

What is ctcLink?

ctcLink is a new technology foundation providing 21st century services anytime, anywhere for the students, faculty and staff of Washington's community and technical colleges (CTC).

What's the problem?

Washington's CTCs are using an outdated, 30-year-old system — a patchwork of state-provided and locally-developed processes that are uneven, sometimes incompatible with one another, and increasingly labor-intensive to maintain. Data at each college stays at each college instead of being available system-wide.

What's the solution?

With ctcLink, information will connect and move freely among all 34 community and technical colleges. The inefficient days of double-entry, manual reconciliation, and jumping between programs to get information will be over, saving money and time and delivering the services needed in today's technologically advanced world.

How will ctcLink help students?

Students will have 24/7 access to a full range of online services, including:

- Centralized catalog of courses at all 34 colleges
- Single admission application process regardless of where or when they decide to attend
- Single electronic record with one student ID number available to all colleges
- Single financial aid application process
- The ability to make tuition and fee payments online
- Access to faculty and advisors
- Access to transcripts

How will ctcLink help college staff?

While colleges already perform these functions and services, most were programmed piecemeal — campus by campus — on an outdated platform. With ctcLink, colleges will be able to manage and share:

- Student records, enrollment reports and grades
- Class rosters and scheduling information
- Student grades
- Tuition and financial aid processes
- State and federal reports
- Accounts receivable and payable
- Payroll, purchasing and employee records
- Recruitment tools and benefits administration
- Employee records

How will it be funded?

In 2011, the Legislature recognized the value of this technology initiative by establishing the CTC Innovation Account, funded by up to three percent of tuition. This year, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges seeks authority to sell Certificates of Participation (COP) for financing over the life of the project, to be repaid from the Innovation Account. We will leverage a group discount to replace student information, finance and human resource systems for all 34 community and technical colleges at a cost of roughly \$3 million per college over a 15-year period.

What is the implementation timeline?

Assuming authorization from the legislature for the COP during the 2012 legislative session:

- The first two colleges will be up and running by June 2014.
- Ten colleges will be completed by June 2015.
- Eight additional colleges will be brought online until all colleges are completed by 2017.
- Colleges will be completed in sequence to strategically leverage regional, geographic, and consortia efficiencies.

Selected Technical Details

High-level requirements

The RFP will require vendors to provide the following high-level functional requirements. The successful vendor will also be required to provide a project hosting solution.

Finance

- General ledger
- Accounts payable and receivable
- Asset and inventory
- Treasury (cash management)
- Budget development & position control
- Grant, project, contract management
- Purchasing

Student/Academic

- Student and academic records
- Recruiting and admissions
- Scheduling and registration
- Academic affairs
- Student services
- Financial aid
- Student financials

HR/Payroll

- Recruiting
- Workforce management
- Benefits
- Time and attendance
- Payroll

Self-service functional capabilities

Self-service functions will reduce or eliminate many manual transactions. Users will be able to access the following information directly:

Student/Academic

- General inquiry for process, policies, information, etc.
- Registration/record maintenance
- Service and document requests
- Inquiries and applications (course, schedules, calendar, faculty, grants, etc.)
- Faculty processes (timetables, attendance, rosters, etc.)
- Payments
- FAQs with links to processes

HR/Payroll

- Leave request and approval
- Leave balances and position history
- Time entry, including manager access and approval
- Benefits enrollment
- Earnings statements and total compensation
- Ability to search for jobs and apply online

Finance

- Budget information
- Vendor invoice status
- Employee accounts/records
- Student accounts
- Procurement documents
- E-commerce transactions
- Bidding and quoting processes

Project leadership

While there are multiple levels of decision-making, as the project executive sponsor, the SBCTC Executive Director has ultimate responsibility and authority for this project. The SBCTC Deputy Executive Director for IT is the chair of the project steering committee.

Project preparedness

ctcLink has already been vetted on several levels. The project has been embedded in strategic plans and studies approved by the Legislature, the Department of Enterprise Services, and the SBCTC dating back to 2008. The Legislature approved a funding source for ctcLink in 2010 and college presidents uniformly support the project. An exhaustive readiness assessment completed in 2011 gave a preview of possible roadblocks and gaps based on responses from each community college, which were then addressed in detailed planning documents and the upcoming RFP.