

RCCD

RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY
COLLEGE DISTRICT



2025 Legislative Platform

The Riverside Community College District Board of Trustees, chancellor, and leadership from the three colleges have identified legislative priorities for the 2025 Legislative Program. The District's legislative priorities will focus on three areas: 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 for everyone who wishes to take advantage of the educational opportunities offered by the colleges.



Equity in Access



Financial Aid Reform

1. Federal Aid – Issue: Changes enacted to the 2024-25 Free Application for Federal Student Aid application as per the Fostering Undergraduate Talent by Unlocking Resources for Education Act led to many delays in student application and school processing for the 2024-25 academic year. These delays and processing errors caused confusion, workload issues and loss of confidence in the financial aid process by students and their families. As of June 2024, schools still do not have the ability to process changes, corrections or overrides for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid which harms students. Students requesting unusual or special circumstance appeals, or needing corrections due to verification, are in a holding pattern due to lack of school access to the

required Federal Student Aid portals. These students cannot receive financial aid award offers until this is resolved.

Legislative Actions: Request assurances from Federal Student Aid programs that the 2025-26 Free Application for Federal Student Aid application will launch on time, with 100 percent access for students and parents to complete the application including consent and signature requirements. The District also requests that schools have access to the federal student aid systems to submit corrections and overrides, in batch, after the launch of the application.

2. California Grant Reform - Issue: The District applauds the efforts of legislative champions, such as Assemblymembers Jose Medina and Kevin McCarty and Senator Connie Leyva, for initiating

the California Grant Reform that created the California Grant Equity Framework. The framework includes consolidating California grants into one 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. The framework is expected to continue through the 2024-25 academic year pending budget approvals. Unfortunately, California Grant reform was not funded for 2025-26.

Legislative Actions: The District is requesting that Cal Grant be funded in the 2026-27 academic year so that the California Grant Equity Framework can be implemented.



Special Populations

3. 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 program at the Riverside Community College District colleges supports early intervention and transition support for foster youth; however, this program is projected to exhaust its funding by the end of 2024.

Legislative Actions: Advocate for continuous funding of the Foster Youth Support Network to support the expansion of transitional and rapid rehousing opportunities for these youth.

4. Veterans - Issue: Each year approximately 200,000 service members transition from military to civilian life with 55 percent reporting that their military skills and experience are often dismissed by civilian educators and employers. Credit for prior learning can bridge this critical gap for Veterans and experiential learners statewide

at little to no additional cost to taxpayers. In 2022, the Mapping Articulated Pathways was developed to maximize college credit awarded for military training and professional experience to a cloud-based platform.

Legislative Actions: Support the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office in its statewide implementation of Mapping Articulated Pathways. Authorize \$ 15 million in annual funding to scale the 936 community colleges in the nation and then to the remaining 690 regionally accredited public colleges and universities. The goal is to give Veterans and working adults the credit they deserve through their service and work experience.

5. 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 Assembly Bill 417 which formally established 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.

6. Undocumented and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals - Issue: The District serves about 2,400 students through its Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act, known as the DREAM Act, and Assembly Bill 540 programs per year. However, gaps in funding remain. Additionally, students need assistance identifying legal resources, applying for financial assistance and scholarships, and accessing basic needs services. The District agrees that supporting marginalized students is important, however, without dedicated funding, the District's colleges are limited in what they can provide.

Legislative Actions: Support federal legislation that codifies the DREAM Act to establish a pathway to citizenship, expand Undocumented and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals student eligibility for Pell Grants and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and protect student visas. Seek state support to continue and increase funding for campus resource centers and resource staff liaisons at community colleges to support this student population.

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.

7. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, Two Spirit, and other sexual identities - Issue:

According to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, two spirit, and other sexual identities students are experiencing a disproportionate impact in the following areas: retention, transfer to a four-year university, and completion of a degree or certificate. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, two spirit, and other sexual identities individuals encounter familial, social, economic, and educational instability, which inhibits their ability to succeed academically and holistically.

Legislative Actions: Develop legislation that creates and funds lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, two spirit, and other sexual identities campus resource centers that provide wrap-around services, including mental health and basic needs support. Support funding to hire at least one permanent, full-time, qualified professional employee at each college to meet students' needs and improve educational outcomes. Develop legislation to increase the number of all-gender restrooms and locker rooms and require new buildings to have at least one gender-inclusive restroom per floor.

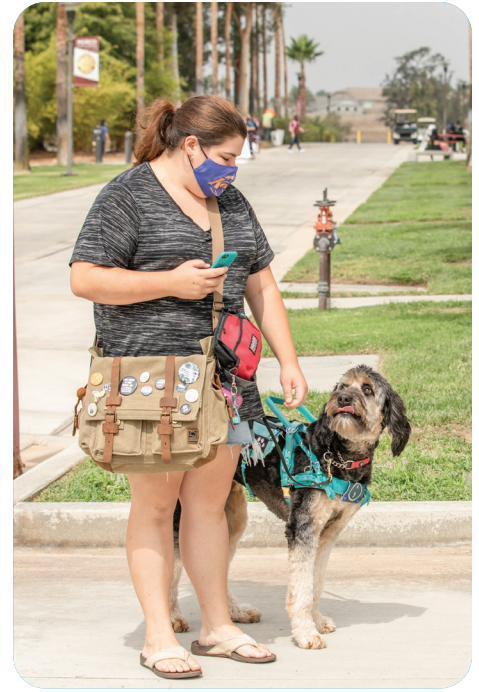
8. Mental and Psychological Services - Issue:

According to a survey conducted by the Healthy Minds Network, 72 percent 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: Advocate for legislation that requires a percentage of Mental Health Services Act funds to go to community colleges to address student health and wellness concerns, including mental health and psychological services.

9. Students with Disabilities - Issue:

In the California Community Colleges system, students with disabilities make up an average of five percent of the total population, with some districts having higher percentages. The Riverside Community College District student population that is registered with Disabled Student Programs and Services is 8.45 percent. The campus Disability Resource Center works with students to ensure they have access to their programs of study through accommodations, services and campus resources. Unfortunately, students with other disabilities, such as autism, continue to grow in which the District's colleges are not well equipped to provide support for students with such disabilities.



Legislative Actions: The District requests \$465,000 to provide three coaches, one for each college. Additionally, RCCD requests \$60,000 (\$20,000 per college) to cover supplies, outreach and engagement opportunities for students, along with professional development opportunities for each coach.

10. Adult Learners - Issue:

Assembly Bill 1705 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 may not have encountered college-level math for years or even decades.

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



Equity in Success



1. Guided Pathways - Issue:

Guided Pathways are structured to provide 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, the District requests at least 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 costing \$800,000 for a total budget of \$9,143,898 per year. Funding for mandatory training and development that requires 10-15 hours is needed for full-time and adjunct faculty plus classified staff crucial for this program's support and sustainability.

2. 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. The District 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. The District 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.

3. Future of Workforce

Development - Issue: Significant economic and educational barriers exist across the Inland Empire. The District 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.

Career & Technical Education

4. 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.

5. Emergency Medical Services Program - Issue: Riverside County and the state of California are facing a critical shortage of first-responders, especially paramedics and ambulance transport providers. The Ben Clark Education Center, located at Moreno Valley College School of Public Safety, offers emergency medical services training



for emergency medical technicians and paramedics.

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

6. Inland Empire Technical

Trade Center - 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 percent 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 Inland Empire Technical Trade Center is a response to the urgent need for good paying jobs, a diverse job market, and a skilled workforce for the region.

Legislative Actions: Partnering with the Inland Empire Labor Council, the Building Trades Council, the Southwest Carpenters,

the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, and trade groups, the District continues to move forward on development of a regional center to meet workforce needs with funding from federal, state and local resources.

7. Apprenticeships & Internships Pathways - Issue:

The Inland Empire suffers from high rates of multi-generational poverty of the region's workforce possessing neither formal training nor skills. The District 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: The District was awarded \$4,697,637 to support apprenticeship development in the Inland Empire, including a subaward of approximately \$2.3 million to the LAUNCH Apprenticeship Network through the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office for providing

local intermediary support. The District requests \$120,000 for planning and \$1.5 million for continued implementation of this approach championed at both the state and federal levels for expansion.

8. Noncredit Programming for People with Disabilities and Older Adults - Issue:

California has the highest incidence rate of autism spectrum disorder in the United States. The most recent census shows that 7.4 percent of individuals below the age of 65 in Riverside County have a disability. Many students could be served through intentional noncredit courses for students with disabilities, but these courses are funded at lower apportionment rates than those for English as a Second Language and career technical education. The Center of Excellence reports that the fastest growing age group in the District's service area is residents 65 and older. The projected increases in these populations

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.

9. Increase Transfer Rates - Issue:

The District receives \$674.94 per student who transfers to a California State University, University of California, or private institution. With the District transferring about 42 percent of students each academic year to these institutions, it is imperative the District receive increased funding to support these transfers.

Legislative Actions: Advocate and support legislation that increases funding to the California Community Colleges system to support transfer efforts. Advocate and support legislation to make the Student-Centered Funding Formula more equitable for community colleges to increase student transfers. Develop and adopt a statewide associate degree transfer curriculum to assist students with transferring to a four-year institution. Work to adopt and integrate the Program Pathway Tracker software to create more associate degree transfers.

10. 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. Federal funding went into training and education in which many incumbent 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 offers a bachelor's degree in emergency management or homeland security. However, California's most populous cities and 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: Develop a bachelor of science program for Moreno Valley College's Ben Clark Education Center within the School of Public Safety certificate and degree course offerings.





Equity in Support



1. District Facilities - Issue: In response to enrollment growth in Inland Empire, there is a pressing need to construct and modernize educational facilities and campus-supporting amenities. RCCD participates in the State Capital Outlay program for project funding each year. The State Chancellor's Office has approved four (4) growth category final project proposals for FY 2025-26 with local contributions from RCCD Measure CC (November 2024). Additionally, RCCD has submitted three (3) growth category final project proposals for FY 2026-27 state approval.

Legislative Actions: Approve state funding for the following construction projects for FY 2025-26 under Proposition 2: Moreno

Valley College's Library & Learning Resource Center building: estimated cost \$106 million; Norco College's Library Learning Resource Center & Student Services building: estimated cost: \$83 million; Riverside City College's Cosmetology building: estimated cost \$48 million; and Moreno Valley's School of Public Safety Education building: estimated cost \$40 million. Support state funding approval of the following projects for FY 2026-27 under Proposition 2: Moreno Valley College's Biological & Physical Science building: estimated cost \$57 million; Norco College's STEM Phase I: estimated cost \$129 million; Riverside City College's Applied Technology: estimated cost \$177 million.

2. RCCD Capital Construction Plan/Deferred Maintenance - Issue: The cost of new construction, facilities modernization, deferred maintenance projects, and campus infrastructure continues to rise. Due to aging facilities, building systems and technology are becoming increasingly outdated and deteriorating. Older campuses require accessibility improvement to provide equitable access for students to campus facilities and amenities. State-scheduled maintenance funding has been reduced or eliminated, resulting in significant delays in repairing and modernizing antiquated college facilities essential for student learning. The risk of deferring these projects could lead to catastrophic failures, disrupting the delivery of education.



Legislative Actions: Advocate for the allocation of physical plant and instructional support funding to ensure a reasonable annual budget for addressing the backlog of scheduled maintenance projects and to support instructional needs, including the replacement of outdated equipment.

3. State Capital Outlay

Program – Issue: The 2020 State Capital Outlay priorities and grant application process uses an annual “zero-based” budgeting method, requiring a minimum of 25 percent of the total project budget to be locally funded in order to access the capital outlay funding program and competition scoring system. However, the State’s project cost estimating system is outdated and does not align with current building code requirements or recent market conditions for construction prices. Projects approved with a 50% state allocation often end up receiving

only 40% or less. Additionally, the State system provides construction cost allowances for certain cost categories that fail to adequately cover actual costs mandated by code or the project’s secondary effects.

Legislative Actions: Advocate for equitable changes to the scoring methodology for capital outlay funding, with a particular focus on revising the hardship exemption criteria. Specifically, reduce or eliminate the requirement that at least 25 percent of the total project budget must be locally funded in order to qualify for the capital outlay funding program. Additionally, advocate for a comprehensive review and adjustment of the project cost modeling to align with current construction costs and market conditions. Emphasize the importance of basing construction cost assessments on actual bid data rather than estimates.

4. Student Housing - Issue:

In 2021, the Riverside Community College District commissioned a feasibility study to identify student housing needs across the three colleges. Key findings show that students need affordable on-campus housing options resulting in a need for over 4,600 beds. In 2023, the District was awarded \$75 million in a joint application with the University of California, Riverside, totaling \$126 million to fund the North District project. Ultimately, 652 beds will be created with 326 beds for community college students. Unfortunately, this leaves a gap of approximately 4,000 beds to meet the student housing needs in the District.

Legislative Actions: Continue to seek state support for funding student housing projects at Moreno Valley College and Norco College. These projects are shovel ready contingent upon funding availabilities. Support additional state funding for rental assistance programs. Expand federal, state and county housing eligibility for community college students and their families.

5. Safety and Emergency

Preparedness - Issue: In recent years, California has grappled with the looming threat of both severe natural disasters and human caused emergencies. The District 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.

6. Access to Technology -

Issue: The District 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.

7. Update teaching modalities:

Post-pandemic, California Community Colleges system has adopted hybrid learning models. The District 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. The District 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.

8. 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 the District's service area.



Legislative Actions: Seek federal and state funding for energy conservation measures. The District needs funding to support the replacement of natural gas appliances with electrical alternatives, replacement of aged campus central plants, and converting infrastructure systems with energy efficient alternatives to reduce energy consumption and optimize efficiencies which is estimated at \$70 million.

8. Equalize Apportionment

- Issue: California community colleges receive about \$12,605 per full-time equivalent while the California State University system receives \$20,385 and University of California institutions receive

\$34,485 per full-time equivalent. California community colleges are reaching enrollment numbers of over 1.8 million students each academic year while California State University and University of California enroll a total of 651,570 students. California community colleges continue to receive less funding yet have to support a student population twice that of institutions that make up the California State University and University of California systems.

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

