

2025 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

CCCS Legislative Priorities and Budget Requests

ABOUT CCCS

The Colorado Community College System embodies the strength and impact of "The Power of 13," uniting 13 unique colleges across more than 35 locations to serve as **Colorado's partner of choice** for workforce development. Guided by an open-access mission, CCCS ensures that every Coloradan, regardless of background or ambition, has access to affordable, in-demand, and life-changing educational opportunities.

Together, we educate over 125,000 students annually through Concurrent Enrollment, Career and Technical Education (CTE), short-term certificate programs, associate and bachelor's degree programs, and customized employee training. Our collective efforts drive economic mobility and create pathways for a stronger, more prosperous Colorado.

CCCS'S LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES AIM TO SUPPORT THE FOLLOWING STRATEGIC GOALS:



INCREASE FUNDING TO SUPPORT BASE OPERATING EXPENSES



SUPPORT STUDENT SUCCESS & INCREASE ACCESS



EXPAND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Questions? Contact:

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BUDGET PRIORITIES & CAPITAL REQUESTS

BUDGET PRIORITIES



Advocating for Increased State Support Amid Budget Constraints

CCCS is navigating a challenging fiscal landscape this year, where state funding recommendations fall significantly short of meeting projected operating costs. Despite a modest increase of \$2.3 million in state appropriations proposed for FY 2025-26 (a mere 0.8% increase from the previous year), this funding—combined with a recommended tuition cap of 2.3%—**covers less than half of our anticipated operating cost growth.**

This reality underscores the critical need for robust advocacy to secure additional state funding. CCCS is focused on ensuring our institutions can continue delivering high-quality education and services that meet the needs of students, communities, and industries.

CAPITAL REQUESTS



Building the Future: Expanding Workforce-Ready Facilities and Technology

Our budget priorities also reflect the importance of investing in state-of-the-art facilities and technology, with requests for controlled maintenance, capital construction, and IT projects aimed at expanding access to workforce-ready education. Many of these projects focus on creating versatile, cross-disciplinary learning environments that integrate workforce-aligned disciplines, ensuring that students are prepared for Colorado's evolving economic needs.

These investments are crucial to addressing pressing infrastructure needs, enhancing student learning experiences, and meeting workforce demands across the state. **View project request list in appendix.**

CCCS LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



Focusing on Student Success and Institutional Sustainability in a Tight Budget Year

As Colorado faces significant financial constraints, CCCS's legislative efforts this year center on navigating a difficult budget landscape. Rather than leading new legislative initiatives, **we are concentrating on securing maximum operating funding to support student success and sustain our colleges' operations.**

While actively engaging in discussions around higher education policies—including opportunities to expand access to concurrent enrollment and workforce development training— **our primary goal is to advocate for the resources needed to ensure affordable, accessible, and high-quality educational opportunities for all Coloradans.** This strategic focus allows us to address immediate funding challenges while continuing to champion initiatives that align with our mission.

Looking Toward the Future

The legislative priorities outlined in the following pages reflect CCCS's long-standing aspirational goals, which remain central to our vision for higher education in Colorado. While this year's focus is shaped by the state's fiscal realities, we are committed to pursuing these priorities in future years when budget conditions are more stable. These enduring goals serve as a roadmap for expanding access, fostering workforce development, and strengthening the communities we serve.

CCCS LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



MEETING STUDENTS WHERE THEY ARE



- **Reduce barriers to Concurrent Enrollment.** CCCS is the state’s largest provider of Concurrent Enrollment (CE), educating 45,000 high schools students each year and saving families over \$57 million in college tuition costs. As a committed partner in fostering equitable access of information and opportunities for students and families, our goal is to expand participation in the state’s Concurrent Enrollment program that provides tuition-free, transferable college credits.
- **Increase Career & Technical Education (CTE) skills in high school.** CCCS approves all CTE programs in the state that receive Federal Perkins dollars, ensuring alignment between workforce and education systems with industry demand.
- CCCS will seek to leverage opportunities from the “1215 Taskforce recommendations” and the “1241 accountability report” to mitigate issues such as:
 - Covering the costs for CE/CTE course materials.
 - Ensuring districts honor all learners by not “capping” the number of CE courses offered or limiting access for participation.
 - Adding “College and Career Readiness Before Graduation” as a postsecondary workforce readiness (PWR) sub-indicator in the K-12 accountability frameworks.

CCCS LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



- **Sustain zero-cost programs (Care Forward and Career Advance).** Through reporting mechanisms, CCCS will showcase the positive impact and on-going need to extend or expand the state’s “free community college” programs for in-demand workforce areas, as identified by the Colorado Talent Pipeline Report.
- **Startup costs support to meet industry demand.** CCCS is strategically planning to create two Centers of Excellence for aerospace and construction management to foster strong industry/education partnerships focused on meeting current and future workforce needs. However, there are large upfront costs in terms of equipment, program development, and personnel. With front-end investments, these future programs have the potential to sustain themselves through strong industry partnerships and student enrollments.
- **Non-credit, industry-recognized credential programs.** Demand for industry recognized credentials, that help folks get jobs now versus in two to four years, is rising but resources are needed to provide these programs (because there is no credit going toward a college degree and, in Colorado, these programs are not recognized in the higher education allocation formula). There are many non-credit courses and programs. CCCS will seek resource support to build this program type. This effort also aligns with Commission on Higher Education’s state strategic goals.

CCCS LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



SUPPORT FOR RURAL COLLEGES



- **Rural institutions** are some of the state's oldest colleges and they are facing an existential crisis. The industries that once drove small town economies are rapidly changing and, as a result, jobs are harder to find, and populations are shrinking and aging. Our small, rural colleges provide education and training, but they are also resources for their communities in diversifying and growing rural economies. Our colleges serve not only as educators, but as conveners and as thought partners and resource generators. We can and must work to secure funding for these colleges .

When rural community colleges were created 70-100 years ago, they were done so with a large state and community investment to buy the land, build the buildings, develop programs, etc. These colleges are small and do not generate sufficient enrollment to produce the revenue needed to maintain on-campus housing, high-cost CTE programs, and basic operations (roofs, boilers, technology, programs to meet local workforce needs, etc.). Additional resources, outside the higher education funding allocation, are needed to help with basic operations to ensure rural community colleges exist in the future.

APPENDIX

FY-2025-26 CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

College	Capital Construction Project	Total Cost	CCF Request	CF Request
CNCC	Weiss & Hefley Renovation	\$8,652,142	\$8,652,142	\$0
ACC	Health Programs Integration, Phase II	\$40,487,561	\$37,248,556	\$3,239,005
RRCC	Health Sciences, EMS and Fire Science Building	\$37,339,236	\$29,871,389	\$7,467,847
PPSC	First Responder Emergency Education Complex, Phase I	\$28,821,210	\$26,501,103	\$2,320,107
CCA	Classroom Building 3rd Floor Renovation	\$6,632,714	\$6,367,405	\$265,309
Otero	Welding Shop Metal Building	\$1,597,641	\$1,597,641	\$0
LCC	Maintenance Building Expansion	\$1,709,500	\$1,709,500	\$0
Total for Capital Construction Projects		\$132,510,004	\$118,617,736	\$13,892,268

FY-2025-26 CAPITAL INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROJECTS

College	Capital Construction Project	Total Cost	CCF Request	CF Request
Otero	Campus Security and Device Upgrades	\$505,050	\$425,050	\$80,000
CNCC	South Campus Redundancy Upgrade	\$571,163	\$571,163	\$0
NJC	Camera Upgrade	\$548,035	\$548,035	\$0
CCA	Campus Technology Modernization	\$2,018,990	\$1,839,080	\$179,910
RRCC	Safety and Security	\$1,170,015	\$1,170,015	\$0
Total for IT Projects		\$4,813,253	\$4,553,343	\$259,910

* The tables above summarize capital projects for state-funded or partially state-funded requests by college.

CCF means Capital Construction Fund (the state-funded portion).

CF means Cash Fund (funding from the college in support of the project).

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