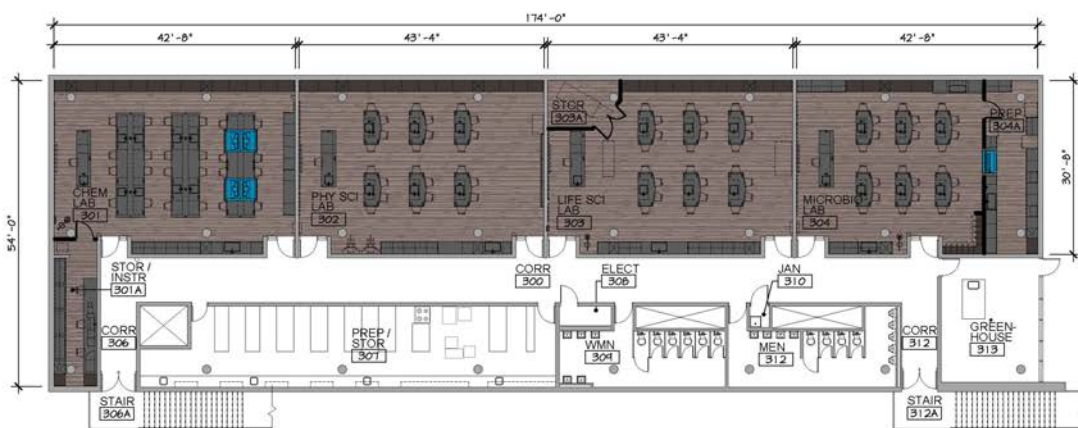


OLNEY CENTRAL COLLEGE FOUNDATION

2026
CAMPAIGN
FOR EXCELLENCE



Plans for the upcoming
science lab renovations in
Dr. Kent L. Wattleworth Hall.



Our Commitment

The Olney Central College Foundation has pledged \$150,000 over the next five years to support OCC's Health Professions Center, which is being partially funded through Illinois Capital Development Board monies.

Investing in Innovation

Foundation to assist with renovations to OCC science labs

The Olney Central College Foundation is supporting an extensive \$2 million project to renovate four science labs in Dr. Kent L. Wattleworth Hall. The work will focus on transforming the third-floor physics, chemistry and two biology labs into modern, high-tech learning spaces. The foundation will assist in these efforts through the purchase of state-of-the-art lab equipment.

OCC President Chris Simpson said the upcoming renovations will be a much-needed addition to the campus. The remodel will encompass everything from new cabinetry, flooring and furniture to upgrading the tools and equipment needed to support effective faculty instruction.

"The new science labs will provide a more modern, updated 21st Century-type of environment for teaching and learning," he said. "I know that both students and faculty members will appreciate the new labs. A modern, well-designed lab can make STEM courses more engaging for students. As we have seen with our recently opened Health Professions Center, these new and updated spaces have a major impact on teaching and learning. It allows for new approaches to instruction for our faculty members and is much more visually appealing to the students."

Work is expected to begin at the conclusion of the spring semester, pending bid approval by the Illinois Eastern Community Colleges Board of Trustees. Renovations will continue throughout the summer and should be completed prior to the start of fall semester classes.

"The new science labs align very well with the newly developed transfer pathways that the IECC has developed," Simpson said. "These pathways provide a better sequence of courses for students and the new labs will enhance learning opportunities for students. I think the students that leave Olney Central College are well prepared for their next steps, whatever that may be. If the student transfers to a 4-year institution, these upgrades to our science labs are going to enhance their ability to be successful as they transfer on."



At right, the Health Professions Center features two simulation labs. Below, nursing students utilizing the new classroom.



OCC unveils new Health Professions Center

Olney Central College celebrated the opening of its new Health Professions Center with an Open House and Dedication Ceremony on December 11. More than 200 guests toured the high-tech facility, which features 7,820 square feet of new construction along with 1,900 square feet of renovated space within Dr. Kent L. Wattleworth Hall.

“This is a state-of-the-art facility that is really going to enhance the teaching and learning process,” said OCC President Chris Simpson. “The faculty do a great job getting our students prepared and this is just going to simply enhance that and give them additional tools at their disposal.”

Funded through the Rebuild Illinois capital program, the \$3.5 million investment includes two classrooms, a six-bed nursing skills lab, two nursing simulation labs with an observation area and a new radiography classroom and lab. The facility also offers a conference room, faculty offices and a student commons area. The OCC Foundation played an important role, pledging more than \$150,000 over the next five years to ensure the inclusion of a much-needed modern classroom space in the final project. Last year's donations totaled \$125,660.

Dr. Alani Frederick, Dean of Health Professions at Illinois Eastern Community Colleges, said the nursing simulation center will enable students to work through real-world scenarios, while the skills lab will offer a flexible space for hands-on learning in a safe, realistic environment. The center will provide the Radiography Program with its first energized lab, enabling students to practice projections in a controlled setting.

“To prepare our students for the real world, they need to be workforce ready, and we are committed to doing that,” Frederick said. “We work really hard to make sure that the equipment available in these rooms is very similar to what is used in the actual clinic site. That way, our students know what to use and how to use it. What we’re able to do here, in both nursing and radiography, is work even harder to make sure our students are prepared so not only will they maintain our high standards, but they’ll exceed them.”



STEM Lab provides new opportunities

The Olney Central College Foundation provided \$9,105 in funding to assist TRIO Upward Bound in creating a new STEM Lab designed to expand learning opportunities for students.

The facility features tools and technologies for coding, robotics and esports. Lab activities aid students in developing essential 21st-Century skills including critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity, which support both college and career readiness.



The TRIO Upward Bound STEM Lab is located in the OCC Learning Commons.



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OCC Foundation awards \$36,546 in mini grants

The Olney Central College Foundation awarded \$36,546 in mini grants to support innovative student-centered campus projects. This year's awards are:

OCC Administration

Television for Student Union

Music Department

Accompaniment for Performances

Automotive Program

Scan Tool

Athletics

Batting Equipment
Irrigation Control Panel

Student Senate

Food for Student Events

Industrial Maintenance Program

Robot

Financial Aid

Conference

Woodworking Classes

Wood Planer

Art Department

Clay Water Recycling System

Welding Program

Stingers and Torches

Nursing Program

Yoga

Cosmetology Program

Computers

TRIO Upward Bound

TRIO Stem Lab Furniture

O&M Department

Tables and Chairs

Merit Scholarships return with Foundation support

We are excited to share that the Olney Central College Foundation is reinstating Merit Scholarships to support outstanding local students. Several years ago, these scholarships helped students stay close to home and significantly reduce the cost of their education. Unfortunately, budget cuts forced the college to pause this important program.

Today, with renewed commitment, the Olney Central College Foundation has pledged \$25,000, and a generous private donor has contributed an additional \$10,000, to bring these scholarships back. Our goal is to expand this opportunity and reach even more deserving students in our communities.

By investing in merit-based scholarships, you help encourage local students to stay local, save money, and pursue their educational goals without unnecessary financial burden.

Please see the blue insert included with your letter and check the Merit Scholarships box to help us expand our reach and make a lasting impact on students' futures.

Thank you for supporting local education and student success.

Sincerely,
The OCC Foundation

2024-2025

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