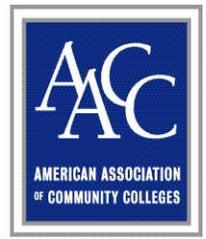


NEWS



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NEW 'PLUS 50 INITIATIVE' BY COMMUNITY COLLEGES REACHES OUT TO BABY BOOMERS *15 Colleges Receive Grants to Develop Innovative Programs for Students Over 50*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – As 78 million baby boomers approach retirement, their attention is turning to staying active and re-focusing their careers – and they're about to get some help from America's community colleges, thanks to a new "Plus 50 Initiative."

Ten community colleges will launch new "demonstration" programs for students over the age of 50, with the help of seed grants from the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and The Atlantic Philanthropies. They'll be aided with mentoring support from five "mentor" colleges that already have established programs for baby boomers.

Organizers say the project is designed to help with one of the largest generational shifts affecting our nation, as baby boomers approach retirement and consider how to keep their lives active, healthy and engaged in careers and projects that matter to them.

"The baby boomer generation wants to stay active in retirement and holds a wealth of knowledge and experience that society cannot afford to see leave the talent pool," said George R. Boggs, AACC President and CEO. "By retooling educational programs and adjusting for the needs of plus 50 students, community colleges can empower baby boomers to continue give back by leading the vibrant and fulfilling lives they desire."

The three-year program is sponsored by the AACC and is funded by a \$3.2 million dollar grant from The Atlantic Philanthropies. The 10 demonstration colleges receiving grants are:

Chaffey Community College, located in **Cucamonga, Calif.**, will start a new program for baby boomer volunteers to mentor and tutor under-prepared students and help them be successful in college.

Clover Park Technical College, located in **Lakewood, Wash.**, will offer an environmental science program alongside a volunteer on-site project for baby boomers exploring sustainability. The program will apply classroom lessons while restoring wetlands, forests and an oak savannah.

Joliet Junior College, located in **Joliet, Ill.**, will offer workforce skills certificate programs to students over the age of 50 for new careers in high-growth jobs in healthcare and education.

Luzerne County Community College, located in **Nanticoke, Pa.**, will provide courses and services that encourage new job skills development, as well as entrepreneurship for plus 50 students wanting to start a new business venture.

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Community colleges reach out to boomers – 2

Northern Virginia Community College, located near **Washington, D.C.**, will expand educational offerings targeting baby boomers and reach out to senior facilities with programs on retirement, personal finance, entrepreneurship, technology literacy and good health.

Richland College, which is part of the Dallas County Community College District, and is located in **Dallas, Texas**, will assess learning needs for baby boomers, develop life-enhancing curricula for plus 50 students seeking to re-define their lives and offer opportunities to retrain experienced workers.

Santa Fe Community College, located in **Gainesville, Fla.**, will address the critical nursing educator shortage by training baby boomer nurses to become instructors for nursing education programs, enabling them to pass their knowledge onto to others and serve a valuable mentoring role for younger nurses.

St. Louis Community College, located in **St. Louis, Mo.**, will establish and pilot workshops on four campuses that will help plus 50 students who see retirement looming ahead of them, but are unsure about how to make this next phase of their lives all they hope it can be. Travel study tours, art classes and many other topics, offered in a format for non-degree seeking students, will enable baby boomers to re-connect with interests they may have set aside decades before while raising children and working.

Wake Technical Community College, located in **Raleigh, N.C.**, will centralize coursework and activities offered by three separate divisions under one organizational umbrella and offer afternoon college classes at convenient times that cater to plus 50 students.

Western Dakota Technical Institute, located in **Rapid City, S. D.**, will develop and pilot a national training model for baby boomers who want to become seasonal rangers and interpretive guides at national parks.

Colleges receiving grants to serve as mentors for the program are:

Cape Cod Community College, located in **West Barnstable, Mass.**, has conducted focus groups and extensive surveys with baby boomers to identify courses and volunteer opportunities. They plan to expand their current programs and develop a talent bank that matches plus 50 students with civic and service opportunities.

Central Florida Community College, located in **Ocala, Fla.**, will develop course offerings that will lead to new employment opportunities for plus 50 students, including online business classes, individual and corporate tax preparation courses, training in less physically demanding medical fields such as medical transcription, and intergenerational computer courses.

Century College, located in **White Bear Lake, Minn.**, will help baby boomers retiring from professional and supervisory positions apply their leadership skills as community volunteers. They will also help plus 50 professionals who've been downsized out of their current jobs with skill development courses in healthcare and technology that enable them to re-enter the workforce.

Clark College, located in **Vancouver, Wash.**, will redesign its small business development curriculum to offer second careers through business ownership at a wine and cooking school for wine hobbyists and food enthusiasts. In addition, a joint program with the Area Agency on Aging will train in-home caregivers.

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Community colleges reach out to boomers – 3

The **Community College of Spokane**, located in **Spokane Wash.**, will help plus 50 workers upgrade or gain new skills and receive re-training to fill regional job vacancies. The college will also expand course delivery to rural areas using distance learning, so that plus 50 students located farther from campus can participate.

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For 88 years, the AACC has been the leading advocate for the nation's community colleges, which currently number more than 1,125 and serve more than 12 million students annually. Its membership comprises 95 percent of all public two-year colleges – the largest, most accessible, most diverse sector of U.S. higher education. As institutions committed to access, community service and lifelong learning, community colleges have long-focused on the needs of adults who are already in the workforce, many of whom are seeking new skills and knowledge for changes in their lives and careers.

To learn more about successful efforts by AACC member colleges to respond to students aged 50 and above, please contact Norma Kent at nkent@aacc.nche.edu, or at 202-728-0200. To learn more about the AACC and The Atlantic Philanthropies, visit www.aacc.nche.edu and www.atlanticphilanthropies.org.

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