



Education  
Strategy  
Group

# 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

CARES, CRRSA, and ARP.

## 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

## HEERF WORKS: HOW GRANTS HAVE SUPPORTED STUDENTS AT PUBLIC RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

APLU APRIL 2022

In the two years since a national emergency was declared due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our nation's colleges and universities have worked tirelessly to guide students and campus communities through the resulting public health and economic crises.

Whether it was rapidly closing campuses as the virus first began to spread in spring 2020, planning for a responsible return to campus in fall that year, coordinating vaccine rollouts throughout spring 2021, or responding to the Delta and Omicron variants in fall 2021 and winter 2022, each new academic term presented unique challenges.

Spanning both the Trump and Biden administrations and two sessions of Congress, leaders from both political parties assembled and passed three emergency funding packages that have provided higher education with significant resources to address unprecedented challenges.

### COVID-19 LEGISLATION, FUNDS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION EMERGENCY RELIEF

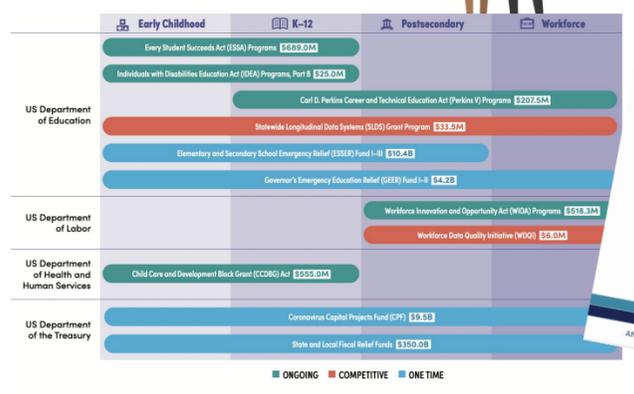
	CORONAVIRUS AID, RELIEF, AND ECONOMIC SECURITY (CARES) ACT	CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE AND RELIEF SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT (CRRSAA)
DATE ENACTED	March 27, 2020	December 27, 2020
FUNDS DISBURSED	Spring/Summer 2020	Winter 2021
APLU INSTITUTION HEERF AWARDS	\$3.85 billion	\$6.05 billion
TOTAL HEERF GRANT	\$4.4 billion	\$23 billion

including nearly \$77 billion in Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) grant aid. APLU members received over \$20 billion in HEERF grants to support their campus communities, which include 4.2 million undergraduates, 1.2 million graduate students and 1.1 million faculty and staff. This support includes nearly \$8.5 billion for institutional grant aid, \$10.5 billion in support for an additional \$1.7 billion in support for APLU that are Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs), and other eligible institutions (see chart on pg. 2).

This federal support has been instrumental in helping institutions navigate the conditions these past two years, health, support students, and of forward for campus communities.

## State and Local Governments Can Use Federal Funding for Education Data

State and local governments need data to meet new demands and respond nimbly to complex challenges related to education and economic recovery. In some cases, leaders will have to make large investments to modernize outdated data systems. In others, leaders will need moderate investments to address more immediate needs, including making data collection adjustments to respond to new data requirements from the federal government, inform learning recovery, and provide support to districts and schools. Fortunately, federal funding streams can be used to support state data systems or related data activities—and state and local leaders should take advantage of these funds to make improvements.



## PRINCIPLES FOR PANDEMIC RELIEF Maximizing the Impact of Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF) for Students

Policy Brief no. 2 - June 8, 2021

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress allocated three rounds of financial relief, generally referred to as the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund to support students and institutions of higher education during the ongoing pandemic. The latest round of funding comes with significant improvements that make it easier to direct funds to all students with financial need. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) issued guidance that will allow institutions to distribute aid and address costs and lost revenue incurred from the pandemic.

The Hope Center has developed this guide to provide institutions with support and guidance around how to deliver these funds in ways that address basic needs insecurity and reach marginalized, minoritized, and low-income students. We focus on key areas for consideration, including:

- HEERF Funding, Background, and New Expanded Eligibility
- Assessing Need and Identifying Recipients
- Prioritizing Students and Bringing Students Back
- Timing and Out
- Creating a Culture

## How can we invest forward?

As districts and states work to invest forward with their American Rescue Plan resources, we urge a deliberate focus on putting students on a path to economic mobility in high school. We recommend every community designate a sufficient amount of stimulus resources to shore up support for students in grades 9-12, accelerate postsecondary and career preparation, and ensure more equitable postsecondary access.

- Every community should invest in student support in the following four priorities:
- Build college and career momentum early in high school.**
    - Support on-track credit attainment in 9th grade
    - Embed college and career advising in the school day
  - Acquire knowledge, experiences, and relationships necessary for career success.**
    - Expand participation in high-quality career pathway programs aligned with in-demand labor market opportunities that pay a family-sustaining wage
    - Scale pathway-aligned work-based learning opportunities
    - Invest in near-peer advising supports to expand students' social capital
  - Earn college credit and/or stackable credentials before graduation.**
    - Expand equitable access to and success in advanced courses
    - Increase high-quality industry-recognized credential attainment
  - Directly enroll in postsecondary education or training programs that lead to credentials with labor market value.**
    - Increase FAFSA completion and college applications and training
    - Track and analyze postsecondary outcomes data to target student support

“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

Accelerating Recovery through Credentials | B R I E F

ESG Education Strategy Group

### A FRAMEWORK FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION STIMULUS INVESTMENTS

#### Enroll. Complete. Compete.

The Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated existing disparities across race and income in the United States and displaced thousands of workers. Our higher education institutions faced revenue loss and sharp enrollment declines. Nevertheless, as we collectively recover from the pandemic, postsecondary education leaders have a tremendous opportunity to reimagine current systems and uplift often underserved adult learners through strategic use of the federal stimulus provided by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES), Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA), and American Rescue Plan (ARP) Acts. These three pieces of legislation collectively equip higher education with approximately \$77 billion in higher education emergency relief funds (HEERF) to support students and institutions.

CARES, CRRSA, and ARP collectively equip higher education with approximately **\$77 billion** in higher education emergency relief funds (HEERF) to support students and institutions.

While a portion of these funds are given directly to students and will be used to backfill budgets, leaders have an opportunity to invest in long-term solutions to address higher education's pre-pandemic challenges. This includes addressing equity gaps in access and attainment as well as supporting post-traditional learners. In alignment with the Accelerating Recovery through Credentials *Rapid Response Toolkit* and *Adult-Ready Playbook*, Education Strategy Group, with generous support from the Kresge Foundation, presents a new framework for federal stimulus investments in higher education. Effectively titled, "Enroll. Complete. Compete.," this framework aims to address the current pain points of postsecondary education institutions and our workforce, while uplifting adult learners.

It is clear that 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. To seize this one-in-a-generation opportunity, we must act now.

MAY 2022

**ESG**

Education  
Strategy  
Group

**Enroll.**

# Enrollments are on a steady decline, especially at community colleges

5.1% ↓

Overall enrollments in postsecondary education have dropped by a total of 5.1 percent since fall 2019.

13.2% ↓

Community colleges are experiencing the largest decline in enrollment since the pandemic began: -13.2 percent

Source: National Student Clearinghouse (2022)

Anxiety and concerns surrounding COVID-19 and health.

Unstable and shifting personal finances



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.**



**ESG**

Education  
Strategy  
Group

**Complete.**

# COVID-19 exacerbated existing disparities in persistence and completion, and we haven't recovered...

2%↓

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.**

3.2%↓

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.



CSCU

**ESG**

Education  
Strategy  
Group

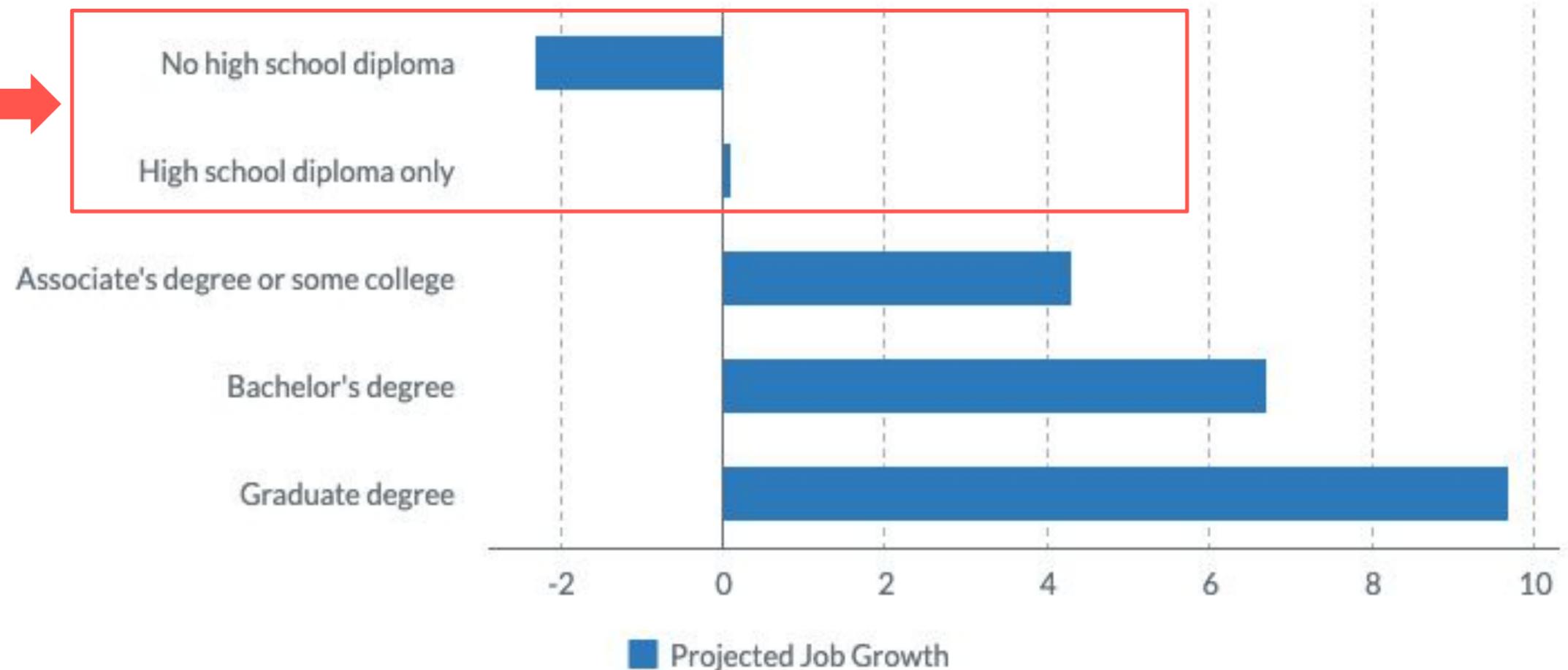
**Compete.**

# 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



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics via The New York Times (February 2021)



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

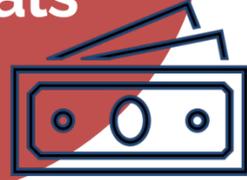
**California** used \$472.5 million in ARPA funds to establish the **Golden State Education and Training Grant Program** (\$1,000 - \$2,5000) to assist Californians who lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



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.



Low-cost  
short-term  
credentials



Coaching  
and  
navigational  
support



Targeted aid  
at  
populations  
with need



**Strategic state-level investments of Education Stabilization Funds can promote postsecondary attainment & scale innovative programs.**

Flexible  
coursework  
options



Basic needs  
and  
wrap-around  
d supports



Data  
capacity to  
inform  
decisions



perseverance

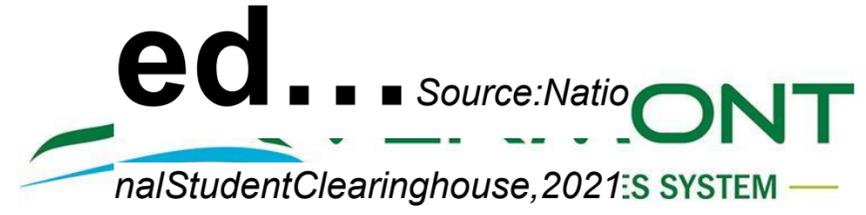
and completion,

and we

haven't

recovered

Soph Chan  
Vermont State Colleges System



At the height of the pandemic, there was a 2 percent decline in enrollment.

herewasa2perc



Dr. Kim Hunter Reed  
Commissioner of Higher Education  
Louisiana Board of Regents



# Questions?



# Enroll. Complete. Compete.

## Framework & Resources

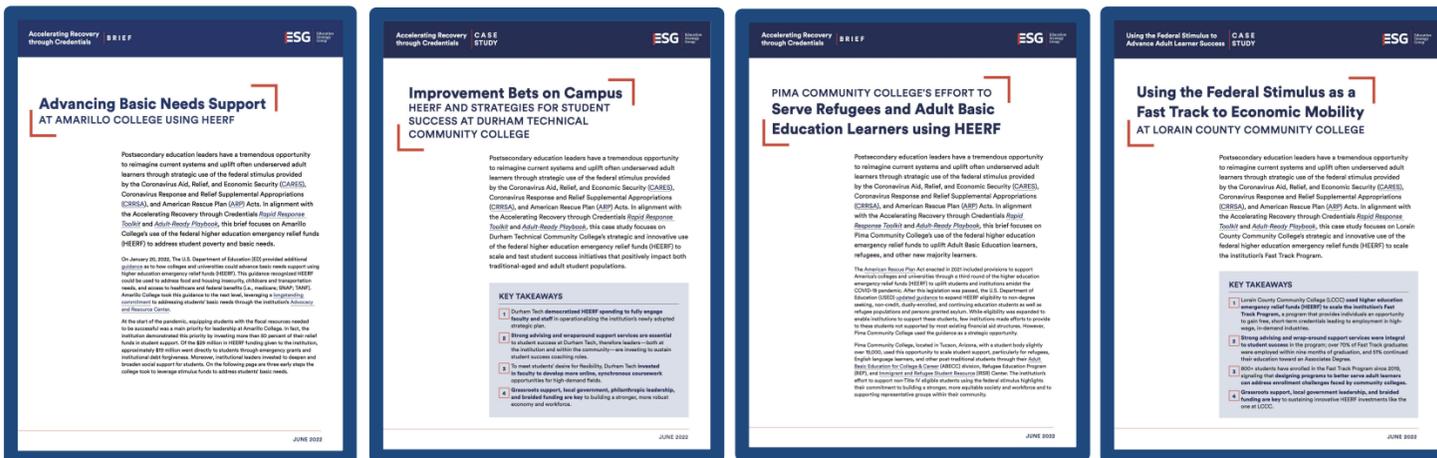
In alignment with the Accelerating Recovery through Credentials **Rapid Response Toolkit** and **Adult-Ready Playbook**, Education Strategy Group presents a **new framework and resources for federal stimulus investments in higher education.**

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.




**Build college and career momentum early in high school.**



**Earn college credit and/or stackable credentials before graduation.**



**Directly enroll in postsecondary education or training programs that lead to credentials with labor market value.**



**Acquire knowledge, experiences, and relationships necessary for career success.**

<https://tinyurl.com/stimulus-framework>

[investforward.us](https://investforward.us)



# Panelist Resources



Report link

## 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



Landing page



Report link



## VSCS Transformation Proposal:

A 21st Century Public-Access System of Higher Education for Vermont

February 22, 2021



Landing page



Landing page

# Contact Us

## **Matt Gandal**

President & CEO, Education Strategy Group  
[mgandal@edstrategy.org](mailto:mgandal@edstrategy.org)

## **Dr. Kim Hunter Reed**

Commissioner of Higher Education,  
Louisiana Board of Regents  
[kim.reed@laregents.edu](mailto:kim.reed@laregents.edu)

## **Sophie Zdatny**

Chancellor, Vermont State Colleges  
[sophie.zdatny@vsc.edu](mailto:sophie.zdatny@vsc.edu)



Education  
Strategy  
Group

