

# RCCD

RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE DISTRICT

MORENO  
VALLEY  
COLLEGE

NORCO  
COLLEGE

 RCC  
RIVERSIDE CITY COLLEGE

## 2026 District Priorities

The Riverside Community College District (RCCD) defines its strategic priorities through a series of white papers that underscore key projects, programs, and services across its colleges. Supported by the District Office, Moreno Valley College, Norco College, and Riverside City College are committed to serving and enriching their diverse communities by providing certificates, degrees, and transfer pathways that empower students to achieve their educational and career goals.



# Equity in Access







# Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)



## ISSUE

On July 4, 2025, President Trump signed the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (H.R. 1), which includes significant higher education provisions affecting Federal Pell Grants. The legislation increases overall Pell Grant funding by \$10.5 billion, prohibits Pell Grants for students receiving full-ride scholarships, and excludes farm and small-business assets from financial aid eligibility calculations. Additionally, Workforce Pell Grant eligibility has been expanded to cover short-term, career-focused programs ranging from 150 to 599 clock hours, lasting 8 to 14 weeks, and available across for-profit, nonprofit and public institutions. The

Act also replaces income-contingent repayment plans with a new income-based option called the Repayment Assistance Plan.

The success of California community colleges depends heavily on a strong partnership with the federal government. Maintaining college affordability and streamlining the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) verification process are critical to student achievement. The District supports initiatives to increase availability and access to federal Pell Grants and Cal Grants that utilize the FAFSA process to establish eligibility. We also seek reforms to reduce administrative burdens faced by

students and college staff during the application process.

More importantly, the District recognizes the inequity in grant funding. Students attending California community colleges, which comprise the largest student population in the state, receive lower grant awards compared to their peers at the University of California, California State University, and private institutions. To ensure equitable access to education and address the increasing costs of attendance, the Pell Grant awards need to be increased for community college students to better align with current living and educational expenses.

BACKGROUND

The Cal Grant is a crucial state-specific financial aid program in California that does not require repayment. To be eligible, applicants must submit either the FAFSA or the California Dream Act application by the designated deadline and meet all eligibility, financial and minimum GPA criteria for the program. Cal Grants are available to students attending University of California campuses, California State Universities, and California Community Colleges as well as qualifying independent, career or technical schools within California. The program provides tuition and fee assistance to eligible students at UC and CSU campuses with an additional financial award available for California Grant B recipients. While the program has effectively adjusted grant amounts for students attending UC and CSU campuses to reflect rising tuition and fees, award levels for community college students have remained largely stagnant. The Cal Grant Reform Act, enacted in 2022, remains unfunded, leaving critical reforms to California’s higher education financial aid system in limbo. Given the state’s persistent budget deficits, there is significant uncertainty regarding the timeline and assurance of full implementation,

underscoring the need for prioritized funding to ensure equitable access for students.

In 2024-25, the colleges of Riverside Community College District distributed Pell Grants to 17,482 students totaling \$76,537,300 in funding. Please see the breakdown as shown on the following table:

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Riverside Community College District advocates for changes to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, the Federal Student Aid system, and Cal Grant program to:

Federal

- 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.
- Advocate to change the definition of independent on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid application by lowering the independence age or allowing for overrides to include self-support.

- Advocate to change the U.S. 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 Free Application for Federal Student Aid 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.
- Expand federal financial aid and emergency funding eligibility to undocumented and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) students.
- Launch the 2026-27 Free Application for Federal Student Aid application on time, June 30, 2026, with 100% access to students and parents completing the application.
- Introduce legislation that prevents poor performing colleges from participating in the federal student aid program.
- Consider methods of ensuring robust oversight that allow public colleges to focus on educational outcomes and less

| RCC                          |                 |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Pell Student Count 2024-2025 | 11,163          |
| Pell Dollars Paid 2024-2025  | \$48,749,667.00 |
| MVC                          |                 |
| Pell Student Count 2024-25   | 3,751           |
| Pell Dollars Paid 2024-25    | \$16,361,942.00 |
| Norco                        |                 |
| Pell Student Count 2024-2025 | 2568            |
| Pell Dollars Paid 2024-2025  | \$11,425,691.00 |





on administrative tasks, such as Student Success Scorecard and the Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative indicators.

- Amend H.R. 1 to exclude for-profit institutions from eligibility for Workforce Pell Grant funding, ensuring that federal resources are prioritized for high-quality, public and nonprofit career education programs.

### State

- Raise yearly award amounts to keep pace with inflation and improve support for non-tuition expenses like CalFresh to provide comprehensive financial assistance. Full implementation, however, remains dependent on state revenues amid ongoing budget constraints.

- Simplify GPA requirements by eliminating them for community college students and setting a 2.0 minimum for university students. This streamlined approach reduces administrative complexity and improves access for older, returning, and non-traditional students facing unique financial aid barriers.





# Foster Youth Support Services



## ISSUE

Foster youth face a disproportionate array of barriers that impede their access to and completion of higher education. The instability in their familial, social, economic and educational experiences significantly hinders their successful transition from the foster care system to independent adulthood, often resulting in delayed academic progress relative to their peers. Riverside Community College District is committed to facilitating this critical transition by providing targeted educational

support to foster youth. Given the unique challenges that foster youth encounter, tailored support services are necessary to improve their college enrollment, retention and degree completion rates. California's community colleges serve as a vital entry point for foster youth to pursue postsecondary education and workforce development; however, these institutions require adequate resources to address the specialized needs of this vulnerable population effectively.

## BACKGROUND

Riverside County, home to the state's third-largest foster youth population, has approximately 4,500 foster youth enrolled in K–12 schools according to the Department of Public Social Services. In response, the District participates in the NextUp program, administered through Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) with support from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. The NextUp program offers eligible current and former foster youth campus-based

support, including financial aid for books and supplies, transportation, tutoring, food, and emergency housing.

College staff collaborate with prospective and newly enrolled foster youth to enhance college readiness and facilitate smooth transitions to higher education. As part of these efforts, Riverside City College secured funding to establish a targeted dual enrollment program for foster youth in feeder high schools. A portion of these funds supports a dedicated resource specialist who assists foster youth with enrollment, provides technical guidance on college systems, and supports academic progress. Over two years, Riverside City College enabled 51 foster youth to access dual enrollment with 19 successfully enrolling and completing 23 courses, earning simultaneous college and high school credit. Additionally, Norco College recently received a dual enrollment grant, supporting seven foster youth during the summer term.

NextUp provides critical on-campus resources, the transitional support offered by the Foster Youth Support Network. Despite these efforts, foster youth continue to be disproportionately underserved, with persistent gaps in retention, transfer rates, and degree completion.

In 2025, Riverside City College (RCC) was selected as one of six colleges statewide to implement the Foster Youth College Access Demonstration Project, a two-year, \$180,000 initiative to expand educational opportunities for foster youth. The project strengthens partnerships with K–12 districts and community organizations to support

high school foster youth, increase dual enrollment participation, and improve students' transition from high school to postsecondary education.

## LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Riverside Community College District advocates for the following actions to protect and support foster youth.

### Federal

- Oppose the budget proposal to eliminate nearly \$1.2 billion in funding for fiscal year 2026-27 for TRIO programs through the Department of Education, which would dissolve the program and remove critical resources and services that help foster youth.
- Support the full restoration of \$1.2 billion in funding for fiscal year 2026-27 to support TRIO programs to ensure continued access and success for foster youth in higher education.
- Support legislation that protects and supports foster youth's educational attainment.

### State

- Allocate \$60,000 annually for foster youth dual enrollment to support high school students' transition to college by providing early access to college coursework and targeted academic and personal support. The program currently relies on private foundation grants.
- Allocate \$25,000 annually to the Guardian Scholars program to support non-NextUp foster youth who are ineligible for NextUp grants, meal vouchers, or direct aid. The program provides assistance with student fees, textbooks, CTE toolkits, meal vouchers, basic needs



support, outreach supplies, and program activities. Currently, colleges rely on a limited number of one-time private donor grants to meet these students' needs.

- Allocate \$100,000 annually for the Foster Youth Support Network, as current funding for this program has expired.
- Support a statewide model for cross-sector collaboration that uplifts one of the most marginalized student populations.

### Local

- Support transitional and rapid rehousing opportunities for foster youth, including college-focused rapid rehousing.
- Expand evidence-based practices that address housing insecurity, food access, and academic persistence.



# Education for Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Students



## ISSUE

Over the past several years, the California Community Colleges system has significantly advanced rehabilitative education for justice-involved individuals, fulfilling key voter mandates. Following the passage of Senate Bill 1391 (2014), thousands of incarcerated students have enrolled in face-to-face Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) programs within state prisons. In 2021, the Rising Scholars Network was launched for up to fifty colleges to provide targeted support services for justice-impacted students. While the initiative has expanded access, it also revealed gaps in services such as tutoring, counseling and access to technology.

Assembly Bill 417 (2021) furthered this work by authorizing community college courses for justice-involved students both in juvenile facilities and on campuses, creating clear pathways to degrees and transfer opportunities. These efforts align with California's broader public safety, equity and economic goals by promoting rehabilitation, reducing recidivism, and supporting reintegration. Despite these advancements, justice-involved students still face significant barriers to persistence and completion. Sustained investment in the Rising Scholars Network and expanded support services are critical to ensuring long-term success for this population and strengthening California's workforce and communities.

## BACKGROUND

Riverside County accounts for approximately six percent of California's paroled population. The Riverside Community College District is dedicated to supporting justice-involved individuals, with each campus hosting student organizations focused on this community: Transitioning Minds at Riverside City and Moreno Valley Colleges, and Liberated Scholars at Norco College.

Norco College collaborates with the California Rehabilitation Center, a Level II medium-security facility housing up to 3,000 inmates, to offer the Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) program to



incarcerated individuals. Currently, Norco College serves over 268 incarcerated students' and has conferred 193 associate degrees including Associate Degrees for Transfer to justice-involved students. While each Rising Scholars Network receives equal state funding, Norco College's program uniquely serves both incarcerated and formerly incarcerated populations, effectively supporting two distinct groups within its Rising Scholars Network.

## LEGISLATIVE ACTION

To better serve incarcerated students the District requests the following actions to address the urgent needs of the Rising Scholars Network and justice-involved individuals:

### Federal

- Oppose the fiscal year 2026 budget proposal to eliminate nearly \$1.2 billion in funding for TRIO programs through the Department of Education, which would dissolve the program and remove critical resources and services that help justice involved students succeed in higher education while advancing educational equity.
- Support the full restoration of \$1.2 billion in funding for fiscal year 2026-27 to support TRIO programs to ensure continued access and success for justice involved students in higher education.

- Support legislation that protects and supports formerly and currently incarcerated student's educational attainment.

### State

- Allocate \$1.7 million to the District to support the Rising Scholars program.
- Introduce legislation to create a transcript data-sharing program for incarcerated students.
- Support legislation and funding for instructional technology in prison.
- Reintroduce legislation similar to AB 2425 (Bryan) - Community colleges: Hire UP: From Corrections to Career Pilot Program. This legislation would authorize the Chancellor's Office to enter into agreements with up to ten community college districts to provide funding for stipends to formerly incarcerated individuals, CalWORKs recipients, and former foster youth.
- Support continuous funding to expand the technology infrastructure plan of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation at each prison.
- Support continuous funding for counseling and tutorial services at the prisons.

### Local

- Introduce legislation to create a community college and juvenile hall partnership, working collaboratively with the Riverside County Probation Department at the Youth Treatment Educational Center.
- Establish a process for issuing state identification for incarcerated students.



# Undocumented and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals



## ISSUE

Approximately 75,000 undocumented students, including those protected under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy, are currently enrolled in the California Community Colleges system. In response, California has taken progressive steps to expand educational access for this population. Assembly Bill 540 created a more equitable tuition structure by allowing undocumented students to qualify for in-state tuition if they completed at least three years of coursework from California high schools, earned a high school diploma or equivalent, and enrolled in a California college. Since then, additional legislation

has further increased access and support. The California DREAM Act expanded access by allowing eligible undocumented students to apply for state financial aid, including grants and scholarships. Senate Bill 68 broadened eligibility by allowing attendance at community colleges, adult schools, or correctional facilities to count toward the attendance requirement. Most recently, Senate Bill 1141 removed the two-year cap on community college credits, allowing students to apply a full three years of coursework toward AB 540 eligibility.

The Riverside Community College District (RCCD) serves thousands of undocumented and mixed-status

students, both DACA and non-DACA, through its Dreamer and AB 540 programs. While RCCD receives annual state funding to support these students, the lack of a comprehensive management information reporting system for undocumented and mixed-status students hinders the District's ability to demonstrate student impact and potentially secure additional funding. One ongoing concern is the unfunded mandate from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office that requires each college to establish a dedicated Dreamer Center. Without dedicated funding, colleges face significant challenges in adequately serving AB 540 students, Dreamers, and other undocumented individuals.



## BACKGROUND

In 2017, the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, Immigrants Rising, and the Foundation for California Community Colleges collaborated to produce a report examining the current status of undocumented students in California community colleges. The Dreamers Project Report served as the basis for legislation approved by the California State Legislature and signed by Governor Gavin Newsom on October 12, 2019, to promote undocumented student success.

On October 15, 2019, the Riverside Community College District Board of Trustees approved a resolution supporting Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. Each of the three colleges identified a Dreamer Resource Liaison, established a

Dreamers Taskforce, and partnered with community agencies to provide legal support and services. However, the creation of a Dreamer Resource Center at each of the colleges has remained elusive.

## LEGISLATIVE ACTION

RCCD acknowledges the critical need to support Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), non-DACA, and mixed-status students. To remove barriers to academic success and enhance retention and completion outcomes for these populations, RCCD respectfully requests the following actions:

### Federal

- Support federal legislation that codifies Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals to establish a pathway to citizenship.

- Expand student eligibility for Pell Grants and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
- Advocate for the preservation and safeguarding of student visa programs.

### State

- Request expansion of Cal-FRESH eligibility to include any student, regardless of immigration status.
- Develop bridge programming to support undocumented students from high school to transfer/graduation.
- Allocate \$500,000 annually to create learning communities for undocumented students, each supported by a dedicated academic counselor to address student needs and enhance educational outcomes at every college.
- Allocate \$360,000 annually to hire three Dream Resource Liaisons to support undocumented students by providing guidance on legal rights, mental health, career development, and education, helping address their unique challenges and ensuring access to tailored resources and assistance.
- Allocate \$450,000 annually to Dream Resource Centers to support Dream Resource Liaisons in providing student services, including career pathways, legal assistance, basic needs, and outreach.

### Local

- Develop bridge programming to support undocumented students from high school to transfer/graduation.



# LGBTQIA2+ Student Programs



## ISSUE

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, Two Spirit, and other gender and sexual minority (LGBTQIA2+) individuals face significant familial, social, economic, and educational challenges that hinder their academic and personal success. Data from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office show that LGBTQIA2+ students experience disproportionately lower rates of retention, completion of college-level math, and English in their first year.

Capturing accurate data on LGBTQIA2+ students remains difficult

due to challenges in identifying the full population and the community's intersectional nature. These students report higher levels of mental health issues, food and housing insecurity, and a lower sense of safety and belonging on campus according to a survey conducted by the JED Foundation in 2019. Nationally, the number of individuals identifying as LGBTQIA2+ continues to grow, and approximately 70% of LGBTQIA2+ community college students are students of color, facing compound systemic barriers to success.

## BACKGROUND

The California State Legislature has

enacted several laws to advance support for LGBTQIA2+ individuals within the community college system. AB 620 (2011) mandates the collection and reporting of aggregate data on sexual orientation and gender identity. AB 1018 (2017) requires the inclusion of LGBTQIA2+ students in Student Equity Plans. Funding support has been provided through AB 132 (2021), AB 102 (2023), and AB 1812 (2024), which together allocate \$10 million in one-time funding to LGBTQIA2+ initiatives statewide. To promote respectful and affirming practices, AB 2315 (2022) requires the use of students' and employees'



affirmed names and genders in records where legal names are not mandatory. Additionally, SB 1491 (2024) directs each campus to appoint an LGBTQIA2+ liaison who is exempt from mandatory reporting requirements related to sexual harassment and violence. These legislative measures collectively strengthen protections and resources for LGBTQIA2+ students, faculty and staff in California's community colleges.

## REQUESTS

Riverside Community College District requests the following actions to expand and enhance LGBTQIA2+ student services to reduce barriers and increase retention and completion:

### Federal

- Support continuous funding opportunities through the Department of Education.
- Support continuous and increase funding opportunities for student support services.
- Support legislation that includes and protects LGBTQIA2+'s students through student support services.

### State

- Allocate \$479,232 to hire three permanent, full-time qualified professionals, one at each college, to support LGBTQIA2+ students and improve educational outcomes.
- Improve accurate data gathering regarding students' sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, so that colleges are positioned to access data to further develop informed services; allow key personnel



access to disaggregated data to provide holistic and direct support to LGBTQIA2+ students.

- Develop legislation to increase the number of all-gender restrooms and locker rooms and require new builds have at least one gender-inclusive restroom per floor.
- Develop legislation that creates and funds LGBTQIA2+ resource centers on each campus for students to access resources and network with each other.
- Support the creation of dedicated scholarships targeted toward LGBTQIA2+ students to provide opportunities like their peers.

- Allocate \$5,000 for the creation of LGBTQIA2+ learning programs.

- Reallocate \$125,000 to support initiatives serving LGBTQIA2+ communities, including mental health services, basic needs assistance, and professional development. The District's existing funding allocation expires in 2029-30.

### Local

- Partner with the County of Riverside to deliver support services in coordination with the Department of Public Health and Social Services.

# Students with Disabilities



## ISSUE

Students with disabilities face persistent barriers in California's community colleges, including limited access to specialized support, inadequate advising, and the loss of preparatory coursework. Current Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSPS) funding focuses narrowly on academic accommodations, as outlined in Title V regulations, leaving little room for broader support services that improve persistence and retention. Many students struggle with the transition from the structured K–12 environment; face challenges such

as disrupted routines, difficulty navigating campus life, and limited self-advocacy skills all of which contribute to higher dropout rates. A critical gap is the lack of trained advisors who understand the unique needs of students with disabilities. General education advising often overwhelms these students, while one-on-one guidance on study strategies could significantly boost outcomes.

The elimination of remedial courses under AB 705 has further compounded these challenges by forcing students into transfer-level

coursework before they are ready. Even entry-level courses, like art, have become more rigorous, reducing accessible entry points for those needing a gradual transition. Rising costs for American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation also pose a growing concern. Changes in hiring protocols have significantly increased expenses, placing additional pressure on already limited DSPS budgets. While DSPS offers vital accommodations, current funding and regulatory constraints prevent colleges from providing the comprehensive support needed to help students with disabilities succeed.



## BACKGROUND

Since its passage in 1975, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) has established the federal government as a key driver in promoting educational equity for children with disabilities through a long-standing, large-scale assistance program. As a grant-based statute, IDEA provides federal funding for special education and requires states to guarantee a free appropriate public education meaning (specially designed instruction at no cost to parents) that addresses each child's unique needs for all eligible students. The largest component of IDEA is the Assistance for Education of All Children with Disabilities, which supports special education services for children and youth with disabilities from ages 3 to 21.

The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office has mandated that community colleges increase success outcomes for historically underrepresented students, which includes students with disabilities. This expectation supports moving disabled student support service programs to a 21st century model of supporting the whole student. Throughout the California Community Colleges system, students with disabilities make up five percent of the total student population, with some districts having higher percentages, like the 12 percent student population registered within the Riverside Community College District.

## LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Riverside Community College District requests the following actions to enhance services for current students with disabilities and to build the capacity to serve additional populations, including



neurodivergent students, by reducing barriers and creating greater opportunities for success, persistence, and program completion.

### Federal

- Support the proposed \$16.66 billion budget for fiscal year 2026–27 for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to ensure continued access to high-quality education and essential services for students with disabilities.
- Support legislation that protects and supports students with disabilities.

### State

- Support the proposed \$1.53 billion budget for fiscal year 2026–27 to support special education grants to the state for Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS), providing essential support services to students with disabilities to ensure equal access to education.
- Expand permissible uses of DSPS funds to include proactive services such as academic coaching, study skills instruction, and mental health referrals to promote retention and completion.
- Allocate \$465,000 annually to hire three educational advisors and fund their professional development to help students develop time management, organizational, and self-empowerment skills while navigating the psychosocial aspects of college life.
- Allocate \$60,000 annually funding, \$20,000 per college, to support supplies, outreach, and engagement programs for students with disabilities.
- Allocate \$642,314 annually to offset increased costs associated with ASL interpreter services due to contracting and labor changes, ensuring continued access for deaf and hard-of-hearing students.
- Create a dedicated state grant program to support hiring and training of educational advisors who specialize in working with students with disabilities, focusing on 1:1 support and transition planning.
- Advocate for legislation that would allow community colleges to offer noncredit or non-transferable developmental courses tailored for students with disabilities as an on-ramp to transfer-level coursework.



# Adult Education



## ISSUE

According to the California Community College Chancellor's Office, in the 2023–24 academic year, approximately 42% of students in California Community Colleges are classified as adult students (25 years old or older). Many of these students face unique challenges, including extended time away from formal education, work and family responsibilities, and gaps in foundational academic skills. Prior to AB 1705, noncredit courses played a critical role in bridging these gaps by offering accessible, no-cost pathways to build essential competencies in English and mathematics without the pressure of

traditional credit-bearing courses.

The elimination of noncredit remedial options under AB 1705 has disproportionately impacted adult learners who require incremental academic support to succeed in college-level coursework. This policy shift has contributed to declining completion rates and reduced overall student success among this demographic, undermining the state's broader workforce development and educational equity goals.

Moreover, reliance on high school transcript data for placement decisions may not accurately reflect

the current abilities or potential of adult learners, particularly those who have been out of school for years or experienced educational disruptions. Alternative placement measures, such as multiple measures assessment and noncredit preparatory programs, have demonstrated effectiveness in supporting adult student success. To ensure equitable outcomes and optimize educational attainment, legislative consideration should be given to restoring and expanding noncredit pathways and incorporating flexible, holistic placement practices that address the diverse needs of adult learners.

## BACKGROUND

Extensive research in higher education confirms a strong link between completing college-level English and mathematics courses and earning a degree. Students who successfully pass these essential courses tend to achieve higher overall completion rates than those who do not. Traditionally, colleges provided developmental education courses, mostly for credit, to help students strengthen foundational skills like arithmetic before advancing to college-level math. Although widely utilized, these courses were criticized for adding to students' educational expenses by requiring credits that did not count toward degree requirements.

Data from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office for the 2021–22 academic year reveal stark disparities: first-year completion rates for transfer-level English among adult learners aged 25 and older were 12%, compared to 42% for traditional K–12 pipeline students. Similar trends exist in mathematics, where adult learners' success rates in transfer-level courses lag by approximately 21 percentage points, around 5%. In response, legislation including AB 1705 was enacted to limit developmental education requirements, even extending restrictions to noncredit offerings, despite noncredit courses being tuition-free. While these reforms have generally benefited students progressing directly from the K–12 system, they have disproportionately disadvantaged adult learners who return to college after years or decades away from formal education. Many of these adult learners now face diminished access to support structures designed for nontraditional students. Such



programs would provide crucial academic support without imposing additional tuition costs, improving adult learner success in transfer-level English and mathematics.

## LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Riverside Community College District suggests the following actions to support adult learners:

### Federal

- Oppose the proposed reduction of funding for the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) from \$881 million to \$712 million for fiscal year 2026-27. AEFLA provides federal support for local programs that improve adult literacy, education, and family literacy, promoting economic self-sufficiency.

- Support the restored funding of \$881 million for Adult Education and Family Literacy Act for fiscal year 2026-27.
- Support legislation that protects and supports adult education.

### State

- Advocate for a return of noncredit developmental education to support adult learners.
- AB 1705 should be amended to explicitly allow noncredit developmental education options for adult learners.

### Local

- Establish and sustain collaborative partnerships with the County of Riverside to enhance support services.
- Collaborate with local government to assess and address the educational needs of adult learners.



# Financial Aid Fraud



## ISSUE

The California Community Colleges (CCC) system, a cornerstone of accessible higher education and workforce development in our state, is currently under significant threat from an escalating wave of fraudulent applications and enrollments. California community colleges have witnessed an alarming increase in sophisticated attempts to defraud the system, primarily

driven by organized entities aiming to illicitly obtain state and federal financial aid. This crisis jeopardizes taxpayer funds, strains college resources, and, most critically, displaces legitimate students seeking educational opportunities.

## BACKGROUND

Fraudulent enrollment activities, often executed through automated “bot” accounts, stolen identities, and even

AI-generated coursework which are educational materials created using artificial intelligence has become increasingly prevalent. Recent reports and data from the CCC Chancellor’s Office indicate that a significant percentage, as high as 25-34% of all applications systemwide, are now flagged as fraudulent. It is imperative that policies are established and funded to protect students from financial aid fraud.



## LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Riverside Community College District suggests the following actions to prevent financial aid fraud.

### Federal:

- Facilitate improved collaboration and information sharing between the CCC Chancellor's Office, individual districts, and federal law enforcement agencies

including the Department of Justice and Department of Education, and financial institutions to investigate and prosecute fraud rings.

- Support initiatives that allow for secure, real-time data sharing and cross-referencing to identify and flag fraudulent patterns at the point of application.

### State:

- Allocate \$100 annually for the development, implementation, and ongoing maintenance of advanced, system-wide identity verification technologies and fraud detection platforms for all California community colleges.
- Enact legislation pertaining to college admissions, enrollment verification, and financial aid disbursement to close loopholes exploited by fraudsters. This may include stricter penalties for perpetrators.
- Support legislation that provides colleges with greater flexibility and clearer authority to swiftly act against confirmed fraudulent accounts, including the ability to quickly recover improperly disbursed funds.
- Support the creation of a centralized task force focused on combating CCC enrollment fraud.
- Allocate \$35 million annually in for comprehensive state-level audits to fully assess the scope, methods and financial impact of enrollment fraud, with findings used to inform ongoing prevention strategies.

### Local:

- Allocate \$40 million annually to implement local anti-fraud technologies, specialized staff training, and personnel dedicated to fraud prevention, investigation and compliance.
- Allocate \$50 million annually to account for the increased workload on IT, admissions, financial aid, and faculty.
- Support pilot programs for new anti-fraud technologies and approaches.





# Equity in Success





# Inland Empire Technical Trade Center



## ISSUE

The Inland Empire (IE) has a rich variety of postsecondary institutions offering traditional certificate and degree programs. While these institutions provide most of the existing career education programs for IE residents, there are only a few highly focused technical training centers. These centers, while offering 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 a variety of sectors, including supply chain logistics, and hospitality. Communities in the region disproportionately face environmental hazards such as pollution from logistics and distribution centers, intensifying existing socioeconomic challenges.

Given the need for education and training that provides residents with high-skilled, high-demand and high-paying jobs to achieve self-sufficiency, RCCD is establishing the Inland Empire Technical Trade Center (IETTC).

The IETTC is a regional training center that focuses on short-term credential and certificate preparation while providing students with opportunities to earn while they learn through state and federal registered apprenticeship programs. The IETTC is a response to the urgent need for living wage jobs for the region's residents and for a locally available, educated and skilled workforce for the region's current and future employers. In a first step in accomplishing this, RCCD successfully passed a bond in November 2024, that will provide \$213 million to build the first lab and classroom facilities onsite. Planning efforts for the IETTC include a multi-phased site plan with facilities organized to maximize flexibility

as the region's needs for training change. A final comprehensive education and facilities plan was approved in June 2025 by RCCD's Board of Trustees, paving the way for building on the purchased site in Jurupa Valley. On September 22, 2025, the RCC Academic Senate approved the recruitment of faculty Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to support an ad hoc advisory workgroup for the IETTC. In fall 2025, the workgroup agreed on initial program areas, emphasizing the need for flexibility to respond to community and workforce demands. Guided by labor market data and faculty input, the identified focus areas include Building and Trades, Advanced Manufacturing, Utilities, Healthcare, Agriculture, and Entrepreneurship/Technology. Those programs can possibly include commercial HVAC, heavy duty electrical automotive, solar electricity, home health and health care entry and mid-level pathways, and building trades.



## BACKGROUND

Government and private sector leaders across the Inland Empire agree that local availability of an educated and skilled workforce is critical for competitiveness in the global economy. The IE, while providing a variety of traditional educational options for students into and through the university level, suffers from persistently low rates of degree attainment and high rates of multi-generational poverty in marginalized communities throughout the region. In 2019, almost 54% of the region's workforce was neither formally trained nor skilled and earned insufficient pay and/or benefits in jobs with "no viable career pathway to a good job" (Brookings). Since 2019, inflation and skyrocketing housing costs, coupled with burgeoning and continued development in the logistics sector in the IE, have continued to proliferate low-skill, low-wage jobs for people without postsecondary training, making upward mobility an impossible dream.

A vital component of the IETTC will be an integrated "earn and learn" model providing students with access to industry-based state and federal registered apprenticeship programs, as well as direct connection to labor leadership. The IETTC is broadly connected to the region's key partners and is well-positioned to offer critical education, training and supportive services necessary for the region's most at-risk residents to achieve prosperity. Without this crucial resource, persistent economic and educational gaps will grow as workforce demands of a diversifying and technologically advancing economy will require

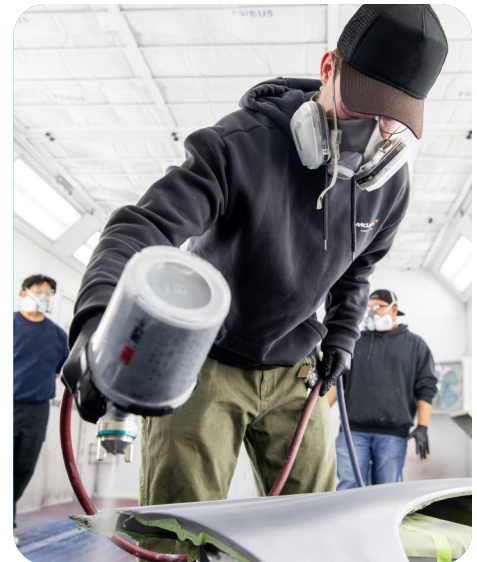
ever-increasing technical knowledge and skills.

## LEGISLATIVE ACTION

RCCD is seeking resources to complete the establishment of facilities and programs to meet the region's current and future workforce development needs. To date, RCCD has received \$33 million to purchase and improve the identified Jurupa Valley site and to conduct extensive planning with the region's residents and key stakeholder groups. It should be noted that the bond funding permits only the initiation of planning and Phase 1, and does not advance the project toward full realization. The District's specific funding requests are outlined below.

### Federal and State

- The District seeks a coordinated state–federal capital investment of \$250 million in funding for Phases II and III of the Inland Empire Technical Trade Center for building costs, which will bring the site to center status and allow the college to enroll more than 1,000 full-time equivalent students (FTES), and approximately 3,000 individual students and community members. This funding can be provided through state workforce infrastructure bonds, federal workforce grants through the Department of Commerce and Department of Labor programs, or one-time budget investments, designating the IETTC as a regional workforce hub serving high-demand, high-wage industries.
- The District is seeking \$150 million in funding to support the acquisition of educational equipment, program implementation, and instructional



materials necessary for Phase II of the project. This will ensure workers are trained on modern, industry-aligned technologies.

### State:

- Appropriate \$10 million annually through the state General Fund or workforce development programs to cover operations, maintenance, and instructional continuity. Sustainable operations keep training facilities up to date and aligned with evolving workforce needs, supporting high-demand sectors in climate, healthcare, and infrastructure.

### Local

- Authorize and encourage local government and private-sector partnerships to accelerate site development and program expansion by enabling joint-use agreements, facility sharing, and regional cost-sharing models. Supporting local matching funds can help leverage state and federal investments. Strong local partnerships are critical to completing the infrastructure plan and ensuring that regional workforce development aligns with current and future demand.

# Moreno Valley College School of Public Safety: Bachelor of Science in Emergency Management



## ISSUE

Riverside County and the State of California are experiencing a critical shortage of public safety personnel including fire, EMS, emergency management, 911 dispatch, and law enforcement. This shortage has led to longer response times, reduced operational capacity, and diminished public confidence. The Peace Officers Research Association of California reports that between 2020 and 2022, the state experienced a loss of approximately 3,600 sworn staff and 1,200 civilian staff, representing declines of 4.5% and 3%, respectively. Contributing

factors include rapid population growth, an aging workforce, the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, a wave of retirements, and limited access to affordable training programs.

Many municipalities now require a bachelor's degree for entry-level emergency management roles. However, affordable public options are scarce, often forcing students to pursue costly private education thus widening the equity gap.

In response, Moreno Valley College's School of Public Safety has launched California Community

Colleges' first public Bachelor of Science in Emergency Management program. This innovative program aligns with state and regional workforce needs and provides multiple pathways into leadership roles across public safety disciplines.

To meet the scale of the staffing crisis, additional public investment is essential. Supporting this program will help fill critical workforce gaps and create living-wage career opportunities especially in underserved communities strengthening both public safety and regional economic resilience.



## BACKGROUND

Moreno Valley College's School of Public Safety is located at the Ben Clark Education Center, one of the largest public safety education centers in Southern California. The School of Public Safety prepares hundreds of students to work as law enforcement officers, firefighters, paramedics, emergency medical technicians, correctional officers, dispatchers, probation officers, crime analysts, and specialists in emergency management and homeland security.

Moreno Valley College is working with private and public partners to create a workforce of trained, educated and skilled personnel to assume vital roles in emergency management and public safety.

## LEGISLATIVE ACTION

To address regional workforce and economic development needs, the Riverside Community College District requests the following support to expand and enhance the emergency management program and public safety training:

### Federal

- Support the proposed \$1.45 billion budget for fiscal year 2026–27 for Career and Technical Education (CTE) through the Department of Education to advance hands-on, workforce-aligned training.
- Support the proposed \$3 billion budget for fiscal year 2026–27 for Apprenticeship programs administered by the Department of Labor to better align with regional workforce training programs.



### State

- The District is requesting \$820,000 annually to support key personnel positions, essential supplies, equipment, and marketing needs to launch and sustain the program, while also investing in faculty and staff upskilling to ensure effective use of updated training equipment and software as FTES revenue is generated.
- Convert the full-time lab technician position from categorical to permanent funding to ensure consistent operation of high-fidelity training equipment.
- Advocate program support through the Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative (IEPI).
- Establish educational partnerships with the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) and California Specialized Training Institute (CSTI).

### Local

- Provide sustained support for regional apprenticeship intermediary organizations and college-sponsored apprenticeship programs to scale high-quality apprenticeship pathways in emergency medical services.
- Ensure these programs offer equitable access to workforce-aligned training and career advancement opportunities for students.
- Collaborate with private nonprofit organizations funded by Department of Labor workforce development grants.
- Develop internship opportunities with the Riverside County Emergency Management Department and other county municipalities.

# Guided Pathways



## ISSUE

Riverside Community College District (RCCD) serves a highly diverse student body, including many first-generation, low-income, and historically underrepresented students who often encounter challenges navigating the complexities of higher education. Traditional college structures have contributed to high dropout rates, unnecessary unit accumulation, and extended time to degree completion. Guided Pathways offers a comprehensive

solution to these issues through coordinated, system-level change. RCCD has made notable progress in implementing Guided Pathways across its three colleges: Riverside City College, Norco College, and Moreno Valley College. Key efforts include the creation of clear program maps and meta-majors to help students make early, informed decisions; expansion of case management advising and academic support services; integration of career exploration and workforce

preparation into academic programs; and the launch of targeted equity initiatives to close achievement gaps. Despite this progress, sustained success requires ongoing commitment and investment. There are three primary sources of direct funding for implementing guided pathways: state and local public funding, tuition and fee revenue, and external grants. While the District receives apportionment funding of \$7,425 per full-time equivalent students (FTES) for dual enrollment, the colleges



do not receive funding specifically designated for these programs. Establishing a mechanism to direct apportionment funds toward dual enrollment would support program growth, particularly since colleges receive no state or federal funding to administer them. Long-term funding is essential to support faculty professional development, enhance student services, and upgrade data systems and technology. Additionally, full implementation depends on cross-college collaboration, updated governance structures, and continued institutional transformation.

## BACKGROUND

First introduced in 2015 through the Community College Research Center's (CCRC) publication, *Redesigning America's Community Colleges: A Clearer Path to Student Success*, the Guided Pathways model is a student-focused approach designed to enhance college completion, promote equity, and strengthen career readiness by streamlining the student experience. Guided Pathways help students identify their goals, stay on track, and reach graduation more efficiently. RCCD serves more than 60,000 students annually across Riverside City College, Norco College, and Moreno Valley College. Guided Pathways is a foundational component of the District's commitment to student success and equity. Each college has implemented Guided Pathways by organizing support services around meta-majors and creating student engagement centers. These centers are designed to provide a consistent and equitable experience, offering comparable levels of counseling, academic advising, and peer mentoring to ensure all students have the tools and support needed to achieve their academic and career goals.

The four tenets of Guided Pathways are essential components that guide the implementation of the model across various institutions. These are:

- **Clarity** – The colleges developed clear program maps and support structures to guide students towards achieving their academic, transfer and career goals. As the colleges progress in their implementation, regular reviews of maps are underway, and new maps are created as programs are added. Working with K-12 and four-year partners to align maps, decreasing unnecessary units, and time to completion is ongoing.
- **Intake** – Colleges have implemented intentional outreach and orientation for incoming students to connect them to support teams and resources. Students are supported in career exploration and designing an educational plan.
- **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. The equitable standard of a care model requires additional resources as enumerated above.
- **Learning** – Program learning outcomes and student learning outcomes are regularly assessed with a focus on continuous improvement. The colleges regularly review disaggregated effectiveness data, including transfer and career transition. Faculty development and professional learning are aligned with Guided Pathways.

## LEGISLATIVE ACTION

The District requests the following action to fully implement and maintain the Guided Pathways model at each of the three colleges.

### Federal

- Support reauthorization of the Federal Higher Education Act to ensure ongoing investment in student access, equity, and success.
- Support for reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to strengthen workforce development and training pathways.

### State

- The District is seeking an additional apportionment of \$2,131 per FTES to support college-level program implementation for dual enrollment.

### Local

- Develop and maintain partnership with K-12 and four-year institutions to identify and reduce barriers for students.
- Encourage alignment of Guided Pathways with dual enrollment, transfer pathways, and workforce initiatives to create seamless education-to-career pipelines.

# Inland Empire Tech Bridge



## ISSUE

Diversification of the region's economy requires an investment in innovative sectors to establish new businesses that provide well-paying jobs, and enable local residents to work in the Inland Empire. These innovative sectors include the development of new technologies, products and services to meet regional needs for climate-resiliency and energy efficiency, while securing the nation's safety through a strong

and stable infrastructure that reshores manufacturing and hardens local supply chains. Given the need for investment by the region's innovators and entrepreneurs, the District partnered with the Naval Surface Warfare Center-Corona and the County of Riverside to create the Inland Empire Tech Bridge. This facility provides programming and supportive services to the region's job creators and seekers.

## BACKGROUND

The Inland Empire Tech Bridge is one of 18 Tech Bridges worldwide authorized and supported by the Department of Defense. Anchored by the Naval Surface Warfare Center, Corona Division, the Inland Empire Tech Bridge is part of a growing technology innovation ecosystem. The Center's strategic partnerships with academia, government, and industry support its mission of performance and





readiness assessment, measurement science and calibration, and range systems engineering for live, virtual, and constructive training.

The Inland Empire Tech Bridge uses off-base facilities for collaborative workshops and problem-solving events to pursue dual-use innovation that benefits warfighters as well as industry in key areas including:

- Data Analytics
- Data Environments
- Data Visualization
- Measurement Technologies

In addition to the creation of new, dual-use innovative technologies, the Inland Empire Tech Bridge serves as the site for the Inland

Empire APEX Accelerator, a Department of Defense sponsored program that helps entrepreneurs prepare for government contracting and procurement opportunities. Additionally, the Inland Empire Tech Bridge is a resource for the region's job seekers, offering services through the Naval Surface Warfare Center and the County of Riverside to assist residents with finding jobs in the region. To date, the District has received \$1.5 million through Assemblymember Sabrina Cervantes and \$1.5 million from the County of Riverside to secure the Tech Bridge building in Norco, adjacent to the Naval Surface Warfare Center, and approximately \$1.1 million for creation of an on-site prototyping lab.

## LEGISLATIVE ACTION

To support the Inland Empire Tech Bridge the District requests the following action:

### Federal

- Support the proposed allocation of \$70 million in the fiscal year 2026-27 Defense Appropriations Bill to sustain critical workforce development services for the region, including ongoing APEX Accelerator funding, integration with the County's Workforce Development system, and continuous Department of Defense support to expand the Tech Bridge's Maverick Innovation Lab to neighboring Inland Empire regions, strengthening opportunities for both job creators and job seekers.
- Designate a specific geographic area in the Inland Empire as an Innovation Zone or Defense Technology Corridor with targeted tax incentives and infrastructure support.

### State

- Establish funding mechanisms to support early-stage tech ventures aligned with national security and emerging fields such as AI, cyber, robotics, and advanced manufacturing.

### Local

- Invest in training programs aligned with DoD and tech industry needs such as cybersecurity, data science, and additive manufacturing.
- Strengthen collaborations with the County of Riverside, local businesses, and employers to promote continued economic development.



# College Credit for Veterans and Working Adults through the MAP Initiative



## ISSUE

There are over 62 million working adults in the United States who do not have a certificate or an associate's degree. Of those, three million are Veterans. California is home to 436,000 Veterans and 6.8 million working adults who do not yet have a college credential. Most Veterans have training, certification, or experience equivalent to college coursework, which could qualify them for up to a year of credit for prior learning.

Veterans qualify for just 36 months of Post-911 GI Bill educational benefits,

which is typically not enough to fund a four-year degree. In fact, 25 percent of Veterans surveyed dropped out because their benefits ran out. At the same time, working adults face financial aid limitations that make a college degree completion seem unreasonable. Fifty-two percent of those surveyed believe a good job is not attainable. At the same time, 69 percent said that a degree or certificate would provide a strong advantage and 84 percent said credit for prior learning would strongly influence their choice to attend college. Sadly, fewer than 11 percent ever receive any

credit and far less than that in the California public higher education systems.

Credit for prior learning can be a powerful incentive to attend college and has been shown to increase enrollment of first-time college goers; double completion rates; shorten time to completion by 9 to 14 months; save state funding; preserve financial aid for higher degree attainment; lower debt; and improve career advancement<sup>1</sup>—all at little additional cost to taxpayers according to the American Council of Education. Honoring prior

<sup>1</sup> Klein-Collins, R., Taylor, J., Bishop, C., Bransberger, P., Lane, P., Leibrandt, S., Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), ... Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE). (2020). The PLA Boost: Results from a 72-Institution Targeted Study of Prior Learning Assessment and Adult Student Outcomes. Council for Adult and Experiential Learning. Website: <https://www.cael.org/news-and-resources/new-research-from-cael-and-wiche-on-prior-learning-assessment-and-adult-student-outcomes>



|            | 15 UNITS CPL<br>LEADING TO<br>ASSOCIATE'S | PRESERVATION<br>OF FUNDS &<br>SAVINGS | 20-<br>YEAR<br>IMPACT | TARGET  | PRESERVATION<br>OF FUNDS &<br>SAVINGS | 20-YEAR<br>IMPACT |
|------------|---|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| CALIFORNIA | VETERANS                                  | 26,115                                | 135,000               | 10,000  | \$261.2M                              | \$1.4B            |
|            | WORKING<br>ADULTS                         | 14,653                                | 115,000               | 100,000 | \$1.5B                                | \$11.5B           |
| USA        | VETERANS                                  | 26,115                                | 135,000               | 50,000  | \$1.3B                                | \$6.8B            |
|            | WORKING<br>ADULTS                         | 14,653                                | 115,000               | 500,000 | \$7.3B                                | \$57.5B           |

learning by mapping credit for prior learning to college and career pathways may be the solution colleges, students and industry partners are looking for to foster upward mobility, close skills gaps, reverse enrollment declines, and reduce crippling student loan debt.

With more than 30,000 Veterans and active-duty military enrolled

in the California Community College (CCC) system in 2025, CCC Chancellor Sonya Christian has initiated a Veteran’s Sprint, an ambitious effort to collect all 30,000 plus Joint Services Transcripts (JST) across 116 colleges and award college credit based on the American Council of Education credit recommendations listed on each JST. If just 10,000 were awarded a

semester of credit (15 units) leading to an associate degree, the annual preservation of funds, savings, and impact would total \$1.4 billion. If 50,000 were awarded the same credit nationwide, the impact would be \$6.8 billion<sup>2</sup>.

In 2024, the CCC Chancellor’s Office integrated the Mapping Articulated Pathways (MAP) Initiative

<sup>2</sup> Beacon Economics. (2024). Expected Economic Benefits from Credit for Prior Learning in California. Website: <https://map.rccd.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Expected-Economic-Benefits-of-CPL-in-California.pdf>





## LEGISLATIVE ACTION

The District requests the following action to scale the Mapping Articulated Pathways Initiative nationwide to ensure that working adults, apprentices, and Veterans get the college credit they deserve for their prior learning.

### Federal

- Authorize \$25 million in annual funding to scale Mapping Articulated Pathways to the 936 community colleges in the US and then to the remaining 690 regionally accredited public colleges and universities.
- Develop a national common course numbering system and credential repository.
- Develop a national competency framework linking academic courses to industry and military certifications and training, and integrations with related state and federal systems such as Department of Defense Credentialing Opportunities On-Line, American Council on Education Military Guide, American Council on Education National Guide, Department of Labor, Skills Bridge, and U.S. MAP to ensure a seamless path from service to higher education/training to career.
- Complete the development of Mapping Articulated Pathways resources.
- Create the Credit for Prior Learning National Center of Excellence to support students and colleges seeking credit for prior learning and to conduct CPL related research leading to innovation, cost savings, and optimization of CPL opportunities.

technology, training and support to drive the newly established CPL Initiative, which seeks by 2030 to develop and offer CPL to attract 250,000 (500,000 stretch goal) Veterans, apprentices, working adults and others with prior learning to seek a college credential and career advancement.

The California budget now provides \$5 million ongoing funding and \$15 million one-time Proposition 98 funding to support the continued scaling of the CPL Initiative's AI-supported technology, training, student and college support, and outreach services.

While current funding supports the efforts needed to scale CPL in the CCC System, additional funding is needed to scale the higher education systems in California and across the nation. Requested funding will support: 1) continued development of the MAP platform, which is offered free of charge to all participating institutions; 2) development of a national credential registry to house CPL-eligible and validated documents; 3) development of a national Center of Excellence for Credit for Prior Learning to provide college and student support and research dedicated to maximizing CPL opportunities and strengthening alignment between academic and

workforce training; 4) development of a national common course crosswalk to make CPL decisions at one institution adoptable at other institutions; and 5) development of an AI-enabled validated skills taxonomy to support skills-informed hiring and to provide students a learning and employment record with a summary of validated skills.

## THE CALIFORNIA MAP INITIATIVE

The Riverside Community College District hosts the California Mapping Articulated Pathways Initiative on behalf of the California Community College Chancellor's Office. The MAP Initiative leads the effort to scale credit for prior learning in California's 116 community colleges and beyond.

The Mapping Articulated Pathways project began in 2017 as a strategy to increase Veteran access as part of the Norco College Veteran Initiative. Since then, the Initiative has grown to support all 116 credit granting community colleges in the state and three noncredit institutions. In 2024, the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office incorporated the Mapping Articulated Pathways Initiative as a demonstration project and a key component to its Vision 2030 Plan.





# Noncredit Education & Certificates



## ISSUE

In California, noncredit courses at community colleges offer students a valuable opportunity to build skills and competencies at no cost. However, not all noncredit programs receive equal treatment, which discourages colleges from developing programs that could significantly advance equity for adult learners. Certain noncredit courses receive funding comparable to credit-bearing classes. However, programs serving individuals with disabilities and older adults receive substantially less funding, limiting their reach and impact.

Noncredit education is essential to preparing adult learners for workforce participation, career progression, and active civic engagement. Community colleges throughout the state provide tuition-free noncredit programs tailored to meet the needs of historically underserved populations, including older adults, English language learners, justice-involved individuals, and those seeking short-term career training. Yet, current state policy restricts both the funding and formal recognition of many noncredit certificate programs, diminishing their ability to respond to labor market demands and promote economic mobility.

## BACKGROUND

Funding for noncredit courses is limited to specific areas such as English as a Second Language (ESL), short-term vocational training, and basic skills instruction. However, noncredit courses serving individuals with disabilities and older adults do not receive the same level of financial support despite often requiring greater expertise and resources to design and deliver. As a result, these vital programs are frequently deprioritized in community college planning, representing a significant missed opportunity for inclusive education and community engagement.



One such opportunity lies in addressing the needs of individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). California has the highest prevalence of ASD in the nation. Although many individuals with ASD do not have an intellectual disability, they still face disproportionately low success rates in higher education. Targeted, thoughtfully developed noncredit programs could help close this gap. Many community colleges have already established robust noncredit programs supporting students with disabilities and promoting independent living. However, these programs often rely on external funding due to the current underfunding of noncredit education for this population.

Another underserved population whose educational needs are overlooked under current funding policies is older adults. Similarly, California is home to the largest population of adults aged 65 and older, with approximately 39 million older residents across the state. Noncredit programs for older adults also suffer from inadequate funding, despite substantial research demonstrating the positive impact of lifelong learning on mental

health and overall well-being. Like programs for students with disabilities, these initiatives are critical but remain under-resourced under the current funding model.

## LEGISLATIVE ACTION

The District requests the following action to support adult education and noncredit certificates.

### Federal

- Oppose the proposed reduction of funding for the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) from \$881 million to \$712 million for fiscal year 2026-27. AEFLA provides federal support for local programs that improve adult literacy, education, and family literacy, promoting economic self-sufficiency.
- Support the restored funding of \$881 million for Adult Education and Family Literacy Act for fiscal year 2026-27.
- Support legislation that protects and supports noncredit education.

- Support funding for data collection and research on adult learner outcomes.

### State

- The District requests \$1.73 million annually to fund faculty, management, advisors, student success coordinators, outreach, and operating expenses. Key investments include staffing to provide curriculum development, student support, and college transition services, alongside marketing and professional development to expand program awareness and quality. Current funding from California Adult Education Program (CAEP) totals \$689,000, with projected noncredit apportionments rising from \$911,000 in 2024–25 to an estimated \$1.89 million by 2029–30. This budget positions the District to scale programs effectively, meet growing community needs, and align resources with anticipated enrollment growth.
- Expand eligibility for enhanced noncredit funding to include programs serving individuals with disabilities and older adults.
- Create a standardized framework to recognize noncredit certificates of completion or competency as stackable credentials with clear articulation into credit programs and workforce pipelines.

### Local

- Develop partnerships with local employers to co-design short-term, noncredit training programs that meet regional labor market demands and enhance student employment outcomes.



# *Equity in Support*







# District Facilities: Capital Outlay and Development



## ISSUE

The cost of facility construction and modernization, and deferred maintenance projects, continues to escalate. As campus infrastructure and facilities age and building systems and existing technology become outdated, the replacement needs increase significantly. In the Riverside Community College District repairs, replacements and upgrades are urgently needed before catastrophic failures and service interruptions occur. State maintenance funding has been eliminated for the past three years, causing delays in repairs, maintenance and modernization of facilities necessary for a 21st-century learning environment.

Due to the ongoing educational programmatic development in response to regional market needs, employment demand, and enrollment growth, there is an urgent need for 21st-century educational facilities as well as campus supporting amenities. The 2023 November Facilities Condition Assessment report, completed by the Foundation of California Community Colleges system, illustrates that the District and its colleges face \$200 million in deferred maintenance and scheduled maintenance backlog. Therefore, the District is requesting a total of \$510 million to address capital outlay and \$15 million deferred maintenance needs on an annual basis.

## BACKGROUND

Based on educational needs in 2020, the Riverside Community College District and colleges updated their facility master plans. Founded in 1916, the Riverside City College campus has several existing facilities, amenities and infrastructure that have deteriorated and remain outdated. At Moreno Valley College and Norco College, growth remains a concern as the campuses continue to struggle for additional facilities to become comprehensive colleges that offer art, kinesiology, technology education programs, library and learning resource centers, and other in-demand programs. These two colleges, which were founded in 1991, require infrastructure upgrades.



The District has also identified a need for a training center. The Inland Empire Technical Training Center in the city of Jurupa Valley will provide western Riverside County residents with access to training opportunities that would lead to quality jobs in current and emerging sectors in the region. The District used a state appropriation of \$33 million to secure the land for the Inland Empire Technical Trade Center. Additionally, Norco College, in order to serve residents of Corona, will expand course offerings at a new center within the city limits.

## LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Currently, the District faces an estimated \$5 billion in capital facility needs to support educational growth, infrastructure improvements, deferred maintenance, and physical expansion. The successful passage of RCCD's \$954 million Measure CC general obligation bond on November 5, 2024, represents a significant milestone. However, additional federal and state funding is still necessary to meet the District's full need. With recent passage of Proposition 2, which allocates \$1.5 billion to the California Community Colleges, RCCD will receive funding for several projects, including: Moreno Valley College Library Learning Resource Center Building; Norco College Library Learning Resource Center and Student Services Building; Riverside City College's Cosmetology building; and the School of Public Safety Education building 2-A at the Ben Clark Education Center.

## State

- Support the State Chancellor's Office and Department of Finance submission for Moreno Valley College's Biological &



Science building; however, the likelihood of funding approval is small. Estimated cost \$70 million.

- Provide an annual budget for scheduled maintenance projects. Currently, there is a backlog on instructional support to address deferred maintenance needs, architectural barriers removal, hazardous waste mitigation, building seismic upgrades, and replacement of instructional equipment. The estimated cost is \$15-\$20 million annually.
- Funding for infrastructure project upgrades associated with water pipes, storm water system, high and medium voltage power lines, hydronic pipes for centralized cooling systems,

communication fiber cables and switches, electrical substations/transformers, etc. at Moreno Valley College, Norco College, and Riverside City College. The estimated cost is \$100 million.

- Funding for a campuswide accessibility improvement project to comply with the Americans with Disability Act requirements. The estimated cost is \$30 million.
- Funding for demolition of old and offline facilities that are scheduled to be demolished for future development. The estimated cost is \$20 million.
- Funding allocated for seismic retrofitting of outdated facilities to improve earthquake resilience. The estimated cost is \$40 million.



# Sustainability and Climate Action



## ISSUE

Climate hazards and environmental risks require education, awareness, and action. Southern California is at risk of environmental and climate-related hazards. In the past several 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 Riverside Community College District's

service area. Therefore, the District is requesting a total of \$91,500,000 to address the District's Safety and Emergency Preparedness needs.

## BACKGROUND

The Riverside Community College District recognizes its responsibility to operate in a socially, environmentally, and economically conscious way; protect regional waterways and natural ecosystems; preserve resources; and contribute to social mobility and well-being. The Riverside Community College District's Sustainability & Climate Action

Plan provides an implementable roadmap toward sustainability goals that establishes the District as a leader in addressing environmental stewardship and climate change. The District's Sustainability and Climate Action Plan encompasses 10 impact areas which include integrating decarbonization and climate justice, waste minimization and procurement, community vitality, water and ecosystem stewardship, and resilience with academics, trust and transparency, engagement, equity and social justice, and community partnerships.





## LEGISLATIVE ACTION

The District has identified and prioritized mission-critical projects that align with the Sustainability & Climate Action Plan at the colleges:

### Federal

- Support the proposed \$46.3 billion budget allocation for fiscal year 2026–27 to the Department of Energy to sustain ongoing funding for the California State Energy Program.

### State

- Implement energy conservation measures, such as boiler replacement, building energy sub-metering, daylight harvesting, glazing upgrades, reducing lighting power

intensity, roof insulation, variable frequency drive, and wall insulation to reduce energy consumption and optimize efficiencies. The estimated cost is \$30 million.

- Replace natural gas appliances at the end of their life with electrical alternatives. Estimated cost \$11 million.
- Replace outdated and aged campus central plants and infrastructure systems with high-efficiency alternatives and more sustainable infrastructure/central plants. The estimated cost is \$33 million.
- Replace existing water infrastructure, including plumbing fixtures and irrigation controls

with water-efficient fixtures. Estimated cost \$8.5 million.

- Convert turf grass to native landscaping or meadows to align with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office goal of limiting turf grass to no more than 50 percent of the landscaped areas on campus. The estimated cost is \$4 million.
- Reduce the weight of total waste and increase waste diversion (non-construction, construction, organic, recyclables, hazardous waste, durable goods, etc.) by establishing a comprehensive waste assessment/material consumption benchmark. The estimated cost is \$5 million.



# Affordable Student Housing



## ISSUE

For California community college students, housing is a vital foundation to academic success. Studies such as the September 2023 Basic Needs Report show that 60 percent of respondents are housing insecure, with concerns about increased rent, mortgage and utility rates making it difficult to cover total living expenses, according to Real College California. Thus, the Riverside Community College District and the California Community Colleges system acknowledge the significant need for affordable housing options

for students, especially those aging out of the foster care system. RCCD conducted student housing surveys and market demand studies in 2020, 2021, and 2022 across its three colleges, which found that among more than 2,100 students surveyed, 25 percent reported experiencing housing insecurity and 18 percent reported experiencing homelessness in the prior year. Therefore, the District is requesting a total of \$230 million to address affordable student housing needs.

## BACKGROUND

In recent years, the District has established a set of strategic goals and objectives that address student basic needs, institutional mission attainment, and long-term financial viability. Affordable student housing opportunities are included among those strategic goals and objectives. A student housing initiative is necessary to address housing insecurity and student homelessness, improve student retention, bridge the equity gap, and remove barriers to student success.





Senate Bill 169, the Higher Education Student Housing Grant Program, recognized the significant housing demand and approved \$2 billion to provide one-time funding for capacity expansion projects to support increased resident enrollment.

In response to affordable student housing needs, the District developed four student housing plans: three on-campus and one off-campus, a partnership with the University of California, Riverside. In July 2023, the District was awarded \$75 million, and the University of California, Riverside was presented \$51 million to partially fund the North District II student housing project. Opened in fall of 2025, the project provides 1,568 beds. Of those, 652 beds will be set aside for affordable housing with 326 designated specifically for RCCD students whose home campus is Riverside City College.

## LEGISLATIVE ACTION

In alignment with the District's strategic goals for affordable student housing, below are requests based on the prioritized critical-mission projects:

### Federal

- Support the proposed \$36.2 billion Fiscal Year 2026–27 budget allocation for Rental Assistance and Affordable Housing programs administered by the Department of Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development.

### State

- 100 percent construction funding for Moreno Valley College's affordable student housing project; total amount of \$75 million for fiscal year 2026-27 will provide 280 affordable beds at a low-income rate for qualified students.

- 100 percent construction funding for Norco College's affordable student housing project; total amount of \$80 million for fiscal year 2026-27 will provide 280 affordable beds at a low-income rate for qualified students.

### Local

- Allocate \$75 million in Fiscal Year 2026–27 to Riverside City College to sustain on-campus housing and student support services.
- Work in partnership with the County of Riverside and local cities to ensure students are prioritized in affordable housing projects.
- Support County of Riverside and local cities in addressing their affordable housing needs.



# Safety and Emergency Preparedness



## ISSUE

Funds are needed to address emergency preparedness and response capabilities for crises such as earthquakes, wildfires and active shooter incidents within the Riverside Community College District and its colleges. The District is requesting a total of \$65,340,000 to address the District's Safety and Emergency Preparedness needs. By advocating for these funds, the Riverside Community College District can significantly enhance its capacity

to respond effectively to a spectrum of emergencies across the District, safeguarding the well-being of campus communities, and fostering a culture of safety and preparedness.

## BACKGROUND

In recent years, California has faced increasing natural disasters and man-made emergencies. In this challenging environment, it is imperative for educational institutions, particularly community colleges, to take proactive steps

to ensure 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 and wildfires.

## REQUESTS

To achieve these goals, the District proposes advocating for annual funding increases to support vital enhancements in the following key areas:

### Local

- Assist the County of Riverside, local law enforcement and emergency responders in pursuing funding opportunities from federal agencies, including the Department of Agriculture, Department of Commerce, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Homeland Security, Department of the Interior, Department of Justice, and the Department of Transportation.
- Support funding for a comprehensive assessment and subsequent upgrading of lock systems throughout the District, enabling more efficient execution of lockdown and shelter-in-place protocols. The estimated cost is \$8.8 million.
- Support funding to modernize security camera systems to facilitate remote access to security footage by law enforcement personnel, enhancing their situational awareness. The estimated cost is \$5.5 million.
- Support funding to upgrade or replace existing outdoor sirens to seamlessly integrate them with the RAVE mass notification system, enabling more comprehensive and timely alerts during emergencies. Estimated cost \$4.4 million.
- Support funding to upgrade campus lighting, further enhancing safety and security. Estimated cost \$4.4 million.



- Support funding to install and maintain emergency generators for emergency operations centers at the District and college locations and emergency operations center supplies. The estimated cost is \$8.8 million to secure center operations and \$330,000 for supplies and maintenance.
- Support funding to establish a mobile command post during an active shooter event, facilitating rapid deployment and coordination. The estimated cost is \$440,000.
- Support funding for Micro Grids - a small network of electricity users with a local source of supply (solar, battery or generator) that is connected to the centralized power grid, but able to function independently in the event of an outage in the centralized grid. The estimated cost is \$25 million.
- Support 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. The estimated cost is \$8 million.



# Field Act



## ISSUE

The Riverside Community College District (RCCD) is committed to maintaining safe and modern learning environments. RCCD already adheres to rigorous construction standards and undergoes local and state review for major capital projects. However, expanding the Field Act to cover all community college buildings, especially leased and off-campus facilities, would impose unreasonable compliance burdens, drive up costs, and limit our ability to serve underserved students flexibly.

## BACKGROUND

The Field Act (1933) is a landmark piece of legislation passed in response to the Long Beach earthquake, which caused

catastrophic damage to public schools. The Act requires that the Division of the State Architect (DSA) provides design review and construction oversight for K–12 schools, community colleges, and various other state-owned and state-leased facilities to ensure that they comply with all structural, accessibility, and fire and life safety codes.

## LEGISLATIVE ACTION

To ensure seismic safety while preserving community college flexibility, RCCD recommends the following:

### State

- Reject legislation that imposes Field Act requirements on all

community college facilities, especially leased or nonstate-funded buildings.

- Establish a state-funded seismic retrofit grant program specifically for high-risk, permanent instructional buildings on community college campuses.
- Allow colleges to demonstrate seismic safety compliance through certified local building departments and engineers, rather than duplicative DSA oversight.
- Exempt leased or short-term use buildings from Field Act mandates, especially those used for non-core instructional purposes or temporary programming.

