



For Immediate Release

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As Tax Year Closes, Ohio Community Colleges Seek Donations to Help Students

COLUMBUS, OHIO – As the 2019 tax year comes to a close and Ohioans are looking for charitable-giving tax deductions, the state’s 23 community colleges are encouraging families to consider making a financial gift to their local college, boosting efforts to help improve student success and advance innovation.

“Community colleges provide tremendous value to Ohio families and our overall economy, but there’s a troubling gap between that value and the low level of annual giving those colleges receive,” said Jack Hershey, president and CEO of the Ohio Association of Community Colleges (OACC). “It’s amazing that just one percent of all the annual giving to higher education nationally is directed to community colleges, when those colleges enroll more than 35 percent of all the postsecondary students in the state.”

“We want to turn that gap on its head by changing the perception of donors who generously support higher education, but too often overlook the needs of community colleges that directly serve their home towns and neighbors,” Hershey said. “After all, Ohio’s community colleges are widely considered the gateway for helping area businesses quickly find skilled workers, while providing students with a low-cost path to a degree or credential required for today’s in-demand jobs. Plus, the average tuition in Ohio for a four-year college is almost \$10,000 compared to just under \$4,500 at a community college – making a gift to a community college a more powerful return on investment for donors.”

Hershey said the OACC is stressing five compelling reasons for giving to a community college:

- Donors may be able to take advantage of charitable tax deductions.
- Students are appreciative. Many of the students attending community colleges are the first in their family ever to attend college or are nontraditional students,

often raising families. The cost of college can be a particular burden to these individuals.

- Invest in YOUR community. After receiving their degree or certificate, more than 90% of community college students seek job opportunities locally compared to graduates of larger four-year schools, who too often move away from the local hometown to find work.
- Scholarships help! While Ohio's community colleges are affordable, private giving helps increase scholarships and opportunities for more students to get on the path (and stay on the path) to a rewarding new career.
- Help close Ohio's skills gap. Community colleges are playing a critical role in Governor Mike DeWine's efforts to help more Ohioans get a degree, certificate or credential needed to close the state's skills gap by developing new programs and training workers for emerging industries.

According to the Ohio Department of Higher Education, more than 171,000 students were enrolled at Ohio community colleges in 2017, compared to 286,000 undergraduates studying at four-year public universities in the state.

For more information on the various ways you can support one of Ohio's 23 community colleges, including charitable contributions that may be tax deductible, please contact your local community college today.

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