

There's
a place
for you.



For Immediate Release: November 4, 2025

The Aspen Institute Names Triton College as a Top 200 U.S. Community College Eligible for the 2027 Aspen Prize

\$1 Million Prize Honors Colleges Achieving Strong Student Results, both in College and After Graduation

RIVER GROVE, III. — Triton College is proud to announce that it has been named one of the 200 institutions eligible to compete for the \$1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence—the nation's premier recognition of high achievement and performance among two-year colleges.

The 200 colleges were selected based on their student outcomes data, including retention, completion, transfer and bachelor's attainment rates. Started in 2010, this is the ninth cycle of the Aspen Prize.

"Triton College is pleased to be recognized for our commitment to valuing the individual, educating and serving our community," said Triton College President Mary-Rita Moore. "Community colleges have proven time and again to be the backbone of higher education and local economies. This recognition affirms that strong student outcomes are achievable when access and academic excellence come together. At Triton, we remain focused on supporting learners, as they pursue meaningful pathways to careers, further education and personal advancement—strengthening families, local employers and our region as a whole."

Together, these 200 colleges represent the breadth and diversity of the community college sector. They are located in urban, rural and suburban areas across the country and serve anywhere from a few hundred students to tens of thousands. Some of these colleges focus primarily on workforce programs, while others focus on transfer and bachelor's attainment or a combination of the two.

"The Aspen Prize rewards colleges that achieve the kind of outcomes that actually matter to students—completing college degree programs that, in turn, lead to lifelong success," said Josh Wyner, executive director of the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program. "Aspen Prize winners offer a powerful message: Community colleges can deliver the kind of life-changing education that makes the American Dream real."

Community colleges educate nearly six million students. Yet community college student outcomes fall short in both the rate at which students graduate and the percentage of students who achieve success after graduation. The Aspen Prize process identifies and celebrates community colleges that

demonstrate that achieving stronger outcomes is possible, providing a roadmap of effective practices and strategies for other colleges to follow.

The 200 eligible colleges have been invited to submit an application and participate in a rigorous review process that will culminate in the naming of the Aspen Prize winner in spring 2027. Over the coming 20 months, the colleges that apply for the Aspen Prize will be assessed based on (1) student outcomes data, ranging from student transfer and completion rates to employment and wages after graduation and (2) whether they have engaged in scaled practices that led to high and improving student outcomes.

“Among these 200 colleges are some really special places that deliver strong and improving outcomes for students across the board,” Wyner said. “Our job over the coming 20 months is to gather a lot more data and work with a deep bench of field experts to assess which of these 200 stand out so we can not only honor them with a monetary award, but drive attention to the most effective field practices that other colleges can replicate.”

This is the first time since the inception of the Aspen Prize that 200 colleges are eligible to apply, growing from 150. This year, in addition to publicly available federal data, over 600 colleges authorized the use of National Student Clearinghouse data on their institution’s degree completion, transfer, and bachelor’s attainment rates for full- and part-time students.

Since its founding in 1964, Triton College has remained steadfast in its mission of educating and serving the community. Through its welcoming learning environment, affordable tuition and open admission policy, the institution has expanded the accessibility of post-secondary education for residents across its district. For more information, visit triton.edu. The full list of eligible community colleges can be accessed at highered.aspeninstitute.org.

###

Media Contacts:

Melissa Ramirez Cooper | melissacooper@triton.edu | 708-456-0300, Ext. 3496
Hunter Oberst | hunteroberst@triton.edu | 708-456-0300, Ext. 3820

ABOUT TRITON COLLEGE:

Triton College is a public institution of higher education dedicated to student success. Recently recognized by the Aspen Institute as one of the Top 200 community colleges in the nation, Triton offers more than 120 degree and certificate programs that prepare students to pursue meaningful careers, transfer to four-year universities, and thrive in a global economy. Guided by our mission—*Valuing the individual, educating and serving the community*—Triton serves nearly 12,000 students annually on its 110-acre campus in River Grove, Illinois. Our dedicated faculty and staff provide high-quality, accessible and affordable educational opportunities that empower students and strengthens the communities we serve. Triton College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and a member of The Illinois Community College Board. Illinois is home to 45 colleges in 39 community college districts. Learn more at triton.edu.

The **Aspen Institute College Excellence Program** aims to strengthen higher education leadership and practice to improve student outcomes—with the ultimate goal of advancing economic mobility and developing talent for the good of each individual and society as a whole. For more information, visit highered.aspeninstitute.org.

The **Aspen Institute** is a global nonprofit organization whose purpose is to ignite human potential to build understanding and create new possibilities for a better world. Founded in 1949, the Institute drives change through dialogue, leadership, and action to help solve society's greatest challenges. It is headquartered in Washington, D.C. and has a campus in Aspen, Colorado, as well as an international network of partners. For more information, visit aspeninstitute.org.