

RCCD

RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY
COLLEGE DISTRICT



Legislative Platform 2024

The Riverside Community College District (RCCD) Board of Trustees, Chancellor and leadership from the three colleges have identified legislative priorities for the 2024 Legislative Program. RCCD's priorities will focus on three areas which include: Equity in Success, Equity in Access, and Equity in Support. The District strives to impact the social and economic mobility of its students by ensuring equity in access, success and support for everyone who wishes to take advantage of the educational opportunities offered by the colleges.



Equity in Access



• **Pell Grant - Issue:** Current Pell Grant award amounts have not kept up with inflation and increased college costs over time. Doubling the current Pell grant award to \$13,000 and expanding eligibility to students enrolled in certificated programs of less than 16 units is needed. These short-term programs offered at RCCD colleges offer individuals a path to obtaining an education, joining the workforce, and getting out of poverty.

Legislative Actions: Support the US Department of Education and federal legislative proposals on the Higher Education Act that reduce barriers, increase award amount for total cost of education, and expand eligibility and support for apprenticeship programs as well as short-term certificates less than 16 units.

• **Cal Grant Reform - Issue:** RCCD applauds the efforts of our legislative champions Assemblymembers Jose Medina and Kevin McCarty, and Senator Connie Leyva for initiating Cal Grant Reform that created the Cal Grant Equity Framework. The Framework includes consolidating Cal Grants into one Cal Grant for community colleges, reducing the number of questions on the application, and providing colleges with more flexibility to adjust aid to reflect a student's unique situation more accurately. The California Student Aid Commission has adopted this framework and began implementing these changes in the 2022-23 academic year.

Legislative Actions: RCCD is committed to the Cal Grant Equity Framework and will stay vigilant of any challenges or barriers that may

arise during this implementation process as it is expected to continue through the 2024-25 academic year.

• **Foster Youth - Issue:** Riverside County is home to the third largest population of foster youth in the state. Foster youth tend to face a disproportionate number of barriers to accessing and persisting toward a degree. The Foster Youth Support Network (FYSN) program at RCCD supports early intervention and transition support for foster youth; however, this program is projected to exhaust its funding by 2024.

Legislative Actions: Advocate for continuous federal and state funding that invest in the Foster Youth Support Network. Support the expansion of transitional and rapid rehousing opportunities for these youth.



• **Veterans - Issue:** Each year approximately 200,000 service members transition from military to civilian life with 55% reporting that their military skills and experience are often dismissed by civilian educators and employers. Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) can bridge this critical gap for all Veterans and experiential learners statewide at little to no additional cost to taxpayers. In 2022, the Military Articulation Pathways (MAP) was developed to maximize college credit awarded for military training and professional experience to a cloud-based platform.

Legislative Actions: Support the State Chancellor's Office in its adoption of the MAP Initiative to improve equal access, completion transfer, and career attainment for Veterans and adult learners through credit for prior learning that will be the foundation for statewide and nationwide scaling of this underutilized pathway for success. The goal is to give all Veterans and working adults all the credit they deserve through their experience.

• **Justice Involved and Formerly Incarcerated - Issue:** California community colleges have worked to restore justice-involved individuals into their communities through rehabilitative programming. In October 2021, the Governor signed

AB 417 which formally establishes the Rising Scholars Network program to provide support services for justice-involved students. Since the implementation of the Rising Scholar Network, several barriers to support this student population have been identified.

Legislative Actions: Seek federal and state funds for facilitating transcript-sharing and instructional technology for teaching incarcerated students. Establish mentorship and apprenticeship programs with local businesses. Establish a process for issuing state identification for incarcerated students. Seek partnerships with counties and cities for program support and addressing basic needs.

• **Undocumented and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) - Issue:** The District serves about 2,400 students through its Dreamer and AB 540 programs per year, however, gaps in funding remain. Additionally, students need assistance identifying legal resources, applying for financial assistance and scholarships, and accessing mental health services. The District agrees that this is important to support marginalized students, however, without dedicated funding, the District is limited in what it can provide.

Legislative Actions: Support federal legislation that codifies DACA to establish a pathway to citizenship, expand DACA student eligibility for Pell Grants and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and protect student visas. Seek state support to continue and increase funding for Dreamer centers and resource staff liaisons at community colleges. Request expansion of Cal-FRESH eligibility to include DACA students. Develop bridge programming to support undocumented students from high school to transfer/graduation. Support the establishment of a learning community for undocumented students, equipped with a dedicated academic counselor.

• **LGBTQIA2+ - Issue:** According to the California Community College Chancellor's Office, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer LGBTQIA2+ students are experiencing a disproportionate impact in the following areas: retention, transfer to a four-year university, and completion of a degree or certificate. LGBTQIA2+ individuals encounter familial, social, economic, and educational instability, which inhibits their ability to succeed academically and holistically.

Legislative Actions: Seek legislative support to create and expand LGBTQIA2+ campus resource centers that provide wrap-around services including mental health and basic needs support. Establish partnerships with local community organizations that are LGBTQIA2+ which can affirm and assist with dedicated support services and resources.



• **Mental and Psychological**

Services - Issue: According to a survey conducted by the Healthy Minds Network, 72% of students indicated a need for mental health support to help them achieve academic success. Mental health is correlated with higher satisfaction in college. Students with mental health problems, such as depression, are two times more likely than their peers to leave their institution based on the Healthy Minds Network. Thus, increasing on-site mental health experts, counseling services, and preventive programs can reduce risk and increase student retention.

Legislative Actions: Propose legislation that requires an additional percentage of Mental Health Services Act funds go to community colleges to address student health and wellness concerns, including mental health and psychological services.

• **Students with Disabilities**

- Issue: Throughout the California Community College system, students with disabilities make up an average of 5% of the total population, with some districts having higher percentages; 8.45% of the Riverside Community College District (RCCD) student population is registered with the Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS) programs. RCCD's Disability Resource Center works with students to ensure they have access to their programs of study through accommodations, services and campus resources. Unfortunately, the number of students with other disabilities, such as autism, continues to grow and the District is not well equipped to provide support for all students with disabilities.

Legislative Actions: Support additional funding to DSPS programs to allow the creation of a position that can provide intrusive and adaptable support through coaching. RCCD requests

the following increase in annual funding - \$500,784 to provide three coaches, one for each college. Additionally, RCCD requests \$20,000 for each college, a total cost of \$60,000, to cover supplies, outreach and engagement opportunities for students, along with professional development opportunities for each coach.

• **Adult Learners - Issue:** AB1705 is having a negative impact on completion rates for adult learners and has removed previously available remedies, particularly noncredit coursework, which could aid adult students who are not coming through the K-12 pipeline, and thus may not have encountered college-level math for years or even decades.

Legislative Actions: Advocate for a return of noncredit developmental education to support adult learners. Adult learners ages 25-55 need better access to higher education to strengthen the workforce.



Equity in Success



• **Guided Pathways - Issue:** Guided Pathways are structured to provide all students with clear enrollment avenues, course-taking patterns, and support services resulting in increased student access, equity and success. Unfortunately, barriers such as lack of prep courses, counselor-to-student ratio, and funding for wrap-around support services prevent Guided Pathways from fully being implemented. Wrap-around support in the student centers is central to student success and is related to their standard of care.

Legislative Actions: To provide this equitable Standard of Care, RCCD requires, at a minimum, 50 educational advisors (\$114,538/year per advisor), 10 counselors (\$163,142/year per counselor),

150 peer mentors (\$12,100/year per mentor), and basic equipment for the engagement centers (\$800,000) for a total budget of \$9,143,898 per year for staff and a one-time allocation of \$800,000 for equipment. Additional funding for mandatory training and development requirements for 10-15 hours are needed for faculty (full-time and adjunct) and classified staff who are crucial for the support and sustainability of this program.

• **High School Partnership Program, Dual-Enrollment, College, and Career Access Pathways (CCAP), and Middle/Early College - Issue:** Educational attainment rates in the Inland Empire are among some of the lowest in the state. RCCD needs

to expand the pipeline of students entering college through dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment, Summer Bridge, Upward Bound, and other programs that specifically target this population.

Legislative Actions: Support changes to California Education Code and Title 5 regulations to accommodate the needs of high school students enrolled in dual enrollment courses. RCCD requests \$9,143,898 per year for staff and a one-time allocation of \$800,000 for equipment. Additional funding for mandatory training and development requirements for 10-15 hours are needed for faculty (full-time and adjunct) and classified staff who are crucial for the support and sustainability of this program.

• **Future of Workforce**

Development - Issue: Significant economic and educational barriers exist across the Inland Empire. RCCD seeks to increase the percentage of certificate and degree holders in the region by providing access to apprenticeships that address regional industry talent needs.

Legislative Actions: Advocate for continued funding and resources for college-based workforce development. Support regional apprenticeship programs that provide students with higher educational certificates and degrees that lead to higher paying careers.

• **Clinical Placements - Issue:** Private training facilities are paying clinical sites for students to intern at their locations creating a direct path to employment opportunities which diverts students from public institutions. To stay competitive, the District needs more financial support for instructional staff, equipment, and logistical resources.

Legislative Actions: Support legislation that will prohibit clinical institutions from accepting financial incentives, such as monetary donations and scholarships from private education programs to secure clinical placements. Support increased funding for these clinical placement programs.

• **Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Program - Issue:** Riverside County and the state of California are facing a critical shortage of paramedics for first-response fire departments and ambulance transport providers. The Ben Clark Training Center (BCTC), located at Moreno Valley College (MVC) School of Public Safety, offers Emergency Medical Services training for Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and Paramedics.



Legislative Actions: Seek legislative support and pilot funding for cross-disciplinary programs between nursing and EMS. Advocate for more apprenticeship programs in EMS and other health services to decrease the shortage.

• **Inland Empire Technical Trade Center (IETTC) - Issue:** The Inland Empire suffers from low rates of degree attainment and high rates of multi-generational poverty in marginalized communities throughout the region. Approximately 54% of the region's current workforce is neither formally trained nor skilled and earns insufficient pay with no benefits in jobs and no viable career pathway. The IETTC is a response to the urgent need for good paying jobs, a diverse job market, and skilled workforce for the region.

Legislative Actions: Partnering with the Inland Empire Labor Council, Building Trades Council, Southwest Carpenters, IBEW, and others, RCCD will continue to plan

for a regional center to meet current and future workforce needs with funding from federal, state and local resources.

• **Apprenticeships & Internships Pathways - Issue:** The Inland Empire suffers from high rates of multi-generational poverty with approximately 54% of the region's workforce possessing neither formal training nor skills. RCCD participates in the LAUNCH Apprenticeship Network Hub with the primary goal of connecting students and employers with available apprenticeship programs and resources throughout the region. Additionally, internships are limited in the region and are often unpaid opportunities.

Legislative Actions: RCCD was awarded \$4,697,637 to support the LAUNCH Apprenticeship Network including a subaward for \$2,221,776. RCCD requests \$120,000 for planning and \$1.5 million for implementation and expansion.

• **Noncredit Programming for People with Disabilities and Older Adults - Issue:**

The most recent census shows that 7.4% of individuals below the age of 65 in Riverside County have a disability. The Center of Excellence reports show that the fastest growing age group in the RCCD area is residents of 65 and older. By 2024, this age group is projected to grow by 24% in the Moreno Valley College area, by 20.7% in the Norco College area, and by 19.7% in the Riverside City College area. The projected increases in the older adult populations for all three RCCD colleges warrant exploration of senior citizen curriculum expansion. This is a large population and many of them will be allowed to access education through online and hybrid learning.

Legislative Actions: Advocate for full apportionment for noncredit classes that serve people with disabilities and older adults. Advocate for support services and dedicated counselors for adults with disabilities. Support Higher Education initiatives that offer funding to provide classes to people with disabilities and older adults.

• **Increase Transfer Rates - Issue:** RCCD receives \$674.94 per student who transfers into a CSU, UC or private institution. With RCCD transferring about 42% of students each academic year to these institutions, it is imperative RCCD receive increased funding to support these transfers. Work to adopt and integrate the Program Pathway Tracker software to create more associate degree transfers (ADT).

Legislative Actions: Advocate and support legislation that increases funding to California Community Colleges (CCC) to support transfer efforts. Advocate and support

legislation to make the Student-Centered Funding Formula more equitable for CCC to increase student transfers. Develop and adopt a statewide ADT curriculum to assist students with transferring to CSUs and UCs.

• **Baccalaureate Degree Program - Issue:**

President Bush created an Executive Order to help correct the lack of communication amongst governmental agencies in response to the US attack on September 11. This included the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and restructuring of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The educational component was addressed with mostly graduate level training and education for incumbent response personnel from the military, law enforcement and fire. Federal funding went into training and education in which many incumbents first-response personnel

received graduate level training. As these individuals retire, a void has been created that has left training and education in the undergraduate area open. The idea of a bachelor's degree in emergency management has not been fully implemented nor deployed. None of California's public universities offer a bachelor's degree in emergency management or Homeland Security. However, all 10 of California's most populous cities, and seven of the 10 largest counties, require a bachelor's degree for entry level Emergency Management positions. This leaves expensive private universities as the only option for students who wish to earn a degree in this field.

Legislative Actions: Support the development and approval of a Bachelor of Science program for the Moreno Valley College Education Center within the School of Public Safety certificate and degree course offerings.





Equity in Support



• **District Facilities - Issue:** The cost of new construction and facilities modernization projects continues to escalate. Meanwhile, campus infrastructure, facilities, building systems, and technology are becoming outdated. In response to enrollment growth, new educational facilities and campus supporting amenities need to be constructed and modernized.

Legislative Actions: Support 100% construction funding for the following projects: Norco College's Center for Human Performance & Kinesiology building - estimated cost \$60 million; Moreno Valley College's Library & Learning Resource Center building - estimated cost \$95 million; Riverside City College's Cosmetology building - estimated cost \$48.2

million; and Moreno Valley's School of Public Safety Education building - estimated cost \$30 million.

• **RCCD Capital Construction Plan/Deferred Maintenance - Issue:** The cost of new construction, facilities modernization, and deferred maintenance projects continues to escalate while state scheduled maintenance funding has been reduced. This results in serious delays in repairing and modernizing antiquated college facilities that could be available for student learning.

Legislative Actions: Request equitable changes to the new scoring methodology for capital outlay funding, especially the Hardship Exemption which requires a minimum 25% of the total project

budget to be locally funded to access the capital outlay funding program. Advocate for the physical plant and instructional support funding allocation to provide a reasonable annual budget for scheduled maintenance projects backlog and instructional support to address deferred maintenance needs and replacement of instruction equipment.

• **Student Housing - Issue:** In 2021, RCCD commissioned a feasibility study to identify college student housing needs across all three colleges. Key findings show that students need affordable on-campus housing options resulting in a need for over 4,600 beds. In 2023, RCCD was awarded \$75 million in a joint application with the



University of California, Riverside, totaling \$126 million to fund the North District project. Five hundred sixty-two student beds will be created with 326 beds for RCCD students. Unfortunately, this leaves a gap of over 4,200 beds to meet RCCD student housing needs.

Legislative Actions: Continue to seek state support for the completion of the District's student housing application for planning and construction of student housing projects for Moreno Valley College and Norco College students. Support additional state funding for rental assistance programs. Expand federal, state and county housing eligibility for community college students and their families.

• **Safety and Emergency Preparedness - Issue:** In recent years, California has grappled with the looming threat of both severe natural disasters and human caused emergencies. RCCD must proactively elevate its emergency readiness and response capabilities to ensure the safety and welfare of students, faculty and staff.

Legislative Actions: Advocate for federal and state annual increases in funding to facilitate vital enhancements in the following areas: lock system assessment and upgrade, security camera system, update campus lighting, emergency generators, emergency operations center supplies, and micro grids.

• **Access to Technology - Issue:** RCCD is dedicated to extending broadband access to ensure community college students have access to the highest quality technology experiences, including high-speed internet at home.

Legislative Actions: Support funding for public-private partnerships with community-based organizations or local government agencies for students to acquire high-speed internet at home.

• **Update teaching modalities:** Post-pandemic, the colleges have adopted hybrid learning models. RCCD must continue to modernize its technology infrastructure to broaden the utilization of real-time data analytics, enhance access to systemwide data resources, and provide access to cloud-based instructional solutions thereby bolstering online education delivery and better supporting faculty. RCCD is dedicated to offering quality online programs, distance learning, and flexible classes for working families.

Legislative Actions: Seek funding for partnerships with cloud service providers. This would facilitate the adoption of the best cloud-based instructional platforms and tools at a reduced cost.

• **District Sustainability and Climate Action - Issue:** Southern California is at risk for environmental and climate-related hazards. In the past few years, wildfires, extreme



heat waves, historic drought, and aging utilities and facilities have threatened Californians' health and economic livelihood. The impact of these crises is more significant for vulnerable, low-income and disadvantaged communities, many of which exist in the Inland Empire and within RCCD's service area.

Legislative Actions: Implement energy conservation measures, replace all natural gas appliances with electrical alternatives, and replace outdated and aged campus central plants and infrastructure systems with high efficiency alternatives across the District sites to reduce energy consumption and optimize efficiencies - estimated at \$55 million.

• **Equalize Apportionment - Issue:** California Community Colleges (CCC) receive about \$12,605 per full-time equivalent (FTE) while CSUs receive \$20,385 and UCs receive \$34,485 per FTE. CCC are reaching enrollment numbers of over 1.8 million students each academic year while CSUs and UCs have 651,570 students enrolled in total. CCC receive less funding to support a student population over double that of CSUs and UCs combined.

Legislative Actions: Support and advocate for legislation to make the Student-Centered Funding Formula more equitable for CCC. Advocate and support legislation that increases funding to CCC apportionments.

Equity in Access



Financial Aid Reform - Higher Education Act/FAFSA

ISSUE

The success of California Community Colleges (CCC) is dependent on a strong partnership with the federal government. Keeping college affordable for individuals and streamlining the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) verification process is key to student success. We support actions to increase the Cal Grant funding for students attending any of Riverside's four colleges and universities: the Riverside Community College District (RCCD); California Baptist University; La Sierra University; and the University of California, Riverside. In particular, RCCD notes that state grant funding for

students within the CCC system is not equitable to the funding students receive for enrollment in the University of California (UC), California State University (CSU), and private college counterparts. CCC students are the largest population of students receiving the lowest Cal Grant award amount. To provide CCC students with the resources needed for success, the Cal Grant program must increase the award amount to keep up with the cost of living. This will result in a more equitable system for California higher education students while reducing confusion and workload for students and institutions.

REQUESTS

RCCD suggests changes to the FAFSA and the Federal Financial Aid (FFA) system to:

- Restore Title IV student aid eligibility for college students who lack a high school diploma or its equivalent but have demonstrated their ability to benefit from postsecondary education through successful coursework without limitation on when the coursework occurred.
- Change the definition of independent on the FAFSA application by lowering the independent age or allowing for overrides to include self-support.



- Prevent poor performing colleges from participating in the federal student aid program.
- Consider methods of ensuring robust oversight that allow public colleges to focus more on educational outcomes and less on administrative tasks, such as Student Success Scorecard and the Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative indicators.

BACKGROUND

The Cal Grant program has provided tuition and fee coverage for UC/CSU eligible students with an additional access award for Cal Grant B students. As tuition and fees have increased, so has the Cal Grant award amount for these colleges. CCC students represent the largest population of Cal Grant recipients, yet award amounts have remained relatively static and not kept up with the increase in the cost of attendance. Although 67% of CCC students receive a tuition waiver, it has been shown that CCC's are more expensive for students when compared to four-year institutions due to the lower level of financial aid available to cover costs beyond tuition and fees.

In 2022-23, the colleges of RCCD distributed Pell Grants to more than 13,041 students, as shown in the following table.

2022-23 RCCD Pell Grant Awards

13,041

Students who received Pell Grants per college:

MVC	NC	RCC
2,503	2,021	8,517

- Change the US Department of Education verification regulations for individuals and financial aid administrators to simplify the financial aid process.
 - Include the housing status question back into the FAFSA which was removed through FAFSA simplification to allow for accurate Cost of Attendance assignment and packaging of aid without delay or additional steps for the student.
 - Remove incarceration as an eligibility restriction for receiving a Pell Grant award and simplify Financial Aid administrative requirements for this population and associated programs.
 - Increase the annual Pell Grant award to accommodate inflation and rising college costs and extend Pell Grant eligibility to short-term training programs (less than 16-unit certificates or 500 hours) offered by institutions of higher education.
 - Call on Congress to change federal law, allowing eligibility for undocumented and DACA students for federal financial aid and emergency funding.
- In addition, RCCD requests members of Congress to:
- Ensure community colleges are incentivized to focus on improving student outcomes.

Equity in Access: Special Populations



Undocumented and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)

ISSUE

Approximately 75,000 undocumented students, including those who are protected by the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy, are enrolled in California Community Colleges. Assembly Bill 540 allows students who have attended a high school in California for three years and have earned a high school diploma or equivalent to receive in-state tuition helping this population gain access to the education and training necessary to enter the workforce; provide for their families; and contribute to the local, regional and state economy. Riverside Community College District

(RCCD) serves roughly 2,400 students through its Dreamer and AB 540 programs per year. A major concern is the unfunded mandate from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office to establish a Dreamer Center at each college. The District agrees that this is a crucial step to supporting students, but without dedicated funding, it is still ill-equipped to address the needs and concerns of AB 540 students, Dreamers, and other undocumented students.

REQUESTS

Support federal legislation that codifies DACA to establish a pathway to citizenship, expand DACA student eligibility for Pell Grants and SNAP, and protect student visas. We seek state support to continue and increase funding for Dreamer Centers and resource

staff liaisons at community colleges; request expansion of Cal-FRESH eligibility to include DACA students; develop bridge programming to support undocumented students from high school to transfer/graduation; and support the establishment of learning communities for undocumented students equipped with a dedicated academic counselor.

Education for Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Program

ISSUE

Over the past seven years, California Community Colleges have worked to meet voter mandates to restore justice-involved individuals into their communities through rehabilitative

programming. Since the passage of SB 1391 (2014), thousands of justice-involved students have matriculated to face-to-face Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) programs offered within state prisons. In October 2021, the Governor signed AB 417, which formally established the Rising Scholars Network as a categorical program for up to fifty community colleges, providing support services for justice-involved students. Although this program is successful, it exposed institutional gaps in support for this student population. To better serve incarcerated students, RCCD will continue to push to remove limited access to technology and bring support programs inside institutions.

REQUESTS

RCCD requests \$410,000 in yearly funding to hire more faculty and staff support for the Rising Scholars program at California Rehabilitation Center, Norco. RCCD needs one full-time counselor at \$170,000 per year, one part-time counselor at \$75,000 per year, one full-time admissions specialist at \$130,000 per year, one part-time tutorial support at \$25,000 per year, and one faculty coordinator at \$10,000 per year. Support AB 2425: Community Colleges: HIRE UP: From Corrections to Career Pilot Program. Support continuous funding and expansion of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) technology infrastructure plan for each prison. RCCD requests funding to hire personnel who will work collaboratively with the Riverside County Probation Department at the Youth Treatment Educational Center to create a program for youth. Author legislation to create Community College-Juvenile Hall Partnerships to work collaboratively with the Riverside County Probation Department at the

Youth Treatment Educational Center. Author legislation to establish a process for issuing state identification for incarcerated students.

LGBTQIA2+ Student Programs

ISSUE

According to student success data provided by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQIA2+) students are not achieving their degree and career goals at the same rate as their peers. LGBTQIA2+ students are experiencing a disproportionate impact in the following areas: retention, completion of college level math and English in the first year, completion of a degree or certificate, and transfer to a four-year university. National data shows about 70% of community college LGBTQIA2+ students are students of color who face additional barriers. LGBTQIA2+ individuals encounter familial, social, economic and educational instability, which inhibits their ability to succeed academically and holistically. LGBTQIA2+ students experience higher rates of mental illness and food and housing insecurity; they feel campuses are less welcoming and safe, and report a lower sense of belonging than their heterosexual and cisgender peers.

REQUESTS

Develop legislation that creates and funds LGBTQIA2+ resource centers on each campus for students to seek refuge, access resources, and network with each other. Support funding to hire at least one permanent, full-time, qualified professional staff member at each college to work to meet LGBTQIA2+

students' needs and improve educational outcomes. Support funding to provide LGBTQIA2+-specific mental health services and basic needs support. Develop legislation to increase the number of all-gender restrooms and locker rooms, as well as requiring all new buildings to have at least one gender inclusive restroom per floor.

Foster Youth Support Services

ISSUE

Foster youth face a disproportionate number of barriers to accessing and persisting toward a degree, resulting in challenges for this vulnerable population. Foster youth encounter familial, social, economic and educational instability which inhibits their ability to transition successfully from the foster care system to adulthood. Such disruptions delay the youth's academic progress, leading them to fall significantly behind their peers. RCCD is committed to successfully transition these students from foster care to independence through education.

REQUESTS

Support continuous and increased funding for the Foster Youth Support Network (FYSN) program. Support legislation that will expand dual enrollment opportunities for foster youth in all California high schools. Support transitional and rapid rehousing opportunities for foster youth, including college-focused rapid rehousing. Funding support for non-Next Up foster youth who are ineligible for Next Up grants, meal vouchers, and/or direct aid. Colleges rely on limited one-time private donor grants to support those students.

Equity in Success



Moreno Valley College School of Public Safety

ISSUE

The Inland Empire suffers from persistent, multi-generational poverty. Significant economic and educational barriers exist that affect individuals, families and communities across Riverside and San Bernardino counties. Wealth measures show that more than one in five children in the region live in poverty. Educational attainment rates are among the lowest in the state and nation, with almost one in five adults over the age of 25 lacking a high school diploma. This often results in reliance on social service programs, chronic un- and under-employment, and persistent multi-generational poverty that disproportionately impacts

traditionally marginalized and underserved communities of color. Equity, access and success for the region's residents can be improved through education and technical skill development leading to locally available living wage careers. The Emergency Medical Services sector offers an array of opportunities for individuals of all experiences and backgrounds, particularly individuals who represent the communities most in need of services. Riverside County and the state of California are facing a critical shortage of paramedics for first-response fire departments and ambulance transport providers.

REQUESTS

Support continuous funding for the Bridge Program that allows allied healthcare students to cross and co-train for professional growth and development within the industry. Strengthen the delivery of real-world competency-based training by hiring full-time lab technicians who will facilitate and maintain new high-fidelity equipment and materials, including immersive audio and visual training software, as well as equipment devices. Support both regional apprenticeship intermediary organizations and college-sponsored apprenticeship programs as they work to expand apprenticeship opportunities for students pursuing Emergency Medical Services training.

Inland Empire Tech Bridge Center

ISSUE

Diversification of the region's economy requires investment in new and innovative sectors in the Inland Empire. These sectors include development of new technologies, products and services to meet the needs of a future that is climate-resilient, energy efficient, and that secures our nation's safety through a strong and stable infrastructure. Given the need for investment in the region's innovators and entrepreneurs, RCCD partnered with the Naval Surface Warfare Center Corona (NSWC Corona) and the County of Riverside to create the Inland Empire Tech Bridge Center (IETBC). This Center will provide programming and supportive services to the region's job seekers and job creators.



REQUEST

To date, RCCD has received \$1.5 million through Assemblymember Sabrina Cervantes and \$1.5 million from the county of Riverside to secure the IETBC building in Norco adjacent to NSWC. RCCD is seeking resources for continued programming support of the region's job seekers and job creators.



Inland Empire Technical Trade Center (IETTC)

ISSUE

While the Inland Empire has a rich variety of traditional postsecondary institutions offering certificate and degree programs, there are only a handful of highly focused technical training centers. These centers, while offering technical training in a variety of skilled trades, often lack the necessary infrastructure, support systems, and complementary academic offerings that California Community Colleges can holistically provide to the region's traditionally marginalized and underserved populations. These populations are disproportionately impacted by the region's reliance on low skill, low wage labor in various sectors, including supply chain, logistics and hospitality. They are also most likely to suffer from climate change impacts caused by pollution from the logistics and transportation sectors across inland Southern California. Given the need for education and training that provides residents with good jobs, RCCD is working to create the Inland Empire Technical Trade Center (IETTC), an

accessible and equitable regional training center that focuses on high skill, high demand, and high paying programs that provide students with opportunities to earn while they learn through registered apprenticeship programs. The IETTC is a response to the urgent need for good jobs for the region's residents, diversification of the regional economy, and for a locally available educated and skilled workforce for the region's current and future employers.

REQUEST

RCCD is seeking resources for the establishment of facilities and programs to meet the region's current and future workforce development needs. To date, RCCD has received over \$37.5 million to begin the process of planning, land acquisition, land improvements, and program development. Early estimates indicate a need for approximately \$50 million to site the first building on the IETTC's proposed location in Jurupa Valley.

Equity in Success



Veterans Education and the MAP Initiative

ISSUE

Veterans qualify for just 36 months of Post-9/11 G.I. Bill educational benefits which are not enough to fund a four-year degree program. Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) can bridge this critical gap at little to no additional cost to taxpayers. There are 1.57 million Veterans living in California, the largest population in the nation. In Fall 2022, there were 23,566 Veterans and active-duty military enrolled in the California Community Colleges and using their educational benefits. If Veterans were awarded a year of credit, the annual savings could total \$1.67 billion. Nationwide, there were 822,775 service members in higher education. If just 25% were awarded one semester of credit (15 units), the savings could total \$6.4 billion.

Each year approximately 200,000 service members transition from military to civilian life. Transition stress is a significant factor that disproportionately affects younger Veterans ages 18-34. Post-9/11 Veterans are more likely to say they struggled with lack of structure in civilian life and felt disconnected from family or friends. Some surveys indicate over sixty percent reporting difficulty adjusting to civilian life. Forty-five percent report feeling that their military skills and experience are often dismissed by civilian educators and employers.

The promise of higher education is reported as the number one motivation for service members. More than seventy percent of service members state that their time in the service promoted their interest

in higher education, training, and certification or licensing programs. While service members are clear in their desire and preparation for higher education, they also cite significant barriers to completing their educational goals including:

- Lack of financial resources/ financial burden (56%)
- Personal/family obligations (28%)
- GI Bill benefits expire before degree completion (25%)
- Issues related to wellness and/ or disability (23%)
- Conflict between job and school (22%)

Easing the transition by offering wrap-around services and college course credits to those entering higher education will help reduce the barriers cited above.

REQUESTS

RCCD is calling on state and federal leaders to scale Mapping Articulated Pathways (MAP) nationwide and establish MAP Centers for Excellence to ensure that Veterans get the college credit they deserve (up to one year of credit) for their military training and coursework.

- **CA State Funding:** Authorize \$6 million in annual funding to scale MAP statewide to articulate Military Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) and other forms of CPL for working adults. RCCD submitted this request to the California Community Colleges Board of Governors, and it was included in the Community Colleges Chancellor's 2023-24 budget proposal to the Governor. The funding will support expansion of MAP to all 116 California community colleges, plus all CSUs and UCs.
- **Federal Funding:** Authorize \$15 million in annual funding to scale MAP to all 936 community colleges nationwide and then to the remaining 690 regionally accredited public colleges and universities.
- **Complete the development of MAP modules** needed to support scaling statewide and nationwide, including development of a national common course numbering system in collaboration with state and federal agencies to ensure a seamless pathway from service to higher education or career training into a profession.

California can lead the nation in solving this longstanding systemic inequity for Veterans and working adults by empowering the community colleges of the country.

BACKGROUND: THE CALIFORNIA MAP INITIATIVE

The Riverside Community College District hosts the California MAP Initiative which is leading the effort to deploy MAP in California's 116 Community Colleges and beyond. The MAP project began in 2017 as a strategy to increase Veteran access as part of the Norco College Veteran's Initiative. The Phase 1 design and beta testing was made possible by California Assemblymember Sabrina Cervantes, District 60, and the California Latino Legislative Caucus which sponsored an appropriation to expand access to higher education for Veterans by implementing MAP and by developing a regional Veterans Resource Center at Norco College. In 2018, the project (Phase 2) was adopted by the 12 member colleges of the Inland Empire Desert Regional Consortium. In 2021, Assemblymember Cervantes and the California Latino Legislative Caucus sponsored a \$2 million appropriation to begin funding Phase 3 to scale MAP statewide.

In 2022, the California MAP Initiative was formed to lead the effort to maximize CPL for all Veterans and working adults statewide. In February 2022, the MAP 2022 Cohort of 55 colleges was formed and in 2023, it was further expanded to 76 colleges dedicated to maximizing CPL. The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office has incorporated the MAP Initiative as a key component to its Vision 2030 Strategic Plan and supports scaling the project to all California Community Colleges and beyond.



BACKGROUND: CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING

Most Veterans receive just two to three units of college credit for their military training, even though most qualify for significantly more based on the credit recommendations listed on their JST. The American Council on Education (ACE) has evaluated thousands of military occupations and courses and makes credit recommendations for college course credit. Unfortunately, the credit is not linked to courses at local colleges. To guarantee that all Veterans receive all the credit they deserve, each college course needs to be matched or articulated and approved by faculty with one or more of the 5,000+ credit recommendations. This task is further complicated by rank-and-file faculty and administrators at colleges who have limited understanding of credit for prior learning or how to make, approve, store, share and transcribe the myriad of articulations possible. Even for colleges that focus on articulating their courses to ACE credit recommendations, there is no system to share those articulations with other colleges and universities to which students might transfer or take additional classes. There is also no system to facilitate working adult credit for industry certifications. Each college also has a unique class numbering system which prevents large-scale sharing of articulation decisions. Lastly, institutions are less likely to grant CPL for fear it will not be honored at a transfer institution.

Equity in Support



District Facilities Capital Outlay & Deferred Maintenance

ISSUE

The cost of new construction, facilities modernization, and deferred maintenance projects continues to escalate. Meanwhile, campus infrastructure and facilities continue to age, and building systems and existing technology become outdated and need significant repairs/replacements/upgrades before catastrophic failures and service outages occur. Recent state scheduled maintenance funding has been reduced. Unavailability or decreases in resources result in delays to repairs, maintenance and modernization of facilities necessary for the 21st century learning environment. Additionally, due to the ongoing educational programmatic

development in response to the regional market needs/employment demand/enrollment growth, new educational facilities and campus supporting amenities need to be constructed and/or repurposed/modernized.

REQUEST

Funding for Norco College's Center for Human Performance and Kinesiology building (\$60 million) was approved and partially funded by the state capital outlay funding in FY 21-22 (\$30 million). Funding for Moreno Valley College's Library and Learning Resource Center building (\$95 million) is eligible for growth category and part of the state capital outlay funding's spending plan for

FY 24-25. Funding for Riverside City College's Cosmetology building (\$48.2 million) is eligible for growth category and part of the state capital outlay funding's spending plan for FY 24-25. Funding for the School of Public Safety Education building 2-A (\$30 million) is eligible for growth category and part of the state capital outlay funding's spending plan for FY 25-26. Provide an annual budget for scheduled maintenance projects backlog and instructional support to address deferred maintenance needs, architectural barriers removal, hazardous waste mitigation, building seismic upgrades, and replacement of instructional equipment (\$10-15 million/annually).

Affordable Student Housing

ISSUE

Housing is a vital foundation for CCC students as many studies show, including the September 2023 Basic Needs Report according to Real College California, that 60% of respondents are housing insecure, with concerns about increased rent, mortgage and utility rates making it difficult to pay total living expenses. Thus, RCCD and the CCC system recognize the significant need for affordable housing options for young adults, including those aging out of the foster care system. RCCD conducted several student housing surveys and market demand studies across the three colleges (Moreno Valley, Norco and Riverside City), which show that of over 2,100 RCCD students surveyed, 25% of respondents reported experiencing housing insecurity, and 18% experienced homelessness the previous year.

REQUESTS

Funding for Moreno Valley College's affordable student housing project in the total amount of \$55 million for FY 24-25 will provide 280 affordable beds and Norco College's affordable student housing project in the total amount of \$56 million for FY 25-26 will provide 280 affordable beds at a low-income rate for qualified students.



Sustainability & Climate Action

ISSUE

Climate hazards and environmental risks require education awareness and action. Southern California is at risk for environmental and climate-related hazards. In the past few years, wildfires, extreme heat waves, historic drought, and aging utilities and facilities have threatened Californians' health and economic livelihood. The impact of these crises is more significant for vulnerable, low-income and disadvantaged communities, many which exist in the Inland Empire and within RCCD's service area.

REQUESTS

Funding to implement energy conservation measures (ECM), such as boiler replacement, building energy sub-metering, daylight harvesting, glazing upgrades, reducing lighting power intensity, roof insulation, vampire load

reduction, variable frequency drive, and wall insulation across the District sites are estimated at \$25 million. Funding to replace all natural gas appliances with electrical alternatives has an estimated budget of \$10 million. Funding to replace outdated and aged campus central plants and infrastructure systems with high efficiency alternatives has an estimated budget of \$20 million. Funding to replace existing water infrastructure including plumbing fixtures and irrigation controls to water-efficient fixtures has an estimated budget of \$7 million. Funding to convert turf-grass to native landscape areas or landscape meadows to align with the CCC system goal of turf-grass shall not exceed 50% of the landscaped areas on campus (\$3 million). RCCD is requesting \$65,000,000 in total to address our Sustainability and Climate Action needs.



Equity in Support

Safety and Emergency Preparedness

ISSUE

Enhance emergency preparedness and response capabilities for many crises, including earthquakes, wildfires, and active shooters.

BACKGROUND

In recent years, California has faced the looming specter of severe natural disasters and man-made emergencies. In this challenging environment, it is imperative for educational institutions, particularly community colleges, to take proactive steps to enhance their readiness and response capabilities. The safety and well-being of students, faculty and staff depend on this crucial endeavor. This comprehensive initiative encompasses two pivotal dimensions: reinforcing the preparedness of facilities to handle potential active shooter incidents; and fortifying the overall capacity to respond effectively to a diverse array of crises, including earthquakes, wildfires and active shooter events.

REQUESTS

In pursuit of these goals, the proposed strategy involves advocating for annual increases in funding to facilitate vital enhancements in the following key areas:

- Funding for a comprehensive assessment and subsequent upgrading of lock systems across the District, enabling more

efficient execution of lockdown and shelter-in-place protocols. Estimated cost: \$4 million to implement.

- Funding to modernize security camera systems to facilitate remote access to security footage by law enforcement personnel, enhancing their situational awareness. Estimated cost: \$7 million to implement.
- Funding to upgrade or replace existing sirens to seamlessly integrate them with the RAVE mass notification system, enabling more comprehensive and timely alerts during emergencies. Estimated cost: \$3 million to implement.
- Funding to upgrade campus-wide lighting to enhance safety and security. Estimated cost: \$4 million to implement.
- Funding to install and maintain emergency generators for District central emergency operations centers, college emergency operations centers, and emergency operations center supplies ensuring sustained functionality of the emergency operations centers. Estimated cost: \$7 million to establish the center and \$250,000 for supplies and maintenance.
- Establish a mobile command post using a supervisory vehicle from the police department during an active shooter event,

facilitating rapid deployment and coordination. Estimated cost: \$320,000 to implement.

- Micro Grids: A Micro Grid is a small network of electricity users with a local source of supply (solar, battery or generator) that is usually connected to the centralized power grid, but able to function independently in the event of an outage in the centralized grid. Estimated cost: \$15-20 million to implement.
- Funding to implement a multi-mode communication infrastructure that includes redundant links across wireless and hardwired channels. This ensures uninterrupted and reliable communication capabilities, even when one or more channels fail, thereby strengthening resilience of emergency response mechanisms. Estimated cost: \$5 million to implement.

RCCD is requesting \$50,570,000 in total to address our Safety and Emergency Preparedness needs. By advocating for these funding increases and implementing these specific measures, the Riverside Community College District can significantly enhance its capacity to respond effectively to a wide spectrum of emergencies, safeguarding the well-being of campus communities, and fostering a culture of safety and preparedness.



Equity in Access

Adult Learners and AB 1705

ISSUE

Assembly Bill 1705, the Student Success Act of 2012, authored by Seymour-Campbell, is having a negative impact on completion rates for adult learners. AB 1705 establishes additional regulations for equitable placement reform at the CCC by stipulating the way high school transcript data, whether formal or provided by the student, will be used to determine a student's placement and enrollment in English and mathematics courses at the CCC. AB 1705 has removed previously available remedies, particularly noncredit coursework, which could aid adult students who are not coming through the K-12 pipeline and may not have encountered college-level math for years or even decades.

REQUESTS

Advocate for a return of noncredit developmental education to support adult learners.

BACKGROUND

The positive causality between completing college-level English and math courses and degree completion rates is well established and well known in higher education.

Students who complete college-level math and English (particularly in their first year of study) tend to complete their degrees at a much higher rate than students who struggle to complete these courses. For decades, to aid students in the completion of their college-level math and English courses, colleges offered developmental ed courses (courses that help students build up to college level math by filling in gaps in their knowledge of arithmetic and other basic math). These classes were popular, but mostly they were offered for credit and were therefore rightfully criticized for adding costs to a student's college education for credits that did not count towards their degree. For this reason, amongst a multitude of others, legislation was enacted in the form of AB 1705 that prohibited developmental course requirements, and then later in AB 1705, which severely limited developmental education, even via noncredit, though these remedies did not add additional costs to students as they can be offered tuition free.

For K-12 pipeline students, the effects of this legislation have been positive, but that has not been the case for adult learners, who come to higher education not directly

from a K-12 school, but rather after years or even decades of having sat in a classroom. Looking at recent data from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office from the 2021-22 academic year, first year completion rates of transfer-level English, only 12% adult learners (ages 25 and older) successfully completed their course (compared to 42% of K-12 pipeline students), with math following a similar pattern as K-12 students outperform adult learners by 21 percentage points, leaving adult learning hovering around a 5% success rate in transfer-level math.

AB 1705 makes very few exceptions in allowability for developmental ed fixes, but one that certainly should be added is noncredit developmental education for adult learners, who are quickly being left behind by their K-12 counterparts, who having just recently graduated from high school are better versed in pre-college math than adult learners who may have spent their time having a career, raising kids, or both, before returning to the college classroom. Providing this option could provide a means for these students to be more successful in transfer-level math and English without incurring any additional costs to them.



Equity in Access



Students with Disabilities

ISSUE

The California Community College Chancellor's Office has mandated that community colleges increase success outcomes for historically underrepresented students, which includes students with disabilities. This expectation supports Disabled Student Support Services (DSPS) programs to move from a 20th century model of compliance to a 21st century model of supporting the whole student as they navigate their academic programs at the community college. Throughout the CCC system, students with disabilities make up an average of 5% of the total population, with some districts having higher percentages; 8.45% of the RCCCD student population is registered with the DSPS programs.

However, current funding to provide equal access through accommodations leaves little opportunity to expand support to improve persistence, retention and success outcomes. An emerging best practice throughout the CCC is providing coaching to students with disabilities. This type of coaching provides students with disabilities with the support necessary to navigate the transition into college as well as the potential daily nuances of each day on campus. Barriers for students with disabilities include the removal of the structure provided by secondary schools and parents; disruption of routines; difficulties navigating the psychosocial aspect of higher education such as group work and meeting with professors; and self-advocacy which leads to lack of retention and results in failure.

REQUEST

Title V is specific as to how DSPS funding can be used as related to academics and accommodations which creates a barrier to expanding support and services. RCCCD requests \$500,784 to provide three coaches, one for each college. Coaches can support students with organization and time management, skills connected to executive functioning to make navigating college less overwhelming, and self-advocacy and self-empowerment skills as well as understanding and navigating the psychosocial aspects of college. Additionally, RCCCD requests \$20,000 for each college, a total cost of \$60,000, to cover supplies, outreach and engagement opportunities for students, along with professional development opportunities for each coach. Supporting students with disabilities to minimize these potential barriers creates more opportunities for success, persistence and completion.



Equity in Success



Guided Pathways

ISSUE

Research has shown that offering community college students Guided Pathways and “wraparound” supports increases in retention, persistence and completion of their educational goals. However, this model is more intrusive than the traditional model of community college education and requires additional services and support that are not currently offered, and which will increase the cost of service per student. While colleges can pursue external funding to develop and pilot key components of Guided Pathways, institutionalization and long-term sustainability requires ongoing funding that is not currently available through existing revenue streams.

To ensure that all students have equitable access and success in pursuing and attaining their educational and career goals, every college has implemented Guided Pathways and established engagement centers based on meta-majors. A crucial principle is that each center will provide a similar “standard of care” per student that includes equitable levels of counseling, educational advising and peer mentoring. To provide this equitable Standard of Care, RCCD requires, at a minimum, 50 educational advisors (\$114,538/year per advisor), 10 counselors (\$163,142/year per counselor), 150 peer mentors (\$12,100/year per mentor), and basic equipment for the engagement

centers (\$800,000) for a total budget of \$9,143,898 per year for staff and a one-time allocation of \$800,000 for equipment. Additional funding for mandatory training and development requirements for 10-15 hours are needed for faculty (full-time and adjunct) and classified staff who are crucial for the support and sustainability of this program.

REQUEST

RCCD requests an increase in FTES apportionment funding and/or ongoing annual allocation to implement fully and sustain the Guided Pathways model at all three of the District’s colleges.



BACKGROUND

The Guided Pathways model is nationally recognized for its effectiveness in reducing completion time and cost of education for community college students. As outlined in the 2015 book, *Redesigning America's Community Colleges: A Clearer Path to Student Success* (Bailey, et al, 2015), Guided Pathways is a whole-college redesign model that helps all students explore, choose, plan and complete programs aligned with their career and education goals efficiently and affordably. At RCCD, Guided Pathways emerged from several successful completion initiatives at Moreno Valley College, Norco College, and Completion Counts at Riverside City College. In 2012, Completion Counts was initially funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Working in

partnership with the city of Riverside, local Chambers of Commerce, and the region's school districts, RCC implemented the Completion Counts model, which yielded significant improvements in student completion rates, and more specifically time to completion. A majority of the 700 student Completion Counts cohort was successful in completing their certificates and degrees in three years rather than the more traditional six years. The success of Completion Counts, both locally and in communities across the country, led to a system-wide reform of the community college structure.

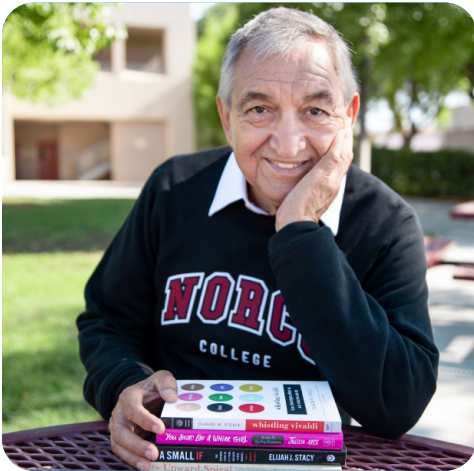
The colleges are currently working to fully scale Guided Pathways and ensure that all 60,000 students served by the District have selected a pathway and are making progress toward their educational and completion goals. Specific activities

toward each of the four tenets of Guided Pathways include:

- **Clarity** – Through the Guided Pathways framework, the colleges developed pathways for students, providing clear program maps and support structures to guide students towards achieving their academic, transfer and career goals.
- **Intake** – Through Guided Pathways, the colleges completely redesigned their new student intake process to include academic planning (based on program maps) and student educational plans to ensure students know what courses they need to complete their educational goals in a timely manner.
- **Support** – Collaborative teams of counselors, educational advisors, faculty advisors, librarians, peer mentors, tutors, and supplemental instructors provide integrated and comprehensive academic support for students in the identified instructional pathways.
- **Learning** – Riverside City College and Norco College are using the degree qualifications profile model to create and provide resources for students about program learning outcomes, future educational opportunities, and careers in their desired field of study. Moreno Valley College is creating an apprenticeship program for students that will deliver hands-on learning opportunities for students that lead directly to employment in better than living wage jobs.

Equity in Success

Adult Education & Noncredit Certificates



ISSUE

In the state of California, noncredit courses provide students with an opportunity to develop skills and competencies at no cost at their local community college. While this represents an incredible value proposition and resource for local communities, not all noncredit is treated equally, which disincentivizes community colleges from developing certain programs which have the potential to make substantial inroads in creating more equitable outcomes for adult learners and older adults throughout our communities. While certain noncredit programs enjoy support in the form of apportionment roughly on par with for-credit college classes, other eligible noncredit categories, namely “Courses for Persons with Substantial Disabilities” and “Courses for Older Adults,”

which have the potential to be community mainstays and increase the utility of every community college in California, are provided with significantly less support in the form of apportionment.

REQUEST

Advocate for full apportionment for noncredit classes that serve people with disabilities and older adults. Advocate for support services and dedicated counselors for adults with disabilities. Support Higher Education initiatives that offer funding to provide classes to people with disabilities and older adults.

BACKGROUND

Currently, enhanced funding is only available for noncredit courses in English as a Second Language (ESL), short-term vocational, workforce preparation, and basic skills courses. Noncredit courses that receive enhanced funding currently receive 40% more funding in the form of apportionment than noncredit offerings for persons with disabilities and older adults despite the fact that these courses may require more, not less, in terms of expertise for their development, operation and implementation – a fact that makes them less attractive options to community colleges as they strategize future planning, and thus,

often represent a missed opportunity.

One missed opportunity is that the state of California has the highest incidence rate of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in the United States, yet despite that two-thirds of those individuals with ASD do not have an intellectual disability, they still experience some of the lowest levels of success in higher education, something that could be remedied with thoughtful noncredit programming. Many community colleges in California have developed expansive noncredit programs for students with disabilities, supporting independent living initiatives to help people thrive in their communities, despite their personal challenges. These programs inevitably require outside resources as these courses are currently underfunded in the current noncredit model.

Just as California has the highest reported incidence rate of people with ASD, it also has the largest population of adults aged 65 and older with approximately thirty-nine million older adults living throughout the state – and like noncredit for people with disabilities, it is underfunded in the current noncredit model, despite the clear body of evidence that lifelong learning contributes to psychological wellbeing and health of older adults.

