

## New Resource Available for Improving Options for Struggling Students and Dropouts

When students drop out of school, they dissociate themselves from an institution meant to enable their success and increase their opportunities. Thus, they face greater odds against success and a stable future than if they had graduated from high school. Recognizing these harsh realities, some states and communities collaborate to develop high school improvement efforts and to establish reengagement opportunities for students who drop out in an effort to raise the graduation rates of this group of students. Many of these efforts provide flexibility within the education system by enabling customized options that attract a diverse student population while also maintaining high standards. To learn more about such efforts, click on the newest publication from the National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC), [Building Roads to Success: Key Considerations for Communities and States Reconnecting Youth to Education](#), which provides ideas and options for educators, parents, and concerned community members to retain struggling students and help them thrive. In addition, it describes actions designed to attract dropouts back to school and to provide a more satisfactory and effective learning experience for them.

## DOL Career Pathways Innovation Fund Competition Closes March 31

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) has announced the availability of \$122 million in grant funds under the [Career Pathways Innovation Fund \(CPIF\) Solicitation for Grant Applications](#). At least \$65 million will be reserved for projects that focus on the health-care sector. Those eligible to apply as lead grantees are: local workforce investment boards, individual community and technical colleges, community college districts, and state community college systems. DOL intends to fund approximately 40 to 50 grants ranging from \$1 million to \$5 million. These grants will focus on programs that help individuals of varying skill levels secure full-time employment by providing training that will help them develop high-demand skills. Funded programs will have multiple entry and exit points and many will include links to services, such as basic adult education and English for non-native speaker classes, that prepare individuals to enroll in college-level classes. In addition, DOL intends to reserve approximately \$6.25 million to award additional funding for third-party evaluation of grant activities. **Closing Date: March 31, 2011**

## Community College Summit and Visit to Education and Job Training Center Held in Philadelphia

Secretary of Education Duncan and Secretary of Labor Solis [visited Philadelphia](#) on Feb. 28 to [promote collaborations that help adult learners join the workforce and obtain college degrees](#). Duncan and Solis toured District 1199C (an affiliate of the National Union of Hospitals and Healthcare Employees that formed a Training and Upgrading Fund) and addressed the first community college regional summit. These visits demonstrated their belief that developing an educated, skilled workforce is essential to economic recovery and the future economic standing of the U.S.

Duncan and Solis began the city visit at the District 1199C Training and Upgrading Fund. Feb. 28 was also the first day of class for the newly funded Health Information Career Pathway Program, an integrated model of academic preparation and occupational training. Duncan and Solis toured the Breslin Leaning Center housing the Pre-Nursing/Pre-Allied Health program and visited classes, including one instructing ESL students and one teaching students about electronic health records. The Training and Upgrading Fund program serves a diverse student population made up of union members and community residents, including dislocated and unemployed workers as well as immigrants.

The two secretaries then spoke at the Community College of Philadelphia, site of the Department of Education's first community college regional summit. Participants in the summit included educators, business leaders, and policymakers from more than a dozen states who discussed degree completion, the critical role of community colleges in preparing students, and how to best prepare adult learners to transition into two-year colleges and the workforce. Secretary Duncan reported that in a single generation the U.S. has fallen from first to ninth in the world in its percentage of college graduates, with a completion rate of just 40 percent. He noted that some 90 million American adults have no more than basic numeracy and literacy skills and acknowledged problems in the academic "pipeline" to community colleges. Duncan stated that he wants "to get higher ed out of the remediation business." The secretary also explained that many who drop out do so not because of their inability to learn or lack of motivation, but rather because they cannot afford the rising costs of education. He stated that skilled, educated workers are key to getting the country back to being a thriving economy and to attaining the president's goal of leading the world in college graduates by 2020. Echoing her colleague's commitment, Secretary Solis announced that, as part of a larger \$2 billion Trade Adjustment Community College and Career Training Program over the next four years, beginning in the spring, \$122 million in funding will be awarded to community colleges offering career pathway programs for in-demand fields. The funding focus is to help community colleges service their students so completion rates rise and students with degrees will be able to better meet their personal goals. "I hope that community colleges feel it's their moment in the sun," said Duncan.

For more information on this summit and the three additional regional summits scheduled in Indianapolis (March 23) and San Diego (April 15) over the next several weeks, as well as a virtual summit scheduled on April 27, please visit OVAE's home page at: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/index.html?src=oc>