



2025-27 OPERATING BUDGET REQUEST

JANUARY 10, 2025

Washington's community and technical colleges are asking the Legislature to keep our colleges whole and to make targeted investments that support our students and the communities and employers that count on their success.



Preserve 2023-25 state allocation for fiscal year 2025

We respectfully urge the Legislature to preserve fiscal year 2025 funding that was approved in the 2023-25 operating budget (\$28.6 million). Our colleges were advised of a state budget error just before start of fall quarter and, by then, had already dedicated the funds in good faith to support programs and services, hire staff, enter vendor contracts, and pay for increasing operating costs — all in service to students. Retracting these funds would force many colleges to implement abrupt and harmful cuts this winter and spring when they are already struggling with rising operational costs.

Maintain current funding for community and technical colleges

The Legislature has made impactful investments to open the doors to higher education for the people of Washington state. We urge the Legislature to keep up the momentum by maintaining current funding levels for our 34 community and technical colleges and the 290,000 students we serve across our state. According to the Washington Roundtable's Skill Up for our Future report, 1.5 million+ job openings are expected in Washington over the next decade, 75% of which will require a postsecondary credential such as a degree, apprenticeship, or high-value industry certification. Our open-admission colleges offer these options at a more affordable cost for students of all ages and backgrounds, equipping them with the skills to land well paying jobs and support their families and communities.

Make targeted investments in compensation and operations

While we recognize the constraints of the current budget deficit, our colleges are facing challenges that directly impact our ability to fulfill our mission of providing high-quality, accessible education to our students.

Fully-funded competitive compensation: Colleges are losing expert faculty and staff — including financial aid staff and business officers — to better paying jobs elsewhere. A salary increase of 6.5% for each year of the biennium, for a total wage increase of 13%, would help colleges provide competitive compensation, fill vacant positions, and reduce turnover (\$183 million over the biennium and ongoing). We urge the Legislature to continue to provide 100% funding for compensation in the 2025-27 operating budget.

College operations: Community and technical colleges urgently need additional, core operational support to cover the true cost of running a college. College operating costs have increased dramatically over the past five years and Washington's tuition formula has not kept pace with the increases. Legislative funding for core operational support would help cover essential costs, ensure sufficient funding for student programs and services, and enable colleges to meet their unique local needs (\$90 million over the biennium and ongoing).

CONTACT INFORMATION

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