local government, corporations, and other institutions of higher education. These partnerships can be used to build relationships between industry and community colleges, improve transfer and career pathways, and help local and State governments support community colleges through initiatives, reforms, local and State appropriations, and other funding opportunities. In addition to supporting students and building capacity, these partnerships could also be used to provide research and training opportunities for community college faculty and staff.

4. Bolster Recruitment: this Executive Order could be used to bolster the Federal Government's recruitment activities on community college campuses for the Federal Service, internships, and other opportunities.

5. Establish Community College Week: The White House should establish and recognize a week to highlight community colleges. During this week, the Federal Government and other interested parties could highlight the unique contributions community colleges have made to their communities, as well as the students and families they serve.

In addition to these items, the White House should explore other ways in which the Federal Government can support community colleges. The Center for American Progress is willing to assist in these efforts. Thank you for your leadership in strengthening educational and economic opportunity in the United States.

Sincerely,

Center for American Progress