

## GEER II

### State Examples

A number of states used the first round of GEER funding for activities related to workforce training, including:

- **Rapid Credentials:** [Florida Department of Education \(FDOE\)](#) is using \$35 million in GEER funds to partner with Florida College System (FCS) institutions and technical colleges to increase capacity around short-term, in-demand certification and training programs. These programs could include technical certificates, clock hour career certificates (i.e., vocational training), and industry certification preparation courses. According to FDOE, "This proposal marries perfectly with the Pathway to Job Market Dashboard concept."
- **Oklahoma tuition-free credential programs** for credentials local businesses have identified as high demand: "Tri County Tech's [Skills to Rebuild program](#) will get students into the workforce in as little as two months by offering accelerated certifications in the areas of accounting, health care, nursing, child development, computer networking/cybersecurity, and manufacturing. Skills to Rebuild is unique in that it shortens the traditional time it takes for a student to complete these programs by an average of 20 percent while maintaining high educational standards for certifications and graduation. Furthermore, most courses will be offered virtually and on evenings and weekends to accommodate working students."
- **Indiana expanded their [Next Level Jobs program](#)** to additional industry credential areas and broadened eligibility using CARES Act funding. Next Level Jobs provides free training for workers and reimbursements for Indiana employers for training employees in high-demand fields. The Workforce Ready Grant pays for people to earn a high-value certificate in one of Indiana's high-growth job fields, tuition free. The Employer Training Grant will reimburse an employer for up to \$5,000 per trained employee who is trained, hired, and retained for six months, up to \$50,000 per employer.
- **Maryland** used \$10 million in GEER funds to community colleges to provide workforce development courses and continuing professional education that leads to government or industry certification or licensure.

### *Investing in a Statewide College Promise Program*

#### Overview and Connection to Attainment

College Promise programs, which provide a guarantee that eligible students can attend a certain amount of higher education without paying tuition or fees, have gained momentum in recent years as a strategy to change the college-going culture of a state. Although these programs are structured differently, they are all designed to reach students who might not otherwise pursue higher education and encourage them to earn a certificate or degree. The national non-profit College Promise publishes a [catalog](#) of state and local college promise programs, and notes that the most successful programs acknowledge that support services are critical to college quality and success.

These programs can provide significant momentum toward progress on attainment, especially when it comes to ensuring that recent high school graduates successfully enroll in higher education – a major focus of the NC Demography [Leaky Pipeline report](#). Given the disruptions caused by the pandemic and how they could derail the educational progress of students, a College Promise program could provide the financial support and momentum that could help North Carolina minimize those disruptions.

#### Potential Uses of Funds

State leaders could use GEER II funding for the following purposes related to College Promise programs:

- 06. Provide funding to establish a pilot College Promise program that covers two years of community college for eligible students.**
  - a. Eligibility for a Promise program could be targeted in a number of ways, including:
    - i. Displaced workers who lost a job because of the pandemic.
    - ii. Essential and frontline workers (see Michigan example on the next page).
    - iii. Recent high school graduates in good academic standing whose college plans have been disrupted by coronavirus.