

EFFICIENCY IN ARKANSAS HIGHER ED

The "Policy Foundation was established in 1995 as an independent research organization ... The Foundation has established the Efficiency Project ... (which) allows a nonpartisan, independent group of citizens to volunteer their time and efforts to directly impact the improvement of state government ... to make it more cost-effective and citizen accountable." Gov. Asa Hutchinson, Dec. 17, 2015

"Total operating expenditures at the Arkansas Department of Higher Education decreased versus CPI in the period under review (FY2014-to-2015)." Policy Foundation, Efficiency Project report¹ to Hutchinson administration, October 2016

(November 2020) State agencies are not the only Arkansas government units that have reduced actual expenditures or spent less than CPI in recent years. An untold story are multiple cost-saving measures taken by some Arkansas colleges and universities. DFA records show *declines* in "total operating expenditures" (FY2015-to-2019, see Endnotes) at 15 colleges and universities:

Arkansas State University-Jonesboro
Arkansas State University-Mountain Home
Arkansas State University-Three Rivers²
Black River Technical College
Cossatot Community College Univ. of AR.
Mid-South Community College
Ozarka College
Pulaski Technical College
Rich Mountain Community College
South Arkansas Community College
Southern Arkansas University
Southern Arkansas University Technical Branch
Univ. of Arkansas at Little Rock
University of Arkansas at Fort Smith
Univ. of Arkansas Community College-Batesville

Total operating expenditures for Institutions of Higher Education increased 8.9% percent in the period, slightly above the 8.7% increase in CPI.

¹ The Project report identified four efficiencies undertaken by ADHE: 1) " Over the last year, we reviewed all positions in the department. Several positions have been eliminated, some will be eliminated when retirements occur and others have been changed to match operating priorities; 2) We have eliminated one outsourced contract and will end a second contract by July 2016. Outsourced duties will be absorbed by existing employees; 3) One of three fleet vehicles is being eliminated; 4) Increasing automated processes to eliminate repetitive manual tasks. For example, data entry of student transcript information."

² Ouachita Technical College (FY2015) College of the Ouachitas (FY2019) and ASU-Three Rivers effective January 1, 2020.

Eight other colleges and universities increased total operating expenditures less than CPI, DFA records show.

Arkansas State University-Beebe
Arkansas Tech University
National Park Community College
Phillips Community College of the Univ. of Arkansas
Southeast Arkansas College
University of Central Arkansas
UAMS Indigent Care
Univ. of Arkansas Community College-Morrilton

Total operating expenditures at other schools were greater than CPI.

--Greg Kaza

Endnotes

(Schools with declines in total operating expenditures)
<https://www.dfa.arkansas.gov/budget/agency-actual-expenditures/> ASU Jonesboro (F2015) \$233,869,988, (FY2019) \$211,487,374; ASU-Mountain Home, \$9,868,187, \$8,968,118; ASU-Three Rivers (formerly Ouachita Technical College) \$11,620,125, (College of the Ouachitas) \$10,378,906; Black River Technical College \$23,465,422, \$14,643,426; Cossatot Community College Univ. of Arkansas \$13,429,063, \$12,791,634; Mid-South Community College \$20,613,658, \$16,907,710; Ozarka College \$10,388,489, \$8,504,900; Pulaski Technical College \$64,425,270, \$40,109,965; Rich Mountain Community College \$7,645,970, \$7,528,491; South Arkansas Community College \$17,441,435, \$15,515,218; Southern Arkansas University \$52,113,566, \$43,828,544; Southern Arkansas University-Technical Branch \$16,335,169, \$16,171,011; Univ. of Arkansas at Little Rock \$171,392,265, \$142,889,422; Univ. of Arkansas at Fort Smith \$71,596,322, \$70,184,653; and Univ. of Arkansas Comm. College-Batesville \$12,316,190, \$11,720,967.

(Total Spending) Total Institutions of Higher Education (FY2015) \$3,478,854,666, (FY2019) \$3,790,805,526

(Schools spending less than CPI) Arkansas State University-Beebe (FY2015) \$30,713,450, \$30,819,089; Arkansas Tech University \$113,581,498, \$120,199,283; National Park Community College \$20,683,477, \$21,382,044; Phillips Community College of the Univ. of Arkansas \$18,201,273, \$19,152,711; Southeast Arkansas College \$12,266,500, \$13,138,345; University of Central Arkansas \$176,355,051, \$186,796,266; UAMS Indigent Care \$5,342,181, \$5,342,181; and Univ. of Arkansas Community College-Morrilton \$14,869,778, \$15,068,188.