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President's plan for free community college could cost AZ over \$31 million

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By Greg Argos

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PHOENIX (CBS5) - The president's plan for two free years of community [college](#) may cost Arizona taxpayers at least \$31 million.

According to the president's proposal, any first-time college students would be able to attend two years of community college for free. They would have to maintain at least a 2.5 GPA. The federal government would pay for 75 percent of the cost, and states that decide to opt-in would pay the remaining 25 percent.

"I think it's a great idea to generate (conversation) about access," said Dr. Rufus Gasper, the chancellor of Maricopa County Community [Colleges](#) (MCCCD).

Gasper said he would have to further [research](#) cost, but a rough estimate puts the total cost of the president's plan for MCCCD at approximately \$151 million. The state would have to pay approximately \$38 million.

"It's worth the [investment](#). Over time the state would benefit and the community would benefit and all boats would rise," he said.

The plan is based on a similar system already enacted in Tennessee.

A spokesperson for Gov. Doug Ducey's office would not comment on whether Arizona would [participate](#) in the program.

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