

# ImaginePA

*Preparing Pennsylvania for  
a Prosperous Tomorrow*





# Imagine a thriving Pennsylvania.

**Imagine** a skilled workforce trained for family-sustaining careers with Pennsylvania-based employers. **Imagine** a pipeline of motivated postsecondary students who complete their bachelor's degrees at a rate higher than average. **Imagine** a Pennsylvania where higher education and training was available to anyone who wanted to build a better tomorrow. **Imagine** a debt-free college degree. **Imagine** a growing economy. **Imagine** a prosperous tomorrow.

Pennsylvania's community colleges are ready to transform that vision into a reality.

**Community colleges can foster a future that Pennsylvania leaders envision.**

**Community colleges can create a future that Pennsylvania businesses want.**

**Community colleges can offer a future that Pennsylvania students need.**

However, in order to do so, the Commonwealth must provide strategic investments and pursue a comprehensive policy agenda that will support a public higher education structure that is collaborative, innovative and prepares all Pennsylvanians for success. As the largest providers of postsecondary education and training in Pennsylvania – the colleges served nearly a quarter of a million students from every county in the Commonwealth in 2021 – community colleges are committed to working collaboratively with policymakers, employers, colleague institutions and other partners to increase Pennsylvania's postsecondary education attainment rate and contribute to a thriving future.

We recommend the following areas of focus:



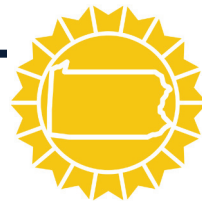
**Provide Appropriate and Sustained Support for Community Colleges**



**Eliminate Barriers to Postsecondary Education Attainment**



**Strengthen Community Colleges' Role in the Commonwealth's Workforce Development System**



**Expand Access to Community College Programs**

# Expanded Recommendations



**Provide appropriate and consistent operating and capital support for community colleges.** Pennsylvania's community colleges rely on public support for their operations. Yet state funding for the community college operating and capital appropriation has not kept up with inflation. The Commonwealth should:



Increase the community college operating appropriation and – after establishing an appropriate funding level – provide ongoing, consistent support so that community colleges can maintain instructional quality and provide supports to students that ensure they succeed and complete their degree or credential.



Increase the community college capital appropriation to maintain the state's current investment in community college infrastructure and provide the facilities and equipment necessary to ensure students are offered high-quality instruction in high priority occupations aligned with state, regional and local workforce needs.



**Eliminate barriers to postsecondary education attainment.** Students face a range of barriers when attempting to earn a postsecondary degree or credential. The Commonwealth can help eliminate these financial and academic barriers by:



Partnering with community colleges to improve the college readiness of high school graduates by funding research-based, proven practices to increase college success, such as summer bridge programs.



Funding a statewide dual enrollment program for high school students to enroll in college coursework at a community college.



Implementing a program to make higher education more affordable by waiving tuition and fees and/or providing increased scholarship assistance for students seeking to enroll in credit and noncredit programming at a Pennsylvania community college.



Authorizing community colleges to confer applied baccalaureate degrees, particularly in areas with critical workforce needs.



**Strengthen community colleges' role in the Commonwealth's workforce development system.** Estimates suggest that Pennsylvania must produce an additional 820,000 credentials to meet its attainment goal, with the growth needed in associate degree and certificate completion – areas in which community colleges excel. The Commonwealth should:



Fund the expansion of existing – and the development of new – programs and pathways aligned with local and state workforce needs. This includes pathways leading to a diploma, certificate, associate degree, formal or informal apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs and applied baccalaureate degrees.



Prioritize Pennsylvania's community colleges as preferred providers in the Commonwealth's job training programs through Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) implementation and WEDnetPA.



Include community colleges as a partner in efforts to attract industries to Pennsylvania.



**Expand access to community college programming.** Pennsylvania must increase its overall postsecondary education attainment rate and address inequities in attainment by race, ethnicity and geography. The Commonwealth should provide funding for existing community colleges to partner with entities in underserved regions of Pennsylvania to expand community college programming and services.

Since the enactment of the Community College Act of 1963, Pennsylvania community colleges have served as anchors in their communities and bedrocks of higher learning. Since their inception, community colleges have educated approximately 13 million credit and non-credit students across Pennsylvania.

The colleges employ more than 22,500 individuals statewide, add as much as \$13.6 billion to the Pennsylvania economy annually and provide an array of economic, social and cultural benefits to the communities they serve.

Pennsylvania's community colleges seek to create, adapt and enhance programs and services to meet the changing needs of the Commonwealth and the communities they serve; their role in the Commonwealth's workforce development strategies has never been more important. As the Commonwealth seeks to rebuild its economy, it will need the flexible, affordable education and training programs offered by the community colleges listed below to ensure that Pennsylvanians can gain the skills to enter or advance in the workforce and support the economy.

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)  
Erie County Community College of PA (EC3PA)  
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)

