

## **Application Process and Formal Application**

### **Creation and Formation of Community College District**

This application, associated agency rules, and processes are provided in accordance with Wyoming State Statute 21-18-312.

#### Process Overview

Developing a community college and district is a lengthy process. Wyoming State Statute requires that no community college may be established in the state unless approved by both the Community College Commission and subsequently approved by the Legislature (W.S.S 21-18-312 (b)). As such the general steps are summarized as follows:

1. Initial interest in college district formation expressed to the Community College Commission Executive Director.
2. Review and consideration of minimal prerequisites as submitted by the interested party by the Community College Commission.
3. Completion and submission of the application, and subscribed petition of not less than five hundred (500) or twenty-five percent or (25%), whichever is smaller of qualified electors within the proposed district area.
4. Upon the receipt of the application, The Wyoming Community College Commission will initiate a comprehensive survey to consider many factors to assist the Commission on the disposition of the application. The Commission is to be reimbursed by the county for costs associated with survey development.
5. The Commission shall approve or disapprove the petition within (90) and furnish survey findings to the Legislature and the county commissioners.
6. If the application is approved by both the WCCC and the Wyoming Legislature, the county in which the community college is to be formed, shall conduct an election for the creation of the district, the authority to levy a property tax to not exceed four (4) mills, and to elect initial community college district board members.
7. Should other counties seek to be included in the proposed community college district, the clerks of the other county shall conduct a separate election.
8. Upon completion of the vote, the vote necessary to authorize the establishment of a community college district is a majority of all votes cast within the proposed district.

#### Preliminary Consideration for Seeking Creation of a Community College District

Prior to submission of a complete application, the following minimal prerequisites must be satisfied.

- A. The area to be formed into the district must be a territory having an assessed property valuation of not less than one hundred million dollars (\$100,000,000)
- B. There must be not less than fifteen hundred (1,500) students regularly enrolled in grades nine (9) through twelve (12).

C. The territory of such district may encompass one (1) or more counties

W.S.S 21-18-312 (a)

#### Accreditation By the Higher Learning Commission

Accreditation is a formal, independent verification that an Institution of Higher Education (IHE) meets established quality standards, and is required for the transferability and formal recognition of the credits, certificates and degrees it produces. The United States Department of Education has granted authority to multiple institutional accrediting bodies to evaluate and monitor IHE's in which the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) serves as the institutional accreditor for Wyoming. Only after receiving accreditation can an IHE do the following:

- Provide federal financial aid (Pell Grants) to students
- Participate in intercollegiate athletics
- Allow students to transfer credits, certificates and degrees to other IHE's
- Provide appropriate professional licensures through their coursework

Accreditation cannot be granted until a college has operated for several years and can demonstrate its academic effectiveness, its financial sustainability, and its effective governance structure among many other criteria. Typically, institutions seeking eligibility, candidacy, and initial accreditation need to operate as unaccredited institutions for approximately 4-5 years before accumulating the necessary evidence to demonstrate their qualifications for formal accreditation. It may be possible for extension campuses within existing districts to apply their duration of operations towards these accrediting requirements with the approval of the institutional accreditor. Unaccredited institutions cannot publicly describe themselves as a candidate for accreditation, or imply that they are currently working with an institutional accreditor, until the institution has been granted candidacy by HLC. Further, accrediting bodies require assurances of state authorization and rigor in the process to move toward independent status. As a result, the requirements for minimum expectations for accreditation eligibility and candidacy are embedded within. The Community College Commission district formation application process is designed to verify and validate to the accrediting body, the state has conducted a thorough and substantive review of the obligations required when allowing an institution to pursue independently accredited college status.

The accreditation process for institutions seeking initial accreditation is a two-step process that takes approximately 4-6 years: Step 1. Eligibility and 2. Candidacy and Initial Accreditation. *See [www.hlcommission.org](http://www.hlcommission.org) for more information and guidance.*

## Formal Application

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### Submitting Entity Contact Information

Location of Proposed Community College District (County or Counties, city or towns)

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Proposed name of college district

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Name of submitting agency, party, or public Entity

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Mailing Address

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Contact Information (telephone, email, website)

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Administrative Contact

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Administrative Contact Information (telephone, email, website)

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Administrative Contact Mailing Address

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### Statement of Purpose

Please submit a statement of purpose detailing the goals of forming a new community college district and college, how the addition of a college will have a greater benefit to the community than educational services currently provided, and how the new college will compliment and not detract from educational opportunities already available across Wyoming. Including a formal Needs Assessment Study is advisable.

### Demographic and Educational Need questions

1. Please provide the legal boundaries of the proposed district (including map).
2. Identify the location of campus or campuses proposed within the new district.
3. Note the projected date of establishment of a campus within the district.
4. Detail the existing population of the proposed district.
5. Detail the projected population of the district for the year of application and projected into the next ten years in five-year increments.
6. Detail the number of high school seniors from the proposed district projected to attend, for the application year and projected into the next ten years in five-year increments.
7. Identify the number of high school seniors in the state, not from the proposed district, projected to attend, for the year of application and projected into the next ten years in five-year increments.
8. Identify the adult population (ages 25-64) that do not currently hold a recognized post-secondary credit certificate or degree within the proposed district.
9. Clarify the number of district adult (ages 25-64) students projected to attend, for the year of the application and projected into the next ten years in five-year increments.
10. Identify other demographic factors felt to be important in the context of this request, such as known industrial developments or industrial closing which may effect the economy and/or population.
11. Identify projected student populations for unduplicated full-time credit, unduplicated part-time credit, unduplicated noncredit workforce training/continuing education, and unduplicated noncredit community service.

### Educational Programming including Student Support Questions

12. Discuss degrees and certificates to be offered through the overall instructional program including that the programs are appropriate for an institution of higher education.
13. Identify academic transfer programs to be established at the campus, including justification based on demand and projected ten years.
14. Identify career-technical education (CTE) programs to be established at the campus, including justification based on demand and projected ten years. Include data related to Wyoming economic priority sectors and/or current and projected wage data.
15. Identify non-credit workforce training and/or continuing education programs to be established within the district, including justification based on current and projected demand for the next ten years.

16. Identify community service programs to be established within the district, including justification based on current and projected demand for the next ten years.
17. Identify geographic areas of service the instructional program (academic, CTE, workforce training/continuing education, community service) would serve outside of the proposed district. Include statements of demand for these services from each area so identified.
18. Identify all programs offered by distance education or correspondence education and the institution's capacity to meet student learning and support needs.
19. Identify student support programming to be established at the campus and how these services will be implemented and sustained including, but not limited to, library services, registration and records management including transcribing, document preservation, academic advising, financial aid and scholarships, placement, and student activities.
20. List first year and second year academic programs currently underway in the proposed district through other Wyoming community colleges, out-of-state institutions, or private industry and the numbers of students enrolled in each.
21. List noncredit workforce training/continuing education and community service programs currently underway in the proposed district through other Wyoming community colleges or through cooperative agreements or among other agencies.
22. List demand-justified programs in academic, CTE, workforce training/continuing education, and community service areas not currently offered or not projected to be offered by an existing Wyoming community college in the proposed district.
23. List existing programs offered in the academic, CTE, workforce training/continuing education, or community service area, which do not satisfy their intended purposes or do not satisfy the demand for which they were intended.

#### Institutional Accreditation

24. Discuss steps to be taken to establish accreditation of the institution through the Higher Learning Commission. Include anticipated milestones and dates.
25. For existing campuses, discuss steps and/or legal operating agreements with an existing accredited Wyoming community college district to provide educational services including curriculum, catalog, student support, transfer of credits, and credential awarding during the accreditation process. Include clear and complete descriptions of the relationship between the institution independent college status and the supporting Wyoming community college district.
26. Detail the plan to develop a district mission statement and any similar statements of vision/values.
27. Detail the plan and timeline to develop a catalog and other sources through which information about the institution, its personnel, and its academic program is provided.
28. Detail the plan and timeline to develop clearly articulated learning goals for academic programs including strategies for assessments.
29. Plan and clarify the timeline for development of the district's general education minimum requirements which should be grounded in the philosophy and impacts of common knowledge

and intellectual concepts with no less than 15 credits for an AAS degree, 24 credits for an AA or AS degree, or 30 for a baccalaureate degree.

30. Plan and clarify the timeline to provide assurances to meet the federal requirements for credit described in the HLC Federal Compliance program.

#### Facilities and Physical Resources

31. Identify existing facilities capable of housing in-district programs and administration.
32. Identify facilities necessary to house future program and administration needs within a twenty-year projection.
33. Identify funding available and projected for facility development, listed separately in five-year increments for twenty years from the date of application.
34. For existing campuses, identify ownership of property.
35. For existing campuses that operate under an existing college district, identify the process for transfer of ownership or planned lease agreements for continued campus operation.

#### Financial Resources and Administrative Capacity

36. List Items (a) through (f), in five-year increments for 20 years from the date of application
  - a. Assessed Valuation
  - b. Motor Vehicle Tax
  - c. Tuition
  - d. Fees both institutional and course
  - e. Investments
  - f. Other Funds
  - g. State Supplemental Funds (Note that unaccredited institutions are not eligible to receive general fund appropriations from Wyoming.)
37. Plan and detail a timeline for the district to have the financial base to support its operations and sustain operations in the future including fiscal management, budgeting capacity using WCCC format and National Association of College and University Budget Officers (NACUBO) guidelines, including debt management and external auditing capacity.
38. Plan and detail a timeline for appointing a Chief Executive Officer (President) and necessary administrative positions to support a district.
39. Plan and detail a timeline for employing faculty and other academic personnel appropriately qualified and sufficient in number to support the academic programs and operations.
40. Plan and detail a timeline for implementation of an administrative computing system including student and financial records.
41. Plan and detail a timeline for securing access to learning resources and support services necessary to support the learning expected of its students (research labs and supplies, libraries/librarians, other).
42. Plan and detail a timeline for developing and implementing academic and business operations, board policies, and administrative policies and procedures.

