

COMMUNITY COLLEGE BUDGET REQUESTS

From Classroom to Career: Strengthening Wyoming Through Community College Investment



Strategic Investment Summary

As the state navigates evolving labor demands and demographic shifts, the colleges face mounting financial pressures that threaten their ability to deliver high-quality, responsive education.

As Wyoming navigates shifting labor demands and demographic changes, its community colleges face intensifying financial pressures that jeopardize their ability to provide high-quality, responsive education. The colleges initiated this

budget process with a \$48 million request to the WCCC—an effort to recover from more than a decade of underfunding—and while the request has been shaped through analysis and collaboration, the underlying need remains substantial.

Funding Wyoming's community colleges is the way to unlock the most value for educating, employing, and empowering individuals while strengthening Wyoming's economic backbone.

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Funding Buckets

Directly Funding
the Colleges

\$19M

for core operational support

\$24.5M

concept for Career and
Technical Education (CTE)
(\$15M) and one-time Wyoming
Works funding (\$9.5M)

WCCC Support & Urgent Tuition Warning

The WCCC endorsed the revised request and issued a strong statement on tuition in October: if the state cannot meet the colleges' financial needs, significant tuition increases may be necessary—despite constitutional expectations for affordable access.

Why It Matters

This budget request is not aspirational—it is essential. It reflects:

- Months of data-driven refinement.
- A collaborative, statewide effort.
- The college has done the work – they have implemented shared services and continue to explore opportunities, reduced FTEs, traded positions and services for raises to try to get salaries closer to market, and eliminated more programs than they have launched, with new offerings focused on those directly aligned to high-demand workforce needs.
- If funding falls short, salaries will remain below market, growth and responsiveness will be stifled, and the colleges will not be able to make healthy investments in people or programs.
- Enrollment, retention, and completion rates across the colleges are rising. The ROI for the colleges is excellent (see ROI data at bit.ly/CommunityCollegesROI).
- A strategic investment in workforce development, economic resilience, and educational access.

A Strategic Investment in Wyoming's Future

This \$43.5 million request is not merely a budgetary ask—it is a strategic investment in Wyoming's resilience, competitiveness, and civic infrastructure. Community colleges are our economy's cornerstone, uniquely positioned to deliver rapid, cost-effective solutions to workforce gaps, educational inequities, and regional economic development. Fully funding this request ensures that Wyoming remains agile, inclusive, and future-ready.