



MAKING HIGHER EDUCATION & CAREER TRAINING OPTIONS

AFFORDABLE & EFFECTIVE

WINNER TO RECEIVE

\$10,000

& RUNNERS-UP

\$1,000

ENTRY DEADLINE

MAR

23

2018

**Friday, March 23, 2018
at 4:00 PM ET.**

HOW TO APPLY

Submit an idea paper of five or fewer pages describing the problem you're addressing and your solution. The "idea" can be a new concept or a recently implemented program that shows promising results. Be sure to touch briefly on the following elements:

- A description, with relevant background, of the problem to be addressed.
- An explanation of the proposed solution and how it will change the current policy landscape in postsecondary education. If appropriate, cite examples of similar approaches that are currently in place. If possible, estimate and discuss the costs and benefits of your idea or model compared to current policy approaches, potential obstacles to implementation, and the estimated size of the potential student population that would be affected in Massachusetts. Please note: Legal obstacles or the need for new legislation should not be considered barriers to entry. Also, we may seek further information regarding your proposal.

TWO WAYS TO SUBMIT

online: bgc.pioneerinstitute.org

email: bgc@pioneerinstitute.org

include your paper as an attachment



2018 PROBLEM STATEMENT

EACH YEAR, THE BETTER GOVERNMENT COMPETITION FOCUSES on one of the country's greatest public policy challenges. Families today are struggling to afford college, young adults are saddled with crippling debt, and government workforce development programs and existing education models have not been reliable pipelines to stable employment. In recognition of these challenges, Pioneer Institute's 2018 Better Government Competition seeks ideas to make postsecondary education options for high school graduates more affordable, accessible, and effective.

WE AIM TO

- Identify and promote new approaches to two- and four-year colleges, vocational-technical programs, apprenticeship models, and private workforce training initiatives;
- Find creative solutions to contain the rising costs of higher education and remediate the student debt crisis; and
- Solicit new ways to better prepare students for jobs and careers in the 21st-century global economy, while retaining the core values of post-secondary education.

POTENTIAL AREAS FOR APPLICANTS TO CONSIDER

- **Developing approaches to address escalating education costs and student loan debt.**
- **Generating new information resources to:**
 - Guide families through the college application and financial aid processes, and alternative career options;
 - Ensure the value of student investment in higher education – for example, through performance-based funding and transparency tools for consumers.
- **Leveraging digital learning and web-based educational models** to contain costs, improve academic quality, and broaden access to on-line coursework and degree programs.
- **Re-thinking community colleges**, for example, through course re-design and other improvements that increase completion rates and, where appropriate, help students transition to four-year colleges.
- **Establishing coordinated, scalable apprenticeship programs and vocational-technical options** that cultivate middle skills, expand occupational opportunities, and make training new employees more affordable for employers.
- **Explore ways to advance partnerships between postsecondary schools and employers** that augment student opportunities for career development.
- **Other ideas?** The topics outlined above are examples to help stimulate and guide the development of your proposals. Entrants are not limited to the categories listed above and should feel free to draft proposals focused on other ideas based on proven public policy reforms related to higher education costs, postsecondary education opportunities, and workforce competitiveness.



QUESTIONS

Shawni Littlehale, Director, Better Government Competition

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The Better Government Competition is an annual idea contest that attracts the interest of experts and ordinary citizens alike. Since 1991, the Competition has served as a forum that rewards and promotes the nation's most innovative policy ideas. Implementation of the Competition's winning entries has saved Massachusetts well over half-a-billion dollars, and has driven numerous changes in state and federal policy.