



## Community College Infrastructure – The Need for Federal Funding

**The Problem:** The COVID-19 pandemic has drastically impacted the national economy. Millions of jobs have been lost, with the greatest impact on those of more limited means. Many jobs are gone permanently, leaving millions of workers in need of education and training leading to other opportunities. The pandemic has also accelerated economic transformations that were already underway that will require newly skilled workers.

As the largest sector of higher education and the one most focused on career and technical education, community colleges are poised to foster economic growth by offering skills training aligned with industry needs. However, their ability to deliver state-of-the-art technical education is linked to having up-to-date facilities and the fixed equipment and educational resources that go with them. The increasing sophistication of technical education, which has a growing virtual component, requires continuous, large-scale capital investments. Additionally, academic facilities across the array of community colleges also need modernization.

Over time, state and local support for community college facilities has fallen far short of need. The result is an increasing backlog of unaddressed projects and a mounting number of deferred maintenance needs, with a negative impact on education quality. With the current national focus on infrastructure, it is timely for the federal government to focus on the unique needs of community colleges.

Based on an evaluation of facilities needs at community colleges across the country, national total deferred community college maintenance and needed renovations and upgrades is estimated at \$60 billion. This estimate reflects the fact that many community college facilities built in the 1960s and 1970s are fundamentally untouched. The estimate does not include future new construction projects that colleges hope to undertake.

**The Solution:** Community colleges welcome the \$12 billion for community college infrastructure included in President Biden’s American Jobs plan. Even though this funding falls short of our formal request of \$50 billion, the proposal will dramatically and visibly improve community college campuses and educational offerings. Projects covered by the infrastructure funding would include advanced manufacturing sites, libraries, nanotechnology laboratories, nursing facilities, and smart classroom structures. Funding will complement any broader national infrastructure efforts, in addition to shaping the future economy. It would also have a direct positive local economic impact.

The federal community college infrastructure effort should ensure a broad diffusion of funds, both across states and regions and among different types of institutions. The unique challenges of smaller colleges should be reflected. Local economic impact should be a factor in project selection. Current economic conditions recommend direct federal investment in facilities, rather than indirect subsidies or funding that contains matching requirements.

### State Examples of Need:

Community colleges evaluate their facilities needs and priorities in somewhat different ways. Some of the estimates of community college facilities need include:

- **Alabama**
  - Total requested amounts from the 24 community and technical colleges for infrastructure projects was \$772,066,006.
- **California**
  - Estimated need for new facilities, modernization of existing facilities, and deferred maintenance for community colleges is \$30,000,000,000.
- **Illinois**
  - Capital budget needs for deferred maintenance and renovations at community colleges are estimated to be \$862,609,501.
- **Massachusetts**
  - Building, infrastructure, grounds, and new construction needs at community colleges exceed \$1,100,000,000.
- **Michigan**
  - Total capital needs for community colleges are estimated to be \$500,000,000, conservatively.
- **New York**
  - SUNY Community Colleges reported an estimated need of \$3,100,000,000 overall for construction, renovation, and deferred maintenance.
- **North Carolina**
  - Estimated cost for top priority/immediate construction, repair, and renovation needs at community colleges is a minimum of \$2,240,000,000.
- **Virginia**
  - The total estimated needs for the Virginia Community College System across facility infrastructure and information technology infrastructure is \$1,890,000,000.
- **Washington**
  - Estimates a need of \$776,000,000 for FY 2021 – 2023 to fund several minor projects at every community college and 32 major projects at 29 community colleges across the state. This is not a comprehensive estimate of all the needs.
- **West Virginia**
  - West Virginia Community and Technical College System estimates \$95,973,000 in deferred maintenance and capital improvements for FY 2022.

**Supplemental Information:** Below are examples of community college facilities that need infrastructure improvements.

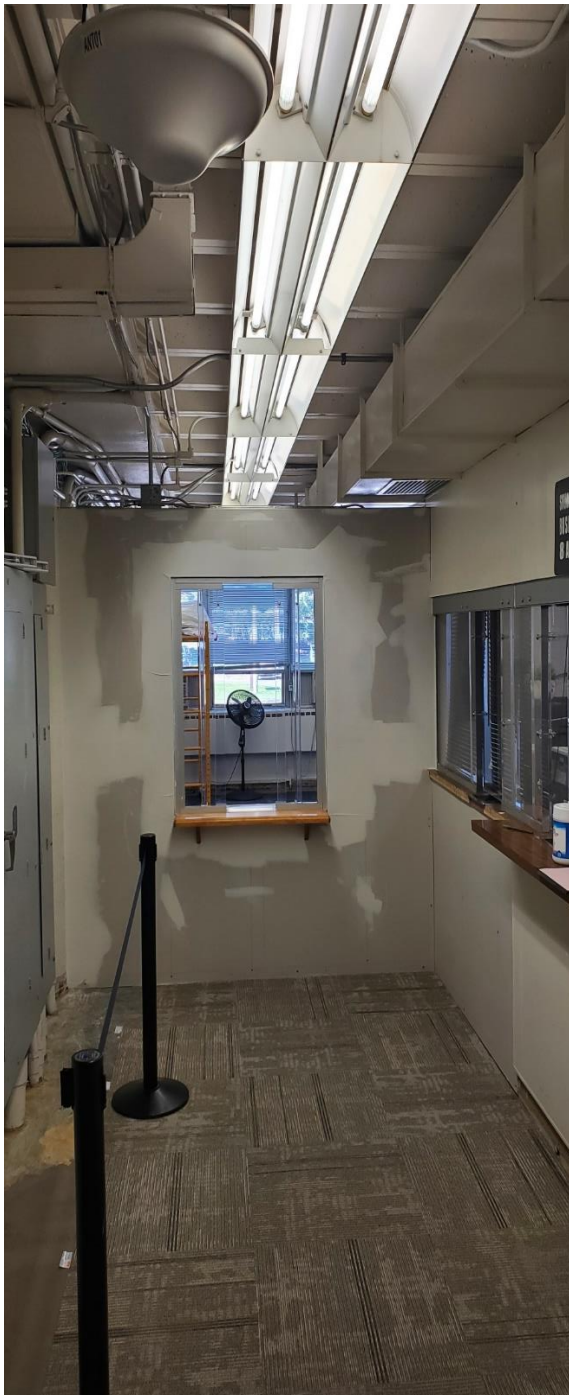


Built in 1956-57, this building at SUNY Broome needs a complete renovation. Window AC units need replacements and are loaded with asbestos, which adds greatly to the renovation costs.



SUNY Broome Student Center building also requires complete renovation and will need asbestos abatement.





Inside hallway of a building that's over 65 years old and in need of renovation in New York.



Inside hallway of building needing complete renovation in New York. Decaying ceiling tiles, and outdated facilities can be seen.



Onondaga Community College Gordon Student Center water heater and boilers need to be replaced.

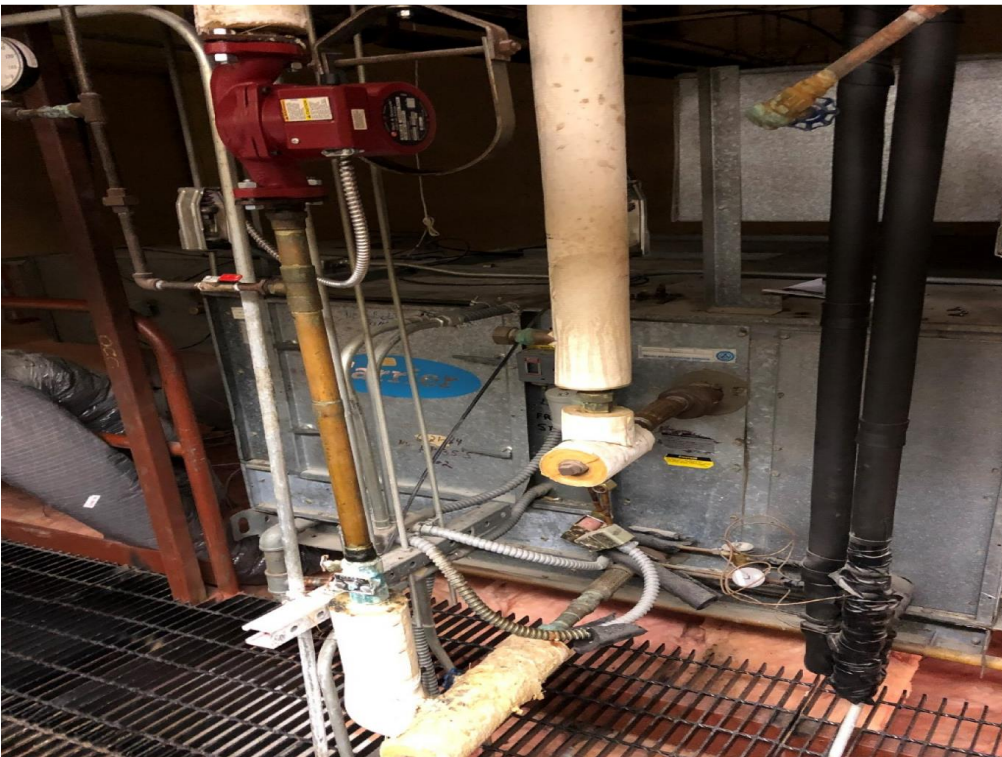


Onondaga Community College Gordon Student Center HVAC System needs replacement.





Onondaga Community College Coyne Hall HVAC system needs complete replacement.



Onondaga Community College Service & Maintenance Building HVAC system needs upgrades.





North Country Community College lab facilities in need of upgrading to meet today's needs.



Outdated North Country Community College cafeteria needs to be renovated.



Library in need of update and modernization at North Country Community College.



Lecture hall at North Country Community College that needs renovation and modernization.





Butler County Community College building requiring renovation and modernization.

**Conclusion:** While community colleges across the nation strive to provide affordable, high quality education; but in order to meet the needs of today's students and today's labor market, our institutions require sophisticated and modern equipment and facilities to provide the technological education required for the jobs of today and tomorrow.