

2026

# COMMUNITY COLLEGE INNOVATION CHALLENGE

Advancing Student Innovation & Impact



## The Community College Innovation Challenge- Student Application Idea Vetting & Why You Should Apply!

February 19, 2026  
3:00 – 4:00 pm Eastern



PHI THETA KAPPA  
HONOR SOCIETY

# Speakers



**Ellen Hause**  
Associate VP for  
Academic & Student  
Affairs, American  
Association of  
Community Colleges, DC



**V. Celeste Carter**  
Former Lead ATE Program  
Director, National  
Science Foundation, VA



**Courtney Larson**  
ATE Program Manager  
American Association of  
Community Colleges, DC



**Estrella Luna**  
2025 CCIC Finalist  
Student, Bergen  
Community College, NJ



**Anelisa Lauri**  
CCIC Judge,  
Senior Program Manager,  
Latino Business Action  
Network, FL

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# COMMUNITY COLLEGE INNOVATION CHALLENGE

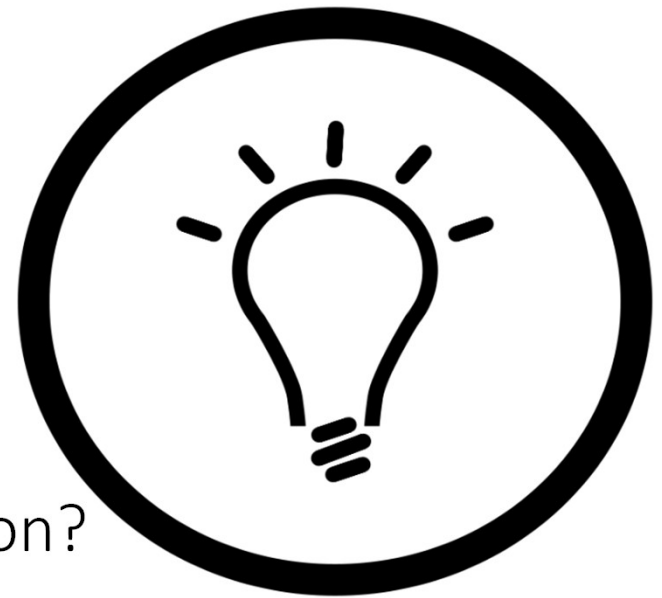
Advancing Student Innovation & Impact



## Participant Poll

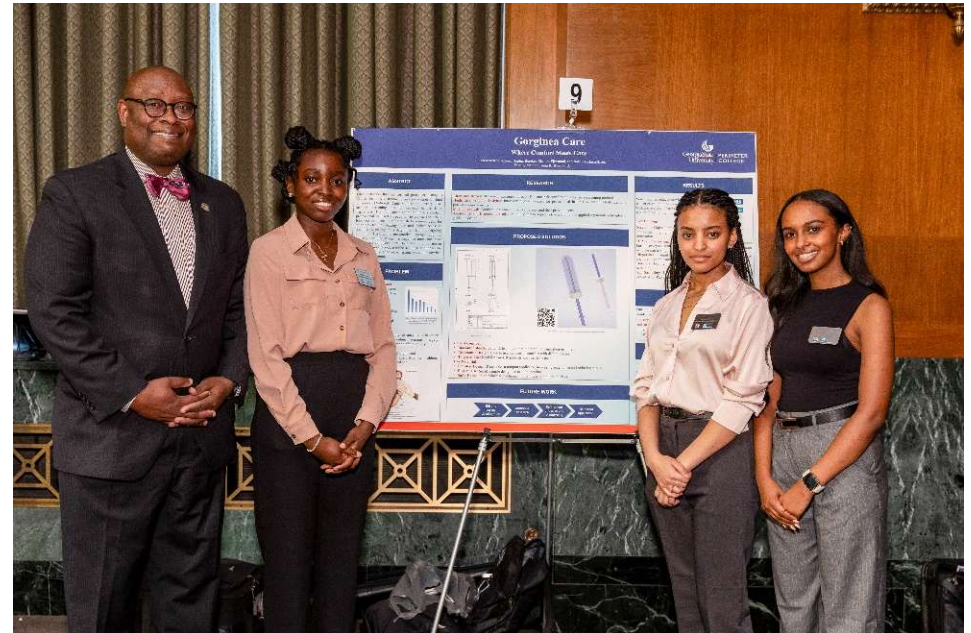
# Community College Innovation Challenge

- Agenda
  - CCIC Background & Overview
    - Innovation Boot Camp
    - What You Win / How to Apply
    - Selection of Finalist Teams
    - CCIC Timeline
    - Past CCIC Innovations
  - Presenter Perspectives on:
    - Why support student innovation?
    - Why apply?
    - What makes for a winning idea?
  - Questions & Idea Vetting – We want to hear from you!



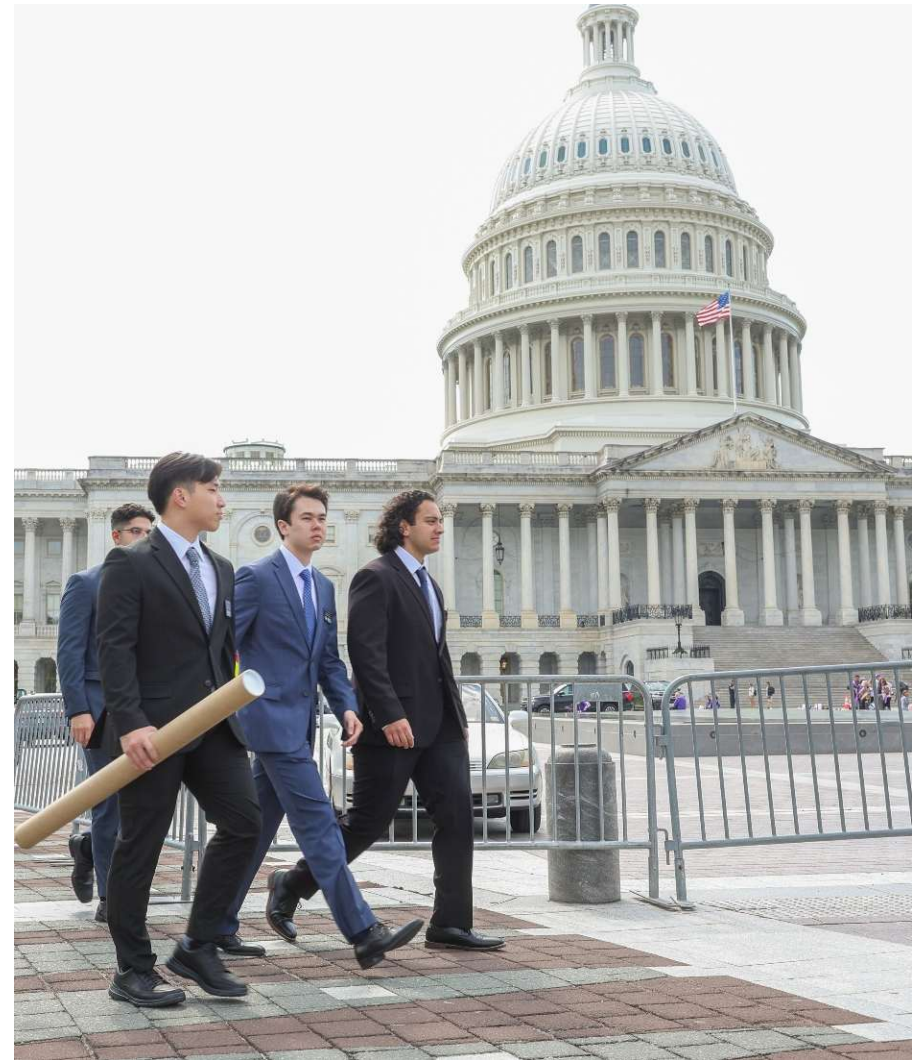
# Community College Innovation Challenge

- CCIC run in partnership with AACCC & NSF
- Student teams submit STEM-based solutions to real-world problems of local to global concern
- Up to 12 finalist teams attend the Innovation Boot Camp, for technical assistance & coaching to build skills in:
  - Business of Innovation
  - Entrepreneurship
  - Strategic Communication



# Community College Innovation Challenge

- Teams interact with entrepreneurs, experts, & industry professionals.
- The Boot Camp culminates in two capstone events:
  - Poster Session & Reception with key Congressional and STEM stakeholders
  - Pitch competition in front of panel of judges



# Community College Innovation Challenge

- Winners receive:
  - A plaque for all finalist schools;
  - Recognition certificates from NSF and AACCC for each finalist team member;
  - Full travel support for all finalist team members to attend the Innovation Boot Camp in Washington, D.C.;
  - A \$500 cash honorarium;
  - Cash awards made to each 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place team member
    - 1<sup>st</sup> place: \$3,000
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> place: \$2,000
    - 3<sup>rd</sup> place: \$1,000





# Stakeholder Engagement



- Teams of 2-4 students with a faculty/administrator mentor
- Develop STEM solution to real-world problem
- Submit a written entry and 90-second video addressing:
  - The problem – relevant background, context of problem
  - The solution – describe the solution, the science/technology that informs it, how it is different & innovative, identify challenges & barriers
  - The impact and benefits – how impact and benefits would be measured, potential societal impact
  - Video to tell compelling story and how team's solution is innovative and unique in addressing problem

[www.aaccinnovationchallenge.com](http://www.aaccinnovationchallenge.com)

# Community College Innovation Challenge



Entries will be evaluated based on innovation and impact, feasibility, and clarity of communication



Up to 12 finalist teams selected to advance to the Innovation Boot Camp taking place June 8-11, 2026, in Washington, D.C.



Finalist team members are required to attend the Innovation Boot Camp

# 2026 CCIC TIMELINE

April 3	Submissions due
Late April	12 finalist teams notified
May 1	Welcome & Orientation to the Innovation Boot Camp Webinar at 1:00 p.m. EDT
May 8	The Customer Discovery Journey in STEM Innovation Webinar at 1:00 p.m. EDT
June 8-11	Innovation Boot Camp in Washington, D.C.
June 9	Student Poster Session on Capitol Hill
June 11	First, Second, & Third Place Winning Teams announced at the end of the Boot Camp



Why Innovate?



# Student Perspective Why Apply?

What  
Makes for a  
Winning  
Idea?



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