Invest Forward: Leveraging the Federal Stimulus to Support Students’ Postsecondary Success

*Enroll. Complete. Compete.*

Education Strategy Group
August 9, 2022
COVID-19’s Impact on Education

- Disrupted postsecondary attendance
- Exacerbated existing disparities in persistence and attainment
- Altered our learning environments
- Reenergized, collective movement to address systemic inequities

$76 billion HEERF
$189.5 billion ESSER
$4.2 billion GEER

OPPORTUNITY to reimagine traditional structures in education that do not work for our learners.
Leaders across the field are advocating for strategic use of these funds.

“This is a moment where we have investments that give us a chance to pilot and reimagine structures of learning and time to degree. I hope we don’t miss this moment. I’m afraid we will. I’m afraid that institutions will simply use these funds to prop up broken systems, rather than reimagine and rethink them. So, that’s my call. Don’t miss the moment we are in now.”
The federal stimulus can provide learners a path to economic mobility

Enroll

Complete

Compete
Enroll.
Enrollments are on a steady decline, especially at community colleges

- Overall enrollments in postsecondary education have dropped by a total of 5.1 percent since fall 2019.
- Community colleges are experiencing the largest decline in enrollment since the pandemic began: -13.2 percent.

Anxiety and concerns surrounding COVID-19 and health.

Unstable and shifting personal finances.

Source: National Student Clearinghouse (2022)
Example for **Enroll**: Stimulus dollars can be used to support engagements with students that can improve enrollment among traditional and post-traditional learners.

Colorado invested $51M in ARPA dollars to help re-enroll learners displaced by the pandemic. Specifically, HB21-1330 provides additional funding to the Colorado Opportunity Scholarship, invests in local businesses to hire additional workers, equips institutions and community-based organizations with grants for FAFSA completion, bolsters data collection and reporting, and provides direct and indirect supports to traditionally underserved student populations.
Complete.
COVID-19 exacerbated existing disparities in persistence and completion, and we haven’t recovered...

At the height of the pandemic, there was a 2 percent decline in persistence across the United States, with the community college sector being hit the hardest. According to NCES’s recent report on persistence and retention, these rates remain below pre-pandemic levels.

The pandemic has only exacerbated existing disparities among Students of Color. The overall first-year persistence rate fell the most among Latinx students (-3.2 pp to 68.6%) and continues to impact Native American students as well.

Source: National Student Clearinghouse, 2021; 2022
Example for **Complete**: Investing in strategies that promote **persistence and completion** efforts will have a positive impact on recovery, students, and the institution's bottom line.

Connecticut used ARPA - approximately $19.5M - to expand **Guided Pathways advising** across the CSCU system. Advisors deploy a holistic, case managed approach to **supporting students and their academic, career, and basic needs**. CSCU's goal is to hire more than 150 new advisors to support students.
Compete.
Postsecondary credentials are even more critical to compete in today's economy.

Over the next ten years, there is zero or negative job growth projected for those with a high school diploma or less.

Projected Job Growth by Educational Attainment

- No high school diploma
- High school diploma only
- Associate's degree or some college
- Bachelor's degree
- Graduate degree

Example of **Compete**: Purposefully prioritizing career and workforce readiness is essential for economic recovery.

**California** used $472.5 million in ARPA funds to establish the **Golden State Education and Training Grant Program** ($1,000 - $2,5000) to assist Californians who lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This one-time grant award is given to students to upskill or reskill and enter the workforce to increase their monthly wages. Grants are disbursed by the California Student Aid Commission to institutions to cover the cost of tuition and fees for eligible applicants.
Strategic state-level investments of Education Stabilization Funds can promote postsecondary attainment & scale innovative programs.

- Low-cost short-term credentials
- Coaching and navigational support
- Targeted aid at populations with need
- Flexible coursework options
- Basic needs and wrap-around supports
- Data capacity to inform decisions
Sophie Zdatny
SOPHIE@VSC.EDU
SOPHIE.ZDATNY@CELLOR.VERMONT.EDU
SKIM.REED@LAREROFHIGHEREDUSTRATEGY.ORG
UPMGA@MANDAL.EDU
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Source:NationalStudentClearinghouse,2021
89.5billion

Dr. Kim Hunter Reed
Commissioner of Higher Education
Louisiana Board of Regents
Questions?
Framework & Resources

In alignment with the Accelerating Recovery through Credentials Rapid Response Toolkit and Adult-Ready Playbook, Education Strategy Group presents a new framework and resources for federal stimulus investments in higher education.

We have an opportunity to help more post-traditional learners enroll in higher education, complete a credential of value, and compete in our global economy using the federal stimulus.

An initiative to encourage districts and states to prioritize investing a significant portion of their American Rescue Plan resources in helping students successfully access postsecondary education and succeed in future career pathways.

This effort includes arming district and state leaders with high-impact strategies and peer connection opportunities to guide their investments in student pathways.

https://tinyurl.com/stimulus-framework

Invest Forward

https://investforward.us
Panelist Resources

Final Report of the Select Committee on the Future of Public Higher Education in Vermont

The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems

April 9, 2021

VSCS Transformation Proposal:

February 22, 2021

REBOOT
YOUR CAREER

LOUISIANA
DUAL ENROLLMENT

Completers Grant
Contact Us

**Matt Gandal**  
President & CEO, Education Strategy Group  
mgandal@edstrategy.org

**Dr. Kim Hunter Reed**  
Commissioner of Higher Education, Louisiana Board of Regents  
kim.reed@laregents.edu

**Sophie Zdatny**  
Chancellor, Vermont State Colleges  
sophie.zdatny@vsc.edu