



# HIGHER EDUCATION



The Executive Budget continues to implement Governor Hochul's vision to transform the State's public higher education system to become the best and most equitable statewide system of higher education in the country, with actions to expand enrollment and access to colleges across the State and strengthen the **State University of New York (SUNY)** and **City University of New York (CUNY)** systems.

New York's public higher education system educates nearly 614,000 students, according to reported Fall 2024 enrollment. This includes 47 four-year colleges and graduate schools administered by SUNY and CUNY that provide 372,000 full- and part-time students with an array of undergraduate, graduate, and professional degrees and 37 local and regional community colleges supported by SUNY and CUNY serving nearly 242,000 students across the State. In addition to SUNY and CUNY, New York is home to nearly 200 private colleges and universities that served over 526,000 students in Fall 2023.

The **State University Construction Fund (SUCF)**, the **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 public university systems across New York State.

The **Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC)**, New York State's student financial aid agency, is a national leader in helping make college affordable for students. HESC oversees numerous State-funded financial aid programs, including the **Excelsior Scholarship**, the **Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)**, and other scholarship and loan forgiveness programs. Together, these programs provided financial aid to approximately 300,000 students during the 2023-24 academic year (AY 2024). HESC also partners with the Office of the State Comptroller to administer the **College Choice Tuition Savings** program.

The **State Education Department (SED)** also contributes funding for higher education, including opportunity programs that help support the success of disadvantaged students.

## EXTENDING OPPORTUNITY TO OUR STUDENTS

In 2022, in her first State of the State Address, Governor Hochul outlined a vision to transform SUNY and secure its status as the best and most equitable statewide system of higher education in the country. Specifically, the Governor outlined goals related to increasing enrollment and completion rates, preparing students for in-demand jobs, ensuring a world-class student experience, recruiting top faculty, providing a wide range of degrees and credentials, and doubling sponsored research, startups, and patents. In the FY 2023 Budget, the Governor provided SUNY and CUNY with significant increases in operating aid and capital funding, expanded TAP for part-time students, increased support for opportunity programs, and announced that Stony Brook University and the University at Buffalo would become SUNY's flagship institutions.

Governor Hochul took additional steps to transform the State's higher education system in the FY 2024 Budget, investing \$2.4 billion in new funding for capital projects and \$381 million in operating support for SUNY and CUNY, creating a \$500 million State matching fund for contributions to the endowments of SUNY's four university centers, and allowing flexibility for both systems to increase graduate and non-resident tuition rates to generate additional campus operating revenue.

Last year, the Governor produced another budget that strengthens New York's public higher education institutions and provides needed support to students and families. Governor Hochul increased operating assistance to SUNY and CUNY by \$409 million; supplied \$1.3 billion in new State funding for capital projects, including new capital grants for private colleges; and expanded the TAP program by increasing the minimum award, raising income eligibility thresholds, and extending eligibility to part-time students at proprietary colleges.

## ABOUT NEW YORK'S INVESTMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

In the three budgets enacted under Governor Hochul, State operating funding for higher education has

increased by a total of \$1.41 billion (23 percent), growing from \$6.15 billion to \$7.56 billion.

State and local funding per student for public colleges in New York was \$14,816 in FY 2023 – \$3,759 (34 percent) more than the national average and higher than 42 other states.

More than two-thirds (70 percent) of New York public colleges' total revenue comes from State and local support – 10 percentage points higher than the national average and more than 39 other states.

The average tuition and fees at the State's four-year public institutions was \$8,579 in AY 2024 – \$2,681 (24 percent) less than the national average and lower than 43 other states.

New York's generous investment in student financial aid, including TAP and Excelsior Scholarships, helped over 182,000 New York State residents – 58 percent of full-time resident undergraduate students – attend SUNY and CUNY tuition-free in AY 2024, including 53 percent at SUNY State-operated campuses and 66 percent at CUNY senior colleges.

## PROPOSED FY 2026 BUDGET ACTIONS

As implementation of Governor Hochul's vision continues in 2025, the FY 2026 Executive Budget takes additional steps to strengthen and transform our State's higher education system:

**Providing \$269 Million in New State Support for SUNY and CUNY Campuses.** The Executive Budget provides \$269 million in new State support for SUNY State-operated campuses (\$138 million) and CUNY senior colleges (\$131 million). This funding includes:

- \$210 million in general operating support (\$114 million SUNY, \$96 million CUNY);
- \$22 million in increased funding for university employee fringe benefits at CUNY;
- \$20 million for ACE and ASAP, which support academic and career advisement, tuition grants, textbooks, and transportation costs (\$12 million SUNY, \$8 million CUNY);
- \$15 million in artificial intelligence investments (\$10 million SUNY, \$5 million CUNY);

- \$1 million for the Regional Gun Violence Research Consortium at SUNY; and
- \$0.75 million for the First Responder Counseling Scholarship Program at SUNY.

**Providing State Support for SUNY Downstate Hospital.** The Executive Budget includes \$100 million in operating support to SUNY Downstate Hospital. This brings the total two-year operating support investment in SUNY Downstate Hospital to \$200 million.

**Advancing Additional State Support to Help Cover CUNY Collective Bargaining Costs.** The Executive Budget provides CUNY with \$192 million in June 2025 to cover the lump-sum payments from the general salary increases of 3 percent effective in 2023 and 2024 and one-time bonuses under the recently ratified Professional Staff Congress contract, representing an advance on funding that CUNY would otherwise receive in the following academic year.

**Funding Free Community College in High-Demand Occupations.** The Executive Budget provides \$47 million (\$28.2 million SUNY, \$18.8 million CUNY) to cover the remaining cost of tuition, fees, and books for community college students ages 25-55 pursuing select associate's degrees in high-demand occupations, including nursing, teaching, technology, and engineering.

**Maintaining the Community College Funding Floor.** The Executive Budget maintains a funding floor for community colleges at 100 percent of prior year funding. Without a funding floor, community colleges would face a \$124 million (19 percent) loss in formula aid due to enrollment declines.

**Providing \$2.0 Billion for New Capital Projects at SUNY and CUNY Campuses.** The Executive Budget provides \$2.0 billion in new funding for capital projects to help maintain SUNY and CUNY campus facilities in a state of good repair, support innovative research, and make strategic investments in new facilities. This includes: \$750 million for SUNY State-operated campuses (\$550 million for critical maintenance, \$200 million for research facilities), \$417 million for CUNY senior colleges (\$284 million for critical maintenance, \$133 million for research

facilities), \$650 million for the modernization and revitalization of SUNY hospitals (\$450 million Downstate, \$200 million Upstate), and \$166 million for community colleges (\$131 million SUNY, \$35 million CUNY). In addition, the Executive Budget provides \$76 million for capital program administration (\$31 million SUCF, \$18 million CUCF, \$27 million DASNY) and \$25 million to establish the SUNY Green Energy Loan Fund to finance energy conservation projects on campuses.

**Streamlining Part-Time Financial Aid Programs.**

The Executive Budget consolidates the three existing State financial aid programs for part-time students, expanding part-time TAP to students taking a minimum of three credits per semester, down from six.

| Higher Education General Fund Spending |                                  |                                  |  |                    |
|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|--------------------|
| CATEGORY                               | FY 2025<br>(MILLIONS OF DOLLARS) | FY 2026<br>(MILLIONS OF DOLLARS) | DOLLAR CHANGE<br>(MILLIONS OF DOLLARS) | PERCENT CHANGE (%) |
| SUNY State-Operated Campuses           | 3,795                            | 3,920                            | 125                                    | 3.3                |
| CUNY Senior Colleges                   | 1,899                            | 2,016                            | 117                                    | 6.1                |
| HESC Financial Aid Programs            | 1,026                            | 1,029                            | 3                                      | 0.3                |
| Community Colleges                     | 697                              | 745                              | 48                                     | 6.9                |
| SED Programs                           | 148                              | 138                              | (9)                                    | (6.2)              |
| <b>GENERAL FUND TOTAL</b>              | <b>7,564</b>                     | <b>7,848</b>                     | <b>284</b>                             | <b>3.7</b>         |

Data Notes:

- The \$125 million net increase for SUNY State-operated campuses includes new funding for operating aid, artificial intelligence, and increasing student success through the ACE and ASAP programs, partially offset by \$12 million of one-time funding in the FY 2025 Budget
- The \$117 million net increase for CUNY senior colleges includes new funding for operating aid, fringe benefits, artificial intelligence, and increasing student success through the ACE and ASAP programs, partially offset by \$14 million of one-time funding in the FY 2025 Budget.
- The \$48 million net increase for community colleges includes funding for free community college in high-demand occupations.
- The decrease in funding for SED programs is attributable to one-time funding provided in the FY 2025 Budget.
- In addition to the \$7.8 billion in State support included in the table, the State is estimated to pay \$998 million in FY 2026 for debt service on bond-financed capital projects at SUNY and CUNY.