

**Elected Officials and Other Community Leaders Applaud Expansion of Tuition-Free
Community College**

“Rowan College at Burlington County supports initiatives that make college more affordable. We are excited by the news of our inclusion within the CCOG (Community College Opportunity Grant) Pilot and will use this to build upon the success of our 3+1 program that has already saved students more than \$3 million in two years.”

- **Michael A. Cioce, Ed.D., President of Rowan College at Burlington County**

“Expanding the CCOG program for students this year will enable students to progress towards a credential that helps them provide for their families in the new age of work.”

- **Jon H. Connolly, Ph.D., President of Sussex County Community College**

“Our state’s community colleges are a great asset. Community college has long been a stepping stone for the underprivileged striving for more, and expanding free community college will bring a college degree within reach for many more New Jerseyans. College degrees have become essential to excelling in many professions and each year countless students begin their journey towards associate’s and bachelor’s degrees in our higher education system. I look forward to seeing how many more are able to achieve their dreams of earning a degree through this program.”

- **Senator Sandra B. Cunningham (D-Hudson), Chair of Senate Higher Education Committee**

“Governor Murphy should be commended for the great strides in making higher education attainable for all students in New Jersey. The Opportunity Grant eliminates any financial obstacles and will allow community college students to prepare for their future and follow their dreams.”

- **Essex County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr., Essex County Executive**

“Brookdale Community College, Essex County College, County College of Morris, Raritan Valley Community College, Rowan College at Burlington County, and Sussex County Community College are all appreciative of the opportunity to participate in the Community College Opportunity Grant pilot program which will assist many students to obtain a post-secondary education and to earn degrees and credentials of economic value. The expansion of this program to students at all community colleges in New Jersey is an important step forward for a program that plays a significant role in the state’s efforts to both build a skilled workforce to support the innovation economy and increase the percentage of adults with a post-secondary credential or degree to 65% by 2025.”

- **Aaron Fichtner, Ph.D., President, New Jersey Council of County Colleges**

“County College of Morris provides a high quality education at a price that is affordable. CCOG funds help ensure that students who need a little extra support can continue their education and make it to the finish line. When this happens, everyone wins.”

- **Anthony J. Iacono, Ph.D., President of County College of Morris**

“I am pleased that the Community College Opportunity Grant (CCOG) Program has been funded to expand free attendance to eligible students at every community college in the state. Ironically, neither of the two county colleges in my district, (Essex and Morris), were included in the pilot; this expansion now includes both. Every underserved, eligible New Jersey resident will now have the chance to pursue college and career paths free from worry about incurring debt. The opportunities this program creates are limitless, and I am proud to be a part of this transformational undertaking.”

- **Assemblywoman Mila Jasey (D-Morris & Essex), Chair of the Assembly Higher Education Committee**

"The furtherance of the gift of education that New Jersey is bestowing upon our Raritan Valley Community College students enlightens them today and assures positive action from them to benefit all of us here in Somerset County in the future. I look forward to seeing these individuals develop into all they can be, while serving our wider community."

- **Freeholder Director Brian D. Levine, Somerset County, New Jersey Board of Chosen Freeholders**

“I’m delighted that students at Raritan Valley Community College are now eligible for CCOG. This generous extension will transform the lives of our most deserving students.”

- **Michael McDonough, Ph.D., President of Raritan Valley Community College**

“Essex County College, through its dedicated faculty and staff, has provided an exceptional educational experience to over 240,000 New Jerseyans. For half a century, Essex County College has been committed to serving our students and community by providing academic and workforce development programs that prepare global leaders, transforms lives, and communities. As a Minority Serving Institution (MSI) - which is a Predominately Black Institution (PBI), Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), and a Veterans Friendly College - we are proud of our diversity and inclusion and are fully committed to all in obtaining a quality, accessible, and affordable education that will better their lives. It has always been our hope to have access to the CCOG funds to provide much needed financial support, removing financial and other systemic barriers to education and training for far too many deserving residents of Essex County. We are pleased to now be included in the Governor's Community College Opportunity Grant Spring 2019 Pilot, an investment in Essex County that will bring significant returns to the state of New Jersey. Access to the CCOG funds will allow Essex County College to assist potentially hundreds of individuals in earning credentials of economic value that will better their lives, improve their communities, put Essex County first, and ultimately move the state of New Jersey forward.”

- **Anthony E. Munroe, Ed.D., President of Essex County College**

“I’m excited that our own RVCC has qualified for the CCOG (Community College Opportunity Grant). This is a great opportunity for those who seek to pursue higher education, where the lack of finances prevents them from doing so and contributes to the decline in enrollment.”

- **Shanel Y. Robinson, Somerset County Freeholder**

“There is no denying the question of college affordability that faces many of our families. Any opportunity we have to support the students most in need should be embraced. I am excited that the program has expanded to include Essex County College and I look forward to seeing the positive outcomes that grow out of this policy.”

- **Senator M. Teresa Ruiz (D-Newark), Chair of Senate Education Committee**

“The expansion of the Community College Opportunity Grant to Rowan College at Burlington County is welcome and appreciated news, especially for the students who will now be able to receive a free college education. This is a step in the right direction to making higher education more affordable,”

- **Senator Troy Singleton (D-Moorestown), Chair of Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee**

“Brookdale Community College has a very proud tradition of providing the citizens of Monmouth County with access to an excellent and affordable higher education. This expansion of the Governor’s CCOG pilot program removes financial obstacles that limit many of our students’ opportunity to earn the credentials necessary to advance their careers and earn sustainable wages.”

- **David Stout, Ph.D., President of Brookdale Community College**