

Discussion Points

County Colleges

1a. The FY 2025 Governor’s Budget recommends \$149.1 million in County College Operational Costs Aid, representing a \$20 million decrease from the FY 2024 adjusted appropriation. The \$20 million was added by the Legislature in FY 2024, but is not recommended to continue in FY 2025. According to the New Jersey Council of County Colleges, the FY 2024 increase in operating aid was used to offset increases in health care costs.

The Council’s State budget request to the State Treasurer requested \$189.1 million in Operational Costs Aid, or a \$20 million increase compared to FY 2024. The Council’s budget request asked for continued funding of the FY 2024 \$20 million increase and another \$20 million increase in FY 2025 “to reflect increases in costs and to continue to make modest increases in state investment in community colleges.” The request reflects FY 2025 funding priorities of:

- an increase of \$2.5 million to expand the Student Success Fund;
 - an increase of \$4 million for the College Readiness Now Program
 - an increase of \$8 million to pilot evidenced-based practices for supporting student retention and completion;
 - an increase of \$125,000 for the Community College Opportunity Grant Program
 - continued funding of \$9 million for the Consortium for Workforce and Economic Development;
 - an increase of \$20 million to establish a New Economy Opportunity Skills Fund to serve as a source of funding for community college workforce programs.
- **Questions:** Given the FY 2025 recommended appropriation, what measures listed above will the County Colleges choose to fund taking current operational costs into account? What cuts will have to be made to fund any of the programs and projects listed above?

The proposed FY 2025 State Budget drastically reduces critical state investment in New Jersey’s community colleges, **cutting \$20 million** from this historically underfunded but vital sector of higher education.

Developed with input from the state’s 18 community colleges, the original FY 2025 budget request submitted by the New Jersey Council of County Colleges (NJCCC) focused on critical investments designed to increase economic mobility for all New Jerseyans by tackling stark racial, ethnic, and geographic disparities in the attainment of postsecondary degrees and credentials, and by equipping our state’s workers with both the technical and digital skills, as well as the analytical, creative thinking, and “robot-proof” human skills, they need to thrive. Our original budget request reflected our ***New Jersey Opportunity Agenda: Building Pathways to Equity and Economic Prosperity***, our collective blueprint for building an innovative and agile community college sector ready to adapt to a rapidly evolving postsecondary education environment—one that is colored by complex economic, social, technological, demographic, and climate changes.

Discussion Points (Cont'd)

Our original NJCCC budget request also reflected the urgent need for foundational operating aid support to ensure community colleges can pay for the staffing, facilities, and services necessary to fulfilling their mission. The proposed **\$20 million cut in state investment—a 12 percent reduction**—will significantly undermine the critical work of community colleges to build an equitable, innovative, and prosperous New Jersey. The proposed reduction jeopardizes the operation of New Jersey’s 18 community colleges, which currently educate close to 240,000 residents and power the key industries of our state’s economy. This proposed budget cut means community colleges, which typically serve the most economically vulnerable students, will be forced to make difficult decisions that could include raising tuition, cutting programs and student supports, and reducing staffing.

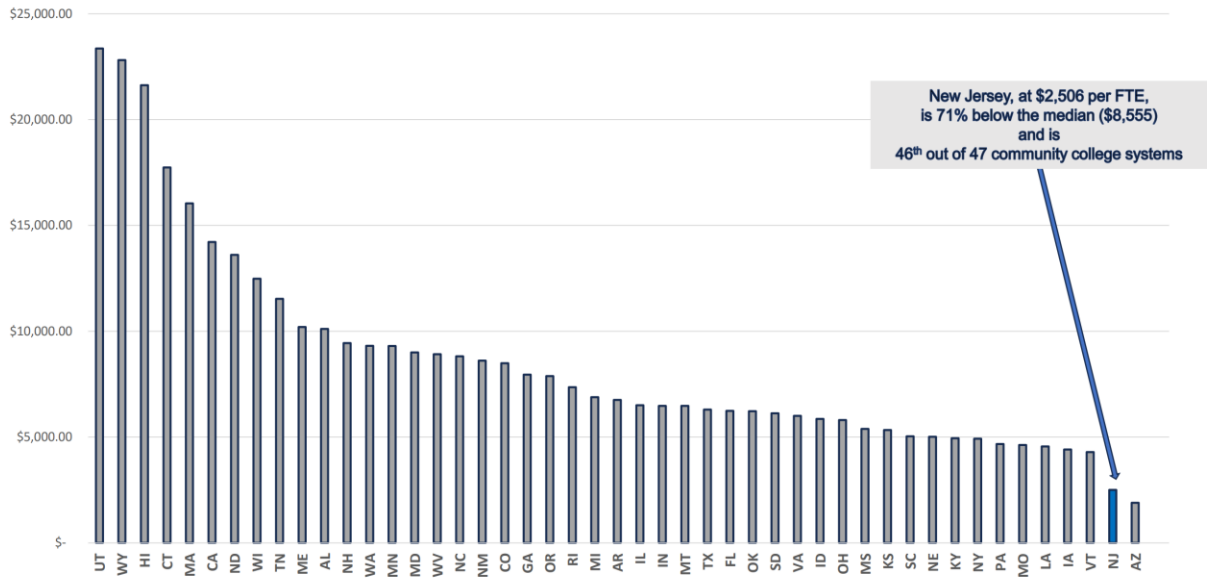
Even before this proposed reduction, New Jersey’s community colleges rank toward the bottom of the nation for state funding. The proposed FY 2025 budget strips out the same \$20 million the community colleges received last year with the help of the State Legislature in the FY 2024 state budget. We are grateful for the FY 2024 increase that, while important in helping with last year’s soaring health care costs of \$12 million, still left our colleges far behind their counterparts in other states in per capita funding—and well behind where we would be if funding kept pace with inflation.

- A reduction from FY 2024’s \$169 million to the proposed FY 2025 level of \$149 million will undermine the ability of colleges to deliver high-quality and affordable education to residents and impede their ability to meet the evolving workforce needs of employers.
- In FY 2024, **New Jersey ranked 46th among the 47 states** with community colleges in terms of state support per full-time student. **State investment in FY 2024 totaled \$2,506 per full-time student—71% below the national median of \$8,555.**
- **If the proposed budget is enacted, state operating aid to community colleges will be below the level of funding provided in FY 2002 (\$149 million vs \$156 million in FY 2002, not adjusted for inflation).**

In sum, the \$20 million cut to operating aid will impede the ability of our 18 community colleges to carry out the innovative strategies we have laid out in the Opportunity Agenda as well as threaten our current operations.

Discussion Points (Cont'd)

State Support for Community Colleges per Full Time Equivalent Enrollment, FY 2024



Discussion Points (Cont'd)

New Jersey Community College State Operating Aid FY2021-FY2025 (proposed)

| Fiscal Year | State Operating Aid (in thousands) |
|--------------------|---|
| 2001 | \$143,747 |
| 2002 | \$155,562 |
| 2003 | \$160,562 |
| 2004 | \$160,562 |
| 2005 | \$162,562 |
| 2006 | \$162,562 |
| 2007 | \$155,806 |
| 2008 | \$163,437 |
| 2009 | \$149,093 |
| 2010 | \$139,436 |
| 2011 | \$137,156 |
| 2012 | \$134,787 |
| 2013 | \$134,787 |
| 2014 | \$134,121 |
| 2015 | \$134,121 |
| 2016 | \$134,123 |
| 2017 | \$134,121 |
| 2018 | \$134,121 |
| 2019 | \$134,372 |
| 2020 | \$118,556 |
| 2021 | \$117,356 |
| 2022 | \$144,123 |
| 2023 | \$149,123 |
| 2024 | \$169,123 |
| 2025 (proposed) | \$149,123 |

1b. A proposed revision to budget language would stipulate that 100 percent, instead of \$10 million of the amount appropriated for County College Operational Costs Aid is to be allocated through a funding model based on factors including enrollment and completion of students with a priority given for low-income populations, underrepresented populations, and adults. The funding model is developed by the New Jersey Council of County Colleges, in consultation with the Secretary of Higher Education.

- **Questions:** Please describe the interaction of the language change and the recommended reduction in the appropriation for County College Operating Aid on the funding that will be available for operating expenses and the funding priorities listed

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above. Will the change in the amount allocated in accordance with the funding distribution model for state operational costs leverage funding for some of the budget priorities and allow for stable funding of operating costs? If the Governor's recommendation is approved, will the county colleges not be able to meet operating expenses or will they not be able to fund FY 2025 funding priorities?

- Please describe the specific increased costs that the county colleges are currently experiencing. Are certain operational costs experiencing a particularly high rise compared to the experience of the county colleges in previous years? Please discuss the fiscal stability of the county colleges in the current economic environment. What solutions are available to the county colleges if the appropriation is reduced in FY 2025?
- What are the specific metrics used in the funding model developed by the New Jersey Council of County Colleges, in consultation with the Secretary of Higher Education? In what ways does the funding model implement the requirement under budget language to prioritize each low-income population, underrepresented population, and adults? To what extent does the funding model consider outcomes-based metrics, such as employment and percentages of county college students seeking further education?

If the Governor's recommendation is approved, the state's 18 community colleges will not be able to meet operating expenses without cuts to programs or increases to tuition, and they will not be able to cover the cost of FY 2025 funding priorities. In recent years, inflation has led to the increase of costs to the colleges for all products and services, including health care for employees, supplies, materials for academic programs, utilities, services to the college, and many, many others (see question 3 below). Community colleges are fiscally stable, but their operations are strained by continued modest levels of state investment, and individual colleges are forced to make difficult decisions to ensure a balanced budget. Community colleges cannot borrow funds, and, as a result, they must develop a budget that is in line with expenses.

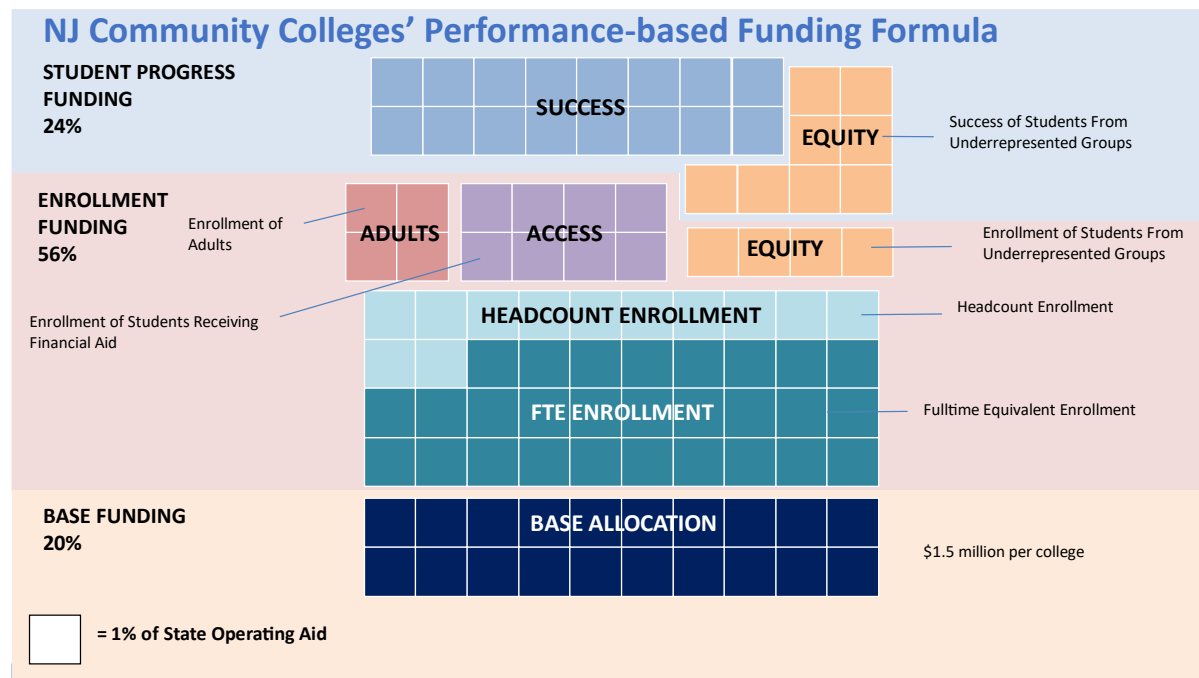
The proposed cut to state investment of \$20 million will force the colleges to consider increasing tuition, reducing critical services, and cutting academic programs.

The Funding Distribution Model for State Operating Aid to New Jersey's Community College ensures that state investment in community colleges, while modest, is allocated to the individual colleges in a fair and transparent manner, and that the investment supports state priorities of access, equity, and student success. The funding distribution model was adopted unanimously by all 18 community colleges in August 2021 and was approved by the Secretary of Higher Education and took effect in Fiscal Year 2022. The funding distribution model (formula) was designed to honor the unique and important role of community colleges in expanding access to higher education, addressing equity gaps, and ensuring student success. As a performance-based formula, New Jersey's distribution model is one of the most forward-thinking and strategic formulas in the country for the allocation of state investment in community colleges.

The funding distribution model contains three components:

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- i. Base Aid equal amounts per college: Each community college receive base funding of \$1.5 million.
- ii. Enrollment and Performance Aid: Weighted categories of aid distributed proportionately, which align with the following priorities:
 - A. Recognize student enrollment – 50%
 - B. Expand access – 10%
 - C. Address gaps in equity/diversity – 15%
 - D. Boost adult enrollment – 5%
 - E. Reward student progress/completion – 20%
- iii. Floor: The formula, as adopted and approved by the Secretary of Higher Education, provided that no community college will receive less in state operating aid than their FY2021 full-year equivalent allocation plus an increase of 2%. The adopted and approved formula committed that this floor will continue at this level for no less than 5 years (through FY 2026).



In FY 2024, all 18 colleges received funding that was higher than the floor amount. If the FY 2025 state budget includes funding at the FY 2024 levels, the change in budget language will have no impact. However, if the proposed budget is enacted and state aid is reduced by \$20 million, it is likely that some colleges will receive the floor amount in the formula.

The formula includes metrics that prioritize the enrollment of low-income population, the enrollment and graduation of underrepresented population, the enrollment of adults, and the success of students. These include:

Discussion Points (Cont'd)

| PRIORITY CATEGORY | METRIC | PERCENTAGE OF FORMULA |
|--|---|-----------------------|
| Enrollment of low-income students: | Number of Unduplicated Students who Receive State or Federal Financial Aid Based on Income <i>Note: These include the federal PELL program, the state TAG program, and the state CCOG program.</i> | 10% |
| Enrollment and completion of degrees by students from underrepresented populations: | Number of Black, Hispanic, American Indian or Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders Students Enrolled, Weighted to Reflect County Demographics <i>Note: Data is weighted based on the extent to which the college has enrolled students from underrepresented populations at a greater rate than the overall population of the county or counties served.</i> | 5% |
| Completion of degrees by students from underrepresented populations: | Number of Degrees Awarded to Black, Hispanic, American Indian or Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders Students | 10% |
| Enrollment of adults: | Number of students equal to or greater than 25 years of age | 5% |

The funding distribution model currently allocates 30% of the funds based on student success metrics. These currently include the number of degrees and 30 credit certificates that are awarded to all students (20%) and the number of degrees and 30 credit certificates that are awarded to students from underrepresented groups in higher education (10%).

The New Jersey Council of County Colleges is committed to continuing to refine and update the funding model, in consultation and with the approval of the Secretary of Higher Education. Currently, a Funding Formula Task Force, consisting of six community college Presidents, is meeting to make recommendations to the Presidents, the Council's Collaborations/Operations Committee, and ultimately to the full Council on possible enhancements to the funding distribution model.

Discussion Points (Cont'd)

Drop-off Cliff

2. According to the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education in the responses to the FY 2024 discussion points, the office “has not conducted research to determine the root causes of the statewide enrollment decline; however, the State’s enrollment numbers mirror national trends, with the decline of enrollment for Fall 2022 from Fall 2021 was 0.9% for NJ institutions compared to 1.1% nationally. Our fall 2022 enrollment data shows higher education enrollment stabilizing following the declines from the pandemic. This year, while senior public and independent public-mission institutions show a very slight drop in overall enrollment, the New Jersey county college sector had its first enrollment increase since 2011. The New Jersey College Promise aims to help with enrollment by addressing affordability concerns and providing students with a pathway to a two- and four- year degree tuition-free. The program thresholds help mitigate the drop-off ‘cliff’ of aid as AGI increases. College Promise programs provide a clear message to prospective students – both traditional and adult learners – of the opportunity to get a degree tuition-free. Research has shown that promise programs can increase college enrollment and attainment. However, time is needed for that messaging to get out and begin to impact student and family decisions and choices.”

- **Questions:** What is the “Drop-off Cliff” and how is it affecting enrollment? What have the enrollment changes been since the fall of 2022? What is the projection of the population of students who will attend the institution over the next ten years and what are the factors underlying the projection? Is the institution finding that the College Promise is mitigating enrollment declines and degree attainment?
- How is the institution adapting its recruitment and admissions strategies in response to the projected declines in traditional college-aged students?
- What specific initiatives is your institution implementing to attract and retain adult learners and other non-traditional student demographics?
- How is the institution addressing the potential financial implications of declining enrollments, particularly for institutions heavily reliant on tuition revenue?
- Are there plans to diversify revenue streams or explore alternative funding models to offset potential declines in enrollment?

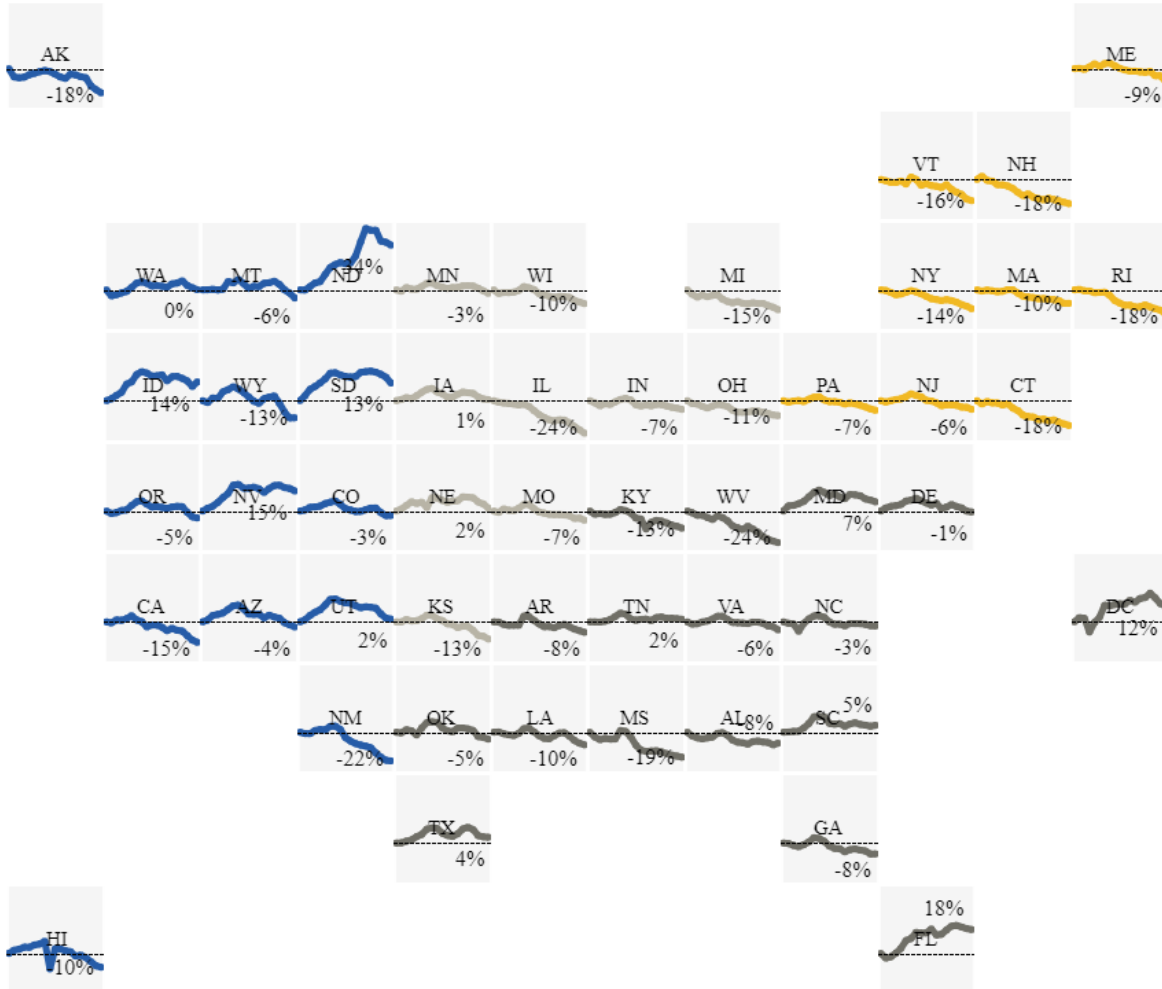
According to the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) analysis of preliminary Fall 2023 enrollment data, total enrollment across all of higher education in New Jersey rose by 1.14% over Fall 2022. **Community colleges had a second consecutive year of enrollment increases, rising 3.9%, considerably more than other higher education sectors.**

The “drop-off cliff” refers to the decline in births, particularly between 2007-2009 during the Great Recession, resulting in a decline in the traditional college-age population starting in 2025 that is projected to last until 2037. According to projections done by the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE), New Jersey will face a 6% decline by 2037 in the number of high school graduates—the smallest drop among states in the Northeast region.

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WICHE data also project a 6% decline for New Jersey’s high school graduate population between the 2023-24 academic year and 2033-34. According to [data from the New Jersey Department of Education](#), the number of high school graduates is actually on track to increase for the next three years, through the class of 2027, and then start a gentle decline.

Projections Data from the 10th Edition of Knocking at the College Door



Source: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates, 2020*, www.knocking.wiche.edu

The New Jersey Community College Opportunity Grant (CCOG) plays an important role in helping low-income students have the resources to attend postsecondary education. For Academic Year (AY) 2022-2023, CCOG helped close to 12,000 students. Just over half (54%) were students from households with adjusted gross incomes (AGI) of \$0-\$65,000, and the remainder were from households with AGI between \$65-\$80,000. For the current AY 2023-2024, as of April 29, 2024, CCOG has helped 17,216 students, including 11,226 in the first tier, 2,937 in the second, and 3,053 in the newly added third tier for AGI between \$80-100,000.

Discussion Points (Cont'd)

While expanding access to postsecondary education through CCOG is critical, it does not remove the need for foundational operating aid resources to support those students' needs.

Community colleges employ a wide array of creative recruitment and retention strategies to help both high school age students and adults.

- Traditional high school age students represent a significant proportion of the community college student body; students between the ages of 18-24 make up close to two-thirds (63%) of New Jersey community college students. **Pillar 1 of our Opportunity Agenda calls for Helping All High School Students Access Pathways to Postsecondary and Career Success.** To help achieve this goal, our 18 community colleges engage in deep partnerships with their local high school districts. They are working to expand dual enrollment and early college offerings with a focus on equity. They are prepared to work with the Department of Education, HESAA, OSHE, and local school districts to implement the recently enacted FAFSA mandate, serving as high school liaisons.

Our original budget request called for expanded College Readiness Now (CRN) funding to help recruit and connect more of New Jersey's high school students to community colleges; instead, the annual \$1 million CRN program was targeted for a \$200,000 (20%) cut. Further, New Jersey remains one of a handful of states without a statewide commitment to dual enrollment—a strategy that has been shown to encourage more high school students to pursue postsecondary education and to reduce their costs and time to degree. A second dual enrollment pilot initiative that was included in the FY 2025 proposed state budget is a start, but it will not come close to helping New Jersey's low-income and underrepresented high school students—including students of color, students with disabilities, students in foster care, and others—get the exposure to and head start in college their wealthier peers can easily access.

- New Jersey's community colleges serve a growing number of adults, with individuals over the age of 25 making up 37% of the student body in FY 2022. **Pillar 4 of our Opportunity Agenda calls for Helping Adults Attain the Credentials They Need for Career Mobility and Labor Market Success.** Our 18 colleges are engaged with OSHE and other providers to reach adults with some credits but no degree or credential. New Jersey's community colleges are also engaged in partnerships with community-based organizations and county and state agencies that serve low-income individuals, refugees, immigrants, veterans, individuals with disabilities, justice-impacted individuals, and other potential adult students.
- New Jersey's community colleges are doubling down on student success initiatives, with some tripling, quadrupling, or even quintupling the retention and graduation rates for their students of all ages, including those from populations that historically struggle. **Pillar 2 of our Opportunity Agenda focuses on Fostering Student Success and Completion in Postsecondary Education and Training.** This includes implementing models that call for more "intrusive" advising, early alert systems, mentoring, student stipends for emergencies and achieving certain milestones, and efforts to address the food, clothing, housing, transportation, mental health, child care, and other basic

Discussion Points (Cont'd)

needs of community college students, many of whom are low income. It also includes expanding access to credit for prior learning, which has been shown to help adults persist and reduce cost and time to degree, and offering a growing range of stackable short-term and workforce credentials that are appealing to many adult learners.

For FY 2022, tuition, fees, and chargeback made up over half of funding (52%) at community colleges. County aid accounted for roughly a quarter (24%), state aid was less than 15%, and other sources were 9%. As they prepare for potential enrollment declines among high school students, community college leaders will continue recruiting different populations of adult students, including those who are unemployed, underemployed, and working adults who may need to upskill to keep up with AI and other new technologies. They will continue to build more employer partnerships. They will pursue philanthropic, federal, state, and other grant resources. **However, to fulfill their mission, New Jersey's community colleges urgently need the \$20 million in state investment in operating aid to be restored in the FY25 state budget.**

Inflationary Pressures

3. A recent report from the College Board illustrated that while tuition prices increased for the 2023–24 academic year, they did so at a rate lower than inflation. This means that, after adjusting for inflation, average tuition and fees actually decreased across various institutions of higher education.

- **Questions: How has the institution specifically addressed the challenge of managing inflationary pressures on operating expenses, such as faculty salaries, utilities, and administrative costs?**
- **Have there been any adjustments made to financial aid or scholarship programs in response to inflationary pressures to ensure continued affordability for students?**
- **Please elaborate on any strategies or initiatives the institution has implemented to mitigate the effects of inflation on tuition and fee increases?**
- **Are there any areas of the institution's budget that have been particularly affected by inflation, and if so, how is the institution addressing these challenges?**
- **How has the institution balanced the need to maintain quality educational services and resources with the financial constraints imposed by inflationary pressures?**
- **How does the institution communicate with students, faculty, staff, and other stakeholders about the financial challenges posed by inflation and the institution's strategies for addressing them?**

With modest state investment, community colleges have limited options for managing and responding to the increased costs for all goods and services that are critical to the operation of the college. Community colleges are committed to offering high-quality and affordable

Discussion Points (Cont'd)

education, and all 18 colleges have made difficult decisions to meet this commitment. Colleges have two broad options for balancing their budgets each year. They can attempt to increase revenue by raising the cost of tuition or they can make cuts to programs and services.

Some colleges have raised tuition at higher rates than others. Tuition to attend a community college in New Jersey is already higher than in many other states, which has a direct negative impact on college enrollment and student retention at a time when New Jersey needs to be expanding access to postsecondary credentials and degrees. All community colleges have been forced to cut programs and services to students. In particular, all colleges have had to limit the level of student services available to students. As noted above, community colleges are all implementing innovative efforts to increase student retention and completion. However, inflation coupled with modest levels of state investment in community colleges severely hinders the ability of colleges to implement much needed services.

Health insurance costs continue to rise. In FY 2024, community colleges experienced an increase of \$12 million in the cost of health insurance across the 18 colleges. The increase of state operating aid to community colleges in the FY 2024 state budget was critical to the ability of colleges to address this substantial increase. The proposed reduction in state operating aid to community colleges in the Governor's FY 2025 state budget will further challenge the ability of colleges to address the increase in health care costs.

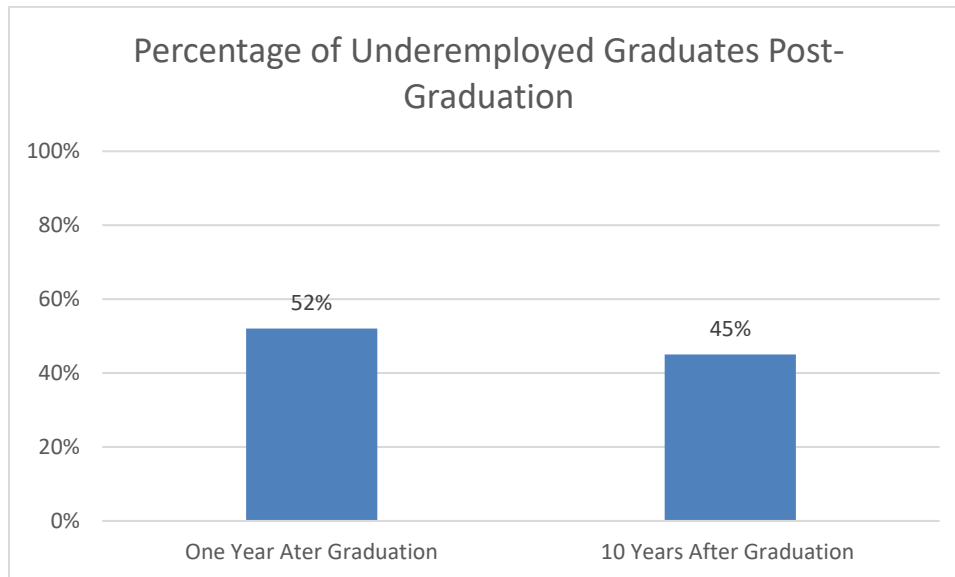
State and federal financial aid programs are a critical source of support to lower-income students. Each college has a foundation that provides scholarships to students, but the amount of funds available to provide to students is modest.

Community colleges are committed to communicating clearly and transparently with students and their community about the college's budget. Each college uses a variety of strategies for communicating about their budget, including emails and letters to the college community, newsletters, trustee meetings, and public forums with students, faculty, and staff.

Job Readiness

4. While the primary goal of many students attending college is to secure gainful employment, a February 2024 research report from the Strada Institute for the Future of Work and the Burning Glass Institute indicates that over half of recent graduates find themselves underemployed one-year post-graduation. After 10 years of graduation that number drops to 45%. Moreover, there is a growing trend of jobs in the United States that no longer require individuals to possess a four-year degree. Notably, last year, the Governor signed Executive Order 327, eliminating the four-year degree prerequisite for numerous entry-level positions within State government.

Discussion Points (Cont'd)



Source: Strada Institute for the Future of Work and the Burning Glass Institute

- **Questions:** Has Executive Order 327 affected enrollment? Does the institution track the employment outcomes of graduates, including metrics such as job placement and salary levels? Is the institution finding similar post graduate under employment rates?
- How does the institution integrate career readiness into its academic programs to ensure students are prepared for the evolving job market?
- Please provide examples of specific initiatives or programs offered by the institution aimed at enhancing students' job market competitiveness and employability.
- Are there any specialized training or certification programs offered by the institution that align with high-demand fields or industries that do not necessarily require a four-year degree?
- Are there any efforts underway to adapt or revise existing academic programs in response to changes in the job market landscape and the elimination of the four-year degree requirement for certain entry-level positions?

The Strada/Burning Glass report studied underemployment for graduates with bachelor's degrees from four-year colleges and universities, not for graduates with associate's degrees from two-year community colleges. It does raise important questions, however, about the labor market value of certain kinds of degrees.

The efforts to remove four-year degree requirements from certain public and private sector entry level jobs, including Governor Murphy's Executive Order 327, are often grounded in equity concerns, recognizing that job seekers of color are less likely than white job seekers to have four-year college degrees. These measures, referred to as "skills-based hiring," also reflect a tight labor market, opening up opportunities to many job seekers for positions that in reality do

Discussion Points (Cont'd)

not require a four-year degree, even if that has been the default hiring preference. The evidence on whether removing degree requirements leads to more hiring of individuals without degrees is, so far, not strong. A [recent study](#) conducted by The Burning Glass Institute and Harvard Business School analyzed hiring data to determine if non-degreed workers were getting hired at higher rates as more employers promote skills-based hiring. The analysis found that while the number of roles for which employers dropped degree requirements quadrupled between 2014 and 2023, the impact on hiring of workers without degrees was negligible.

While the country continues to raise questions about the value of higher education, [recent research](#) from the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University found higher levels of education have positive returns for New Jerseyans, contributing to upward economic and social mobility; it also benefits governments and communities, resulting in higher tax revenues. [Other research](#) finds that in addition to greater economic security, individuals who have postsecondary credentials have a healthier life, are more likely to vote, and are more engaged in their communities. **New Jersey must remain committed to helping more residents attain affordable, high quality postsecondary degrees and credentials at community colleges.**

Community colleges are heavily invested in helping students connect to careers and helping employers meet their workforce needs. **Pillar 3 of our Opportunity Agenda calls for Building Transparent, Seamless, and Stackable Pathways That Respond to the Changing Economy.** As our report notes, New Jersey community colleges are working to build a more flexible and contemporary higher education system that recognizes students take many different and unique journeys to postsecondary credentials and degrees and need transparent academic and career pathways that can be accessed in myriad ways. Community colleges are working to build pathways that connect noncredit workforce education and short-term credentials to credit programs and degrees.

Under Pillar 3, several of the recommended strategies reflect the need to help students connect to careers, such as ensuring all community college students have opportunities to complete high quality, paid internship work experiences. The Strada/Burning Glass report on underemployment for college graduates notes a “strong connection between internships and college-level employment after graduation.” Work-based learning opportunities such as internships are critical to students building social capital and making connections to the labor market, providing them with experience they can point to when considering careers and searching for jobs. [Research](#) has found that first-generation students, Black and Latino/a students, women, and low-income students are less likely to have opportunities for paid internships, and that [community college students](#) are less likely than four-year students to access paid work-based learning opportunities.

In 2021, New Jersey’s community colleges, in partnership with the New Jersey Business and Industry Association and with support in three state budgets, launched the [New Jersey Pathways to Career Opportunities](#) initiative, with the goals of:

- Uniting industry and education experts to solve labor market challenges and build timely and relevant curricula to address skill needs;

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- Creating education and career pathways from middle and high school through two- and four-year college and beyond in the four fastest-growing sectors in New Jersey: Health Services, Infrastructure and Energy, Manufacturing and Supply Chain Management, and Technology and Innovation; and
- Ensuring a more resilient, equitable, and fairer economy for all residents by supporting multiple on-ramps to stackable credentials, education, training, and careers.

The key industries within the Pathways Centers of Workforce Innovation are projected to make up 33% of actual employment in New Jersey in 2028. Occupations within the Centers of Workforce Innovation are projected to grow at a faster rate than all other occupations in New Jersey by 2028. To date, the initiative has enabled 6,178 students and adult learners to participate in career awareness, dual enrollment, for-credit academic courses/programs, noncredit workforce training, pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, and professional development.

STATEWIDE INCLUSIVE COLLABORATIVES

| Health Services | Technology & Innovation | Infrastructure & Energy | Manufacturing & Supply Chain Management |
|--|---|---|---|
| CENTERS OF WORKFORCE INNOVATION | | | |
| <div style="background-color: #00728f; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 5px; font-weight: bold; margin-bottom: 5px;">Patient Care</div> <p>NJ Community College Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atlantic Cape Community College • Bergen Community College • Brookdale Community College • Camden County College • Essex County College • Mercer County Community College • Passaic County Community College • Rowan College of South Jersey • Salem Community College • Union County College | <div style="background-color: #00728f; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 5px; font-weight: bold; margin-bottom: 5px;">Data & Computer Science</div> <p>NJ Community College Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camden County College • Essex County College • Middlesex College • County College of Morris • Ocean County College • Raritan Valley Community College • Rowan College at Burlington County | <div style="background-color: #00728f; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 5px; font-weight: bold; margin-bottom: 5px;">Offshore Wind</div> <p>NJ Community College Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atlantic Cape Community College • Rowan College of South Jersey | <div style="background-color: #00728f; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 5px; font-weight: bold; margin-bottom: 5px;">Manufacturing & Supply Chain Logistics</div> <p>NJ Community College Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brookdale Community College • Camden County College • Essex County College • Hudson County Community College • County College of Morris • Middlesex College • Raritan Valley Community College • Salem Community College • Sussex County Community College • Union College of Union County, NJ |
| | <div style="background-color: #00728f; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 5px; font-weight: bold; margin-bottom: 5px;">Film & TV Production</div> <p>NJ Community College Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brookdale Community College • Hudson County Community College • Mercer County Community College • Camden County College | <div style="background-color: #00728f; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 5px; font-weight: bold; margin-bottom: 5px;">Electric Vehicles</div> <p>NJ Community College Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bergen Community College • Camden County College • Raritan Valley Community College | |
| | | <div style="background-color: #00728f; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 5px; font-weight: bold; margin-bottom: 5px;">Construction</div> <p>NJ Community College Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camden County College • Hudson County Community College • Rowan College at Burlington County • Rowan College of South Jersey | <div style="background-color: #00728f; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 5px; font-weight: bold; margin-bottom: 5px;">Aseptic Processing & Biomanufacturing</div> <p>NJ Community College Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raritan Valley Community College • Middlesex College • Mercer County Community College |



NJ PATHWAYS
TO CAREER OPPORTUNITIES
Helping Education to Build an Innovative Workforce

NJ CC New Jersey's Community Colleges NJBIA

Discussion Points (Cont'd)

Examples across all 18 community colleges of efforts to enhance employability and job market competitiveness of students abound, including:

- County College of Morris (CCM) has created a model pathway in Advanced Manufacturing. Individuals seeking immediate employment in the field, known for family-supporting wages and benefits, complete an eight-week non-credit bootcamp program and enter the workforce immediately on completion. Students completing the bootcamp program in Advanced Manufacturing earn multiple industry credentials, including OSHA 10 and NIMS Level 1. Additionally, college credit in CCM's Mechanical Engineering Technology degree program is awarded on completion of the bootcamp program. CCM manages the interview process with area manufacturers so that each student is ensured interviews with up to five different employers. The employment rate is 93%. Employers are encouraged to hire these entry-level employees as apprentices and CCM supports, as an intermediary, eight U.S. Department of Labor-registered apprenticeships, including Industrial Maintenance, CNC Operator, and Quality Assurance/Quality Control. Approximately 50% of the new hires are hired as apprentices. Upon completion of what is typically a year-long apprenticeship, in addition to receiving their certificate from the U.S. Department of Labor, students are awarded additional credit in the Mechanical Engineering Technology degree program as well as wage increases associated with milestones in their apprenticeship. Students who complete an associate degree, often supported by employer-provided tuition reimbursement, are well-positioned to further advance in their career in Manufacturing.
- Through Warren County Community College's (WCCC) drone program, students can pursue industry certifications, one-year certificate degree programs, or a two-year Associate Degree in Applied Science for Unmanned Systems. These WCCC graduates are securing high-paying positions, and the program is contributing to the region's economic growth.
- Raritan Valley Community College, Mercer County Community College, and Middlesex College have recently launched the Center for Workforce Innovation for Aseptic Processing and Biomanufacturing with a goal of creating a robust pipeline of skilled entry-level workers to meet critical labor market needs. Current industry coalition partners include Johnson & Johnson, Bristol Myers Squibb, Merck, Novartis, Minaris, Roche, Cellares, Legend, Apex, Ferring, Joule, Everest Group, and Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield. Coalition members will contribute to the development of a robust suite of credentials, as well as participate in the development of shared marketing campaigns, job shadowing experiences, pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, and mentorship programs.
- Salem Community College (SCC) is world renowned for its Scientific Glass Technology (SGT) program. Scientific glassblowing, particularly flameworking, is expanding exponentially as it is used in the fields of Chemistry and Physics. SCC students learn how to fabricate precision glass apparatus and instruments critical to research and industry. SCC's Associate in Applied Science in SGT is the only degree program in the United States fully devoted to the development of this essential skill, and one of only a few programs globally.

Discussion Points (Cont'd)

- Mercer County Community College (MCCC) is helping promote registered apprenticeship in New Jersey in several fields, including Health Care. MCCC partners with the Trenton Water Works (TWW)'s Training and Apprenticeship Program (TAP), providing employees with education to prepare them for higher-level jobs in water treatment and distribution operation and maintenance. TAP is supported by the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Growing Apprenticeships in Nontraditional Sectors grant program, which covers half of the apprentices' salaries. TWW's apprentices received 290 hours of training, including 180 hours for MCCC's operator prerequisite course, which is taught on-site at TWW headquarters by a water industry executive. The TAP curriculum, which includes Occupational Safety and Health Administration and Federal Emergency Management Agency emergency response training, prepares apprentices to become water system operation or water treatment specialists who are eligible to take related state exams after they complete their required number of work hours.

NJCCC is currently developing partnerships with the NJ Department of Labor, the New Jersey Statewide Data System, and OSHE to increase capacity to track labor market outcomes of community college students.

Recovering from the Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic

5. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a transition to virtual learning.
 - **Questions:** What percentage of students are still engaged in remote learning, and what factors have influenced the institution's decision to continue remote instruction, if applicable?
 - What specific financial challenges is the institution still dealing with post-pandemic, and what strategies have been employed to address these challenges?
 - How has the continued reliance on remote learning impacted student engagement, academic outcomes, and campus life?

The number of New Jersey community college students engaged exclusively in distance education fell significantly from Fall 2020 to Fall 2022.

| Enrollment in Distance Education | | | | | | |
|---|-------------|------------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|------------------|
| | Fall 2020 | | Fall 2021 | | Fall 2022 | |
| | Exclusively | Some But Not All | Exclusively | Some But Not All | Exclusively | Some But Not All |
| <i>Total</i> | 57,555 | 25,855 | 32,758 | 36,380 | 22,552 | 31,646 |

Source: NJ OSHE Fall Enrollment Dashboard, Distance Education Enrollment

Discussion Points (Cont'd)

As one college reported recently, they reopened as soon as possible after the start of the COVID Pandemic, recognizing their “role as an oasis of safety for so many of our impoverished students.” At that college, in Fall 2020, 13% of classes were offered face-to-face; currently 67% are face-to-face. The college reported current students appeared to be more focused and seeking contact with other students. They also reported that in the aftermath of COVID, students are especially drawn to active learning opportunities. The college is “creating career and major-related ‘*destination venues*’ that allow our students to engage in active learning outside of the classroom with other students with similar interests” such as radio and tv stations, a recording studio, an observatory, a science research lab, an art studio, a Bloomberg lab, a greenhouse, history archives, and others.

This community college—and others have told similar stories—noted that their current students are also “more anxious, and more needy.” They need education and training, guidance and direction, and often food, clothing, and shelter. To help students overcome obstacles, they expanded the professional social work staff to work with students on immediate basic needs issues and to connect them to community resources. They expanded their food insecurity program. They expanded their clothing program, including professional career interview clothes as well as casual, everyday items. Recognizing technology is also a basic student need, they launched an emergency laptop loaner program during COVID and now have an optional laptop fee for new students.

All of these initiatives, vital to supporting today’s community college students, require resources and could be jeopardized by the proposed \$20 million cut to operating aid.

Regarding the decision to continue remote education, community colleges have learned how important remote learning opportunities can be to meeting the needs of working students, who need the flexibility to create class schedules with a mix of instructional modes. Since the pandemic, through extensive training in the use of technology, community colleges have grown more effective at engaging students in online education as well as at providing students with access to remote support services.

Affirmative Action

6. In June 2023, the United States Supreme Court in *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College* and *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. University of North Carolina* held that the schools’ use of race in admissions violated the Constitution’s equal protection principles. The court case stemmed from petitioners in both cases alleging they were denied admissions to Harvard College and the University of North Carolina because of their race. In ruling on the case, the majority opinion of the Court stated that the two institutions’ affirmative action admissions policies “lack sufficiently focused and measurable objectives warranting the use of race.” In its decision, however, the Court clarified that nothing in its opinion prohibits institutions from considering an applicant’s discussion of how race affected the applicant’s life, be it through “discrimination, inspiration, or otherwise.”

Discussion Points (Cont'd)

- **Questions:** Please describe the effect of the Supreme Court's decision on the institution. In what ways did the decision necessitate changes in the institution's admissions policies and any institutional strategies related to student recruitment?
- In light of the decision, in what ways does the institution seek to achieve a student population of varied backgrounds? To what extent does the Court's decision affect or not affect the institution's ability to achieve a student population of varied backgrounds?

Last summer, the United States Supreme Court overturned affirmative action in higher education. As open enrollment institutions that accept all applicants, community colleges did not need to change their admissions policies to comply with these new rulings on affirmative action. However, the implications of these rulings are of grave concern to community colleges, not only because our students of color look to our four-year college and university partners for transfer opportunities, but also because we see this decision as antithetical to our central mission to create a more just and equitable society through education for all.

Our response includes continuing to play a central role in educating a diverse population of New Jersey students and working learners. With a focus on equity, we are expanding partnerships with high schools to prepare students for college and assist them to earn college credit. We plan to work with Governor Murphy and the State Legislature to improve equitable access to affordable dual enrollment programs, ensuring they are available to help all young people earn their first college credits. As noted, Pillar 2 of our Opportunity Agenda is dedicated to Fostering Student Success and Completion in Postsecondary Education and Training. We must continue to strengthen student success programs that address the significant gaps in college completion for students of color, building on successful programs underway at each of our community colleges and programs such as New Jersey's Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF), which assists students from economically and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds, seventy percent of whom are Black and Hispanic. We must also continue to strengthen and support career-focused education and training, working with our employer partners to connect New Jersey's community college students to work-based learning such as internships and apprenticeships, and to good jobs that pay family-sustaining wages.