

COMMUNITY COLLEGE DAILY

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

A big role in Good Jobs Challenge

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The U.S. Commerce Department on Wednesday announced [32 partnerships](#) across the country selected to develop critical workforce pipelines to key industries and to expand employment opportunities, especially among underserved populations. Nearly all the partnerships include at least one two-year college, with many of them having several community college team members. In addition, three of the partnerships are led by a community college and one is led by a state system's foundation.

The partnerships are part of the \$500 million [Good Jobs Challenge](#) funded by the American Rescue Plan. The initiative, administered by the Commerce Department's

Economic Development Administration, aims to enable communities to invest in innovative approaches to workforce development that will secure job opportunities for more than 50,000 Americans in 15 key industries that are essential to U.S. supply chains, global competitiveness and regional development, according to Commerce.

The following are the selected partnerships led by a community college-centered organization, the grant amount and the industry of focus:

- [Foundation for California Community Colleges](#), \$21.5 million for forestry and fire safety
- [Illinois Central College](#), \$14.6 million for information technology (IT)
- [Miami Dade College](#) (Florida), \$10 million for IT
- [Dallas College](#) (Texas), \$8.8 million for bio-medical

Commerce said the projects will support a broad range of individuals from underserved populations, including people of color, women, the formerly incarcerated, and those recovering from substance abuse disorders. In addition, the projects will serve a range of communities, from rural to urban.

“Workforce development is a critical pillar to supporting innovative and competitive economic development, and the Good Jobs Challenge is working hand-in-hand with diverse partners and local leaders to strengthen local economic recovery and resiliency,” Commerce Deputy Secretary Don Graves said in a release.

Commerce received more than [500 applications](#) from partnerships comprising higher education institutions, state and local governments, non-profits and organized labor, including nearly 60 from partnerships headed by organizations representing community colleges, such as individual colleges, districts, college foundations and state systems.

The initiative is structured much like the successful \$1.9-billion [Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training](#) (TAACCCT) program, which had a community college or two-year college organization lead consortia of partners focused on industries that were expanding in their regions. TAACCCT expired in September 2018, but community college and workforce advocates have called on Congress to re-establish the program or create a similar one.

Forestry and fire safety

The project led by the Foundation of California Community Colleges — an auxiliary of the [California Community Colleges](#) system — is one of the more unique ones. It is focused on careers in forestry in direct response to the wildfire crisis in the state. The

foundation is teaming with industry and leading educational institutions to scale a statewide infrastructure for training in forest health and fire safety.

The emerging sector has the potential to grow into a \$39 billion industry with 177,000 jobs in California, according to a project summary. However, there are expected workforce shortages: 6,000 fire managers, 4,000 conservation scientists and foresters, 7,000 loggers, and 1,500 utility line clearance technicians.

The coalition includes five community colleges — [Feather River College](#), [Lake Tahoe Community College](#) and [Shasta College](#) among them — and a four-year institution.

Growing IT needs

The IT industry continues to expand and has a particular increasing need for cybersecurity workers.

Illinois Central College will lead a project to provide the skilled technology and cybersecurity professionals to strengthen and grow large and small employers, including partnering companies Accenture, JP Morgan Chase, i3 broadband and OSF Healthcare. Many of these employers have not only signed letters committing to hire trainees, but also to provide wraparound services to those going through training, according to a project summary.

The goal of the project is to credential 1,249 individuals over three years and place or retain 1,000 in quality jobs. To do so will require a multi-pronged approach, including career awareness in the K-12 system to build interest in IT, as well as training career changers and incumbent workers.

The IT project led by Miami Dade College (MDC) will help the region to continue evolving as a tech hub. It also will include robust business and industry partnerships, with more than 30 employers that include Blackstone Technology and Innovations, Assurant, 8base Inc. and Microsoft. And it also will include wraparound services up to at least a year after hire, with a goal of serving 1,000 participants over three years.

MDC already has a strong track record in developing IT job training programs through various other endeavors, from data science to cloud computing, with partners such as Google and Amazon Web Services. The college is also designated a National Cybersecurity Center of Excellence by the National Security Agency.

Building biotech

Dallas College's project focuses on developing a more robust biotech workforce in the medical field in north central Texas. [Collin College](#) and [Tarrant County College](#) are among its partners. The coalition particularly aims to expand the number of skilled workers in clinical labs, bioinformatics and biomanufacturing. A recent survey of north Texas biotech employers identified a lack of robust talent supply in entry-level biotech skills.

To address this gap, the partnership will create an introductory boot camp, BioWorks for North Texas, to train 800 participants for entry-level biotech employment and will build a career pathway model across all education levels to provide future career growth opportunities, according to a project summary.

The project aims to enroll a total of 800 participants in biotech programs, including BioWorks, industry-recognized certifications, degrees and certificates, and incumbent worker training. Another goal is to ensure that at least 95% (646) of participants who complete the program will be employed or enrolled in further educational programs within six months of program completion. Partnering employers have committed to hire 1,100 individuals into good jobs.

Key players

Two-year public colleges are also partners in nearly all the 32 selected projects. For example, [Trident Technical College](#) is a partner in a healthcare project in South Carolina led by the Charlestown Chamber Foundation. The college will work with employers on curriculum development, provide training and coach students along career pathways, according to a project narrative. In the project serving North Dakota and Minnesota, [North Dakota State College of Science](#) will help with the high demand for immediate and future skilled workers in advanced manufacturing, precision agriculture and food, and IT/cybersecurity.

Many of the partnerships include multiple community college teammates. For example, [Bevill State Community College](#) and [Lawson State Community College](#) were among the higher education partners in the Birmingham Region Health Partnership in Alabama. In Illinois, [Moraine Valley College](#), [Harper College](#) and several institutions from [City Colleges of Chicago](#) — [Malcolm X College](#), [Richard J. Daley College](#), [Wilbur Wright College](#) and [Olive-Harvey College](#) — are involved in the partnership that focuses on the industries of healthcare, IT, manufacturing, and transportation/distribution/logistics.

For more info: <https://www.ccdaily.com/2022/08/a-big-role-in-good-jobs-challenge/>