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Department of Education Announces Year-Round Pell Grants

U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos recently [announced](#) that, as of July 1, 2017, Year-Round Pell grants are now available to students. This change to the policy ensures that hundreds of thousands of college students will now have the needed resources to complete their course work in a time frame compatible with their individual needs.

According to the announcement, this new change in the Federal Pell Grant Program allows “an eligible student to receive up to 150 percent of the student’s Federal Pell Grant Scheduled Award beginning with the 2017–2018 award year.”

Interested parties are encouraged to see the [Dear Colleague](#) letter on the implementation of Year-Round Pell Grants for more information.

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Supporting Student Success: Remedial Education and Developmental Education Alignment Releases Videos

[The Supporting Student Success: Adult Education and Remedial Education Reform in Community Colleges initiative](#), which ran from July 2015 through June 2017, was a technical assistance activity that supported state and local efforts to reform remedial education services across the nation. The initiative explored successful strategies in promoting student success in adult education and developmental education programming, highlighted promising approaches to program design, and provided examples of community colleges implementing these designs in their programs. The program model approaches

contextualization, acceleration, student support, and hybrid models as promising practices for increasing the college transition and completion rates of lower-skilled learners at community colleges.

The initiative created, among other products, three videos: (1) [Supporting Student Success Through Professional Development](#), (2) [Blending Adult Education and Developmental Education: A Hybrid Model](#), and (3) [Managing Community College Change](#). Each video comes with a discussion guide to help viewers think deeply about the concepts discussed and considerations for implementation. Details about each video are available at this [link](#).

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Institute of Museum and Library Services Announces Nominations for 2018 National Medal

The Institute of Museum and Library Services ([IMLS](#)) has recently announced that it is currently accepting nominations for its 2018 National Medal for Museum and Library Service. This award was established to recognize libraries and museums that have made outstanding contributions “to improve the wellbeing of their communities.” IMLS notes that all nominations for an institution by an employee, a board member, a member of the public from the institution’s community, and an elected official are welcome. Each nominated institution must complete and return a nomination [form](#), by **October 2, 2017**, to be considered.

For this year’s award, as indicated in the [announcement](#), IMLS is especially interested in museums and libraries with programs “that build community cohesion and serve as catalysts for positive community change, including programs that provide services for veterans and military families, at-risk children and families, the un- and under-employed, and youth confronting barriers to STEM-related employment.”

Prospective candidates should be aware that all types of nonprofit libraries and library organizations, associations, and consortia are eligible for nomination, including the following: “academic, school, digital, tribal, and special libraries or archives. Public or private nonprofit museums of any discipline are eligible, including general, art, history, science and technology, children’s, and natural history and anthropology, historic houses and sites, arboretums, nature centers, aquariums, zoos, botanical gardens, and planetariums.”

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Brookings Releases New Toolkit for Building Community College and Employer Relationships

The [Brookings Institution’s Brown Center on Education Policy](#) has recently released a [new toolkit](#), *Connecting Community Colleges with Employers: A Toolkit for Building Successful Partnerships*. Concerns over the nation’s skills gap are longstanding and well document, but according to this toolkit, “community colleges have the potential to provide low-cost, high-quality education and training to students.” It further asserts that “[r]obust relationships between colleges and local industry partners are critical to building strong workforce development programs for students.” As such, the toolkit provides useful information on

how community college leaders “can take a deliberate approach to communication with potential partners in their community, including local businesses and industry leaders.”

All interested parties are encouraged to access the toolkit to learn more about the three key topics it covers: Creating a Navigator for Industry Partners, Key Characteristics of Productive Partnerships, and Practical Steps for Building Relationships between Colleges and Industries.

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Indiana to Offer Free Community College Certificate Programs for In-Demand Fields

The [National Skills Coalition](#) recently announced Indiana’s new [Senate Bill 198](#) in its [Skills Blog](#). According to the article, the newly signed bill will provide “free community college to students seeking a certificate in a ‘high value field,’” regardless of financial need. This new legislation, called the “Workforce Ready Grant,” is the outcome of a partnership between Indiana’s governor, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, and the Indiana Department of Workforce Development. It was [supported by](#) the Indiana [Skills2Compete Coalition](#). The Skills Blog says that the state will provide \$2 million a year for the grant program.

Indiana defines “high value fields” as those that have “high job placement, high completion rate, high wage and high demand.” This new grant builds on the state’s [“You Can. Go Back.”](#) campaign, which was designed to encourage more adults to return to college, and complete degrees and credentials. The article highlights that “earning a certificate in an in-demand industry not only helps businesses to fill crucial human capital needs, but also allows adults in low-skilled, low-wage jobs to enter into career pathways leading to family-sustaining wages.”

Both the Indiana Skills2Compete Coalition and National Skills Coalition are strong proponents of policies that help to expand equitable access to middle-skill credentials and careers. Middle-skill jobs, which require education beyond high school but not a four-year degree, make up the largest part of America’s and Indiana’s labor markets. Many key industries in Indiana are currently unable to find enough sufficiently trained workers to fill these jobs. Thus, as the piece states, “[e]stablishing last-dollar scholarships for certificates in in-demand fields, as Indiana’s Workforce Ready Grant does, is one way that states can help adults with limited skills earn a postsecondary credential that leads to a quality middle-skill job while also ensuring that businesses have access to workers with the skills they require.”

For more information on this new bill and other workforce news, please visit the National Skills Coalition’s [Skills Blog](#) and [Indiana Skills 2 Compete Coalition](#).

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Webinar Announcement: The Role of Community Colleges in Regional Economic Development

Date and Time: Monday, September 18, 2017 02:00 PM EDT - 03:00 PM EST

The five colleges of the Northeast Minnesota Higher Education District (NHED) have coined a new mantra: “education-based economic development.” NHED has developed a portfolio of programs and initiatives that support industry in guiding the effort to remake the college experience as proactive instead of reactive with regard to local industry needs and to create a highly skilled workforce. In this webinar, three regional educational leaders will discuss what it means to “lean forward” in such areas as engineering education, customized training and continuing education, and technical education in the high schools. The leaders will also explore the role a unique regional economic development agency plays in their regions, and the colleges’ roles in shaping a skilled workforce that is ahead of the state and national averages in two-year degree attainment. The speakers will also share challenges that were overcome along the way and lessons learned.

To Register: https://rti.connectsolutions.com/msi_september2017/event/registration.html

Presenters: Dr. Trent Janezich, executive director, Advanced Minnesota; Bill Maki, president, Northeast Minnesota Higher Education District; Dr. Randy Smith, president, Rural Community College Alliance.

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