



Deval Patrick Award for Community Colleges at the Boston Foundation

The Boston Foundation is pleased to announce the creation of the Deval Patrick Prize for Community Colleges to recognize an outstanding community college that is working to meet the needs of the regional workforce with strong partnerships with employers.

All 15 community colleges will be invited to apply for this inaugural prize, and the winner will be awarded up to \$50,000. [Applications](#) are due to the Boston Foundation by 5:00 PM, December 19, 2014.

Background:

In 2012, the Boston Foundation convened the Coalition FOR Community Colleges, an independent statewide coalition of business, civic and community leaders who want community colleges in Massachusetts to prosper and provide successful educational and job opportunities for their students. Central to the Coalition's efforts was the belief that community colleges are uniquely positioned to be the crucial bridge between the jobs that exist in our 21st century knowledge-based economy and the skills required to fill them. Then, as now, Massachusetts faced a "skills gap" that left more than 100,000 jobs unfilled at a time when 240,000 Massachusetts residents were unemployed. Why? A yawning mismatch between the skills necessary to fill these jobs and the training of our residents seeking employment.

For decades, Massachusetts has significantly underfunded public higher education, particularly its community colleges. With his new budget proposal, Governor Deval Patrick forcefully decided to change that. He has shone a bright light on the critical role community colleges play in our education system, providing certificate and degree programs that can lead directly to the workforce, and preparing other students to transfer to four-year institutions to continue their path to later economic success. As a coalition, it seeks to work with lawmakers, educators and community leaders to ensure that the state's community colleges live up to that role for more Massachusetts residents.

Creating a system that is unified under a clear and compelling mission can maximize the alignment of the colleges with labor market needs, highlight and build upon best practices from across the 15-campus system, enhance and improve local collaboration with the business and civic community, and ensure that the system as a whole has the resources it needs to provide a quality education to all students.

Following the lead of Governor Deval Patrick, the Coalition sought to elevate the role, responsibilities and funding of these vital public institutions of higher education, in exchange for reforms and accountability measures.

Now, two years later, important reforms have been implemented across the community college system, including a significant change in the funding formula for community colleges, which is based on student outcomes instead of enrollment.

The conversation around these institutions has changed too. Two years ago skeptics questioned whether reform was possible; some wondered whether it was needed. Today, thanks to Governor Patrick's leadership, and the leadership of each of the 15 Community College Presidents, there is broad collaboration working more closely throughout the system with employers and academics to meet the needs of our state's economy and prepare students to take advantage of the opportunities that exist today and that are on the horizon.

The Boston Foundation is pleased to have been a part of this reform effort, and plans to continue to work with community colleges and the state's Department of Higher Education to sustain and deepen the reform efforts. Specifically, the Boston Foundation is committed to ensuring that the reform agenda from 2013 is implemented, and that partnerships between employers and colleges and articulated pathways to degrees, transfer, and career are established.

As a first step, the Boston Foundation has created the **Deval Patrick Award for Community Colleges**, a new prize that recognizes progress and excellence in establishing employer partnerships and career pathways at community colleges. The winner will be awarded up to \$50,000.

In addition to furthering the important reforms of 2013, the goal of this prize is to encourage and recognize community colleges that are establishing strong partnerships with employers and other institutions of higher education in order to meet the economic needs of the region and its employers, particularly in high demand, emerging industries.

Eligibility:

All community colleges in Massachusetts will be eligible to apply for this award. Colleges will be asked to provide information on student demographics and outcomes, and will be asked to respond to a narrative set of questions designed to describe their high-performing and emerging employer partnerships and career pathway efforts.

The Award:

The Boston Foundation and the Coalition FOR Community Colleges will announce the winner of the inaugural **Deval Patrick Award for Community Colleges** in February, 2015. This prize is designed to:

- Sustain the reform momentum begun in 2013 with the community college reform efforts, led by Governor Deval Patrick; and
- Recognize and reward colleges that are establishing strong partnerships that help meet the economic needs of the region and its employers, particularly in high demand, emerging industries.

The winning college will receive up to \$50,000 in unrestricted funds. The college may choose to allocate the award in any way, including sharing the award with the partners in their career programs, or providing scholarships or subsidies for students.

Award Criteria:

A volunteer Selection Committee, drawn from Boston Foundation staff and business members representing the Coalition FOR Community Colleges, will select one winner from the applications received. The final decision will be based on the review of application materials and an interview with key stakeholders.

When reviewing the materials, the selection panel will consider:

- How does the college use accurate labor market information to identify career pathway priorities and refine curricula to integrate its career programming with its academic programming?
- How are employers engaging in program design, curriculum and instructional redesign, career advising, work experience, and pathways to jobs?
- Do career pathways programs offer student credentials that include stackable and portable credits?

- How are colleges creating and supporting a structure for ongoing development and refinement of employer partnerships?
- How are colleges implementing innovations that help expand access to and accelerate progress in high value pathways, including better and earlier advising, financial and academic support services, on-ramps for underprepared students and provision for transfer of courses and credits?
- Has the college demonstrated strong student outcomes in terms of enrollment numbers, credential attainment, employment and earnings of graduates—presented by population subgroups (race, gender, Pell Grant receipt, etc.)?

After reviewing the narrative materials provided by college applicants, the selection panel will review any available workforce data to identify whether the college’s program completers are employed in the sector related to their credential or course of study as a way of measuring employer demand for and satisfaction with, the workforce development program. The selection panel may also reach out to applicant colleges for additional information.

Application: The [application](#) will ask for data on your college, and a narrative application. Questions about the application should be addressed to: patrickprize@tbf.org.

About the application:

- **Data:** Provide information about the campus: mission, vision, student demographics, and an overview of core programs by completing the data profile within the application that describes your student body, key programs & completion rates.
- **Narrative:** Address the following questions in no more than 10 single-sided pages. Please use single spacing and a font no smaller than 12 point.
 1. Please describe the nominated program, and provide evidence that this partnership is meeting employer demand and student needs in your region. Who are the key regional partners that make this partnership work? (E.g. Individual employers, employer associations, workforce partnerships, nonprofit intermediaries, CBOs, K-12, other higher ed partners?) Has this partnership changed since it was first established? Since passage of community college reforms? If so, how?
 2. What roles do employers play in making this a high quality pathway (e.g., advice and feedback on curriculum, program structure; financial aid/tuition reimbursement; advising for students; internships/work-based learning; interviews for graduates)?

3. How does the college organize and regularize its relationships with employers around program design? How does the college ensure it is either building or importing the capacity to support robust partnerships in different industry sectors?
 4. How does the college assess regional employer needs and what is the process for validating employer demand for new or expanded programs? What specific sources of information shape these decisions? What role does local labor market information play in those decisions? What role do employers play?
 5. What support services does the college provide or contract for to help program participants succeed in training and on the job?
 6. How do the highlighted programs reflect an approach that the college and its partners feel is exceptional? Examples could include: more transparent pathway and clearer understanding of requirements, curriculum, and likely job/career paths; more effective employer engagement that helps improve outcomes; reduced time to credential and cost for students; expansion beyond typical workforce development programs (e.g. curricula that are connected to employer demand).
 7. How do you plan to sustain the program and the employer partnership?
- **Letters of Support:** Colleges should attach no more than two letters of support from regional employers who can speak to the workforce partnership highlighted in the application.
 - **Other:** In no more than 5 pages, please feel free to submit other artifacts that are important to understand your college, its students, and its programs.

The criteria for the award

--meeting the economic needs of the region and its employers, particularly in high-demand, emerging industries

--engaging employers in program design, curriculum and instructional redesign, career advising, work experience, and pathways to jobs

--creating or supporting a structure for ongoing development and refinement of employer partnerships

--using accurate labor market information to identify career pathway priorities and refine curricula

--implementing innovations that help expand access to and accelerate progress in high value pathways, including better and earlier advising, financial and academic support services, on ramps for underprepared students, provision for transfer of courses and credits

--ability to demonstrate strong student outcomes--in terms of enrollment numbers, credential attainment, employment and earnings of graduates--presented by population subgroups (race, gender, Pell Grant receipt)

[Applications](#) should be submitted electronically as a Word document to the Boston Foundation by 5:00 PM on December 19, 2014. Applications can be sent to: patrickprize@tbf.org. Questions about the application, the selection process, or the prize can be sent to the same email address.