

Restore higher education funding to ensure a well-educated workforce

BACKGROUND

Maintaining a robust system of higher education is vital to Oklahoma's economic prosperity. Insufficient funding hampers Oklahoma's ability to increase college degree earners and cultivate the productive workforce that is needed to keep Oklahoma economically competitive.



Over the past decade, Oklahoma's 25 colleges and universities have experienced some of the steepest cuts in the nation. In FY 2019, the State Regents is operating with state funding that is still a quarter below FY 2009 levels. Shrinking state funding has forced institutions to cut programs, offer fewer courses, and shift costs to students in the form of higher tuition and fees.

While all state institutions have been affected by these cuts, regional universities and community colleges that serve many rural and lower-income students have suffered the most. These disparities leave many of our students without access to the higher education they need to succeed.

Increased funding for higher education is necessary to restore degree and course offerings, hire additional faculty and staff, increase the number of students graduating on-schedule, and help ensure positive outcomes for Oklahoma's college students.

THE SOLUTION

Restoring state funding of higher education is critical for reaching the outcomes we hope for our children and ensuring long-term prosperity for our state. Oklahoma needs a plan to restore higher education funding that is backed by identified recurring revenue. Lawmakers should guard against giving away revenue with any new tax cuts or tax breaks and resist pressure to reverse any of the hard-won revenue measures passed in recent years.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Contact your state Representative and Senator and urge them to restore higher education funding. Tell them your story to remind them that without this funding, a college degree will be out of reach for too many Oklahomans, and our whole economy will suffer for the lack of a highly educated workforce.

To join the grassroots coalition of Oklahomans working to connect Oklahoma values with better budget and tax priorities, visit www.togetherok.org. To receive SMS advocacy alerts on important budget issues, **text OKBUDGET to 51555**.

You can look up your Senator and Representative on our website under the “Advocacy” tab on our main menu. You can also call the House switchboard at **405-521-2711**, and the Senate switchboard at **405-524-0126**.



“Increased funding for higher education is necessary to restore degree and course offerings, hire additional faculty and staff, increase the number of students graduating on-schedule, and help ensure positive outcomes for Oklahoma’s college students.”



For links to additional information and to view our full list of 2019 Policy Priorities, visit us online at
www.okpolicy.org/2019solutions