



Capital Development Committee

Legislative Council Staff

Nonpartisan Services for Colorado's Legislature

FISCAL YEAR 2025-26 CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION REQUEST

Auraria Higher Education Center
Auraria Campus Safety Center

2024-008

Project Status

This is a continuation project. Phase I was approved for funding in FY 2024-25. This year's request is for the second and final phase.

Table 1
Prioritization

Prioritized By	Priority	Notes
Auraria Higher Education Center	1 of 1	
Colorado Commission on Higher Education	2 of 29	
Office of State Planning and Budgeting	4 of 6	Recommended for funding.

Table 2
Prior Appropriation and Request Information

Fund Source	Prior Appropriation	Budget Year FY 2025-26	Out Year FY 2026-27	Future Requests	Total Costs
CCF	\$19,889,027	\$16,075,891	\$0	\$0	\$35,964,918
CF	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$19,889,027	\$16,075,891	\$0	\$0	\$35,964,918

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Table 3
Itemized Cost Information

Category	Prior Appropriation	Budget Year FY 2025-26	Out Year FY 2026-27	Future Requests	Total Costs
Land Acquisition	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Professional Services	\$4,095,993	\$721,381	\$0	\$0	\$4,817,374
Construction	\$14,845,937	\$12,982,310	\$0	\$0	\$27,828,247
Equipment	\$0	\$1,275,404	\$0	\$0	\$1,275,404
Miscellaneous	\$0	\$331,278	\$0	\$0	\$331,278
Contingency	\$947,097	\$765,518	\$0	\$0	\$1,712,615
Total	\$19,889,027	\$16,075,891	\$0	\$0	\$35,964,918

Program Plan Status

Approved Program Plan: Yes

Date Approved: 10/27/2022

FCI: N/A

Project Description/Scope of Work

The Auraria Higher Education Center (AHEC) is requesting state funds for Phase II of a new, centrally located, three-story, 33,500-GSF Campus Safety Center to house the Auraria Campus Police Department (ACPD) and associated functions. Phase I of the project covered design, early procurement, and early site preparation work. Phase II of the project completes construction of the new building.

AHEC says ACPD's current accommodations in the Administration Building are insufficient for the department to fulfill its mission, limiting the department's ability to respond quickly to campus incidents, secure evidence and conduct investigations, and interact with the community. The new building will include the following spaces:

- a 24-hour public engagement area for functions such as records, public information, and report taking, including a lobby and community room;
- administration and strategy space, including space for investigations and emergency management, along with conference rooms, workstations, and huddle spaces;
- operational spaces, including a drive-in sally port for suspect transfer, evidence processing and storage space, short-term holding and booking space, and interviewing and monitoring rooms;
- a wellness center, including a break room, a locker room, showers and changing rooms, and a lactation room;
- mission-specific storage;

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- classrooms and labs for use by campus criminal justice programs;
- police training rooms, including a lab for regional police officer training;
- co-responder programming space;
- mental health programming space; and
- a 24/7, student-oriented center including a computer lab, a community lounge with vending, and study spaces.

AHEC notes that several of these spaces are intended to foster engagement between the Auraria Campus Police Department and the community it serves, thus maximizing transparency and accountability. AHEC is working collaboratively with the campus community regarding design choices and site location.

Cost assumption. The program plan contractor used an in-house cost estimator to assess costs. The project cost per GSF is \$1,074. The cost assumption accounts for inflation at a rate of 5.2 percent. The project meets the Art in Public Places and High Performance Certification Program requirements, and the campus will seek a LEED Gold certification for the project at a minimum.

Table 4
Project Schedule

Project Component	Start Date	Completion Date
Design	June 2024	June 2025
Construction	June 2025	March 2027
Equipment	April 2027	May 2027
Occupancy	May 2027	

Project Justification

AHEC says the ACPD has been housed in the Administration Building since 2001 and has significantly outgrown this space. The existing space is also inadequate and poorly configured for conducting public safety functions, presenting safety and security issues for personnel and the public. A new building with purpose-built community spaces presents an opportunity for ACPD personnel and the campus community to interact, thereby fostering trust, transparency, and accountability.

The department currently occupies an undersized office suite in the Administration Building that does not have a secure yard for evidence storage, lost and found, or patrol vehicles; space for holding individuals; or showers and lockers for staff. AHEC says the building's location is too remote for officers to easily patrol the campus on foot, hindering the ability of officers to quickly respond to campus incidents.

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Other deficiencies in the current accommodations include:

- lack of space to take reports or conduct interviews, or for private phone calls, mentoring, coaching, and counseling;
- a communications center that is inadequately sized and lacks appropriate mechanical, electrical, and fire protection systems;
- a layout that requires personnel to move detained persons and victims through operational spaces and narrow hallways, creating security issues and potentially placing victims and suspects in the same space;
- chain-of-custody issues associated with evidence-processing space situated apart from storage;
- lack of proper egress, presenting life-safety issues in the event of an active shooter or fire;
- lack of storage space, which presents circulation and fire-protection issues;
- inadequate power supply and running water access; and
- call center monitors visible from lobby windows.

AHEC also explains that the project's design integrates student and campus programming space into the building, creating opportunities for officer and department interaction with the community they serve. The campus included these spaces based on survey work conducted by a community engagement specialist, and says the arrangement will strengthen relationships between the department and stakeholders. Additionally, the project supports the criminal justice programs of AHEC's three constituent institutions.

Program Information

AHEC is comprised of three separate higher education institutions, with a combined student population of 38,000 and approximately 5,000 faculty and staff. The Community College of Denver, Metropolitan State University of Denver, and the University of Colorado Denver share classroom space, parking, and general services on the campus. AHEC manages campus facilities and non-academic functions, including utilities, the library, the child care center, classroom and event scheduling, and campus police and security. The AHEC campus occupies 150 acres in downtown Denver, and opened in 1976.

The ACPD is a full-service police department that operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The ACPD employs approximately 31 sworn officers, 12 neighborhood community officers, 8 administrative staff, 1 emergency management staff member, 1 social worker and 1 Canine (K-9) Unit.

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Operating Budget

Operating expenses are paid from institutional sources. AHEC does not expect a significant increase to its operating budget due to the project, explaining that efficiencies will be realized with the new building and new partnerships will be created to keep costs down. Funds will be needed to support new programming to be housed in the building, and ACPD is exploring grants and other resources to offset the new costs.

Staff Questions and Issues

None.