



April 21, 2025

Joint Ways and Means Education Subcommittee
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs Sollman and Ruiz and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Portland Metro Chamber, I write to urge you to fully fund the Community College Support Fund at \$920 million for the 2025-27 biennium. Oregon's economy depends on a skilled workforce, and community colleges play an essential role in preparing workers to meet the needs of industries across the state.

The Portland Metro Chamber (The Chamber) is greater Portland's Chamber of Commerce and represents the largest, most diverse network of businesses in the region. The Alliance advocates for business at all levels of government to support commerce, community health and the region's overall prosperity. We represent more than 2,200 members, from 27 counties, 13 states and virtually every industry sector. More than 80% of our members are small businesses.

Businesses in the Portland metro region face a growing challenge: there are simply not enough trained workers to fill critical jobs. Employers in industries across the region, including advanced manufacturing, healthcare, technology, construction, and many others, rely on community colleges to provide hands-on, career-focused training that equips students with the skills needed to succeed from day one. However, these programs—especially Career & Technical Education (CTE)—are among the most expensive to operate due to equipment, technology, and instruction costs. Without additional state investment, colleges cannot expand these programs to meet the increasing demand for skilled workers.

Community colleges serve as a key economic driver, offering affordable and accessible education to students of all backgrounds, including working adults looking to upskill or transition into new careers. Ensuring these institutions have the necessary resources is not just an investment in students—it's an investment in Oregon's workforce, business growth, and economic competitiveness.

We urge the Legislature to fully fund the Community College Support Fund at \$920 million to support workforce development, expand in-demand training programs, and keep education accessible. The success of Oregon's businesses and economy depends on it.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jon Isaacs
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