

**Preparing Pennsylvania for the future:  
Recommendations to provide educational opportunities  
and build a skilled workforce in the Commonwealth.**





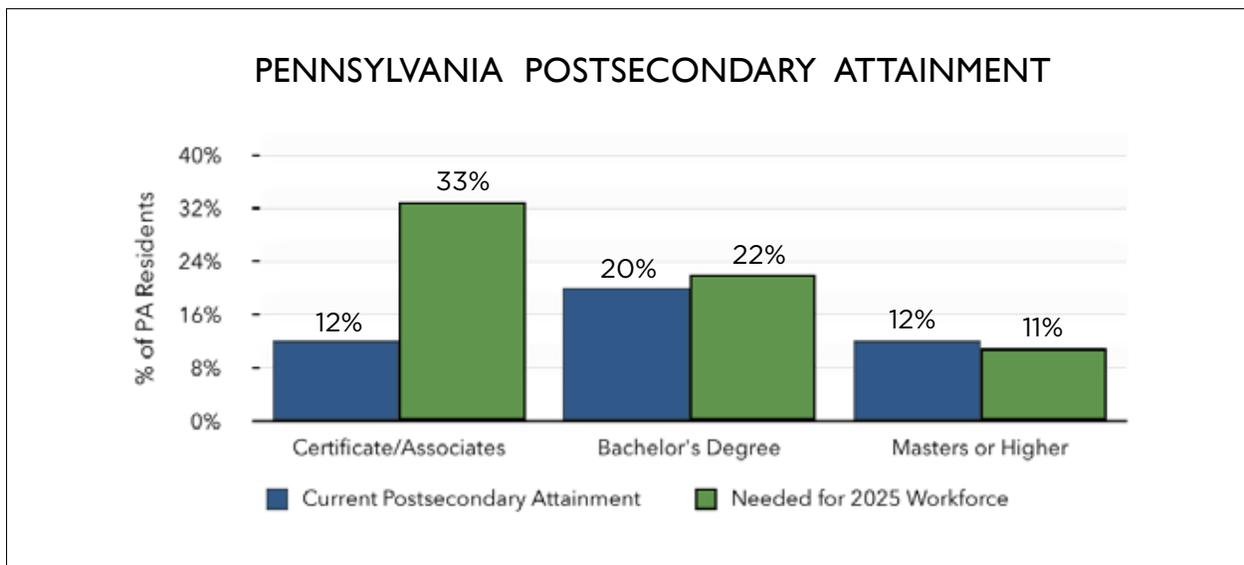
# Executive Summary

Pennsylvania has a distinguished history as a leader among states. Pennsylvania’s higher education system, in particular, has been the envy of other states with an extensive array of public and private institutions. For years, public higher education in Pennsylvania, sustained by a growing population, produced graduates that supported a thriving economy in the Commonwealth.

In 2018, however, the Commonwealth confronts significant challenges. Pennsylvania’s population is declining and shifting. The state’s economy, once based in manufacturing and manual trades, is changing rapidly. Recently, the state has struggled with its annual budget process which sets funding and policy priorities to advance the Commonwealth. Simultaneously, the Commonwealth has failed to develop a comprehensive agenda for its public postsecondary education system, including its community colleges.

The Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce estimates that by 2020, nearly 65 percent of all jobs in the United States will require postsecondary education and training beyond high school, with 30 percent of those jobs requiring some college or an associate degree.<sup>1</sup> Pennsylvania is working towards a postsecondary attainment goal of 60 percent of Pennsylvanians with a postsecondary degree or credential by 2025.

Data compiled from the Pennsylvania Department of Education show that the growth needed for Pennsylvania to reach the national and state attainment goals is projected to be in associate degree or certificate completion.<sup>2</sup> While the state is providing nearly enough bachelor’s and overproducing master degrees, it needs to increase associate degree attainment by 21 percent to meet workforce projections.



<sup>1</sup> Carnevale, A., Smith, N., & Strohl, J. (2013) Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements. Georgetown University: Center on Education and the Workforce. Retrieved from [https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Recovery2020.ES\\_Web\\_.pdf](https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Recovery2020.ES_Web_.pdf)

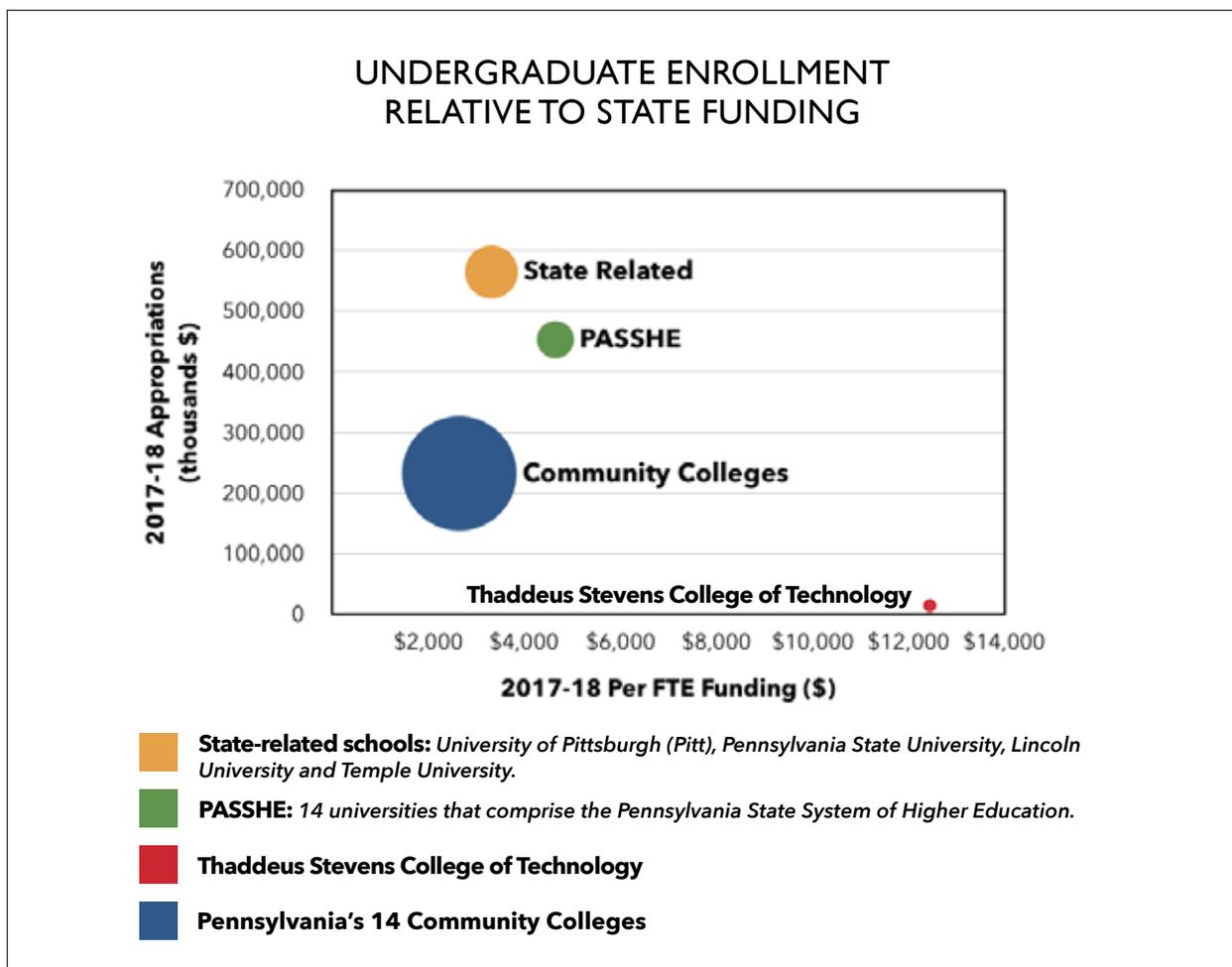
<sup>2</sup> Del Pilar, W. (2017) Office of Postsecondary & Higher Education. Presented at Dixon University Center.



If Pennsylvania is to reach its postsecondary attainment goal, it must prioritize and invest in the institutions that produce graduates with the needed credentials – its community colleges.

However, the Commonwealth has failed to provide the necessary funding and policy framework to achieve these attainment goals and prepare the Commonwealth’s workforce.

Pennsylvania’s community colleges, which educate more Pennsylvanians than all the other sectors of public postsecondary education combined, receive the least amount of state support.



Investing in public higher education is one of the most important investments a state can make. Across the nation, states are making investments in public postsecondary education to improve in their state’s economy and national and global competitiveness. Given the changing economy and demographics of the state, Pennsylvania must pursue a new vision for public postsecondary education in the Commonwealth; one that leverages the expertise and makes investments in its largest provider of workforce and education: its community colleges.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

*The Commission and its member colleges look forward to working with policymakers to implement these eight recommendations.*



## RECOMMENDATION ONE

Educate the state about the many benefits of a community college education.



## RECOMMENDATION TWO

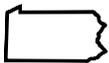
Ensure a postsecondary education credential at a Pennsylvania community college remains an affordable option for Pennsylvanians.



## RECOMMENDATION THREE

Expand opportunities for affordable pathways to a postsecondary credential.

- Support dual enrollment.
- Authorize community colleges to confer applied bachelor's degrees.
- Support expansion of articulation between community colleges and public four-year institutions.
- Support transfer scholarships.



## RECOMMENDATION FOUR

Expand access to community college programming in underserved areas of Pennsylvania.



## RECOMMENDATION FIVE

Strengthen partnerships between community colleges and business & industry.

- Expand apprenticeship opportunities.
- Prioritize community colleges as a workforce training provider.
- Expand eligible uses of tax credits.
- Include community colleges as a partner in efforts to attract industries to Pennsylvania.



## RECOMMENDATION SIX

Invest in community college capital needs through the Transfer to the Community College Capital Fund appropriation.



## RECOMMENDATION SEVEN

Expand data informed decision-making in Pennsylvania.

- Expand capacity for regional economic development planning and forecasting.
- Link data to better understand outcomes.



## RECOMMENDATION EIGHT

Increase the college readiness of Pennsylvania's secondary school students.



# Recommendations

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These recommendations acknowledge the growing evidence that Pennsylvania needs to address its skills gap and increase its educational achievement, particularly in the area of diplomas, certificates and associate degrees to remain competitive in the new global economy.

TABLE I

SECTOR	FIVE-YEAR INCREASE (\$)	FIVE YEAR % INCREASE
<b>Pre-K</b>	\$85,000,000	97.4%
<b>Head Start</b>	\$16,900,000	45.3%
<b>Thaddeus Stevens</b>	\$3,941,000	38.1%
<b>Basic Education</b>	\$588,960,000	10.9%
<b>Community Colleges</b>	\$19,944,000	9.4%

*Source: PA State Enacted Budget  
budget.pa.gov*

While the Commonwealth has made historic investments and policy improvements in early childhood education and basic education, investments in the state’s public postsecondary education system has languished. State funding for public postsecondary education, Pennsylvania’s community colleges, in particular, has failed to keep pace with inflation. Therefore, the fiscal needs of the community colleges remain unmet as they strive to offer education and training programs to provide a skilled workforce for Pennsylvania employers.



The Commonwealth needs a strong comprehensive education system across all sectors. In supporting its education pipeline, the Commonwealth should not abandon its support at the very point where the investments are about to pay off: in the education and training providing many Pennsylvanians with the crucial set of education and employment skills to enter the workforce.

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The Commonwealth’s Master Plan for Higher Education, required by law to be updated every five years, was last completed in 2005. The Commonwealth lacks any meaningful agenda to propel the state, its citizens and postsecondary education institutions to compete in a 21st century global economy. By failing to plan, Pennsylvania is planning to fail.

The individual and societal benefits of a postsecondary education credential are well documented. According to the Lumina Foundation<sup>3</sup>, those with some college earn more in a lifetime than those with a high school education, and those with an associate degree earn more than those with a high school education. There is also a direct relationship between educational attainment and family income; as one rises, so does the other. Individuals with an associate degree are also more likely to have health insurance and retirement plans, less likely to become unemployed and their children are more likely to go to college.

Policymakers need to pursue policies and investment strategies that will expand access to affordable, high-quality postsecondary opportunities for all Pennsylvanians, assist Pennsylvania in raising its postsecondary attainment rate, and make Pennsylvania a more vibrant, efficient and robust economy in which to live and work.

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<sup>3</sup> Trostel, P. (2015) It’s Not Just the Money: The Benefits of College Education to Individuals and to Society. Lumina Foundation, p. 14. Retrieved from <https://www.luminafoundation.org/files/resources/its-not-just-the-money.pdf>



Pennsylvania needs a plan that will develop its education workforce pipelines to help Pennsylvania, and all Pennsylvanians, succeed in a highly competitive global economy.

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The recommendations included in this document reflect the Commission’s belief that all Pennsylvanians should have access to affordable high-quality workforce and education training opportunities that lead to credentials and careers. The recommendations are based on the college’s collective expertise as the largest public provider of education and workforce training in the Commonwealth and our belief that Pennsylvania must improve its higher education policy to better serve its citizens, employers and communities.



## RECOMMENDATION ONE

Educate the state about the benefits of a community college education.

The number of jobs that require some postsecondary education and training, but not a bachelor’s degree, are expected to grow to 30 percent in Pennsylvania by 2020. It is estimated there will be nearly 600,000 jobs in Pennsylvania for workers without a bachelor’s degree; many of these middle skill jobs are expected to pay family sustaining wages and offer opportunities for career advancement. Pennsylvania community colleges are the most affordable option for students to attain the credentials needed to secure jobs that do not require a bachelor’s degree.

The evidence of the benefits of a community college education is sometimes overshadowed by the outdated view that a four-year credential is the only path to a good career and high wages. Statistics show that enrollment in a community college and other short term specialized training can be the beginning of an educational journey that leads to economic security. In some cases, individuals with short-term, high-demand credentials can earn as much as, or even more than, individuals with a traditional, four year credential.

The Commonwealth should implement a comprehensive public information campaign to educate policymakers and citizens about the role community colleges play in the Commonwealth’s education and workforce development systems and the benefits of attending a community college. A community college education and awareness campaign will help to inform public policy and financial decision-making in support of the Commonwealth’s strategic goals, and allow parents and students to make more informed choices regarding postsecondary study.



## RECOMMENDATION TWO

Ensure a postsecondary education credential at a Pennsylvania community college remains an affordable option for Pennsylvanians.

Pennsylvania ranks 49th in the affordability of postsecondary education and has significantly lower than average levels of state funding per student.<sup>4</sup> In Fiscal Year (FY) 2015-2016, Pennsylvania's state and local funding for higher education per FTE ranked 48th in the nation, falling over \$2,840 short of the national average.<sup>5</sup> Pennsylvania's community colleges are the postsecondary option of choice for thousands of Pennsylvanians, but affordability and access remain a challenge for students.

At the inception of the community college movement in Pennsylvania, policymakers made a commitment to fund community colleges. In Pennsylvania, Article XIX-A of the Public School Code committed that the Commonwealth would provide one-third of the operating costs of approved community colleges, local sponsors would provide one-third, and student tuition was prohibited from exceeding one-third of total college operating costs.

Over time, there have been adjustments to that formula, but there has been no strategy underlying the Commonwealth's funding for community colleges. As operating costs increase and public support does not, students have borne an increasing percentage of community college operating costs. As public support has declined, the colleges, which have no revenue raising authority of their own, have had to seek other sources of financial support, including philanthropic, corporate and federal sources of revenue and unfortunately, increases in tuition and fees.

For FY 18-19, the colleges have requested a \$10.6 million increase in the operating appropriation and an additional \$15 million to expand career pathways across the Commonwealth. Policymakers should support these investments in order to increase the Commonwealth's postsecondary attainment rate, prepare the state's workforce, and increase affordability.



A \$10.6 million increase in the operating appropriation for FY 18-19 will begin to reverse the effects of lagging state investment in its largest provider of public postsecondary education-its community colleges.

<sup>4</sup> Institute for Research on Higher Education. (2016). College Affordability Diagnosis: National Report. Institute for Research on Higher Education, Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania. Retrieved from [https://irhe.gse.upenn.edu/affordability-diagnosis/state\\_reports](https://irhe.gse.upenn.edu/affordability-diagnosis/state_reports)

<sup>5</sup> Trends in College Pricing (2017) Trends in College Pricing. The College Board. Retrieved from [https://trends.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/2017-trends-in-college-pricing\\_1.pdf](https://trends.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/2017-trends-in-college-pricing_1.pdf)

## RECOMMENDATION TWO CONTINUED:

Additionally, the Commonwealth should ensure that the community college operating appropriation is regularly increased. Inadequate funding levels limit the incentive, and even increase the risk of developing new and often high-cost programs, the very programs in which the greatest need for skilled workers exists in the state. Failure to invest in its community colleges threatens the Commonwealth’s overall economic development strategy.

The Commonwealth should also support financial aid policies and scholarship programs that increase the access and affordability of obtaining a postsecondary credential including:

- Expansion of the Pennsylvania state grant program to include online programs.
- Expansion of programs to support short-term job training, such as the programs supported through the Pennsylvania Targeted Industry Program (PA-TIP).
- A scholarship program to provide students with the opportunity to attend a community college without the burden of tuition or fees similar to programs which have been implemented in Tennessee, New York, and some communities in Pennsylvania. These programs help to promote a college-going culture and can significantly increase the number of Pennsylvanians who can access and obtain a postsecondary credential.



## RECOMMENDATION THREE

Expand opportunities for affordable pathways to a postsecondary credential.

Attending a four-year institution for four or more years is not the only, and certainly not the most affordable, pathway to bachelor’s degree attainment. Providing Pennsylvanians incentives to start their postsecondary education at a community college can lead to significant savings.

TABLE 2

Estimated Bachelor’s Degree Completion Costs			
College/University	4 Years w/ Room & Board	w/2 Years at a PA CC^	Projected Savings
<b>Bucknell University</b> B.S. in Biology	\$258,464	\$139,750	46%
<b>PASSHE</b> B.S. in Accounting	\$85,768	\$53,402	38%
<b>Penn State University – University Park</b> B.S. in Computer Science	\$116,520	\$68,778	41%
<b>Robert Morris</b> B.S. in Business Administration	\$163,360	\$92,198	44%
<b>Seton Hill University</b> B.A. in Educational Studies	\$179,080	\$100,058	44%
<b>Villanova University</b> B.S. in Nursing	\$249,492	\$135,264*	46%

Note: The savings are contingent upon student transfer as a junior in good standing  
 \*RN to BSN program. ^Based upon average full-time tuition and fees among 14 PA community colleges  
 Sources: College Navigator 2016-17 Tuition and Fees + Room & Board, PA Commission for Community Colleges Annual Tuition and Fees Collection

Students can significantly reduce the cost of attaining a postsecondary credential by attending a community college for two years and transferring to a four-year college or university to complete a bachelor's degree. Under this model, students can often fulfill general education requirements at a community college and pursue specialized credits after transferring.

Information presented in Table 2 suggests that students in Pennsylvania can save a minimum of \$20,000 by first enrolling in a community college. This is consistent with research which notes that Pennsylvania is one of ten states where students can save the most money by attending a community college.<sup>6</sup> Incentivizing this enrollment model can help address the affordability and student debt problem in the Commonwealth.

Pennsylvania should also pursue a variety of research-based initiatives to ensure students have a selection of options for attaining an affordable bachelor's degree.

**Implement a statewide, state-supported, dual enrollment program.** Dual enrollment programs provide secondary students with an opportunity to get a head start on earning college credit while still in high school. Dual enrollment programs generally offer students rigorous curricula and prepare them for college coursework and expectations. In addition, accelerated learning gives students the motivation, financial incentive, and confidence to continue on to college. Dual enrollment programs offer significant benefits, including reducing the average time-to-degree and increasing the likelihood of graduation for participating students.



According to a study published by the Education Commission of the States, dual enrollment positively influences college degree attainment, even after accounting for student, family, schooling achievements, and school context factors.<sup>7</sup> Pennsylvania is one of only four states that do not have a statewide dual enrollment program.

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The Commonwealth should establish a program to cover the costs of tuition and fees for students who are enrolled in approved dual enrollment opportunities at one of Pennsylvania's 14 community colleges. Using community colleges as the preferred provider will maximize the number of students who are able to take advantage of the program, while ensuring the most efficient use of funds.

**Authorize community colleges to confer applied bachelor's degrees.** Community colleges should be authorized to confer applied bachelor's degrees, particularly in health and technology related fields where community colleges have facilities, equipment and expertise, and opportunities for students to obtain a four-year degree in the field, are not readily available.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://studentloanhero.com/featured/community-college-cost-study-10-states/>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.ecs.org/dual-concurrent-enrollment-policies/> and <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/broadening-benefits-dual-enrollment-rp.pdf>

## RECOMMENDATION THREE CONTINUED:

The authority to confer applied baccalaureate degrees will allow the colleges to respond to regional applied technology and vocational workforce needs. The experience of the more than 20 states that have given their community colleges bachelor's degree granting authority, including New York, Ohio, West Virginia and Delaware, suggests that it is an appropriate policy strategy to meet the education and employment needs of employers and students who otherwise may not have the resources or ability to attend a traditional four-year university.

**Expand articulation and transfer between Pennsylvania community colleges and Pennsylvania public four-year institutions.** Some community college students never successfully transfer to a four-year institution to obtain their bachelor's degree, despite their intentions of doing so. The complexities of the transfer process are a major barrier faced by students attempting to transfer. The Commonwealth should guarantee that students who receive an Associate of Arts degree from a Pennsylvania community college can transfer to Pennsylvania's public four-year universities with full junior standing. Improving the transfer process can increase the number of community college students who successfully achieve their goals of attending four-year universities.

**Support transfer scholarships.** The Commonwealth should strengthen transfer opportunities among public postsecondary institutions in the Commonwealth, specifically increasing transfer rates between Pennsylvania's community colleges and PASSHE. Each year, more than 30,000 community college students in Pennsylvania transfer to another postsecondary education institution, with nearly 81 percent transferring to another institution in Pennsylvania. Yet only 8,000 students transfer to a PASSHE university.<sup>8</sup> The Commonwealth should provide incentives for community college students to continue their education at a public institution in Pennsylvania. Transfer scholarships, which could provide community college students with the financial resources to continue their education at another public postsecondary institution, would help to increase the Commonwealth's postsecondary education attainment rate and assist in reversing declining enrollment trends.



## RECOMMENDATION FOUR

Expand access to community college programming to underserved areas in Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania's Master Plan for Higher Education originally recommended that the state establish 28 community colleges, including some in rural areas. That goal has not been realized. More than 50 years later, counties and school districts are unable to provide the financial investment to become a "sponsor" of new community colleges. The state's existing colleges have expanded programming by developing branch campuses and instructional sites.<sup>9</sup> In FY 17-18, the Commonwealth's 14 community colleges offered programs at 29 campuses and 80 instructional sites. However, the Commonwealth needs a comprehensive strategy to provide community college education in underserved areas of the state. Specifically, the Commonwealth should provide distinct funding for communities in underserved areas of the state to partner with existing community colleges to expand community college programming and services.



## RECOMMENDATION FIVE

Strengthen partnerships between community colleges and business & industry.

Pennsylvania employers are concerned about the need for a strong, sustainable workforce. However, they often have difficulty finding the right employees. Community colleges are uniquely positioned to help businesses flourish by providing a pipeline of qualified workers to fill the skills gap. The colleges help bridge the gap in local economies by connecting high schools, postsecondary education, and local businesses, all while providing students with greater affordability and flexibility.

**Expand Apprenticeship Opportunities.** The apprenticeship training model is gaining interest across the state and the country as a proven workforce training tool. Recognized job training partnerships between community colleges and local businesses provide affordable, accelerated continuing education programs that help close the skills gap in the Commonwealth. Through these training programs, students “learn while they earn” and obtain industry recognized credentials that lead to careers. Employers endorse these programs because they supply talent for in-demand jobs and reduce employee turnover. Pennsylvania should invest in the expansion of existing, and development of new, apprenticeship programs in partnership with community colleges by:

- allocating a portion of state workforce dollars to support apprenticeship programs at community colleges,
- offering financial incentives, such as tax credits, for businesses to sponsor apprenticeships and for related equipment, and
- developing and implementing a comprehensive information and marketing campaign to educate businesses and prospective apprentices.

**Prioritize Pennsylvania’s community colleges as a preferred provider in the Commonwealth’s job training programs, through Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) implementation and WEDnetPA.** Pennsylvania’s community colleges are a recognized provider of workforce training in the Commonwealth and excel in providing customized job training programs to businesses across the Commonwealth. In FY 2016-17, employers invested more than \$9.6 million in employee training through direct contracted services with Pennsylvania community colleges with nearly 104,000 training participants serving 1,906 companies.<sup>10</sup> The Commonwealth’s WIOA Combined State Plan affirms the need for the state to utilize its community colleges in strategic partnerships to support job seeker and employer needs. The Commonwealth should streamline these programs and direct more funds for community college workforce and education training programs.

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<sup>8</sup> PA Commission for Community Colleges (2017) Annual Fall Data Collection.

<sup>9</sup> PA Commission for Community Colleges (2017) Annual Campus and Site Survey.

<sup>10</sup> PA Commission for Community Colleges (2017) Annual Fall Data Collection.

## RECOMMENDATION FIVE CONTINUED:

**Expand the eligible uses for the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) to support more students.** The EITC program has been successful in allowing business to support Pennsylvania's students in early, primary and secondary education. EITC should be expanded to allow businesses to support a broader range of educational and workforce training opportunities at Pennsylvania's community colleges. Specifically, EITC eligibility should expand to include the following:

- **College readiness programs.** Many students enter community college requiring math and/or English remediation. Preparing students to be college-ready through short-term academy boot camps and other noncredit bearing supports will reduce time needed for remedial education, to completion and the cost of attendance.
- **Education and training programs for students with intellectual disabilities.** The lack of education and training opportunities is a significant barrier for individuals with intellectual disabilities seeking employment. Noncredit programs, wraparound services and supplemental learning experiences can provide these students with the opportunity to learn valuable skills at a community college.
- **Programs to support low-income student enrollment in noncredit programs.** Most traditional financial aid options do not support enrollment in noncredit programs. Short-term training programs can provide students with in-demand skills that lead to immediate employment.
- **Training and education for incarcerated/recently incarcerated youth.** Juveniles who are incarcerated or have experience in the criminal justice system and have not completed high school are at a high risk of recidivism and often ineligible for financial aid. Training and education programs supported through EITC could assist these youths in finding meaningful employment, thereby increasing their opportunity for post-release success and reducing the Commonwealth's recidivism rate.

**Include community colleges as a partner in efforts to attract industries to Pennsylvania.** Community colleges are national training partners for many corporations. Community college participation in business development strategies is essential, particularly for corporations who are accustomed to working with them in other states. Royal Dutch Shell has repeatedly commended the efforts of western Pennsylvania community colleges in developing programs to train the workforce for the ethylene cracker plant and ancillary industries. Pennsylvania should involve community college leaders in the Commonwealth's efforts to retain existing and attract new businesses.



## RECOMMENDATION SIX

Invest in community college capital needs through the Transfer to the Community College Capital Fund appropriation.

Pennsylvania's community colleges receive financial support for capital improvements through the Transfer to the Community College Capital Fund appropriation. These Commonwealth funds provide for one-half of the cost of approved capital projects including capital lease obligations, debt service payments for previously approved capital projects and payment for new capital projects. Additionally, capital funds help to modernize the college's aging infrastructure, much of which is nearly 50 years old, and address maintenance issues on the campuses.

The Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges partnered with Stantec, an international architecture firm, to survey the capital needs of Pennsylvania's 14 community colleges through 2019. The survey results reveal a total capital need of nearly \$727 million for 227 projects. Individual capital project costs range from a low of \$11,500 to a high of \$82.5 million. However, nearly two-thirds of the capital projects could be completed for \$1 million or less in total costs per project. Pennsylvania's policymakers must ensure that the colleges have access to funds to make the necessary investments in the colleges' capital facilities.



Sustained and flexible capital funding is necessary to support the colleges in meeting the Commonwealth's education and training needs.

Colleges must have the ability to update facilities to conform to industry standards and address the aging infrastructure. In addition, outdated systems negatively affect the energy and financial efficiencies at the institutions. Without adequate funding levels, colleges are forced to stretch equipment beyond estimated useful life, creating a significant deferred maintenance need.

Capital funding supports expansion and upgrade of the colleges' academic and workforce programs. Sufficient levels of state appropriation to the Transfer to the Community College Capital Fund ensures that equipment and facilities are comparable to those in business and industry. This is important for highly technical and specialized programs, particularly in STEM, energy and healthcare fields.



## RECOMMENDATION SEVEN

Expand data informed decision-making in Pennsylvania.

Current, accurate and relevant data can be a powerful tool to inform postsecondary education and workforce development policy. Unfortunately, Pennsylvania does not currently provide key data measures to its education and workforce training providers. The Commonwealth should expand its capacity to provide data and information community colleges need to better align institutional planning, program development and program improvement with state and local needs. This is information that students also need in order to make informed postsecondary education decisions.

The Commonwealth should improve its data compilation, evaluation and presentation in the following areas:

- **Regional economic development planning and forecasting.** The Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry should increase the capacity to forecast workforce needs on a regional basis and share that information with community colleges. Access to this information and other labor market data from the Commonwealth can help community colleges better align education and workforce training programs with state and local needs. Without this information from the Commonwealth, the colleges must rely on vendors to provide this information, often at a considerable cost.
- **Data linkages.** The Commonwealth should explore ways to link labor market data at the Department of Labor & Industry with graduates of postsecondary institutions in the Commonwealth. Data related to graduates working in Pennsylvania and in neighboring states should be provided in regular reports to community colleges. This information would allow both the Commonwealth and community colleges to better understand the impact of education and training programs.

The data and information recommended above can also assist students making postsecondary education decisions, including choice of institution and degree program, currently not available in the Commonwealth's Career Coach tool.





## RECOMMENDATION EIGHT

Increase the college readiness of Pennsylvania's secondary school students.

While Pennsylvania students are making progress on some measures of academic achievement, many Pennsylvania high school graduates are not college ready. Too many Pennsylvania students enroll in postsecondary study and cannot successfully complete college-level coursework. Each year approximately 60 percent of students enrolling in Pennsylvania community colleges require at least one developmental education course.<sup>11</sup>



The developmental education needs of Pennsylvania's postsecondary student population are costly, time consuming, and often result in poor academic outcomes for students.

Developmental education enrollments strain limited public resources, requiring Pennsylvania's education providers to repeatedly educate the same student on the same content. Students and families also pay the costs of developmental education, including out-of-pocket costs and delayed degree attainment. The costs are even greater for students who never progress out of developmental education coursework. The Commonwealth needs to improve the college readiness of its secondary school graduates to disrupt the inefficient cycle of developmental education and ensure that students enter postsecondary study ready to complete college-level coursework.

Pennsylvania's community colleges have implemented a range of evidence-based strategies to improve outcomes for underprepared students. The Commonwealth should leverage the experience and expertise of the colleges in addressing the developmental education needs of students and authorize incentives for secondary education to work collaboratively with community colleges to improve college readiness, persistence, and college completion.

**The Commission suggests these eight recommendations as a foundation for, but not the entirety of, a comprehensive postsecondary education policy in Pennsylvania. Higher education faces many other issues that must also be addressed as part of a broad approach to improving the Commonwealth's statewide attainment rates. The Commission and its member colleges look forward to working with policymakers to develop and implement a comprehensive plan that includes these recommendations to advance postsecondary attainment and economic development in the Commonwealth.**

<sup>11</sup> <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/broadening-benefits-dual-enrollment-rp.pdf>



Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC)

Community College of Beaver County (CCBC)

Bucks County Community College (BUCKS)

Butler County Community College (BC3)

Delaware County Community College (DCCC)

HACC, Central Pennsylvania's Community College (HACC)

Lehigh Carbon Community College (LCCC)

Luzerne County Community College (LUZ)

Montgomery County Community College (MCCC)

Northampton Community College (NCC)

Pennsylvania Highlands Community College (PHCC)

Community College of Philadelphia (CCP)

Reading Area Community College (RACC)

Westmoreland County Community College (WCCC)

**The Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges is a voluntary membership association for Pennsylvania's community colleges. Its members include the college presidents, members of the colleges' boards of trustees and key college administrators. The Commission represents the interests of and advocates for the collective needs of the community colleges to federal and state policymakers.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT [PACOMMUNITYCOLLEGES.ORG](http://PACOMMUNITYCOLLEGES.ORG).