**Fiscal Facts: Understanding Technical College Funding in Wisconsin**

Wisconsin’s technical colleges receive high per-student funding levels compared to other public two-year colleges nationally, previous Wisconsin Policy Forum research found. Our very latest research provides new findings and insights that provide greater context for that comparison.

In 2022, funding per full-time student for the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) campuses brought in $17,419 per FTE student, State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO) data show. This ranked the system fifth-highest nationally and substantially above the U.S. average of $12,642.

To better understand this high ranking in our latest report, we looked at a range of factors, including those that WTCS officials have said help to explain it.

Our review found more than 100,000 technical college students being served in Wisconsin are absent in national data – a large discrepancy that likely makes technical college spending per pupil in Wisconsin look much higher than it actually is. Accounting for the missing students would leave spending levels in Wisconsin somewhat higher than nationally, but much closer to what is typical for other two-year colleges.

In addition, the specific services provided by WTCS colleges tend to be more expensive than those of typical two-year colleges nationally. This includes the relatively costly technical education that the state’s 16 technical college districts provided to a large number of part-time students as well as a range of free services – some mandated by state law – that are provided to adults. This likely explains at least part of the higher spending in Wisconsin.

While national data show much higher funding and spending levels for technical colleges in Wisconsin than most other two-year colleges nationally, these data appear to omit some of the key duties of the WTCS campuses in the state and a huge number of their students.

Wisconsin’s technical colleges are crucial to the state’s employers and workforce. Policymakers and citizens may wish to consider these nuances when determining appropriate levels of technical college funding and spending.

*This information is a service of the Wisconsin Policy Forum, the state’s leading resource for nonpartisan state and local government research and civic education. Learn more at* [*wispolicyforum.org*](https://wispolicyforum.org/research/state-tax-burden-up-but-overall-burden-still-falling/)*.*