

# NEWS



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
January 12, 2022

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## **AACC, NSF Calls All Community College Student Innovators**

*Community College Innovation Challenge invites community college students to create STEM solutions to real-world problems*

Washington, D.C. – Today, the [American Association of Community Colleges](http://www.aacc.nche.edu) (AACC) in partnership with the [National Science Foundation](http://www.nsf.gov) (NSF), has launched its platform to advance student innovation and impact in STEM through the [Community College Innovation Challenge](http://www.aacc.nche.edu/ccic) (CCIC). The competition seeks to foster the development of students' innovation, communication, and entrepreneurial skills. It also enables students to discover and demonstrate their capacity to use STEM to make a difference in the world and translate that knowledge into action.

The CCIC is a national competition where community college student teams, working with a supportive faculty or administrator mentor, use science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) to innovate solutions to real-world problems.

Teams of two to four students are invited to submit proposals and up to 10 finalist teams will be selected to develop their proposal during an Innovation Boot Camp. Finalists teams will create and present an entrepreneurial pitch to a panel of professionals with a chance to win cash awards.

“Community colleges students are incredibly talented and innovative,” said Walter G. Bumphus, president and CEO of AACC. “The CCIC provides an opportunity for students to showcase solutions to real-world issues that impact their communities. CCIC allows us to provide resources and support specifically designed to prepare them to take these solutions from concept to reality. We are proud of the long-standing partnership with NSF to provide this platform and spotlight these talented future entrepreneurs.”

Given the rapid pace of technological advancement and the requirement of new skill sets to prepare for the future of work, students of today must be prepared to compete in an increasingly competitive and global market.

While the 2021 competition was held virtually due to COVID-19, AACC plans to hold this year's competition as an in-person event hosted in the Washington, D.C. metro area. The Innovation Boot Camp provides professional development, mentoring, and coaching designed to build strategic communication and entrepreneurial skills to help students advance their innovations in both the private and public sectors. Students participate in sessions on commercializing ideas, using technology for social applications, communicating with stakeholders, refining a pitch and more. The Innovation Boot Camp culminates in a poster session and engagement opportunity with STEM

leaders and congressional stakeholders, and a pitch presentation in front of a panel of esteemed industry professionals to determine the first, second and third place winning teams.

AACC's mission to build a nation of learners by advancing America's community colleges aligns with the goals of the NSF's [Advanced Technological Education \(ATE\) program](#) to prepare students for meaningful employment in the high-technology fields that drive our nation's economy. To further support this mission, the NSF funded the initial launch of the CCIC alongside AACC in 2015.

"NSF is proud to co-sponsor CCIC and pleased that for years the Challenge has provided a space to spur ingenuity, collaboration, and showcase the great work that is being nurtured in the nation's community colleges," said Sylvia Butterfield, NSF Acting Director for Education and Human Resources, the directorate funding the Challenge. "This competition demonstrates the diversity of STEM talent and creativity that exists at community colleges across the country and furthers NSF's mission to broaden participation of students from various backgrounds to pursue and achieve their STEM career goals."

**All team submissions are due by 11:59 pm PDT on March 30, 2022.** To learn more and apply, visit [www.aaccinnovationchallenge.com](http://www.aaccinnovationchallenge.com). For questions, email [CCIC@aacc.nche.edu](mailto:CCIC@aacc.nche.edu).

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### **About AACC**

As the voice of the nation's community colleges, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), delivers educational and economic opportunity for nearly 12 million diverse students in search of the American Dream. Uniquely dedicated to access and success for all students, AACC's member colleges provide an on-ramp to degree attainment, skilled careers, and family-supporting wages. Located in Washington, D.C., AACC advocates for these not-for-profit, public-serving institutions to ensure they have the resources and support they need to deliver on the mission of increasing economic mobility for all. <https://www.aacc.nche.edu/>

### **About NSF**

The U.S. National Science Foundation propels the nation forward by advancing fundamental research in all fields of science and engineering. NSF supports research and people by providing facilities, instruments and funding to support their ingenuity and sustain the U.S. as a global leader in research and innovation. With a fiscal year 2021 budget of \$8.5 billion, NSF funds reach all 50 states through grants to nearly 2,000 colleges, universities and institutions. Each year, NSF receives more than 40,000 competitive proposals and makes about 11,000 new awards. Those awards include support for cooperative research with industry, Arctic and Antarctic research and operations, and U.S. participation in international scientific efforts.

<https://www.nsf.gov/>

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