



# OUR POLICY PLATFORM

Washington's 34 community and technical colleges (CTCs) are pillars of local communities around the state. The opportunities that they affordably provide drive racial and economic equity, and their impact on the lives of students of color and low-income students is profound.

Constrained by underfunding, CTCs cannot fulfill their mission of providing affordable and quality education to students who want and need it. Just under 60 percent of the students who enter the CTC system do not stay long enough to complete their course of study. Given that CTCs educate people of color at disproportionately high rates, it is clear that students of color are not receiving the education they deserve.

The pandemic and recession have heightened the urgency of addressing racial and economic inequity. The tensions in our society over long-term racial disparities and the economic impacts of a deteriorated economy both call for significant investments in the CTC system.

Communities for Our Colleges recommends that the following policies be adopted by Washington lawmakers and by the CTC system. The recommendations are based on academic research and on academic research and on testimony from students about policies that will enable the colleges to improve the student success rate, especially for students of color.

**Communities for Our Colleges**

3518 South Edmunds Street

Seattle, WA 98118

[juststrategy.org](http://juststrategy.org)

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, EMAIL US AT  
OURCOLLEGES@JUSTSTRATEGY.ORG**

## 1. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Programs

Each community and technical college should be required to develop and implement a **comprehensive diversity program** for its campuses.

As a part of each CTC diversity program, resources, facilities, and assistance will be provided to **permit students to develop associations on each campus for mutual assistance and support.**

Because cost and cultural barriers deter many students from even applying for entrance to CTC programs, each community and technical college will be required to develop **systematic outreach programs** intended to inform students of color and low-income students about student aid and educational opportunities.

## 2. Digital Divide

The current pandemic has caused the CTC system to shift quickly to online learning. Many students encounter problems because they do not have **consistent access to the internet or computer equipment.** The Communities for Our Colleges coalition will request that these barriers to access be addressed as the Legislature and other state leaders work to **overcome the digital divide.**

## 3. Programs for Student Support

Many students report problems with food security, housing, health care, transportation, and childcare. These issues are often the reason why students are unable to complete their courses of study. The legislature has recently made an effort to provide assistance with food insecurity and childcare to CTC students.

These efforts need to be funded and expanded to include added **wrap-around services and stipends for health-care, housing, and transportation.** In particular, **undocumented students**, who do not have access to federal aid programs, must be guaranteed the fulfillment of basic needs.

## 4. Developing a Qualified and Available Counseling System

Testimony of students in our coalition points to a lack of counseling in the CTC system as a serious barrier to student success. The legislature gave recognition to this issue in 2019 by passing HB 1355, establishing a task force to establish staffing standards and ratios for the CTCs.

The Communities for Our Colleges coalition endorses **improvements in faculty counseling, which are critical to student success,** and will support the acquisition of resources needed to implement the HB 1355 task force report.

## 5. Investing in a Stable Faculty Workforce

Academic studies and student testimony point to the heavy use of part-time faculty as a barrier to student retention and success. The **major growth in the use of adjunct faculty that has developed since the 2008 recession needs to be reversed**. The legislature should provide a requirement that **full- and part-time ratios in the CTC system be returned to 2008 levels**. The legislature should also direct SBCTC to conduct a study of faculty pay inequities and to provide a report to the Legislature recommending changes that will provide **equal pay for equal work** between full- and part-time faculty.

## 6. Faculty Diversification

Although nearly 50 percent of the students in CTCs are people of color, the faculty composition is overwhelmingly white. For CTCs to be welcoming places for all students, CTCs need to expand efforts to **recruit and retain faculties that reflect their student populations**.

The Communities for Our Colleges coalition recommends that the Legislature require the **establishment of formal diversity in hiring programs** at each community and technical college by December of 2022 based on [17 Steps for Diversity and Equity in Hiring and Professional Development in the Hiring Process: Potential Barriers and Best Practices](#). Students from diverse backgrounds and faculty bargaining representatives should be included as **advisors in the hiring process**.

## 7. Protecting and Expanding Student Aid Programs

The 2019 Session of the Legislature substantially expanded the state's student aid programs and created an entitlement to tuition forgiveness based on income. These resources have been undermined by the current recession, just when they are needed the most. To protect and expand student aid the Legislature should **repeal the limitations on the assessments on affiliated multi-national corporations contained in Section 74 of the Workforce Investment Act of 2019**. This change will make approximately **\$50 million available each year to fund programs** recommended in this report.

It is recommended that student aid programs be expanded to include **aid for all expenses necessary to participate in CTC classes** for eligible students.

For many undocumented students the requirement for three-year residency in the state before they can be eligible for aid is a serious impediment to their participation in programs aimed at helping them enroll in and complete CTC programs. This requirement should be changed to a **one-year residency requirement**.