



Talking Points

We are undertaking a campaign demanding that the state [Re]Invest in Our Colleges. The campaign strengthens our community and technical colleges (CTCs) through funding and legislation. While we have concrete goals for this year, this will be a long-term campaign. We have a lot we are fighting for.

As part of this effort, we are building alliances with students and other unions representing faculty and staff in the CTCs. There will be a widespread call for community support to raise awareness and highlight the connection Washingtonians have with their CTCs. This will be the first time we are taking on this fight together with students and allied unions. It represents AFT Washington's largest advocacy effort to date.

Statistics To Know

Most Washingtonians benefit directly from CTCs. In 2016, nearly 60% of post-secondary students in Washington enrolled in a CTC,ⁱ and 40% of BA graduates in Washington attended a CTC.ⁱⁱ

CTCs are the only option for higher education and economic mobility for many Washingtonians. Without CTCs many Washingtonians would literally have no other choice for education. Estimated tuition at a CTC in Washington (\$1,342 per quarter) is significantly more affordable than at a comprehensive university (\$2,145 per quarter) or a research university (\$3,639 per quarter).ⁱⁱⁱ For many adults, CTCs are the only option for earning their high school equivalency, basic education, and English as a Second Language classes.

CTCs are a key economic driver. CTCs in Washington add approximately \$20.5 billion to the state's economy.^{iv} A person with at least some college will earn on average \$5K per year more than someone with a high school education.^v CTCs play a major role in providing career preparation in high-demand occupational fields such as healthcare, computer and information science, and service occupations.

CTCs are underfunded. Prior to the recession, there was lackluster investment into CTCs, and they are still funded at those pre-recession levels. This leads us to a situation where:

- CTCs educate 60% of the state's students, but CTCs receive less than 40% of the state's higher education funding.^{vi}
- Forty percent of classified staff earn 25% less than market value salaries.
- Faculty and exempt employee salaries lag at least 12.4% behind peer states in the same field.^{vii}

This makes it challenging to recruit and retain faculty and staff – especially as salaries in K-12 districts are on the rise.

Why We Are Asking For More

We know CTCs are a priority for Washingtonians. Washingtonians almost unanimously agree that CTCs provide a host of benefits to students and the broader community. We also know that post-high school education is necessary in today's job market, and that CTCs provide a critical path to that additional education.^{viii} So why are we shortchanging our students?

Our campaign seeks a level of funding truly reflective of the important role CTCs hold. Our budget request will be above and beyond that being asked for by the college presidents and trustees. Projections show that in the next five years, there will be 44,000 openings per year that require a mid-level education as provided by our CTCs.^v However, latest figures show only about 33,000 completions each year.^{ix} Unless funding is strengthened at a significant level, we will be behind in meeting workforce demands. Additionally, the Washington Student Achievement Council has set a goal that 70% of all adults will have a postsecondary credential by 2023.^x To meet this goal, CTCs will need to graduate over 45,000 students per year for the next

five years, over 10,000 above current figures. According to the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association, Washington still lags behind the US average in every measure of per full-time enrolled student funding.^{xi} In terms of ensuring competitive compensation for faculty and exempt employees in the CTCs, we believe a greater investment is needed, since the state board’s current request would take four years to only barely bring Washington in line with peer states.

Why Now

Washingtonians are with us. A recent survey found that nearly nine in 10 Washingtonians agree that it is important for the state legislature to increase funding for CTCs.^{viii} We have stayed quiet long enough. Now it is time for bold actions to get our colleges and our students the funding they deserve.

What We Want

We are seeking **\$500 million in permanent funding over two years** to improve our campuses for the students and the professionals who play a part in educating them. In addition to funding, we are also looking to strengthen our colleges through legislation. While our legislative package is not yet complete, our package of bills will include funding and resources meant for:

- **Improved counseling** for students by establishing a minimum counselor-to-student ratio;
- **Enhancing professional development funding** for faculty and staff, to better serve our students;
- **Making compensation** fairer by raising pay for all college employees to a livable wage, providing economic security and a middle-class lifestyle;
- **Fighting institutional racism** by funding equity, diversity, and inclusion offices and programs on each campus. This will increase capacity enough to address the needs of employees in addition to those of students; and
- **Premium pay for faculty** teaching our incarcerated students, due to their unique working conditions.

We plan to update our resources as our legislative package develops.

ⁱ 58%, including Running Start Students. Washington State Office of Financial Management, “State-Funded Public Higher Education Enrollment Report, Final 2016-2017”, nd.

<https://erdc.wa.gov/file/362/download?token=hVeXYyxq> (Download Link)

ⁱⁱ Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), “The Role of Transfer in the Attainment of Baccalaureate Degrees at Washington’s Public Bachelor’s Degree Institutions—Class of 2016”, May 2018.

<https://www.sbctc.edu/resources/documents/colleges-staff/research/transfer-research/18-3-role-of-transfer-2018.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC), tuition and college costs page, nd.

<https://www.wsac.wa.gov/tuition-and-college-costs>

^{iv} SBCTC, “The Economic Value of Washington’s Community and Technical Colleges”, December 2016.

<https://www.sbctc.edu/for-employers/economic-impact-study.aspx>

^v WSAC, “A Skilled and Educated Workforce – 2017 Update”, 2017.

<https://www.wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2017.ASkilledAndEducatedWorkforce.pdf>

^{vi} WSAC, postsecondary funding page, nd.

<https://wsac.wa.gov/roadmap/funding>

^{vii} SBCTC, “2019-21 Biennial Budget Proposal”, August 2018.

<https://www.sbctc.edu/resources/documents/about/board/2018-meetings/2018-august-retreat-agenda.pdf>

^{viii} SBCTC, “Sound View Strategy Survey”, June 2018.

<https://www.sbctc.edu/resources/documents/about/board/2018-meetings/2018-august-retreat-agenda.pdf>

^{ix} SBCTC, “Student Progress and Completions”, nd.

<https://www.sbctc.edu/colleges-staff/research/data-public/student-progress-and-completions.aspx>

^x WSAC, “WSAC Overview”, January 2017.

<https://www.wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2017.01.19.Senate.Higher.Ed.WSAC.Overview.pdf>

^{xi} State Higher Education Executive Officers Association, “State Higher Education Finance: Fiscal Year 2017”, 2018.

http://www.sheeo.org/sites/default/files/project-files/SHEEO_SHEF_FY2017_FINAL.pdf