

# Higher Education



Division of the Budget

## HIGHER EDUCATION

The Budget provides a **\$257 million** increase in funding for higher education in New York, bringing total support to **\$7.8 billion**, an increase of **\$1.8 billion** or **29%** since FY 2012.



Increased Funding:

**\$7.8 BILLION**

For Higher Education.

### KEEPING TUITION PREDICTABLE & AFFORDABLE

New York's **predictable tuition plan** has kept public college tuition **affordable**.

Average annual tuition and fees at New York's public four-year colleges are among the lowest in the nation

**\$2,054**

or 20 percent less than the national average and lower than 40 other states.



The Budget increases the income eligibility threshold for the **Excelsior Scholarship** to **\$150,000**, allowing more than 230,000 New York resident students attend **SUNY or CUNY tuition-free**.

### SUPPORT OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS

the Executive Budget invests over **\$200 million** to help students with unique educational challenges in opportunity programs and training centers -- a **57% increase** since FY 2012.



### EXPAND COLLEGE STUDENT ENROLLMENT IN NUTRITION PROGRAM



The Budget increases participation of **low-income college students** in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) so they are more able to attain their college degree.

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The FY 2021 Executive Budget makes college more affordable and accessible by expanding free college tuition to more middle class families while expanding opportunity programs and nutrition benefits for students who need them. The Budget also protects students' interests by requiring greater transparency and accountability for for-profit colleges and stricter standards for the private student loan debt relief industry. The Budget provides record overall funding for the State's institutes of higher education and strategic investments that will help New Yorkers develop the tools and skills they need in the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.

## Overview

New York State's higher education institutions educate over 1.2 million students. The State University of New York (SUNY) and the City University of New York (CUNY) administer 47 four-year colleges and graduate schools that provide nearly 400,000 full- and part-time students with an array of undergraduate, graduate, and first professional educational opportunities. SUNY and CUNY also support 37 community colleges that serve 309,000 students. In addition, 510,000 students attend the more than 100 private colleges and universities across the State. Over the past 10 years, enrollment at New York's public and private higher education institutions has increased by 23,000 (2 percent).

The State University Construction Fund (SUCF), City University Construction Fund (CUCF), and the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY) administer a capital program for over 3,000 academic, research, hospital, dormitory, and multi-use facilities, which make up the physical infrastructure of the university systems.

The Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC) is New York State's student financial aid agency and a national leader in helping make college affordable for New York residents. HESC oversees numerous State-funded financial aid programs, including the Excelsior Scholarship, the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), the Aid for Part Time Study program, and 25 other scholarship and loan forgiveness programs. Together, these programs provide financial aid to approximately 380,000 students. HESC also partners with the Office of the State Comptroller in administering the College Choice Tuition Savings program.

The State Education Department administers funding for higher education, including opportunity programs that help support the success of disadvantaged students.

## Making College More Affordable

Under Governor Cuomo's leadership, New York is leading the nation in expanding access to a quality and affordable college education.

Funding for higher education has increased by nearly \$1.8 billion since 2012 (29 percent), from \$6.0 billion to \$7.8 billion in the FY 2021 Executive Budget. This investment includes nearly \$1.3 billion for strategic programs to make college more affordable and encourage the best and brightest students to build their future in New York.

The average tuition at the State's four-year public institutions is currently lower than 40 other states, and New York State has been aggressively reducing financial barriers to college. In 2011, the State enacted Governor Cuomo's plan to end decades of unpredictable and sudden tuition hikes with a rational tuition system that limits SUNY and CUNY tuition increases. In 2015, Governor Cuomo created the Get On Your Feet Student Loan Forgiveness Program to provide up to two years of student loan payments for recent college graduates.

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In 2017, building on the State’s already generous tuition assistance, New York launched the groundbreaking Excelsior Scholarship to provide tuition-free college for middle class families. The first-of-its-kind program covers tuition at New York’s public colleges and universities for families making up to \$125,000 a year, ensuring 230,000 students will go to SUNY or CUNY tuition-free, including student receiving Excelsior Scholarship, TAP, Pell and other financial aid.

In 2019, the Senator Jose R. Peralta DREAM Act was enacted opening the doors of higher education to thousands of undocumented students providing access to the Excelsior Scholarship, TAP, and other state-administered scholarships.

SUNY and CUNY campuses have received significant support for their capital assets. Since FY 2012, the State has provided over \$12 billion in capital appropriations to maintain and improve campus facilities.

These investments serve as a key driver of the New York State economic engine. SUNY’s annual economic impact in New York State is \$28.6 billion, a 27 percent growth in overall state economic impact since 2008. CUNY is recognized as a national leader in social mobility, helping generations of low-income, underserved and immigrant students succeed.

**Table 10: Higher Education General Fund Spending**

Category	Academic FY 2020 (millions)	Academic FY 2021 (millions)	Change	
			Dollars (millions)	Percent
SUNY State-Operated Campuses (a)	3,025	3,122	97	3.2
CUNY Senior Colleges (a)	1,371	1,394	23	1.7
SUNY and CUNY Debt Service	1,186	1,320	134	11.3
HESC Financial Aid Programs	1,063	1,097	34	3.2
Community Colleges (b)	733	702	(31)	(4.2)
SED Programs	127	127	0	0.0
General Fund Total	7,505	7,762	257	3.4

Includes funding for campus operations and employee fringe benefits.  
Decrease is largely attributable to changes in enrollment.

### Proposed FY 2020 Budget Actions

Building on the successes of programs that provide students with a path to an affordable quality college education, the Executive Budget proposes several strategic investments to ensure all of New York’s aspiring students can go to college and achieve their dreams.

- Expand Free College Tuition to More Middle Class Families.** In 2017, Governor Cuomo created the historic Excelsior Scholarship, a first-in-the-nation program that provides free tuition at New York’s public colleges and universities for middle class families. To expand this transformational opportunity to more middle class families, Governor Cuomo is proposing to raise the Excelsior eligibility threshold from \$125,000 to \$150,000 of adjusted gross income for New York’s families. In AY 2021, the Excelsior Scholarship income eligibility threshold will increase to \$135,000 and fully phase in to \$150,000 in AY 2022. By increasing this threshold, more than 230,000 New York residents will attend SUNY or CUNY tuition free. The Budget includes \$146 million to support this landmark program.

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- **Support Opportunity Programs.** More than just developing programs to assist with tuition, the Governor supported and created additional programs to address the cost of attendance and help students with unique educational challenges. This includes a significant increase in opportunity programs, \$24 million in Open Educational Resources to reduce or eliminate some of the costs of textbooks and expanding food pantries at SUNY and CUNY. The FY 2021 Executive Budget will make \$213 million available for higher education opportunity programs and training centers, a 57 percent increase since FY 2012.
- **Require Transparency and Accountability for For-Profit Colleges.** The Governor is proposing a for-profit college accountability initiative that is focused on transparency and outcomes to ensure that our students are well served in these schools. Numerous studies have found that for-profit colleges correlate to negative outcomes for students, especially low-income, minority and female students. For the \$45 million in taxpayer funds going to these institutions, we need a higher level of accountability and transparency. The Governor's proposal will require for-profit schools to demonstrate positive outcomes for their students and include basic disclosure of funding and financing, including compensation packages of senior leadership and ownership, including any relevant bonuses and incentives. In addition, to further protect New York's veterans from unscrupulous schools that target them for their education benefits, the Governor will work with the Department of Veteran Services to bring more transparency to for-profit schools, identify opportunities to clarify state and federal commitments to education and ensure New York State's veterans will be protected in the for-profit education space.
- **Expand College Student Enrollment in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Benefits.** The Governor has acted to reduce food insecurity among college students, so they are better able to focus on their studies and successfully graduate. To continue these efforts, the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance will establish policy to make more community college students eligible for essential SNAP benefits by establishing a state policy that community college students engaged at least half-time in career and technical education courses of study are exempt from the requirement to work 20 hours weekly to qualify for SNAP. This policy change will increase the participation of low-income college students in SNAP, providing them with essential nutritional benefits so they are more likely to obtain their college certification or degree.
- **Stop Abusive and Deceptive Practices from Student Loan Debt Relief Companies.** Governor Cuomo has championed financial assistance and debt relief for New York students, establishing the Get on Your Feet Loan Forgiveness Program—the nation's only state-sponsored need-based loan forgiveness program and enacting regulations prescribing standards of conduct for student loan servicing companies. However, additional protections are needed to protect New Yorkers from student debt relief companies that have had a poor record of serving their customers. These companies typically charge student loan borrowers substantial upfront fees and promise to assist them with consolidating multiple student loans into a single loan or alternative repayment arrangements. Borrowers, however, can often achieve the same results through free government programs. The Governor will propose legislation setting standards for the student loan debt relief industry in New York.
- **Extend a Predictable Funding Plan for SUNY and CUNY.** The Budget extends a predictable funding plan for CUNY and SUNY that will both protect students from tuition spikes that have occurred in the past and provide our public colleges with additional resources to invest in college affordability and student success. This plan limits increases in the resident tuition rate at SUNY and CUNY to no more than \$200 a year through AY 2025. The revenue generated from any tuition increase will be reinvested to support

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faculty, instruction, initiatives to improve student success and completion, and tuition credits for TAP-eligible students. Additionally, the Budget will authorize the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry to raise tuition rates for non-resident undergraduate students by 10 percent annually for a four-year period, providing flexibility to set non-resident tuition similar to SUNY University Centers.

- **SUNY and CUNY Capital Matching Program.** Since FY 2012, the State has provided over \$12 billion in capital appropriations for SUNY and CUNY to maintain and improve campus facilities. The FY 2021 Executive Budget includes \$1.9 billion in new appropriations for SUNY and CUNY capital projects, including \$400 million (\$200 million for SUNY and \$200 million for CUNY) for the State share of a new 2:1 strategic needs capital matching program to support new construction and/or major renovations of academic buildings at SUNY State-operated and statutory colleges and CUNY senior colleges. The capital match requires that for every \$2 dollars invested by the State, campuses contribute \$1 dollar toward project costs.