

JAY
ROCKEFELLER

UNITED STATES SENATOR FOR WEST VIRGINIA



N E W S R E L E A S E

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ROCKEFELLER ANNOUNCES \$25 MILLION IN FUNDING FOR 10 WEST VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES TO EXPAND SKILLED DEGREE OPPORTUNITIES

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Senator Jay Rockefeller today announced \$25 million in federal funding for the Bridging the Gap Consortium, a group of 10 community and technical colleges in West Virginia dedicated to expanding and improving education and career training programs in fields that lead to high-wage, high-skilled jobs and careers.

The \$25 million award is the highest level of funding that can be allocated under the Department of Labor's Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Community College and Career Training funding program, and reflects the great work of the West Virginia Community and Technical College System in building a strong network of leaders in industry, labor, and academia throughout the state fully committed to preparing the state's workforce for employment in high-wage, high-skill occupations.

"West Virginia's community and technical colleges play an important role in building our state's skilled workforce so this award gives them the ability to strengthen and expand targeted degree opportunities for students, including our veterans and American workers who have lost their jobs to foreign trade," **said Rockefeller**. "I'm so pleased this investment will support students in our state as they work toward building careers in emerging and growing fields."

"This grant will greatly enhance our community and technical college efforts to address the education and workforce needs of West Virginia," **said James Skidmore**, Chancellor of the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education. "I am appreciative of all the hard work that went into this effort. I want to thank our congressional delegation for their tremendous support of our proposal."

“The awarding of this grant will transform technical education in West Virginia. All ten community colleges will benefit as funds will be used to enhance academic instruction in energy, manufacturing, information technology, and construction trades,” said **Jo Harris**, President of Bridgemont Community and Technical College. “Preparation of the proposal was a team effort for this comprehensive project. The award will make a difference in our ability to provide a highly skilled workforce, thus enhancing the economic development of our state.”

Rockefeller, who has long supported TAA benefits for American workers, authored a delegation [letter](#) to Labor Secretary Thomas Perez to express his strong support for Bridgemont Community and Technical College’s grant application for the state-wide consortium, and most recently spoke personally to Secretary Perez to make sure the state’s application received every possible consideration.

The grant program also benefits workers who are eligible for training under the TAA program, which gives U.S. workers who have lost their jobs as a result of foreign trade the opportunity to receive career training.

Bridgemont Community and Technical College leads the 10-member consortium of community and technical colleges that will each receive a portion of the \$25 million award. The award will strengthen programs at each institution that award skill set certificates, certificate degrees, and associate’s degrees in the areas of manufacturing and mechatronics, energy technology, information technology, and construction.

The 10-members of the consortium include:

- Blue Ridge Community and Technical College;
- Bridgemont Community and Technical College;
- Easter West Virginia Community and Technical College;
- Kanawha Valley Community and Technical College;
- Mountwest Community and Technical College;
- New River Community and Technical College;
- Pierpont Community and Technical College;
- Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College;
- West Virginia Northern Community College; and
- West Virginian University at Parkersburg.

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