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**Ten Community Colleges Named Finalists for the \$1 Million  
Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence**

*Finalists honored for achieving exceptional, equitable outcomes for students;  
winner will be announced in May 2021.*

**Washington, D.C., June 9, 2020** – The Aspen Institute [College Excellence Program](#) today announced the 10 finalists for the 2021 [Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence](#), the nation’s signature recognition of high achievement and performance among community colleges. The finalists are:

- [Amarillo College](#) (Amarillo, TX)
- [Broward College](#) (Fort Lauderdale, FL)
- [Borough of Manhattan Community College](#) (New York, NY)
- [Odessa College](#) (Odessa, TX)
- [Pasadena City College](#) (Pasadena, CA)
- [Pierce College](#) (Pierce County, WA)
- [San Antonio College](#) (San Antonio, TX)
- [San Jacinto College](#) (Pasadena, TX)
- [Tallahassee Community College](#) (Tallahassee, FL)
- [West Kentucky Community and Technical College](#) (Paducah, KY)

The 10 Aspen Prize finalists were selected from the nation’s 1,000 community colleges in a process that included qualitative and quantitative data analysis and engaged more than 30 experts in the field. The finalist colleges vary widely in size, location, demographics, and type of degrees offered.

“What these 10 finalists have in common is the ability to effectively identify, develop, and scale strategies to propel all students to not just complete college but also succeed after graduation,” said Josh Wyner, executive director of the College Excellence Program.

Awarded every two years since 2011, the Aspen Prize recognizes institutions that achieve strong student outcomes across four key areas:



- Teaching and learning
- Degree completion and successful transfer to four-year institutions
- Success in the workforce
- Equitable outcomes for diverse student groups

“These institutions have helped ensure that those who have been historically underserved by higher education excel at both two-year community colleges and four-year universities, transforming their job prospects, social mobility, and overall life success.” Wyner said. “This is especially relevant during our current national crises, as we see community colleges adapt impressively to elevate the prospects of the most vulnerable Americans and ensure a strong economic recovery.”

By elevating exceptional colleges and learning from them, the College Excellence Program enables their strategies and practices to be replicated nationwide. What community colleges do has a significant impact on our nation’s ability to develop diverse talent and promote social mobility, given that they enroll 6 million students—about 40 percent of all U.S. undergraduates—and disproportionately serve low-income and minority students.

For the rest of 2020, the Aspen Institute will work with a team of national experts to complete a rigorous review process to determine the eventual prize winner. This will include a comprehensive examination of outcomes data as well as multi-day virtual site visits to each of the 10 finalist institutions.

In early 2021, a distinguished jury will convene to select the prize winner, finalists with distinction, and a rising star and allocate a \$1 million award among them. The winner will be announced at a May 2021 event in Washington, D.C.

The Aspen Prize is generously funded by Ascendium Education Group, Joyce Foundation, and Siemens Foundation.

**Previous winners of the Aspen Prize:**

2019: Indian River State College (FL) and Miami Dade College (FL)

2017: Lake Area Technical College (SD)

2015: Santa Fe College (FL)

2013: Santa Barbara City College (CA) and Walla Walla Community College (WA)

2011: Valencia College (FL)



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**The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program** aims to advance higher education practices, policies, and leadership that significantly improve student outcomes, especially for the growing population of low-income students and students of color on American campuses. For more information, visit [www.highered.aspeninstitute.org](http://www.highered.aspeninstitute.org) and follow CEP on LinkedIn ([www.linkedin.com/showcase/aspenhighered](http://www.linkedin.com/showcase/aspenhighered)) and Twitter (@AspenHigherEd). The Aspen Prize hashtag is #AspenPrize.

**The Aspen Institute** is a community-serving organization with global reach whose vision is a free, just, and equitable society. For 70 years, the Institute has driven change through dialogue, leadership, and action to help solve the world's greatest challenges. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the Institute has offices in Aspen, Colorado, and New York City, and an international network of partners. For more information, visit [www.aspeninstitute.org](http://www.aspeninstitute.org).