2025 Headcount vs. FTE: Why Headcount Matters

Annual HECC enrollment shows how many students are served; FTE shows instructional load.

2025 statewide snapshot

Measure	Community colleges	Public universities
Full academic-year headcount	**209,605**	**125,022**
Estimated funding per headcount	**$2,867**	**$4,279**
Full academic-year student FTE	**73,786.7**	**84,896.5**
SHEF funding per FTE	**$11,591**	**$6,531**
Students served per FTE	**2.84 : 1**	**1.47 : 1**

Why headcount matters

Community colleges serve about **1.9× as many students per FTE** as public universities.

- Part-time attendance is central to the community-college access mission.
- Part-time students still need admissions, registration, financial aid, advising, records, technology, facilities and student supports.

Headcount shows people. FTE only measures instructional load.

Headcount is listed first because it reflects the number of individual students institutions serve.

Sources: HECC full-academic-year enrollment, AY 2024-25; SHEEO State Higher Education Finance (SHEF), FY2025.

Every student needs the college's core services

Part-time attendance is central to community college access



PART-TIME STUDENT

4 credits

Illustrative course load



1 student served



FULL-TIME STUDENT

16 credits

Illustrative course load



1 student served

Different course loads. Shared service needs.

Several part-time students can add up to one FTE.
Each still needs enrollment, records, advising and support.

Access for working adults, parents, high school students and short-term workforce learners.

Source: OCCA Headcount vs. FTE Talking Points, Aug. 10, 2026. Credit loads are illustrative.

Core services support every student

Whether a student takes 4 credits or 16, colleges maintain the same foundational systems

Admissions & registration

Applications and enrollment

Financial aid

Eligibility, awards and compliance

Advising & student success

Planning, outreach and referrals

Records & transcripts

Grades and enrollment verification

Technology & systems

Accounts, platforms and security

Services & infrastructure

Support, facilities and compliance

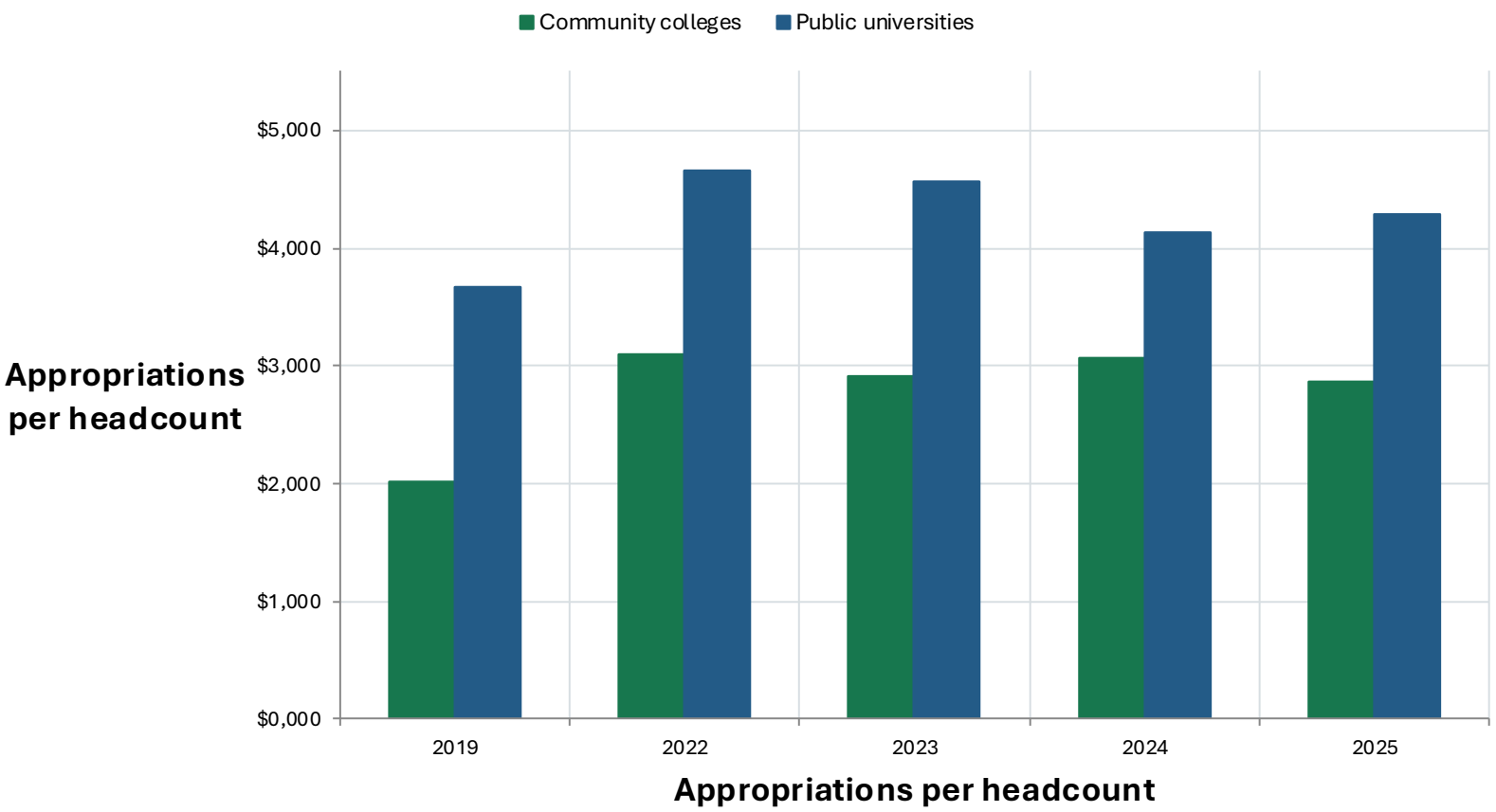
Headcount captures the people who need these services.

Many costs arise per person or remain in place regardless of course load.

Source: OCCA Headcount vs. FTE Talking Points, Aug. 10, 2026.

Funding per headcount: annual HECC enrollment basis

Estimated SHEF public education appropriations per student served during the full academic year



2025 annual view

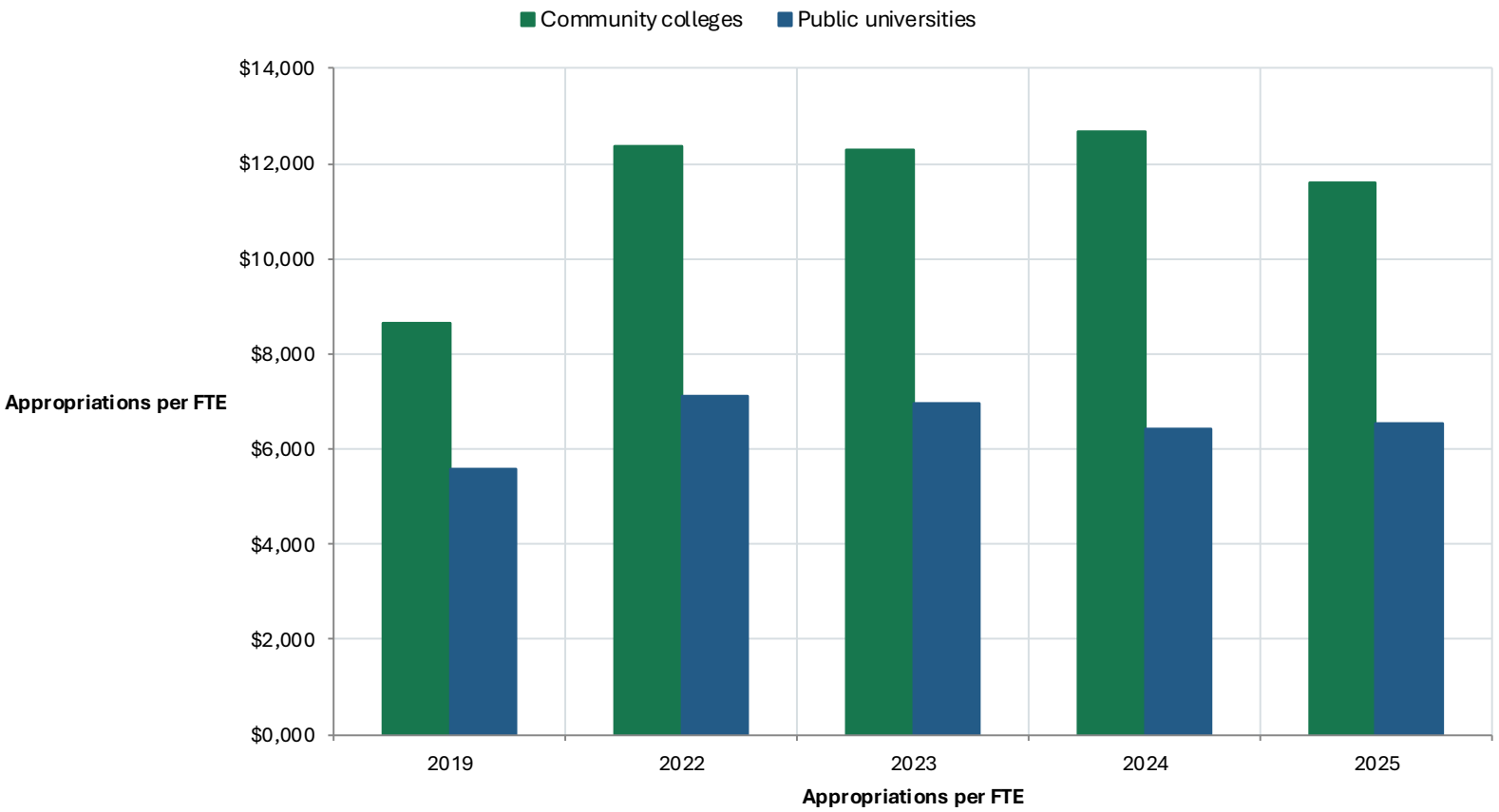
Community colleges
$2,867

Public universities
$4,279

Years pair SHEF fiscal-year funding with the HECC academic year ending in the same year (for example, FY2025 with AY 2024-25).

Funding per FTE: the SHEF series is unchanged

FTE remains useful for measuring instructional load; these are the same sector-level funding values used in the earlier OCCA materials



2025 FTE view

Community colleges
$11,591

Public universities
$6,531

Source: SHEEO, State Higher Education Finance, Table 3.2A. Values are constant adjusted dollars.

Annual enrollment behind the headcount calculation

HECC full-academic-year headcount replaces fall fourth-week headcount in the revised series

Measure	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025
Community college annual headcount	261,434	184,914	193,318	200,573	209,605
Public university annual headcount	126,462	117,544	118,553	123,984	125,022
Community college SHEF FTE	60,770	46,129	45,885	48,624	51,842
Public university SHEF FTE	83,519	76,781	77,840	79,833	81,908

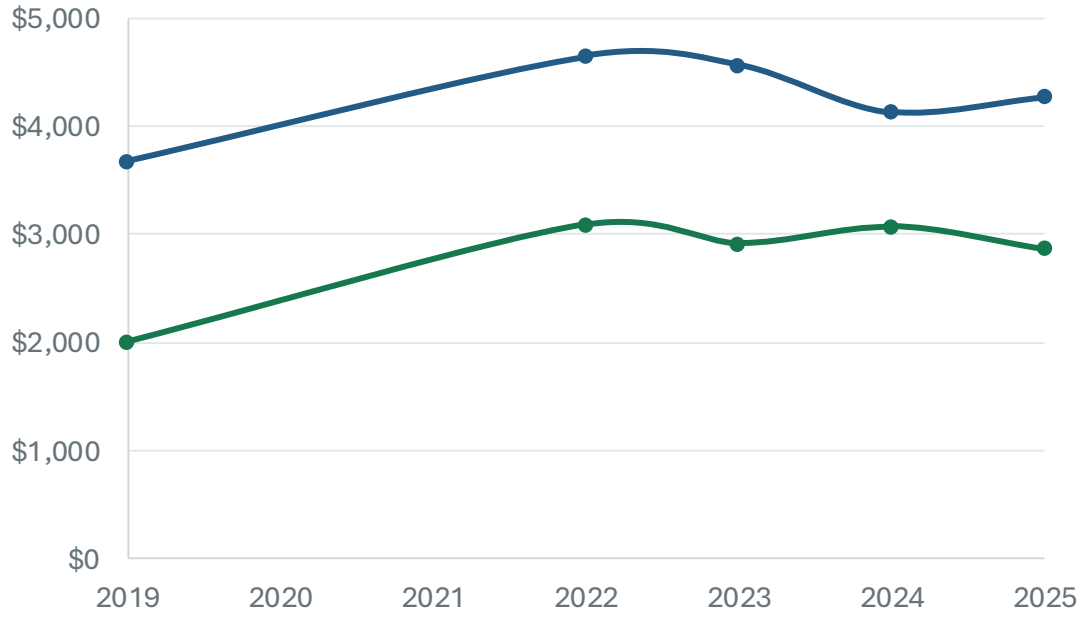
HECC annual headcount: statewide sector snapshots/data dashboards. SHEF FTE: SHEEO Table 3.1A. Headcount is listed before FTE.

Funding comparisons over time

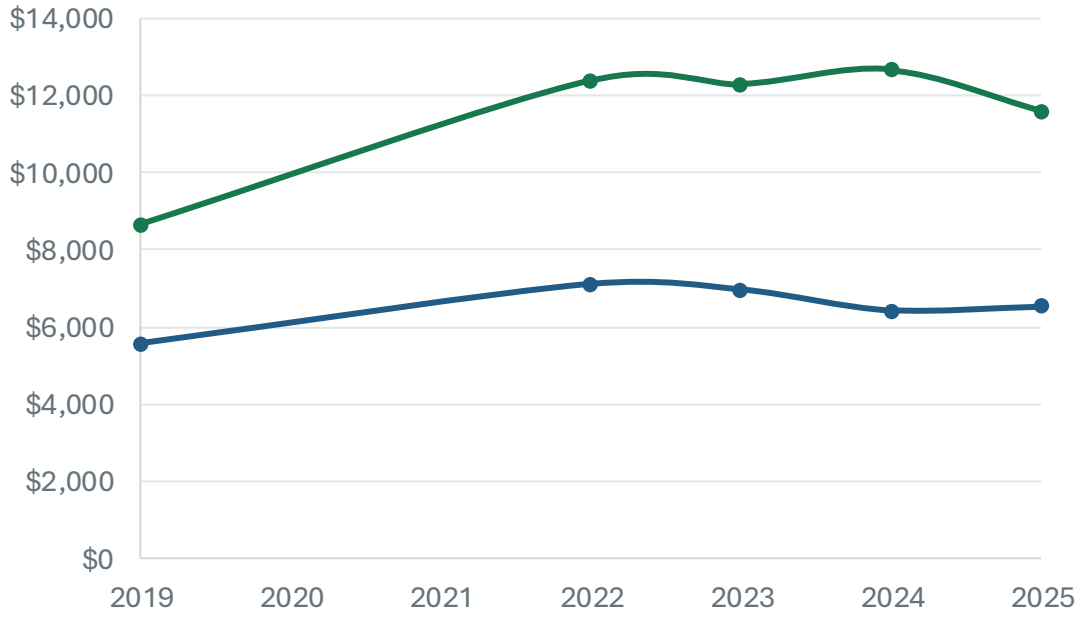
The funding picture changes with the enrollment measure

Community colleges Public universities

Per headcount



Per FTE



Headcount shows people served. FTE shows instructional load.

Selected years. Lines connect available observations; no 2020–21 values. Each graph uses its own dollar scale.

Sources: HECC annual headcount and SHEEO/SHEF. Headcount funding = (SHEF per-FTE appropriations × SHEF FTE) ÷ annual headcount.