



Policy Agenda for Ohio Community Colleges

134th General Assembly

MAKE OHIO “WORKFORCE READY”

Better Support Adult Learners

- Continue supporting Community College Acceleration Program (CCAP) eligibility to better leverage state and local resources through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program’s Employment & Training Program (SNAP E&T).
- Support locally established institutional debt-forgiveness programs that would enable re-enrollment of students who have previously dropped out from a college or university with prior debt.
- Standardize the process for awarding credit hours through prior learning assessments (PLA) and competency-based education (CBE).

Support TechCred

- Preserve funding at current levels for the TechCred Program, which partners colleges and other training providers with employers to help their employees upgrade their skills to increase competitiveness.
- Expand the use of the IMAP Funding within TechCred to be more easily accessed by unemployed or underemployed individuals.

Workforce Rapid Recovery Fund

- Earmark up to \$5 million of the budget stabilization fund for a new workforce rapid recovery fund to provide targeted assistance for short job training programs for unemployed or underemployed individuals.

AFFORDABILITY AND ACCESS TO CLOSE THE EQUITY GAPS

Emergency Aid Program

- Provide \$5 million for block grants to support emergency student aid programs at Ohio’s colleges.
- Funds could be used for one-time emergencies such as car repairs, rental assistance, and utilities—frequently identified financial barriers to low-income students’ progress.

Expand Access to the Ohio College Opportunity Grant (OCOG) Program

- Create the OCOG Transfer Incentive to provide at least an additional \$500 for students who complete their associates degree at a community college and transfer to an Ohio university for their bachelor’s degree.
- Allow low-income community college students to access OCOG to defray expenses of attendance beyond tuition such as the costs of textbooks and other education materials.
- Establish a study committee to make recommendations for improving OCOG’s effectiveness, value, and outcomes for the state and low-income students.

Increase FAFSA Completion

- Make completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) application a high school graduation requirement, with an opt-out provision.
- Create a study committee led by ODHE, ODJFS, ODRC, DSA and the Office of Workforce Transformation to identify ways that Ohio can assist adult learners with completing the FAFSA.

Expand Access to Broadband

- Support ongoing state efforts increase access to broadband or high-speed internet service throughout Ohio.

FUNDING STUDENT SUCCESS

State Support of Instruction (SSI)

- Increase SSI funding by 3% to support continued implementation of student success reforms as well as expected enrollment increases.
- Establish parity in Ohio's outdated funding allocation between community college programs providing short-term certificates or workforce training programs desired by Ohio employers and universities who primarily offer bachelor's degrees.
- Fund new employment metrics in the SSI funding formula to ensure students graduate with degrees that align to Ohio jobs.
- Provide budget transparency, accuracy, and responsiveness by ending one-size-fits-all funding and creating separate SSI budget lines and funding formulas for universities and community colleges.

Tuition Flexibility

- Limit community college tuition increases to a maximum of \$10 per credit hour to help colleges fund new and expanded academic and career support services, student success strategies, technology platforms and online course offerings.

COLLEGE CREDIT PLUS

Student Eligibility

- Revise the Innovative Waiver Program by expanding the length of the waiver and data tracking.
- Establish a study committee to identify barriers and recommend policy changes to improve equity in CCP participation for students of color, low-income students, other underrepresented students, and those pursuing career-tech training opportunities.

Improve Career-Technical Pathways

- Provide greater flexibility within CCP for career-tech students who wish to pursue a workforce-ready postsecondary pathway.
- Support recommendations made by the Career-Technical Credit Transcript Report to ensure career-tech students are awarded their articulated credit in a timelier manner.
- Directly fund College Credit Plus to offset the revenue impact of Ohio's dual enrollment program on K-12 partners.

Improve College Readiness for Academically Underprepared Students

- Better support academically at-risk students with a new co-requisite pilot program to help prepare high school seniors who test below college-level readiness on the ACT (based on the Tennessee Board of Regent's Sails Program).

DEREGULATION

Acknowledge that community colleges are low-cost, efficient institutions of higher education by removing bureaucratic reporting requirements that unnecessarily divert resources on Ohio's community college campuses.

- Eliminate the requirement that community colleges submit annual "efficiency" reports.
- Remove restrictions under ORC 3333.046 to eliminate the state's review of all fees to provide greater local control to community college boards of trustees.
- Eliminate the state mandate that colleges do a six-year capital plan.