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## Changes in State Fiscal Support for Higher Education in the Mountain West, 2016-2021

Vanessa Booth

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

Caitlin J. Saladino

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

William E. Brown Jr.

*Brookings Mountain West, william.brown@unlv.edu*

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## CHANGES IN STATE FISCAL SUPPORT FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE MOUNTAIN WEST, 2016-2021

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

### PURPOSE:

This fact sheet explores higher education budget appropriation changes from fiscal year 2016 (FY16) to fiscal year 2021 (FY21) in the Mountain West states of Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah. This fact sheet reports data original presented in the 2021 *Inside Higher Ed* report, “States Maintain Higher Ed Funding,” by Emma Whitford.<sup>1</sup>

### ABOUT THE DATA:

The original report offers information on higher education fiscal data through a collaborative effort by the State Higher Education Officers Association and the Study of Education Policy at Illinois State University. These collaborators report on changes in state fiscal support for higher education over a period of five years (FY16 to FY21).<sup>2</sup>

The funding totals compiled in this dataset include federal dollars sent to states as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and the Governors Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund allocated for higher education.

This fact sheet presents year by year estimates of state funds, and state funds coupled with federal CARES/GEER funding appropriations allocated for higher education. This does not include CARES money sent directly to college or universities, federal assistance from the December 2020 stimulus package, or the \$1.9 trillion COVID Relief Bill.<sup>3</sup> It also does not include budget allocations from the America Rescue Plan (ARP).

### KEY FINDINGS:

1. Nevada experienced the largest year-over-year budget decline during the FY20-FY21 period, falling 17.8 percent in combined state funds and CARES/GEER funding.
2. From FY20 to FY21, Nevada experienced the largest overall decline (-17.80%) in state fiscal support and federal CARES/GEER money designated for higher education.
3. From FY16 to FY21, Utah (29.9%) saw the largest increase in state funding for higher education.
4. New Mexico (-2.2%) is the only Mountain West state that experienced an overall decrease in state funding for higher education from FY16 to FY21.

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<sup>1</sup> Emma Whitford, “States Maintain Higher Ed Funding,” 2021 (<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2021/03/16/state-higher-ed-funding-flat-thanks-federal-stimulus-influx>).

<sup>2</sup> See Inside Higher Ed “States Maintain Higher Ed Funding,” 2021 (<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2021/03/16/state-higher-ed-funding-flat-thanks-federal-stimulus-influx>).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Table 1 displays changes in higher education funding appropriations over the course of five years for Mountain West states. From FY20 to FY21, Nevada experienced the largest overall decline (-17.80%) in state fiscal support and federal CARES/GEER money designated for higher education.

From FY16 to FY21, Utah (29.9%) saw the largest increase in state funding for higher education, from State Money and Federal CARES/GEER Money, followed by Colorado (22.8%), Arizona (17.2% ); and Nevada (7.0%); New Mexico (-2.2%) is the only Mountain West state that experienced an overall decrease in state funding for higher education from FY16 to FY21.

**Table 1: One, Two, and Five-Year Changes in State Fiscal Support for Higher Education in the Mountain West, FY16 - FY21**

Mountain West State	1 Year Change (FY20-FY21)	1 Year Change (FY20-FY21)	2 Year Change (FY19- FY21)	2 Year Change (FY19-FY21)	5-Year Change (FY16-FY21)	5-Year Change (FY16-FY21)
	State Money Only	State Money + Federal CARES/GEER Money	State Money Only	State Money + Federal CARES/GEER Money	State Money Only	State Money + Federal CARES/GEER Money
Arizona	-4.5%	-3.9%	5.8%	6.5%	16.5%	17.2%
Colorado	-45.3%	-3.8%	-39.2%	6.9%	-30.1%	22.8%
Nevada	-17.8%	-17.8%	-12.1%	-12.1%	7.0%	7.0%
New Mexico	-4.7%	-4.3%	2.2%	2.7%	-2.6%	-2.2%
Utah	-1.1%	-1.1%	8.9%	8.9%	29.9%	29.9%

\*Adapted from “States Maintain Higher Ed Funding,” 2021 ([www.insidehighered.com/news/2021/03/16/state-higher-ed-funding-flat-thanks-federal-stimulus-influx](http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2021/03/16/state-higher-ed-funding-flat-thanks-federal-stimulus-influx))