

# Equity in Access



## Students with Disabilities

### ISSUE

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

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

### REQUEST

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