

Governor Murphy Signs the FY 2021 State Budget Which Includes Level Operating Aid for New Jersey's Community Colleges

Today, Governor Murphy signed the FY2021 state budget. This budget includes level funding for nine months of state operating aid (the same amount since 2011) for New Jersey's 18 community colleges and includes support for the Community College Opportunity Grant program.

New Jersey's community colleges thank the Legislature and the Governor for choosing to invest in community colleges, their students, and their communities. It is essential that the state continues to make investments equal to the value of community colleges to New Jersey's economic growth, the prosperity of our residents, and the academic success of more than half of all the state's undergraduate students attending public colleges and universities.

The Governor's proposed budget announced in August included a \$25 million reduction in operating aid to community colleges. But with the help of over 1,400 community college supporters from every county in the state, we sent almost 18,000 email messages to New Jersey Legislators urging them to restore the \$25 million reduction in state operating aid proposed by the Governor ... and they listened! New Jersey's community colleges are grateful for the Legislature's restoration of the \$25 million reduction to operating aid in both the Assembly and Senate versions of the budget.

The Governor's proposed budget included funding to ensure that the Community College Opportunity Grant (CCOG) program continues and the Legislature concurred. The CCOG program provides individuals in households earning less than \$65,000 the opportunity to attend community college tuition free. The CCOG program is expanding economic opportunity to thousands of New Jersey residents. New Jersey's community colleges are grateful for the Governor's leadership on this important program and the Legislature's on-going support for expanding access to higher education for more New Jerseyans.

New Jersey's Community Colleges serve as anchors and engines of their local economies and communities, and are a place where people of ALL ages can attend to find new opportunities. New Jersey's Community Colleges, as the only educational institutions with statewide reach, provide essential opportunities to more than 300,000 New Jersey residents each year. Over 200,000 students – more than half of all undergraduate students in public colleges and universities in the state – are enrolled in credit and degree programs at New Jersey's Community Colleges. **New Jersey's Community Colleges are the PROVEN choice!**



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New Jersey's community colleges

are instrumental in creating a more resilient and equitable

New Jersey. State support of community colleges is critical. Now, more than ever, New Jersey's future and that of its residents depend on a strong network of community colleges that build pathways to new opportunities and renewed economic growth. In this increasingly global, connected and digital world, New Jersey's community colleges help students and residents prepare and thrive. Community colleges are indispensable institutions in creating a stronger and fairer economy.

New Jersey's 18 community colleges will position New Jersey to recover from this public health and economic crisis by building a skilled workforce that can adapt to the changing economy, by assisting the over one million residents who have lost their jobs, by reducing the cost of higher education for parents and students, by providing adults the opportunity to obtain new skills and careers, and by building strong industry-driven education and training pathways that will be the foundation of the state's economy for years to come.

New Jersey's Community Colleges fulfill a remarkable number of vital roles: i) they prepare students to succeed in four-year institutions; ii) they train residents in accelerated, industry recognized, and stackable workforce training programs to meet labor market demands; iii) they provide access to high quality post-secondary programs for the state's most vulnerable residents; iv) they are rooted in the core values of equality, equity, and opportunity; and v) they serve as dynamic engines of both economic development and civic engagement. **New Jersey's Community Colleges have PROVEN Impact!**

A bolder beginning. A brighter future. It all starts at a New Jersey Community College.

For more information on the current efforts of the state's 18 community colleges, please click on the links below:

[Vision 2028: Framework for the Future of New Jersey Community Colleges](https://www.njccc.org/vision-2028)

<https://www.njccc.org/vision-2028>

[Vision and Action: Community Colleges as Leaders in Building Pathways to New Jersey's Future.](https://www.njccc.org/pathwaystonjfuture)

<https://www.njccc.org/pathwaystonjfuture>

[New Jersey Pathway and Skills Collaboratives](https://njworkforce.org/pathwayandskillscollaborative/)

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