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Higher Education Capital Improvement Proposals

The Governor's Recommended FY 2023 Budget includes three signature capital investments in public higher education totaling \$97.0 million. They consist of:

- Two general obligation bond referenda proposed for the November 2022 ballot for the University of Rhode Island and Community College of Rhode Island totaling \$62.0 million; and
- \$35.0 million from the American Rescue Plan Act Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund (Capital Projects Fund) for Rhode Island College.

University of Rhode Island – Narragansett Bay Campus (\$50 million)

General obligation bonds would finance the repairs of existing facilities and the construction of new ones on the University of Rhode Island's Narragansett Bay Campus in support of the educational and research needs for the marine disciplines. Projects may include the replacement of the Horn Laboratories with a modern laboratory facility and the construction of the Wave & Acoustics Laboratory and the Ocean Engineering Education and Research Center.

Community College of Rhode Island – Renovation and Modernization (\$12 million)

General obligation bonds would finance the restoration and enhancement of academic and student support spaces and other infrastructure on the four campuses that make up the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI). Projects would include modernizing and renovating facilities, making repairs, improving safety and energy efficiency, and replacing outdated educational technology and equipment. The referendum is consistent with Phase IV of CCRI's master plan – an effort to renovate and modernize existing facilities to provide modern learning environments for students.

Rhode Island College – Student Services Center (\$35 million)

Federal funds available under the Capital Projects Fund would finance the construction of a centrally located, "one-stop" Student Services Center. This facility would support students and help Rhode Island College's (RIC) effort to remove barriers that make it difficult for students to complete their education and earn their degrees. The Governor has proposed this project for Capital Projects Fund financing rather than general obligation bonds because the project meets the three criteria for Capital Projects Fund financing as a Multipurpose Community Facility. The project as proposed would: (I) enable health monitoring with the construction of a new Wellness Center that supports both physical wellness and mental health counseling; (II) enhance education with the location of the Office of Academic Advising in the facility to support all students with an emphasis on first-year students and nursing majors; and (III) provide support for workforce training with the co-location of RIC's Career Development Center to provide undergraduate and graduate students with workforce readiness skills. All three of these components are requirements of this funding source.

Additional Funds for Public Higher Education

Above and beyond these signature investments, the recommended budget also includes an increase of \$101.4 million in Rhode Island Capital Plan Funds relative to the enacted plan for the three higher education institutions in combination.