

## Free community college program gets funding in state budget

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WORCESTER, Mass. - Massachusetts' nearly \$56 billion state budget signed into law earlier this week includes \$524 million towards education.

One of the initiatives getting funding is the "MassReconnect" program, which makes community college free for students aged 25 and older. It has the potential to reach nearly 2 million students who are eligible to receive state aid as they earn a college degree or certificate.

At Quinsigamond Community College in Worcester, there are already 400 students who have completed forms to receive the funding. QCC has so far allocated \$1.1 million towards the program.

"They can start a career, they can come back if they've stepped out of their career," said Michelle Tufau Afriyie, QCC's VP for strategic enrollment and student engagement. "They can just explore as well. It's a really good time for students in Massachusetts who are 25 and older to come back to school. There's no reason why they shouldn't at this point."

QCC says all students have to do is apply to school, fill out the FAFSA form and then they'll handle the rest.

The school is holding an in-person registration event Aug. 26 at their main Worcester campus for interested students.