



July 30, 2026

Alamo Colleges District

Dallas College

Lone Star College

Louisiana Community and
Technical College System

Metropolitan Community
College

Tarrant County College

Virginia Community College
System

Wisconsin Technical College
System

The Honorable David Barker
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Assistant Secretary Barker:

I am writing on behalf of Rebuilding America's Middle Class (RAMC) to advocate that the U.S. Department of Education support additional implementation grants for colleges seeking to implement Workforce Pell. RAMC members are dedicated to ensuring the success of Workforce Pell; however, as we have begun this work, we have encountered difficulties in accessing adequate funding to develop and execute on the steps needed to implement this authority. To aid institutions in their work, we urge the Department to support additional funding for the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) focused on supporting Workforce Pell implementation.

RAMC represents more than 75 community colleges and approximately 1 million students nationwide. Community colleges serve 45 percent of all first-time freshmen and 40 percent of our students are first-generation college students. Community colleges are open access, seeking to make higher education accessible and affordable for everyone and match employers' need for a larger, more skilled workforce. We know the importance of preparing more Americans to enter the workforce with the skills necessary to compete for in-demand jobs. RAMC recognizes that Workforce Pell can provide many individuals, especially low-income and unemployed workers, with access to affordable postsecondary training and credentialing opportunities that can have a significant positive impact on their future career and earnings potential. Our colleges' ability to implement Workforce Pell effectively is key to this mission.

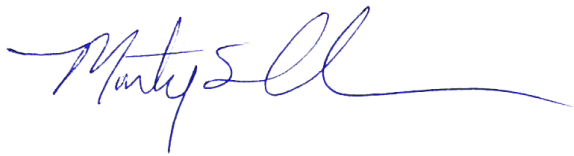
For an institution to receive approval for a Workforce Pell program, it must first submit its Workforce Pell-eligible programs to its State for approval. Prior to this, colleges must collect and analyze data, which in many instances requires coordination among multiple offices, such as registrar and financial aid offices. These intensive efforts require institutions to create new internal systems and processes, all of which require additional time and funding. Many community colleges are navigating tight budgets and do not currently have the resources to ensure that this process is carried out as effectively as possible. An additional round of FIPSE focused on Workforce Pell implementation would provide colleges with the necessary funds to develop data and information-sharing systems that allow them to easily identify which of their programs are eligible. This will in turn enable them to submit programs to their States for approval more efficiently, allowing them to move through the Federal approval process quickly and ultimately provide Workforce Pell grants to students sooner.

Furthermore, we ask that the Department ensures that additional implementation grants provide institutions with the flexibility to address their unique needs when it comes to successfully implementing Workforce Pell. The Workforce Pell approval process requires institutions to bring together many different components, which are likely to vary by institution. Flexibility in additional funding will allow each institution to identify where it most needs resources and enable it to address those areas. Another benefit of additional funding would be to encourage innovation. Increased funding would allow institutions to create new programs or modify existing programs to become Workforce Pell eligible, thereby providing students with more options to choose the path that works best for them.

Overall, RAMC greatly appreciates the Department's work on the implementation of Workforce Pell and the aid that the Department has provided thus far. We encourage the Department support funding for FIPSE funding focused on Workforce Pell implementation as it will allow our institutions to create more opportunities for students to chart a path to the middle class.

Thank you for your attention to our views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Monty Sullivan", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Monty Sullivan

Board President, Rebuilding America's Middle Class (RAMC)
Acting President and Chief Executive Officer, North Carolina Community College System