

1-7-2021

Community College Funding in the Mountain West

Peter Grema

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, peter.grema@unlv.edu

Vanessa Booth

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, vanessa.booth@unlv.edu

Caitlin J. Saladino

The Lincy Institute and Brookings Mountain West, caitlin.saladino@unlv.edu

William E. Brown

The Lincy Institute and Brookings Mountain West, william.brown@unlv.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/bmw_lincy_he



Part of the [Education Policy Commons](#), [Higher Education Commons](#), and the [Public Policy Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Grema, P., Booth, V., Saladino, C. J., Brown, W. E. (2021). Community College Funding in the Mountain West. *Higher Education Fact Sheet No. 13* 1-3.

Available at: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/bmw_lincy_he/9

This Report is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Scholarship@UNLV with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this Report in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/or on the work itself.

This Report has been accepted for inclusion in Higher Education by an authorized administrator of Digital Scholarship@UNLV. For more information, please contact digitalscholarship@unlv.edu.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE FUNDING IN THE MOUNTAIN WEST

Higher Education Fact Sheet No. 13 | January 2021

Prepared by: Peter Grema, Vanessa M. Booth, Caitlin J. Saladino, and William E. Brown, Jr.

PURPOSE:

This fact sheet summarizes data from the Center for American Progress report “Tapping Local Support to Strengthen Community Colleges,” by Marcella Bombardieri.¹ The original report highlights the potential for local funding to compensate for the resource gap that community colleges face throughout the country. This fact sheet reports data on Mountain West states (Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, and Utah).

ABOUT THE DATA:

The original report highlights local funding figures for community colleges in all 50 states. Community colleges are defined as “all public two-year degree-granting institutions, even though some of these are officially designated as technical colleges.”² Revenue reporting data are provided by the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) “for the 2016-2017 academic year, and are self-reported by colleges.”³

The U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 Census of Governments database is the source for data on local government funding (such as city or county sales tax revenue). The report compares the Census data with the IPEDS data “to access how much of an increase in local taxes would be needed to achieve resource equity” for community colleges.⁴

“Resource equity is calculated by the author as the difference in what a state’s four-year and two-year colleges receive in revenue, per full-time equivalent student, multiplied by the number of full-time students attending community college in a given state.”⁵ More broadly, the resource equity gap represents shortfalls in revenue that community colleges receive as opposed to public four-year colleges.

KEY FINDINGS:

1. Among Mountain West states, Nevada and Utah provide \$0 in local funding for their community colleges.
2. Local funding is provided for full-time equivalent (FTE) students attending Arizona (\$5,422 per FTE), Colorado (\$1,331 per FTE), and New Mexico (\$2,761 per FTE) community colleges.
3. The percent of local taxes allocated to Mountain West community colleges ranges from 0% (Nevada and Utah) to 12.30% (Arizona).
4. According to the U.S. Department of Education’s Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), there “are no public community colleges” in the state of Nevada (additional details provided in **Appendix A**).

Table 1 shows that over 61% of Arizona community college funding comes from local sources. The author of the report notes that state funding in Arizona for its community colleges is almost nonexistent. Local taxes must contribute the difference between what students pay in tuition for community college and the cost of full-time equivalent student attendance. New Mexico provides half as much support for its community colleges as does Arizona, and Colorado

1 Marcella Bombardieri “Tapping Local Support to Strengthen Community Colleges.” Report (American Progress, October 2020).

2 Ibid

3 Ibid

4 Ibid

5 Ibid

provides about half as much as New Mexico. Nevada and Utah are outliers in the region and provide no local dollars to support community colleges. All funding for Nevada community colleges come through state support, tuition, and available federal funds.

Table 1: Funding for Community Colleges in the Mountain West

State	Percent Local Funding Community Colleges	Local Appropriations, per Full-Time Equivalent Student
Arizona	61.4	\$5,422
Colorado	17.7	\$1,331
New Mexico	31.4	\$2,761
Nevada	0.0	\$0
Utah	0.0	\$0

* Adapted from Bombardieri, Marcella. (2020). "Tapping Local Support to Strengthen Community Colleges," American Progress

Table 2 shows the dollar amount needed to achieve resource equity between community colleges and their four-year counterparts. It also includes the amount of local revenue raised from various sources and the percentage of that revenue used to fund community colleges. The "Per Cent boost" in tax revenue shows the percent increase in local taxes needed to compensate for the resource equity gap and make community colleges whole.

Arizona needs over \$1.35B for community colleges to reach funding equitable to the state's four-year public institutions. For the other Mountain West states, the resource equity gap ranges from a low of \$143.7M in Utah to a high of \$631.9M in New Mexico. Colorado and Nevada fall in the middle with a gap of approximately \$387.9M and \$319M, respectively. Local revenue raised ranges from \$1.57B in New Mexico to \$8.67B in Colorado. Nevada and Utah's local revenue is about \$2.71B and \$3.22B, respectively, and Arizona's is \$6.75B.

Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico are the only Mountain West states that use local taxes to fund their community colleges. Arizona provides 12.3%, Colorado provides 1.1% and New Mexico provides 10.2% in local tax revenue to fund community colleges. At that rate, Arizona would need to boost its taxes 20% to compensate for the \$1.35B funding gap between its community colleges and state institutions. Colorado must raise their local taxes 4.5%, while New Mexico 40.11%, to reach equity. Nevada and Utah would need to raise local revenues by 11.8% and 4.5%, respectively, to locally fund community colleges in a manner equitable to their four-year higher education institutions.

Table 2: Community College Funding Gap in the Mountain West

State	Amount needed to achieve resource equity	Local revenue from property, individual income, and corporate income taxes	Percent of local taxes already going to community colleges	Percent boost in taxes needed for resource equity for community colleges
Arizona	\$1,351,349,693	\$6,754,467,000	12.3	20.0
Colorado	\$387,896,442	\$8,668,571,000	1.1	4.5
New Mexico	\$631,962,116	\$1,576,034,000	10.2	40.1
Nevada	\$319,011,032	\$2,706,976,000	0.0	11.8
Utah	\$143,790,026	\$3,219,661,000	0.0	4.5

* Adapted from Bombardieri, Marcella. (2020). "Tapping Local Support to Strengthen Community Colleges," American Progress.

APPENDIX A

The State of Nevada has no public community colleges.

An IPEDS official confirmed this fact in a December 11, 2020 email, stating

*“Our records show that there are no public Community Colleges, but there are 10 private for profit Community Colleges.”*⁶

A review of the IPEDS database finds all 7 public higher education institutions in Nevada listed as “four year” although some are described as “primarily associates” (degrees). None are categorized as “two year” institutions.

Nevada Public Institution of Higher Education	IPEDS Institutional Type*
College of Southern Nevada	4-year, primarily associate's, Public
Great Basin College	4-year, primarily associate's, Public
Nevada State College	4-year, Public
Truckee Meadows Community College	4-year, primarily associate's, Public
University of Nevada, Las Vegas	4-year, Public
University of Nevada, Reno	4-year, Public
Western Nevada College	4-year, primarily associate's, Public

* Adapted from U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, *College Navigator*, <https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/?s=NV&ct=1>

⁶ Email from Abis M. Lynch (IPEDS) to William E. Brown, Jr. (Brookings Mountain West, University of Nevada, Las Vegas) received December 11, 2020.