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## **AARP Foundation Announces 2014 Expansion of BACK TO WORK 50+ Initiative through New Collaboration with the American Association of Community Colleges**

**Washington, DC** – With alarming statistics on the number of older unemployed Americans seeking work in mind, AARP Foundation is pleased to announce the expansion of its BACK TO WORK 50+ initiative through a new collaboration with the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and with generous support from Walmart Foundation. BACK TO WORK 50+ is dedicated to moving low income, unemployed men and women age 50+ from instability to stability by increasing their income through employment in good jobs in their communities.

Originally launched in 2013 as a demonstration project in Denver, Colo., 2013 BACK TO WORK 50+ is designed create local coordination of employment services, public benefits application assistance, financial capability and employer engagement to connect 50+ job candidates to specific in-demand jobs in their communities.

Over the next two years, AARP Foundation will invest over \$2 million to expand the program and reach thousands more older workers who need these important services. As part of the BACK TO WORK 50+ expansion, the first 12 community colleges that will become part of the network have been selected and an additional four colleges will be added later in 2014.

To date, BACK TO WORK 50+ has provided over 2,000 unemployed workers with information and resources to help them find meaningful employment.

“More than 3 million workers age 50-plus are looking for full-time employment. Mature workers bring assets to the workplace that employers need,” said AARP Foundation president Lisa Marsh Ryerson. “The expansion of Back to Work 50+ will encourage a multigenerational workforce that brings value to employers and older Americans alike.”

As part of the BACK TO WORK 50+ expansion, the participating community colleges will host local information sessions where job candidates aged 50 and older can learn how to update their personal marketing tools and networking strategies, target their job search on in-demand jobs, get job leads, and find resources that can help them stay strong while they’re looking for their next full-time job. Community colleges are also uniquely positioned to provide access to training opportunities for jobseekers that need skills training to prepare for available jobs. Participating community colleges include:

1. Bevill State Community College, Jasper, AL
2. Maricopa Corporate College, Phoenix, AZ
3. Pima Community College, Tucson, AZ
4. Florida State College at Jacksonville, Jacksonville, FL
5. Santa Fe College, Gainesville, FL
6. Elgin Community College, Elgin, IL
7. Moraine Valley Community College, Palo Hills, IL
8. Santa Fe Community College, Santa Fe, NM
9. Tri-County Technical College, Pendleton, SC
10. Tarrant County college District, Dallas-Fort Worth, TX
11. Kanawha Valley Community & Technical College, South Charleston, WV
12. Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District in El Cajon, CA

“Community colleges have always served a diverse student population, including adult learners looking to retrain for the workforce,” said AACC President and CEO Walter G. Bumphus. “We appreciate AARP Foundation’s interest in working with community colleges, and recognizing that the colleges can help support older and

unemployed workers in a variety of ways.”

The community colleges will focus specifically on the needs of low income, older adult women and provide an expanded level of career and support services. The colleges will have access to a specifically designed version of the Virtual Career Network career exploration platform that was developed by AACC through a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. Participants in the program will use this innovative web-based tool to explore and prepare for careers in high-growth fields.

The BACK TO WORK 50+ program is one of the programs funded by the Walmart Foundation as a part of the Global Women’s Economic Empowerment Initiative, which will help 200,000 U.S. women from low-income households gain better employment opportunities through job training, education, career counseling, and mentoring. For more information, visit [corporate.walmart.com/women](http://corporate.walmart.com/women).

The important services provided by BACK TO WORK 50+ are available due in large part to the generous support of a \$2.3 million grant from Walmart Foundation, which allows AARP Foundation to focus on increasing economic opportunity for older adult women by providing education, training, and employment services that facilitate their entry into good jobs in their communities.

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### **About AARP Foundation**

AARP Foundation is working to win back opportunity for struggling Americans 50+ by being a force for change on the most serious issues they face today: housing, hunger, income and isolation. By coordinating responses to these issues on all four fronts at once, and supporting them with vigorous legal advocacy, the Foundation serves the unique needs of those 50+ while working with local organizations nationwide to reach more people, strengthen communities, work more efficiently and make resources go further. AARP Foundation is AARP’s affiliated charity. Learn more at [www.aarpfoundation.org](http://www.aarpfoundation.org).

### **About the American Association of Community Colleges**

Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the American Association of Community Colleges is a national organization representing the nation’s close to 1,200 community, junior, and technical colleges and their over 13 million students. Community colleges are the largest sector of higher education, enrolling almost half of all U.S. undergraduates. For more information about AACC and community colleges, see [www.aacc.nche.edu](http://www.aacc.nche.edu).

### **About Philanthropy at Walmart**

Walmart and the Walmart Foundation are committed to helping people live better through philanthropic efforts. By operating globally and giving back locally, Walmart is uniquely positioned to address the needs of the communities it serves and make a significant social impact within its core areas of giving: Hunger Relief & Healthy Eating, Sustainability, Career Opportunity and Women’s Economic Empowerment. Walmart and the Walmart Foundation are leading the fight against hunger in the United States with a \$2 billion commitment through 2015. Walmart has donated more than 1 billion meals to those in need across the country. To learn more about Walmart’s giving, visit [foundation.walmart.com](http://foundation.walmart.com).

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