



1. Celebrating Community Colleges

The month of April is National Community College Month, authorized by Congressional Resolution in 1986. This April we're excited to celebrate the many contributions of community colleges to the nation's educational and economic well-being. OCTAE supports this month-long effort to uplift our community colleges (CCs) and invites leaders to join in the celebration by highlighting the unique contributions of the sector. In 2018-2019, 44% of undergraduates were enrolled at CCs – over [7.7 million](#) students. Join us in celebrating these students and the institutions who serve them!

2. Second Chance Month

On March 31st, 2022, President Biden issued a [proclamation](#) on Second Chance Month: “America is a Nation of second chances, and it is critical that our criminal and juvenile justice systems provide meaningful opportunities for rehabilitation and redemption. It is also vital that we address both the root causes of crime and the underlying needs of returning citizens using resources devoted to prevention, diversion, reentry, trauma-informed care, culturally specific services, and social support. By supporting citizens who are committed to rectifying their mistakes, redefining themselves, and making meaningful contributions to society, we help reduce recidivism and build safer communities.”

Second Chance month will include events and resources covering a range of topics essential to successful reentry, including education, employment, housing, behavioral health treatment and family engagement. Check out the National Reentry Resource Center for [events and resources](#).

3. Introducing the President's FY 2023 Budget Proposal

Last week, the Biden-Harris Administration submitted the [President's Budget](#) for fiscal year 2023 to Congress. Reversing years of underinvestment in federal education programs, this proposal reflects the Administration's deep belief in the importance of education and the success and wellbeing of our nation's students. The budget will help lay a stronger foundation for shared growth and prosperity for generations to come and make critical investments in core areas that align with Secretary Cardona's [vision for education in America](#). At ED, the budget would:

- Provide historic investments in schools with high-poverty rates to boldly address opportunity and achievement gaps;
- Invest in educator recruitment and retention; and
- Make historic investments in college affordability.

The budget would also reimagine the high school to postsecondary education transition, proposing a new \$200 million investment in Career-Connected High

Schools. This initiative would award competitive grants to partnerships of local educational agencies, institutions of higher education – including community colleges – and employers to increase integration between the last two years of high school, the first two years of postsecondary education, and quality career pathways.

4. Addressing the Teacher Shortage

In February, Secretary Cardona visited Tennessee's new teacher apprenticeship program

On March 28th, Secretary Cardona issued a nationwide [call to action](#) for states, higher education leaders, and schools to tap federal resources and work together to address the teacher shortage and aid student recovery. The announcement builds on President Biden's call in the State of the Union Address encouraging leaders to use American Rescue Plan funds to address this critical challenge schools and districts across the country are facing. Secretary Cardona is calling on states to commit to:

- Establish teaching as a Registered Apprenticeship;
- Invest in evidence-based teacher residency programs;
- Establish or expand loan forgiveness or service scholarship programs; and
- Increase teacher compensation.

Below are additional resources regarding the teacher shortage:

- An ED [fact sheet](#) detailing schools, districts, states who are already taking up the call to action.
 - Information on the [Supporting Effective Educator Development \(SEED\)](#) grant program, which is now accepting applications to increase the pipeline of highly effective educators.
 - Keep an eye out for an upcoming webinar hosted by the Department of Labor on Tennessee's new Registered Apprenticeship program for teachers.
-

5. ED Launches Real Pay for Real Jobs Initiative

In March, the Department of Education launched an historic real pay for real jobs initiative for people with disabilities. ED's Rehabilitation Services Administration ([RSA](#)) released the notice inviting applications for the Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment (SWTCIE) demonstration project, aimed at increasing access for people with disabilities to jobs that pay good wages. The SWTCIE project is the largest discretionary grant administered by RSA, with \$167 million available to State Vocational Rehabilitation agencies and their partners. [Read the Full Press Release!](#)

6. New! Adult Education Resources & Events

In March, OCTAE's Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL) released the Technology-Based Coaching in Adult Education (TBCAE) project's Federal Initiatives page on LINCS, including the [TBCAE Toolkit](#) to support adult education practitioners in the field. This project explored the use of text messaging to support adult education learners' persistence and success in these programs. Ten programs in four states and 400+ learners participated in the TBCAE project. Program staff sent individualized and personalized text messages to support:

- Learners' retention in program services;
- Development of basic skills (e.g., reading, writing, numeracy, problem-solving); and
- Attainment of a postsecondary credential; and pursuit of further education, training, or employment.

The Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE) is hosting their 2022 National Conference April 10-13th. Secretary Cardona will be speaking on Tuesday during the general session, and a wide range of efforts supported by OCTAE national activities will be highlighted throughout. [Conference agenda here!](#)

7. Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants

Durham Technical Community College where Vice President Harris announced the funding

In March, Vice President Harris and Department of Labor Secretary Walsh announced \$45 million in funding for the second round of [Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants](#). Funding is intended to help people in marginalized and underrepresented populations overcome barriers to access career and technical education programs that connect to good-paying jobs. These grants will allow public and state institutions of higher education and community colleges – individually or collectively – to improve their ability to address equity gaps and meet the skill development needs of employers and workers. The department will award grants of up to \$1.6 million for single institutions and up to \$5 million for consortiums. Below you can find:

- [DOL's press release](#)
 - [The Funding Opportunity Announcement](#)
 - [More information](#)
-

8. Webinars Worth Watching

ED and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) will co-host a College Students and SNAP webinar on April 12th, at 1:30 pm EST. This webinar will be the second in a series hosted by OCTAE and other federal agencies focused on connecting students to public benefits to meet their basic needs. Please register [here](#). In this webinar, you will hear from OCTAE, USDA and institutional leaders about:

- The work being done at ED to support students' basic needs;
- Exciting work being done at colleges to connect students to SNAP benefits and more on what they can do; and
- Student eligibility for SNAP from experts at USDA.

If you are interested in joining, please [register](#) today!

Cross-agency leaders webcast a discussion on the Biden-Harris Administration's agenda to build back better by investing in workforce and education systems. In February 2022, leaders at the Departments of Labor, Education, and Health and Human Services [webcast](#) a discussion about their top priorities, multiple challenges, and opportunities for expanding job quality, improving equity, and strengthening partnerships across workforce programs to support prosperity for adult learners, job seekers and employers. [Watch here!](#)

And finally, listen to recordings for a series of roundtable exploring how community colleges can better ensure equity and improve employment-related outcomes. These roundtables are facilitated jointly by the U.S. Department of Labor's Chief Evaluation Office and the Employment and Training Administration's Office of Workforce Investment. These informative 90-minute roundtables highlight key findings

and feature expert speakers with audience Q&A. Recordings, slides, and transcripts are available. [More here!](#)



Was this email forwarded to you?

[Sign up here](#) for your own copy of OCTAE Connections

We'd love to hear from you. How are we doing? How can we do better?

Email us at OCTAEConnections@ed.gov