



# New York City's Future Needs CUNY and CUNY Needs NYC

*Investing \$62.6 million in new operating funds for CUNY will promote racial equality, boost the economy and ensure safer communities in the future.*

Public higher education fuels a vibrant economy, rejuvenates communities post-COVID, and promotes equity. It provides productive alternatives to recidivism. For example, a 2019 Department of Labor report recommended that community colleges target returning citizens as a way to reduce reincarceration. Those who obtain post-secondary education are less likely to reoffend [Caston 2020]. It keeps tax dollars at home. (For example, a 2021 New York City Comptroller report found that CUNY graduates contributed \$4.2 billion to the state economy in just one year.) Public higher education works; we must invest in CUNY.

CUNY's proven return on investment will uplift our economy by uplifting workers, communities, and families. We can leverage the resources of CUNY to respond to public health and safety issues while helping improve economic inequality. To do so, we must invest in the life-changing wrap-around services that make it possible for students to reconnect to CUNY, stay enrolled once they return, and move on to family-sustaining employment.

The Council knows that CUNY is key to our recovery. We applaud and support Council Speaker Adams' recently proposed CUNY Reconnect Initiative that would help bring back the 700,000 New Yorkers who

have earned some college credits but no degree. This program will improve job prospects for Black and brown New Yorkers while promoting economically thriving communities and boosting enrollment. The Speaker's initial request for \$23 million is a laudable starting point but we must go further. CUNY Reconnect can work, while serving existing students, if we make additional investments in the services that are proven to boost graduation and retention rates.

- **ASAP for All:** Serving as a model for community colleges across the country, ASAP's three-year graduation rate is more than double that of non-ASAP associate degree students at CUNY's community colleges. ASAP provides comprehensive student support and advising (at a ratio of 150 students to 1 advisor), professional development, tuition assistance, free MetroCards and textbooks. A CUNY analysis found that the program narrows existing graduation gaps for Black and Hispanic males. ASAP for All would provide more students, including reconnected students, with access to advising. The City should baseline this increase in the budget to expand this program. **\$20 million**
- **Replace Lost Full-Time Faculty:** CUNY lost hundreds of faculty to attrition during the

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pandemic. The Mayor's proposed 3% across-the-board cut would exacerbate CUNY's over-reliance on underpaid, contingent faculty. It would also make it more difficult to convert long-serving adjuncts to full-time positions. Further, a 2021 study from the University Faculty Senate documented that colleges with the greatest proportion of students of color have the fewest full-time faculty, exacerbating racial inequality. **\$14.6 million**

- **Mental Health Counselors:** CUNY now averages one mental health counselor for every 2,400 students. We can help bring this ratio closer to 1:1,000, as recommended by the International Accreditation of Counseling Services. The Council knows that we have a mental health crisis in our City, and it requires increased funding for more full-time mental health providers on CUNY campuses. **\$10 million**
- **Increase Graduation Rates by Funding Remediation:** Hiring full-time instructors for remedial courses, not contingent faculty who are paid hourly, will create equity and security to truly support student success. **\$2 million**
- **Expand Intensive English-Language Instruction:** The CLIP program helps generate new enrollment and serves the most vulnerable, but at BMCC, for example, the CLIP program in 2020 had a waitlist of 125 students. **\$5 million**
- **Expand Childcare Centers:** Students cannot come back to campus without viable childcare options, nor can they stay enrolled unless we address this barrier to completion. Nationally, one in four college students are parents with dependent children, and over 40% of those are single mothers. Existing centers need more funding, especially for younger children who require higher staff-to-student ratios. **\$4 million**
- **Revise Support for Senior Colleges:** Since 2019 the City has supported Senior Colleges at \$53 million for important services. Adjusted for inflation, this would be \$60 million. **\$7 million**
- **Capital Budget:** We support CUNY's capital budget request for the community colleges. **\$33.5 million**

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