

# Don't Let the Open Door Become a Revolving Door

## *Restore Funding to the Student Success Grant for Illinois' Community Colleges*

Education beyond high school is the best strategy for improving opportunities and achieving higher earnings. An adult with a two-year associate's degree earns 34 percent more and an adult with a bachelor's degree earns 89 percent more than an adult with a high school education. But nearly 40 percent of Illinois adults – two million individuals – have no postsecondary education.

### **Community Colleges Serve the Diverse Needs of Illinois' Adults**

Illinois' 48 community colleges, comprising the third largest system in the nation, are open door institutions that accept all students with high school credentials. Barriers like tuition costs and juggling work, family, and school confront many community college students, the majority of whom are economically or academically disadvantaged. A strong network of educational supports can alleviate these challenges and encourage success, *but when colleges don't have the services to support retention, the open door becomes a revolving door.*

### **Flexible Funding is Key to Supporting Adult Students**

In FY 2003, Illinois' community college system suffered a loss of nearly \$13 million when the **Student Success Grant** (formerly the Special Populations Grant) was eliminated from the state budget. This grant provides maximum flexibility to colleges to target their educational supports to the needs of their own student body – and was last used to provide more than 2.7 million contact hours of tutoring, counseling, and other direct support services to 305,000 students across the state.

### **Make the Student Success Grant a Priority for Illinois**

Many adults want to gain new skills and build a brighter future for themselves and their families, but too many do not have access to the education and training they need. The **Student Success Grant**, which provides funding to each one of Illinois' community colleges to support vital services and outreach, would make college possible for thousands of individuals each year. In fact, two out of every five community college students in Illinois are eligible to receive these supports.

Please restore \$7.5 million to the **Student Success Grant** to reinstate these critical services. All students should find the open door of their local community college one that leads to greater opportunities.

*For more information, contact Nicole Sauler at [nsauler@womenemployed.org](mailto:nsauler@womenemployed.org) or (312) 782-3902, ext. 252.*



111 N. Wabash, Suite 1300 Chicago, IL 60602-2002  
[www.womenemployed.org](http://www.womenemployed.org)