



## **Abstract / Introduction for the**

### **“Colleges for Communities” discussion guide**

Community colleges are natural conveners for deliberative forums on pressing community issues, but don't often engage the public in learning about, and providing direction on, the role of the colleges in relation to the communities they serve.

“Colleges for Communities: What Role Should Community Colleges Play?” is a discussion guide that has been created to help colleges conduct deliberative conversations with their constituents to identify the values and expectations that community members have about colleges.

This discussion guide is the result of research that identified the key themes that emerge when people talk about the good work that colleges are doing, how they should be gearing up to meet future needs, and opportunities to improve effectiveness. It is structured in a way that helps participants to understand the broad range of perspectives and values that community members hold regarding the role of community colleges,

The goal in conducting these forums is not to have participants vote for or pick the “best” of the four approaches to redefining the role of community colleges. Rather, it is to help all participants, including college leaders and representatives, to better understand each perspective, and to appreciate the trade-offs and consequences inherent in adopting any of the proposed strategies. This can help to identify common ground values and priorities that can serve as a basis for adapting planning processes for colleges, refining project implementation strategies, and enriching stakeholder engagement.

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