
COMMUNITY COLLEGE FUNDING MODEL – FEBRUARY 2022

In 2008 and 2009, blue ribbon and community college taskforces met to study community college governance and funding. Much of their work was codified through legislation in 2009, which created the following 3-part allocation model target:

- State Aid Approximately 60% (FY 2023 currently 51%)
- Mills/Local 20% (22%)
- Tuition/Fees 20% (27%)

Funds appropriated to the Wyoming Community College Commission are allocated via a funding allocation model that includes components for fixed and variable costs and performance metrics every 4 years based on the full-time equivalent enrollment of the college system. In order for colleges to qualify for State Aid, each district must meet two primary criteria under W.S. 21-18-205(a):

- A college must be accredited by a regional accrediting agency
- A college must levy at least 4 mills on the district's taxable property valuation

Since 2010 Wyoming's Community Colleges have experienced significant budget cuts and erosion to the tune of \$94M. This has resulted in a shift of the target model to the levels outlined above. While there have been many studies over the years, the most recent legislative activity was the 2020 Select Committee on Community College Funding and Governance.

Tuition

In accordance with the WCCC's tuition policy, a tuition review takes place at a minimum of every odd number year to coincide with the biennial budget. On October 6, 2021, the WCCC held a workshop to discuss tuition rates at the community colleges. Commissioners agreed to not raise tuitions for the 2022- 2023 academic year, despite budget cuts and erosion in a continued effort to keep community college "as free as possible." However, it is important to note that tuition was increased 8 of the last 10 years. Current community college tuition per credit hour is \$105. (Note: The University of Wyoming's tuition per credit hour is going up to \$160 starting in the fall of 2022.)

Locally Assessed Mills

- Pursuant to W.S. 39-13-104(e)(i) a community college district may levy up to 10 mills for its operations and debt obligation payments. The board of trustees for each community college can vote to assess up to 4 mills with an optional 1 mill. All seven accredited colleges currently assess the full 5 mills. The college boards have the ability to directly impose that optional mill for a 2-year period.
- This additional mill is not included in the calculation within the allocation model. It is separate and considered local funding only.
- In addition, Laramie County voters have approved a temporary additional 1 mill for the support and operation of Laramie County Community College (LCCC). (Note: LCCC is the only community college that does not have a Board of Cooperative Educational Services/BOCES.)
- The new Gillette Community College District board of trustees has not yet voted on their initial mill levy amount.

Recapture and Redistribution

- The 4-mills assessed are never subject to recapture and redistribution. This only happens with the state aid to the colleges, and is used to rebalance the difference between projected and actual revenues.
- Every dollar collected locally stays within that county.
- No college district raises enough in 4-mills to sustain their operations without the assistance of State Aid.
- Allocations are driven by enrollment and delivery of weighted credit hours. HB 80 from 2016 refined the model and the rules put in place how the performance metrics would work.
- If there were a situation where the 4-mills fully funded a college based on the proportionate share determined in the allocation model, that college simply would not receive any of the State Aid. The State Aid would then be proportionately shared among the State Aid eligible institutions.

It is important to note that the revenue from local mills has also declined over the last several years, and especially from 2020 to 2021 where we saw a decline of \$4.4M to the colleges.