



NYPIRG NEWS RELEASE

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For More Information:

Megan Ahearn, mahearn@nypirg.org, 845-988-6300

With the Final Budget Passed, Albany Starts To Do Right By College Students And Colleges

In a first-in-a-generation move, the state is funding college costs that have for too long been dumped onto students and their families. The budget freezes tuition, includes what may be the single-biggest hike in the maximum Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) award, begins to close the “TAP Gap,” restores Bundy Aid, increases and restores funding to the state’s opportunity programs, stabilizes support for community colleges, and increases funding for mental health services, campus child care, and for programs for students with disabilities. NYPIRG applauds these critically-needed investments that were made possible by securing new revenue sources such as the Millionaires Tax.

While the state has started to turn the ship on higher education funding, there are still significant steps needed to reverse the impacts of over a decade of underfunding which has reduced class availability, increased class sizes, and made accessing advisement and other services more difficult.

The budget agreement rolls out closure of the “TAP Gap” over the next four years, and rejects the Executive’s operational cuts, but provides no additional operating budget increases. The budget also provides no additional mission funding to SUNY teaching hospitals, which have been on the front lines of the coronavirus battle. Further, community colleges, while saved from falling off the fiscal cliff, [still rely too heavily on students’ tuition dollars](#).

Additional Budget Details:

- Freezes tuition for the next three years
- Increases maximum Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) awards by \$500, from \$5,165 to \$5,665, and aligns the reimbursements to colleges with the maximum TAP award
- Begins closing the TAP Gap with additional funding of \$26 million for CUNY and \$22 million for SUNY this coming year, with a commitment to fully close the gap in four years
- Rejects the Executive’s operating budget cuts to CUNY Senior Colleges of \$26.2 million and to SUNY Senior Colleges of \$46.4 million
- Stabilizes CUNY and SUNY community college funding by increasing funding by \$50 per Full-Time-Equivalent student and ensures that community colleges will at least receive 98% of its previous year’s budget. This amounts to a \$5.6 million increase for CUNY community colleges in total, and a \$19.2 million increase for SUNY community colleges in total
- Increases Opportunity Program budgets, including SEEK, CUNY LEADS, College Discovery, EOP, EOC, STEP, C-STEP, and HEOP
- Restores CUNY ASAP
- Restores Bundy Aid for independent colleges and universities
- Increases mental health service funding to \$1 million for CUNY and \$1 million for SUNY
- Restores childcare funding at CUNY and SUNY
- Increases funding for students with disabilities by \$2 million

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