



WISCONSIN TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM

Wisconsin State Agency 101

A SERIES
PREPARED BY



INSTITUTE FOR
REFORMING GOVERNMENT

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STATE AGENCY FAST FACTS

**52 CAMPUSES
STATEWIDE**

\$1.2 BILLION BUDGET

AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Wisconsin Technical College System consists of 16 districts throughout the state.

The districts have 52 campuses that offer more than 500 programs that consist of collegiate transfers, associate degrees, technical diplomas, apprenticeships, vocational-adult training, basic skills education, community services, hobby courses and community group courses.

In the 2019-2020 term there were more than 64,000 full time equivalent students enrolled at WCTS colleges.

In the 2021-2023 budget, the Wisconsin Technical College System was appropriated **\$1,221,629,400.**

DID YOU KNOW?

Wisconsin was the first state to create a system of technical education. In 1911, the legislature provided state funds and required every community to create an industrial education board with levy authority. This was a precursor to the current Wisconsin Technical College System District boards.

TAXPAYER ALERT!

- While the state's technical colleges provide some of the most workforce-relevant programs in the country, the schools are also among the least accountable parts of state government. Unelected campus leaders effectively have the authority to raise property taxes. The state should explore ways to make these campuses more accountable to taxpayers.
- According to the Wisconsin Policy Forum, since 2000, property taxes for technical colleges have gone up every year except when the legislature provides state aid with the requirement to lower property taxes.
- Then, in the 2021-2023 budget, the legislature provided WTCS \$72 million in funding to reduce property taxes over the biennium. In 2021-2022 this resulted in a \$16.5 million reduction in property taxes.
 - The total levy from property taxes was \$470 million.

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REFORM HISTORY

Wisconsin is unique in that it has both a system of 2-year community colleges in the UW System and the campuses of the WTCS. Major changes to WTCS have been rare in recent years.

However, the need to better meet workforce needs through strong higher education programs has been a constant conversation in all corners of the state for decades.

KEEP AN EYE ON...

- Some policymakers have started discussing how to consolidate and reduce overhead between the WTCS and UW System campuses. Watch for continued discussion on this, especially as the cost of higher education continues to go up and enrollment stays flat or decreases.
- Some programs in the WTCS may be out-of-date and others no longer meet workforce needs. However, new programs may also need to be created. WTCS should do more to improve its ability to stand up new programs that quickly and affordably meet workforce needs.
- Campuses should also ensure alignment between their curriculum and regional or national credentials that employers recognize. This will help attract workers and businesses to the state.

WTCS LEADERSHIP



Dr. Morna K. Foy
President
Wisconsin Tech College System



Dr. Rodney Pasch
Board President
Wisconsin Tech College System

CLOSE CALL...

The dual enrollment program in Wisconsin has been hugely successful and praised by the business community, parents, and students alike. Generally, the program allows high school juniors and seniors to take classes at the local technical college and receive both high school and college credit. The program is a valuable link for students looking to enroll in technical college after graduation and get a jumpstart into the workforce. However, in the 2019-21 budget, Governor Evers proposed changes to the program that would have diminished its success and made it more complicated and bureaucratic. Thankfully, the legislature pulled this out of the budget.

IRG WANTS TO KNOW...

If you were in charge for a day, what reforms would you make to the Technical College System? Email Alex Ignatowski, IRG's Director of State Budget and Government Reform, at ai@reforminggovernment.org.

ABOUT IRG



INSTITUTE FOR
REFORMING GOVERNMENT

The Institute for Reforming Government (IRG) is a 501 (c) 3 and Wisconsin-based think tank established to help remove the onerous barriers and red tape separating the individual from an efficient and functioning government.

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