



NYPIRG NEWS RELEASE

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NYPIRG REACTS TO PRESIDENT BIDEN’S FREE COMMUNITY COLLEGE ANNOUNCEMENT

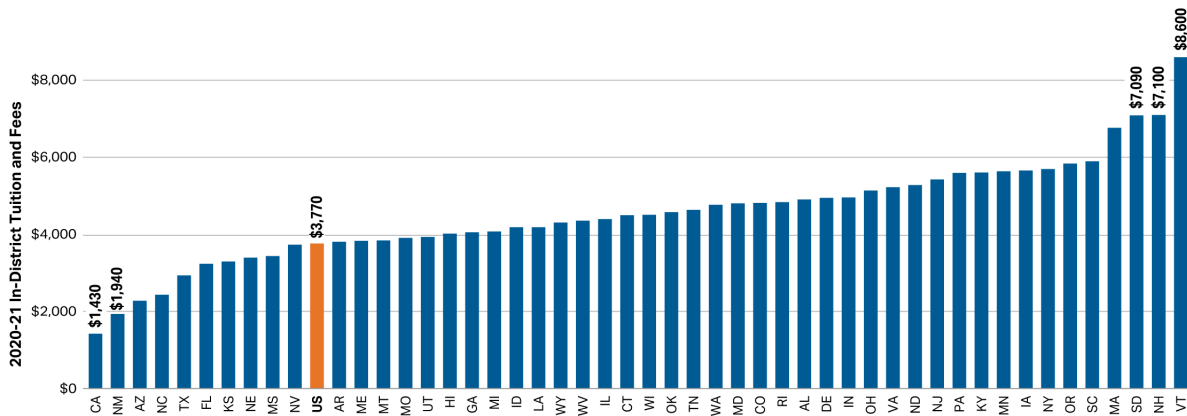
(New York, NY) Rolled out last night, President Biden’s proposal to make community colleges free and increase the Pell Grant is an important opportunity to bring New York’s community colleges back from the financial brink after [a decade of rising costs borne by students](#), withering enrollment, and underfunding from the state. Albany should take note.

The proposal gives New York a framework to support students of color, low income students, and anyone seeking entry to a college degree. Community colleges support more open access to postsecondary education, enroll more students of color and low income students, and contribute to the development of an educated citizenry and skilled workforce.

Here in New York, the state relies too heavily on students’ tuition dollars to fund its community colleges. While the state’s most recently enacted budget takes some steps to stabilize CUNY and SUNY community college funding, New York still charges one of the highest public community college average tuition and fees in the nation.

The College Board annually publishes a national ranking of states’ average tuition and fees. New York State ranks seventh most expensive in the nation for the 2020-2021 academic year. The rate of tuition hikes at NY community colleges over the past decade far outstrip inflation, while states support for community colleges has stagnated. More on NYPIRG’s analysis of New York’s community college costs can be found here: www.nypirgstudents.org/pubs/202102/Policy_Close_Up_higher_ed_2.3.21.pdf.

Average 2020-21 In-District Tuition and Fees at Public Two-Year Institutions, by State¹



Given the high costs of community college tuition relative to the nation, and stagnating enrollment numbers, New York would be wise to participate in this federal program to make community colleges free.

¹ The College Board, Trends in College Pricing and Student Aid 2020, Figure CP-5.