Board of Trustees Legislative Committee Meeting

Meeting Agenda - December 9, 2022, at 12:30 p.m.
SBCCD Boardroom Extension
550 E. Hospitality Ln., Ste. 200, San Bernardino, CA 92408

I. **WELCOME & CALL TO ORDER**
(Frank Reyes)

II. **PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS**
(Frank Reyes)

The San Bernardino Community College Board of Trustees offers an opportunity for the public to address the Board on any agenda item prior to or during the Board's consideration of that item. Comments must be limited to five (5) minutes per speaker and twenty (20) minutes per topic if there is more than one speaker. At the conclusion of public comment, the Board may ask staff to review a matter or may ask that a matter be put on a future agenda. As a matter of law, members of the Board may not discuss or take action on matters raised during public comment unless the matters are properly noticed for discussion or action in Open Session. Anyone who requires a disability-related modification or accommodation in order to participate in the public meeting should contact the Chancellor's Office at (909) 388-6903 as far in advance of the Board meeting as possible.

III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
(Frank Reyes)

A. 2022-08-11 BLC Meeting Minutes

IV. **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS WITHIN THE CALFRESH WORKGROUP REPORT - Jake Brymner, California Student Aid Commission**

V. **ACTION AGENDA**
(Frank Reyes)

A. **Review 2023 Legislative & Budget Advocacy Priorities (Draft: First Read)**
   1. 2023 Advocacy Priorities
   2. CalFresh Workgroup Report
   3. CCC 2023-24 System Budget Proposal

B. **Review 2023 Legislative Principles (Draft: First Read)**

C. **Reaffirmation 2023 Board Legislative Committee Charge (Draft: First Read)**

VI. **OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**
(Frank Reyes)

VII. **NEXT MEETING DATE & ADJOURNMENT**
(Frank Reyes)

A. The next meeting of the Board Legislative Committee:
January 12 2023, at 12:30 p.m. (in person)
SBCCD Boardroom Extension

B. Adjournment

Board of Trustees Legislative Committee

Meeting Minutes – August 11, 2022

Members Present:
Trustee Frank Reyes
Trustee Anne Viricel
Trustee John Longville

Guests Present:
Robert Alexander (SBCCD Student Trustee)
Mark MacDonald, MGI Advocacy, Inc.

Staff Present:
Diana Rodriguez, Chancellor
Jose Torres, Executive Vice Chancellor
Nohemy Ornelas, Vice Chancellor (via Zoom)
Scott Thayer, Interim President San Bernardino Valley College
Angel Rodriguez, Sr. District Director Marketing, Public Affairs, & Government Relations
Heather Ford, Office of the Chancellor (via Zoom)

I. CALL TO ORDER & SELF INTRODUCTION

Trustee Frank Reyes called the meeting to order at 12:39 p.m.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. 2022-02-10 Board Legislative Committee Minutes

Trustee Longville moved to approve the 2022-02-10 Board Legislative Committee minutes.
Trustee Viricel seconded the motion.

AYES: Reyes, Viricel, Longville
NOES: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTENTIONS: None

IV. ADVOCACY UPDATE

A. 2022 Advocacy Update

Sr. District Director Marketing, Public Affairs, & Government Relations A. Rodriguez reported On June 30, Governor Newsom signed the 2022-23 State Budget. Since the state's primary revenue sources—the personal income tax, sales tax, and corporate tax—brought significantly more resources than anticipated for the 2022-23 State Budget, available Proposition 98 resources increased, resulting in over $4 billion in mostly one-time and some ongoing augmentations for California Community Colleges.

For California Community Colleges, the 2022-23 state budget is framed by a Roadmap for the Future which was introduced by Governor Newsom in January and further detailed in May. Key goals in the roadmap include:

- increased collaboration across segments to enhance timely transfer;
- improved completion rates and reduction in excess units;
- closure of equity gaps; and
- better alignment of the system with K-12 and workforce needs.

The enacted 2022-23 state budget aligns with many of SBCCD's legislative priorities.

B. State Action Presentation by Mark MacDonald of MGI Advocacy, Inc.

M. MacDonald presented the 2022 Advocacy Priorities:

- Equity:
  - Increase Student Enrollment and Retention
    - 5% growth, approximately 5,500 FTES
    - $150 million retention and enrollment strategies (strategies to re-enroll students)
    - AB 2627 (Bauer-Kahan) – agreements with local agencies for data sharing and outreach.
  - Support Faculty Diversity Hiring
    - 10 million Equal Employment opportunity to support best practices.
- Increase public investment in student success:
  - Increase Base Funding
    - $600 million base increase ($200 million basic allocation, $400 million increase the rates)
    - $493 million COLA (6.56% increase)
    - $650 million one-time institutional block grant (funding spent on items related to COVID-19 emergency).
  - Changes to Student Center Funding Formula
    - Creates permanent funding floor for CCC funding
      - 2025-26 "Permanent" hold harmless out into place
      - Provides Districts with no less than receive in 2024-25
      - Districts below total TCR not receive COLA in out years & slowly move out of hold harmless.
  - Update Technology Infrastructure
    - $75 million one-time (security network upgrades)
    - $25 million ongoing (data security and protection)
  - Provide CalSTRS/CalPERS Relief
    - No action to provide CalSTRS/CalPERS relief
  - Modernize Facilities and Instructional Equipment
    - $834.4 million facilities maintenance and energy project funding (Districts must spend above the 1995-96 level).
  - Strength KVCR TV/FM Educational Media
    - $15 million to support KVCR TV/FM
- College affordability and basic needs:
  - Support Affordable Student Housing
    - $10 million rapid rehousing program
    - $845,000 Housing Planning Grant (per SBVC and CHC)
    - AB 1602 (McCarty) – Revolving loan program for affordable housing.
    - AB 1764 (Medina) – Data on student housing insecurity, put into budget language.
    - AB 2459 (Cervantes) – Post on State Chancellor's Office websites data on student housing.

Expand Textbook Affordability

- $200 million Student Success and Completion Grant (additional funding to full-time students for access costs).

Address basic needs

- $10 million support for basic needs center.
- $45 million California Healthy Meals Pathway Program.
- SB 20 (Dodd) (requires CSAC to notify a student that they are eligible for CalFresh benefits.

Reform Cal Grant

- AB 1746 (Medina) – consolidate Cal Grant Program into two programs Cal Grant 2 and 4. Included in final budget agreement.
- Trailer Bill language – Cal Grant Reform. Implements the equity framework with the 2024 aware year contingent upon sufficient funding being available.

A. Rodriguez reported Pete Aguilar's office Clean Air Vehicle program at SBVC

A. Rodriguez reported SBCCD hosted the Lieutenant Governor, May 27th SBCCD hosted Congressman Aguilar in a check presentation at KVCR, May 30th hosted CA State General at a student forum to discuss public safety concerns.

V. ACTION AGENDA

None

IV. FUTURE TOPICS

A. Trustee Suggestions

VIII. NEXT MEETING DATE & ADJOURNMENT

A. The next meeting of the Board Legislative Committee (in person)
September 8, 2022, at 12:30 p.m.
SBCCD Boardroom Extension

B. The meeting was adjourned at 1:39 p.m.

Heather Ford, Recorder, Office of the Chancellor

San Bernardino Community College District
Board Legislative Committee
December 9, 2022

Item: 2023 Legislative & Budget Advocacy Priorities (Draft: First Read)

Summary:
This item presents the San Bernardino Community College District's legislative and budget priorities for the fiscal year 2023-24. The proposal describes the funding and public policies needed for SBCCD to advance SBCCD's four districtwide goals and mission to "Positively impact the lives and careers of our students, the well-being of their families, and the prosperity of our community through excellence in educational and training opportunities."

Recommendation:
The Board Legislative Committee may recommend to the full SBCCD Board of Trustees to approve SBCCD's 2023 Legislative & Budget Advocacy Priorities at the January 2023 meeting.

San Bernardino Community College District
2023 Legislative & Budget Advocacy Priorities

Overview: The legislative and budget priorities outlined below advance SBCCD's four districtwide goals and mission to "Positively impact the lives and careers of our students, the well-being of their families, and the prosperity of our community through excellence in education and training opportunities." SBCCD shall refer to these advocacy priorities when engaging with policymakers and key stakeholders during the 2023-24 legislative and budget-building cycle.

Goal 1: Eliminate Barriers to Student Access and Success

- **Support the CCC's 2023-24 Systemwide Budget Request:** SBCCD supports $700 million in ongoing funding to support all California community colleges' educational mission and operations. The proposal identifies core priorities for funding: reduce time and excess units to a degree, close equity gaps, improve educational outcomes, support intersegmental collaboration and data sharing, and establish clear pathways to transfer and careers. Additionally, SBCCD supports $500 million, systemwide, to provide all students with free tuition. The full CCC budget request is available at: https://bit.ly/3XDQHHY

- **Continue Investments in Affordable Student Housing:** SBCCD supports investments to build residential housing for community college students experiencing housing insecurity. SBCCD supports ongoing funding to support colleges working with local, county, and student agencies to establish housing options for community college students. Resources are needed to support initial planning, modernization, restoration, and construction.

- **Expand Textbook Affordability:** SBCCD launched the Books+ program to provide all students with free rental access to textbooks and course materials, limited to the 2021-22 and 2022-23 academic years. SBCCD supports ongoing funding and strategies that make textbooks more affordable to students.

- **Support the CalFresh Workgroup Report:** SBCCD supports the state and federal policy recommendations to address students' basic needs and expand access to CalFresh. Full report available at https://www.csac.ca.gov/sites/main/files/file-attachments/calfresh_workgroup_report.pdf?1646697827

- **Support Funding to Implement the Cal Grant Reform Act:** SBCCD supports funding that would expand financial aid opportunities and create the Cal Grant 2 program for community college students.

- **Support Funding to Modernize SBCCD Facilities:** SBCCD students need access to high quality, safe, modern classrooms, labs, training facilities, and instructional equipment to prepare for career success. Currently, SBCCD has $840 million worth of facility improvement needs. SBCCD supports $150 million in one-time funding, systemwide, to repair and update campus facilities and educational equipment to address the approximately $1.1 billion in deferred maintenance backlog.

- **Request $15 Million to Update Technology Infrastructure:** SBCCD supports $15 million in one-time funding to ensure students have access to adequate distance learning services, modernize technology infrastructure, and protect sensitive data at Crafton Hills College and San Bernardino Valley College.

- **Support FAFSA simplification and expansion of Pell Grants:** SBCCD supports federal policies that reduce the complexity and eliminate student barriers to filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. Additionally, SBCCD supports increased investments in the Pell Grant to make college more accessible and affordable for low-income students.

Goal 2: Be a Diverse, Equitable, Inclusive, and Anti-Racist Institution

- **Support Funding to Strengthen Equal Employment Opportunity Best Practices**: SBCCD supports ongoing funding to connect future hiring practices and procedures to statewide equity and diversity efforts and help strengthen institutional capacity to close equity gaps and improve student outcomes.

- **Support Equitable Funding for Hispanic-Serving Institutions:** SBCCD supports increased levels of federal investment in Title V, Part A, and Title V, Part B of the Higher Education Act. Title V remains the chief national vehicle for targeted funding for HSIs. However, the number of HSIs has far outpaced the monies available for competition, creating inequitable funding for HSIs. Additionally, SBCCD supports federally-guaranteed loans at zero to nominal rates to finance infrastructure improvements for HSIs.

- **Support educational opportunities for all students, regardless of immigration status:** SBCCD supports enacting the Dream Act and policies to ensure all students have financial aid opportunities, regardless of immigration status.

Goal 3: Be a leader and partner in addressing regional issues

- **Support Modernization of the San Bernardino Regional Emergency Training Center**: As a member of the San Bernardino Emergency Regional Training Center Joint Powers Authority, SBCCD supports funding for new equipment and facility repairs to enhance firefighting and emergency response training. Specifically, SBCCD supports a one-time allocation of $1.5 million to acquire a new fire truck apparatus for airport operations and training.

- **Support $3 Million in Ongoing Funding for KVCR TV/FM:** SBCCD requests ongoing public investment to strengthen KVCR TV/FM's long-term capacity to serve the Inland Empire with PBS and NPR educational content, local news, and diverse cultural programming.

- **Request $15 million for Student Training Center at KVCR TV/FM:** SBCCD supports the growth of training opportunities for students preparing for media industry careers by building a new training center at KVCR TV/FM.

Goal 4: Ensure Fiscal Accountability/Sustainability

- **Improve Student-Centered Funding Formula Rates:** SBCCD supports the CCC's budget request of $400 million in ongoing resources to improve Student-Centered Funding Formula rates and continue to support district operations.

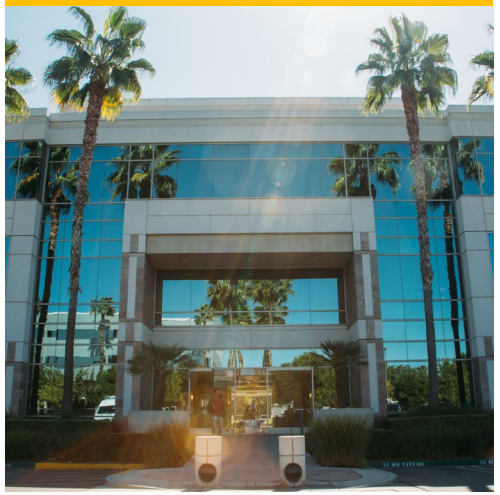
- **Provide CalSTRS/CalPERS Relief:** SBCCD supports ongoing funding in non-Proposition 98 resources to "buy down" the employer contribution levels required by colleges/districts. Doing so will free up general fund revenues for other student-centered priorities.

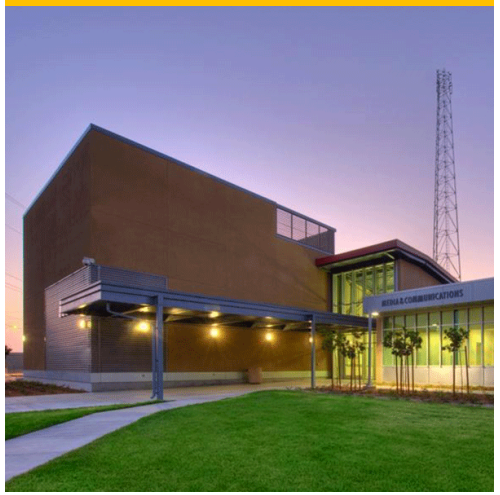
SAN BERNARDINO
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
DISTRICT

Not Yet Approved. For Discussion.

DECEMBER 2022

2023 SBCCD Legislative Priorities





SBCCD.EDU

Crafton Hills College

San Bernardino Valley College

KVCR PBS npr

2023 SBCCD Legislative Principles

Not Yet Approved. For Discussion.

What is this?
How the SBCCD Board Legislative Committee and Chancellor's Office will evaluate local, state, and federal policy proposals and recommend action to support, oppose, or remain neutral.

- **Eliminate Barriers to Student Access and Success**
- **Increase Public Investment in Community College Students**
- **Improve College Affordability & Basic Needs Support**
- **Support Local Decision-Making**
- **Strengthen State and Federal Partnerships**
- **Promote Civic Engagement**

SBCCD's Advocacy Partners (Partial List)

California Community Colleges

CALIFORNIA STUDENT AID COMMISSION

COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA

HACU

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY SAN BERNARDINO

gia GROWING INLAND ACHIEVEMENT

iecf Inland Empire Community Foundation where giving grows

RCCD RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

UC RIVERSIDE

2023 Advocacy Priorities

Not Yet Approved. For Discussion.

Goal 1: Eliminate Barriers to Student Access and Success

- Support the **CCC's 2023-24 systemwide budget request**; $700 million ongoing.
- Support ongoing investments in **affordable student housing**.
- Support strategies and ongoing funding to expand **textbook affordability**.
- Support the **CalFresh Workgroup Report** (16 state/federal policy recommendations).
- Support funding to implement the **Cal Grant Reform Act** to expand and simplify financial aid.
- Support funding to **modernize SBCCD facilities** and instructional equipment.
- Support $15 million in funding to update SBCCD **technology infrastructure**.
- Support $500 million, systemwide, to provide all community college students **free tuition**.
- Support **FAFSA simplification** and expansion of **Pell Grants**.

2023 SBCCD Advocacy Priorities

Not Yet Approved. For Discussion.

Goal 2: Be a Diverse, Equitable, Inclusive & Anti-Racist Institution

- Support funding to strengthen **Equal Employment Opportunity** best practices.
- Support equitable federal funding to support **Hispanic-Serving Institutions**.
- Support educational **opportunities for all students**, regardless of immigration status.

2023 SBCCD Advocacy Priorities

Not Yet Approved. For Discussion.

Goal 3: Be a Leader and Partner in Addressing Regional Issues

- Support $1.5 million for a new fire truck for the **San Bernardino Emergency Training Center**.
- Support $3 million in **ongoing funding for KVCR** to produce more local content and keep PBS/NPR.
- Support $15 million to build a **student training center** at KVCR.

2023 SBCCD Advocacy Priorities

Not Yet Approved. For Discussion.

Goal 4: Ensure Fiscal Accountability/Sustainability

- Support the CCC's budget request of $400 million in ongoing resources to **increase Student Centered Funding Formula rates** and continue to support district operations.
- Support ongoing funding in non-Proposition 98 resources to provide districts with **pension relief**.

Next Steps

Dec. 9, 2022	Jan. 12, 2023	Jan. to June, 2023
BLC defines 2023 advocacy priorities and may vote to recommend to full board.	**Board of Trustees consider approving 2023 advocacy priorities**, as recommended by the BLC.	**SBCCD engages with policymakers** during 2023 legislative and budget-building cycle.

CSAC CALIFORNIA STUDENT AID COMMISSION

ACCESS TO PROPER NUTRITION EQUALS COLLEGE SUCCESS: MAKING CALFRESH WORK FOR STUDENTS

CalFresh Workgroup Convened by the California Student Aid Commission

Prepared by WestEd on behalf of the California Student Aid Commission

February 2022

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	3
Executive Summary	3
Background	13
CSAC CalFresh Workgroup	15
Overview of SNAP and CalFresh	16
Student Needs Are Differential and Complex in Regard to Accessing CalFresh Benefits	19
Challenges to Postsecondary Student CalFresh Access	20
Short-Term and Long-Term Systemic Policy Recommendations That Aim to Substantially Streamline and Create Efficient Access to CalFresh Benefits	24
Conclusion	31
References	32
Appendix A: Workgroup Membership	34
Appendix B: Workgroup Meeting Dates	35
Appendix C: Actions by the State of California to Alleviate Student Basic Needs	36
Appendix D: Criteria for Exemption of a Postsecondary Student from the SNAP Student Eligibility Rule	38

Dear Colleagues,

U.S. college students are struggling more than ever to pay for basic needs, including food. Because access to proper nutrition is essential for students to persist and thrive in college, this is an urgent crisis that demands our attention and action. Student hunger is a well-documented problem. For example, at California colleges and universities, one in three college students report that they experience food insecurity, otherwise known as a lack of consistent access to food, in any given month.[1] Meanwhile, financial aid has not kept pace with need. The federal Pell Grant, one of the primary sources of basic living aid for U.S. students, has lost tremendous purchasing power over the years. Whereas in 1980 a Pell Grant covered about 80 percent of a student's college costs, today it covers only about 28 percent.[2] Such gaps in college affordability have led to chronic student hunger in California and across the country.

This problem has only worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the pandemic began, students have fallen victim to sudden changes in the economy and loss of jobs. Many college students have chosen to forego a college education because of high living costs and the need to work. According to one study, 34 percent of students know someone who has dropped out of college because of food insecurity during the pandemic.[3]

The federal government offers the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known as CalFresh in California, and is one of the largest anti-hunger programs in the world. This benefit is available to college students struggling with having consistent access to healthy, nutritional food. However, students have great difficulty accessing these benefits because of numerous hurdles. Only a fraction of California students living in poverty apply for and receive CalFresh benefits.[4]

In the fall of 2020, the California Student Aid Commission convened a statewide workgroup to examine how to increase college students' access to CalFresh benefits. The workgroup took a student-centered approach to understanding how students experience the benefits system and process. This approach offered a comprehensive look at the pain points in the process where onerous requirements can hinder students from accessing benefits promptly, create confusion, or even result in denial of access to this critical support.

The purpose of this report is to offer state and federal policymakers a set of actionable recommendations that help increase college students' participation in the CalFresh program. The recommendations propose short-term and long-term solutions that can be pursued at the state, federal, or administrative policy levels. We all have a role in helping more of our students access the support available to them.

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1 California Student Aid Commission (CSAC). (2019). *2018–19 student expenses and resources survey: Initial insights: An initial look at the obstacles students face affording higher education.* https://www.csac.ca.gov/sites/main/files/file-attachments/2018-19_student_expenses_and_resources_survey_web.pdf?1575327209

2 The Institute for College Access & Success. (May 2020). *How to secure and strengthen Pell Grants to increase college access and success* [Fact sheet]. https://ticas.org/affordability-2/how-secure-and-strengthen-pell-grants-increase-college-access-and-success/

3 Chegg.org. (2020). Hunger and COVID-19: *Food insecurity amongst US college students in 2020.* https://www.chegg.org/covid-19-food-insecurity-2020

4 California Department of Social Services (CDSS). (2020, June). *Senate Bill 77 CalFresh student data report.* https://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/Leg/202006-SB-77-CalFresh-Student-Data-Report.pdf

Expanding access to higher education and closing the persistent opportunity gaps between student populations, often resulting from resource inequities, are both key elements in creating a more inclusive economy in a post-pandemic California. These students are already on a path to acquiring the skills needed to fill emerging jobs in a more automated 21st century workforce. We cannot afford to lose a generation of students because they are struggling with consistent access to healthy nutritional food. These students, if offered food assistance in a timely fashion, will more likely graduate from college, access good jobs, and break the cycle of poverty.

I would like to thank all the participants of the workgroup who represent a broad cross-section of perspectives and experiences. They each contributed invaluable input that helped shape the recommendations proposed in this report. The entire workgroup holds a deep commitment to helping students access these critical nutrition benefits, and this report is one step toward addressing student hunger.

Sincerely,

Marlene L. Garcia, Executive Director
California Student Aid Commission (CSAC)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work could not have been completed without the generous support of the College Futures Foundation, who funded this project and elevated the need to leverage CalFresh benefits in order to alleviate college student hunger. Thank you to the Foundation for California Community Colleges, who collaborated with the California Student Aid Commission in moving this work forward. Also, much appreciation to WestEd for their staff's support in facilitating the workgroup sessions and publishing this report. Nothing contained in this report represents the endorsement of any individual or organization that participated in the workgroup.

Suggested Citation: California Student Aid Commission. (2022, February). *Access to proper nutrition equals college success: Making CalFresh work for students. CalFresh Workgroup Convened by the California Student Aid Commission.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the last decade, California's postsecondary students have struggled to afford the multitude of expenses associated with pursuing a higher education. This has been particularly true for students from low-income backgrounds, first-generation college-going students, and new immigrants. The issue of college affordability is defined through the costs associated with tuition and supplies, but also with living expenses such as housing and food. Often overlooked, the issue of food insecurity has become a persistent challenge across colleges and universities nationally. In California the challenge is even more acute because of the higher cost of living associated with the state. And the positive outcomes of alleviating food insecurity are well documented—addressing hunger results in improving students' well-being, which in turn supports their academic persistence and completion.

Students' financial challenges have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has only amplified the issue of postsecondary students' food insecurity. In September 2019, one in three California postsecondary students reported experiencing food insecurity in any given month.[5] A subsequent survey taken early in the pandemic revealed that 7 in 10 students lost some or all their income because of the pandemic, income that was a key source for providing basic needs such as food.[6] Increased challenges such as these have led to students dropping out of their postsecondary programs, especially at community colleges. In response to this crisis, the California legislature and governor allocated over $100 million in emergency aid to support the basic needs of California postsecondary students and an additional $295 million in one-time funds for emergency financial aid grants

5 CSAC. (2019). *2018–19 student expenses and resources survey: Initial insights: An initial look at the obstacles students face affording higher education.* https://www.csac.ca.gov/sites/main/files/file-attachments/2018-19_student_expenses_and_resources_survey_web.pdf?1575327209

6 CSAC & California Education Lab, UC Davis School of Education. (2020, July). *COVID-19 student survey.* https://www.csac.ca.gov/sites/main/files/file-attachments/2020_covid19_student_survey.pdf

directly to students.[7] One use of these funds has been to establish food pantries and distribution mechanisms in nearly all colleges and universities in the state to mitigate the growing challenge of student food insecurity. While this measure has helped stem student hunger, one of the most direct ways to address this challenge is through a program already established nationally and in California.

Among California's postsecondary students, it is estimated that between 400,000 and 750,000 are eligible for CalFresh. Yet only 127,000 students receive food benefits through CalFresh.

The federal government provides one of the most expansive anti-hunger programs in the world through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). In California this federal program is executed through the program called CalFresh, which is overseen and regulated by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). CalFresh is managed and administered by local welfare offices in each of the state's 58 counties. CalFresh is targeted specifically to support populations that do not earn sufficient income to provide for basic nutritional needs. And although this program is available to postsecondary students, only a fraction of potentially eligible students in California receive the benefit currently. Among California's 6.7 million postsecondary students, it is estimated that between 400,000 and 750,000 students are potentially eligible for CalFresh. Yet only approximately 127,000 students receive this food benefit.[8] For a subset of these students—those who are undocumented—the challenge is more pronounced as they are prohibited from accessing CalFresh and Pell Grants, the most significant form of federal grant aid for students. It is estimated that between 70,000 to 90,000 undocumented students attend a California college or university.

The primary challenge California faces regarding this issue is to provide better and more efficient access to CalFresh benefits for postsecondary students. This is underscored by the fact that California enrolls one of the smallest proportions of eligible low-income potential beneficiaries in the general population (i.e., 54% of low-income residents compared with 73% nationally).[9] California must grapple

7 The California Budget Act of 2021 allocated $100 million one-time funds to address basic needs through 2024, $30 million to support student mental health, $30 million to establish basic-needs centers on every California community college campus and to hire basic-needs coordinators, $15 million for California State University to fund the basic-needs component of the Graduation Initiative 2025, approximately $6 million to support CalFresh outreach, and $12 million to support increased caseloads at counties (Office of Governor Gavin Newsom. [2021, February 23]. *Governor Newsom signs legislative package providing urgent relief to Californians experiencing pandemic hardship.* https://www.gov.ca.gov/2021/02/23/governor-newsom-signs-legislative-package-providing-urgent-relief-to-californians-experiencing-pandemic-hardship/; AB-128 Budget Act of 2021, Regular Session. (Cal., 2021–2022). https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220AB128).

8 Note that these data were collected prior to the onset of the pandemic. These figures may have increased since the pandemic began. CDSS. (2020, June). *Senate Bill 77 CalFresh student data report.* https://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/Leg/202006-SB-77-CalFresh-Student-Data-Report.pdf; Granville, P. (2020). *Pathways to simplify and expand SNAP access for California college students.* The Century Foundation. https://tcf.org/content/report/pathways-simplify-expand-snap-access-california-college-students/

9 U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. (n.d.). *SNAP participation rates by state, working poor people.* Retrieved September 7, 2021, from https://www.fns.usda.gov/usamap#

with the reality that it is home to the highest proportion of U.S. individuals in poverty and to state and local systems that are struggling to keep pace with growing hunger needs.[10]

CSAC CalFresh Workgroup Documented Systemic Barriers and Proposes Sustainable Solutions to the Identification, Enrollment, and Administration of Benefits to Postsecondary Students

In September 2020 the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) convened a diverse workgroup of practitioners, students, state administration staff, county workers, legislative staff, advocates, researchers, and content experts who set out to understand and document the systemic barriers contributing to low student participation rates in the CalFresh program. Building from this understanding, the workgroup advised on the sustainable and actionable policy recommendations for the identification, enrollment, and administration of CalFresh benefits to California's eligible postsecondary students that are included in this report. The workgroup enlisted input from key interested parties—who represented various sectors, including state and county social service agencies, state and local higher education institutions, state and county K–12 education agencies, students, and content experts—to ensure that the resulting system mapping was a true reflection of students' experience trying to access these benefits.

The workgroup's investigation leveraged a user-centered design approach that anchored the assessment of challenges in accessing CalFresh benefits in the experience of students.

When the original SNAP program was established in 1977, the United States did not contemplate the current demographics of students in postsecondary institutions. In fact, the program actively worked to keep postsecondary students out of the program under the broad-based assumption that a student's low-income status was temporary and that familial resources would support their basic needs. Under this assumption, the federal law provided only a few narrow exemptions that permitted student access to food benefits. These exemptions are commonly referred to as the student eligibility rule, which determines a student's ability to access the benefits.[11]

The workgroup's investigation leveraged a user-centered design approach that anchored the assessment of the challenges in accessing CalFresh benefits in the experience of students. The findings were that it is the benefits system, not any single entity or individual, that has unintentionally created barriers to access for postsecondary students. The system and its barriers are heavily entrenched. This is driven by the program's history, overlapping and paralleled engagement by various state and local government

10 Gorman, A., & Rowan, H. (2018, May 1). Why millions of Californians eligible for food stamps don't get them. *The Salt*. National Public Radio. https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2018/05/01/606422692/why-millions-of-californians-eligible-for-food-stamps-dont-get-them

11 U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Service. Students, 7 CFR § 273.5(b) (1992). https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-C/part-273/subpart-C/section-273.5

agencies, and a system that was not meant to address the unique experience of postsecondary students. Further, state and local government agencies are constrained by federal law and regulations that have built-in prescriptive and outdated program requirements that require compliance to established rules, making it difficult to respond to changing student needs. Simply addressing the federal student eligibility rule will not solve the problems the system poses for postsecondary students.

Student Needs Are Differential and Complex in Regard to Accessing CalFresh Benefits

College is a major milestone for many students who leave home for the first time to live on their own. The challenges of this period of transition are exacerbated for students living in poverty or who are undocumented. And, as the demographic of students attending college continues to shift to more students who need supports, there is a growing demand for the CalFresh system to adjust. For example, students who qualified for California's K–12 free and reduced-price meal (FRPM) program or whose family receives CalFresh benefits have no easy way to access a similar benefit when they leave 12th grade or move away from their family. Their benefits under the FRPM are terminated when they graduate from high school, and to receive CalFresh benefits in college, they must apply for them independent of their family.

Undocumented students are prohibited from receiving any federal benefits, including CalFresh and Pell Grants. In California, approximately 50,000 students annually complete a California Dream Act Application that provides access to the state's Cal Grant.[12] This grant covers tuition at 4-year institutions and a $1,648 nontuition grant for community college students and some 4-year students. However, little or no additional assistance is provided for basic food needs, putting a strain on these students.

These circumstances and the transient nature of postsecondary students create a unique set of challenges that are in addition to an already daunting CalFresh eligibility process. When the workgroup mapped the process for students to access CalFresh benefits, it became evident that students encounter challenges at nearly every step of the process. Although counties have made strides to modernize and create technical pathways to assist students with applications, the workgroup identified several key barriers for students attempting to access CalFresh benefits:

- ***Limited awareness and navigation support:*** Though there is funding dedicated to CalFresh outreach for students, there is limited awareness of the CalFresh program. Many students are unaware that CalFresh benefits are available for those struggling with access to food. Even once they learn about the program, they often need someone to walk them through the process of applying for CalFresh, collecting all the required documents and verification, and navigating the system. This need for hands-on assistance is extremely difficult to scale to the need.
- ***Outdated communication tools:*** Students struggle to complete the interviews necessary for the application process because of slow mail notification, calls from blocked numbers that students often do not answer, and predesignated interview times that often do not match students'

12 These data are pre-pandemic for the 2019/20 school year and were reported from the AY 2020 CADAA applications and awards data. Of the 50,000 students who applied, 21,353 were offered Cal Grants.

schedules.[13] And even when students are approved for the benefit, county social service offices send electronic benefit transfer (EBT) cards and PINs through the postal mail at times that are often not well suited to the start of college classes for students.

- ***Complex processes:*** Completing a successful application requires substantial documentation, sometimes lengthy verification processes, and intensive system navigation. Federal processing timeline penalties and a reimbursement system focused only on completed applications create disincentives for county offices to conduct outreach to college students and to sufficiently support the surges of applications at the start of college.[14] Further, students are highly mobile, often have multiple residences across several years, move across county boundaries, and use electronic forms of communication. All of these characteristics stand in contrast to county social service systems designed for processing a different type of CalFresh applicant. They are also notable in terms of the requirements of an interview for applicants, the complex intercounty transfer process, and outdated communication tools that include notification by mail or phone.
- ***Processing delays:*** Based on data from the workgroup and student reports, delays and high application denial rates result from federal rules and state funding constraints, causing limited county capacity, challenges in ensuring the availability of staff during high volume seasons, variable experience navigating the student eligibility rule, and the need to manage exceedingly large CalFresh applicant caseloads. The student eligibility rule adds requirements that are in addition to those of the general population. Further, the CalFresh funding methodology for counties creates unhelpful incentives for offices and staff that prioritize existing cases over new applications, which is further compounded by the seasonality of student applications.
- ***Gaps in benefits:*** Students who qualified for the K–12 FRPM program or whose family receives CalFresh benefits automatically lose access to those benefits once they start college unless they apply for benefits separately as postsecondary students. Moreover, adults who receive CalFresh benefits before enrolling in college are required to reapply for CalFresh benefits as a postsecondary student and are subject to the more rigorous student eligibility rule. Once a student is approved for CalFresh benefits, the system requires a recertification process every 6 months. This process frequently causes a temporary or permanent loss in benefits. Nearly 36 percent of CalFresh students lose their benefits because of these recertification steps.[15]

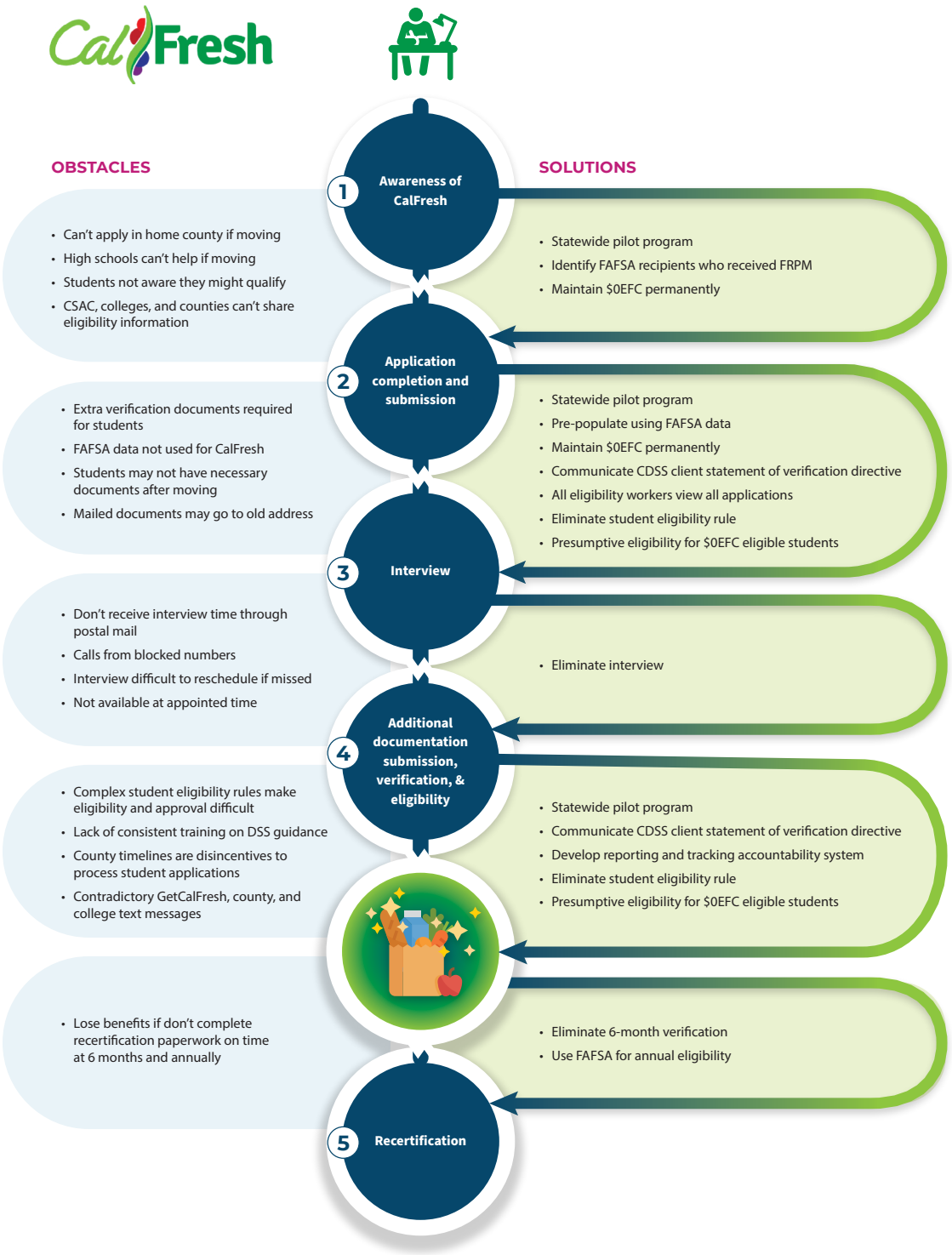
The combination of these process barriers and the difficulty of navigating the system greatly reduces the likelihood that students can access CalFresh food benefits successfully. Figure 1 provides a visual overview of the steps involved in CalFresh eligibility, the breakdowns in the process that are specific to postsecondary students, and proposed solutions (detailed in the next section).

13 Current, temporary federal relief waives the interview requirement. California has also made efforts to make this requirement more flexible, such as through AB 79 and ACL 21-24.

14 There are existing efforts to support the resolution of these issues, including the development of a verification hub and attempts to lift restrictions for verifying student exemptions.

15 California Policy Lab (in press). *CalFresh take-up and recertification.* University of California, Berkeley.

Figure 1. Steps Involved in CalFresh Eligibility, Obstacles Specific to Postsecondary Students, and Proposed Solutions



Source: WestEd. (2022).

Short-Term and Long-Term Systemic Policy Recommendations That Aim to Substantially Streamline and Create Efficient and Equal Access to CalFresh Benefits

The series of sustainable and actionable recommendations included in this report address many of the systemic barriers that have kept postsecondary students out of the CalFresh program. Some recommendations require state policy changes, whereas others require federal action.

Short-Term Pilot Programs

1. **Establish a pilot portal and regional hubs for students to apply for and be approved for CalFresh benefits, following the Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants model.** Because students face a unique set of circumstances and barriers in applying for and receiving CalFresh benefits, creating a pilot statewide portal to assist in processing student applications would provide a vehicle for increasing the efficiency of the process and accessing staff to support the seasonality of student applications. Workgroup participants learned that some of the central challenges students face in accessing CalFresh benefits include their having to move across county boundaries to attend school, the difficulty of navigating the application process, and the significant backlog in processing student applications caused by large numbers of students applying at the beginning of each term. Designating a portal and a regional hub system by a consortium of counties could help mitigate these challenges.

   In this pilot program, three to five county offices could opt in to be designated as regional hubs that work with a consortium of county offices in their area to support centralized, student-specific training; coordinate staffing allocations to address the surge of student applicants at the beginning of each term; and allow for a more concentrated focus on students in order to streamline the application, eligibility, and approval processes. Each regional hub site would be staffed by eligibility workers trained specifically to review student applications. This training would focus on areas such as applying eligibility criteria to student applicants and becoming more familiar with documentation that students must provide to validate eligibility. The regional hub, in coordination with other county agencies in the consortium, would be staffed to address surges in applications, which would decrease delays in processing. Finally, this consortium could further streamline the application process by also coordinating to provide help to students who are crossing county boundaries to attend school. This hub system would be accompanied by a pilot portal that would be used to facilitate the operation of the system.

   This regional hub model already exists in California in the form of the Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI). CAPI was created in 1999 to provide monthly cash benefits to aged, blind, and disabled noncitizens who are ineligible for Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment (SSI/SSP). This program is administered through a consortium of counties that opt in and that designate one agency to process their applications for a defined population.

   State policy action: *State statutory change to implement and new one-time funding.*

2. **Establish a new, state-funded pilot food support program for undocumented students who complete the California Dream Act Application.**
   The barriers undocumented students experience when trying to access CalFresh benefits are exacerbated by the federal rules and policies that explicitly exclude them from applying for any type of federal benefit assistance program. Based on workgroup feedback, it is recommended that the state leverage the existing California Dream Act Application (CADAA), which undocumented students already utilize to access state financial aid, to help streamline students' equal access to food benefits. The CADAA could serve as a central access point by which students can be considered simultaneously for both financial aid and state-funded food benefits and can be recertified annually.

   State policy action: *State statutory change to implement and new one-time funding.*

Short-Term Policy and Regulatory Recommendations

1. **Use Free Application for Federal Student Aid data to prepopulate CalFresh applications.**
   Prepopulating data from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to the CalFresh application—with some supplemental information—would decrease the burden on students to re-enter information they have already provided for the FAFSA.

   State administrative action: *State administrative policy change to implement and targeted one-time funding for IT infrastructure.*

2. **Enhance data-sharing agreement with the California Department of Education to identify all K–12 students who were in the FRPM program.**
   CSAC can enhance an existing data-sharing agreement with the California Department of Education (CDE) to identify FAFSA filers who were in the FRPM program and to inform them of their potential eligibility for CalFresh benefits.

   State administrative action: *Enhance memorandum of understanding (MOU) between CSAC and the CDE.*

3. **Maintain permanent use of $0 Expected Family Contribution status as a metric that determines eligibility to apply for CalFresh benefits.**
   Under the current emergency federal COVID-19 provisions, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) determined that all FAFSA filers with an Expected Family Contribution (EFC) of $0 are eligible to apply for CalFresh benefits without meeting other student eligibility rule requirements. This change enabled more students to receive CalFresh and should be made permanent.

   Federal policy action: *Federal statutory change to implement.*

4. **Eliminate interview requirement for students.**
   Currently the USDA's pandemic interview requirement waiver is in place. Eliminating the interview requirement permanently for students who have complete applications would streamline the process and address students' unique logistical challenges.

   Federal policy action: *Federal statutory and regulatory changes to implement.*

5. **Clearly and concisely communicate CDSS directive to county offices that they accept client statements of verification.**
   The acceptance of this verification effectively exempts students from the student eligibility rule without their having to provide additional documents, eliminating a significant barrier for student access to CalFresh. There have been recent reports of some eligibility workers not being aware of this directive. Additional resources should be marshaled to clearly and concisely communicate the directive to eligibility workers and to provide them with training to increase their understanding and implementation of this significant policy.

   State administrative action: *State administrative change to implement and fund.*

6. **Create a reporting and participation tracking system to collect student data regarding CalFresh.**
   The collection of statewide data on postsecondary student participation in CalFresh is critical for addressing the issues with the current system. A reporting and participation tracking system could be used to collect data regarding students estimated to be eligible for CalFresh benefits, students served by the program, and college CalFresh applications, including timelines, acceptance and denial statistics, and demographics.

   State administrative action: *State statutory change to implement and fund.*

7. **Revise the funding allocation methodology for local counties in order to align incentives and address surges in applications in the general and student populations.**
   The current funding formula that provides monetary support to county offices that are responsible for the administration, eligibility determination, processing, and tracking of the CalFresh program is outdated and misaligned to current needs. Over the past several decades, larger numbers of Californians who are eligible for CalFresh benefits are entering postsecondary institutions and the funding incentives for counties have not kept pace. Implementing this recommendation would revise the allocation methodology and increase funding for counties to account for the substantially increased workload of county offices that must determine the eligibility of more applicants and that experience surges in the submission of student applications throughout the year.

   State policy action: *State statutory change to implement and fund.*

8. **Direct colleges and universities to require local campus food service venues to accept EBT cards from CalFresh students for food purchases.**
   Some colleges and universities have transitioned to enabling campus food service venues to accept EBT cards from CalFresh students for food purchases, which has streamlined transactions between students and venues and has reduced any stigma students may feel. This recommendation would direct all California colleges and universities to require that the food service venues on their campus accept EBT cards from CalFresh students for their food purchases.

   State policy action: *State statutory change to implement and targeted one-time funding to support transition period.*

9. **Allow county eligibility workers to view, transfer, and process all BenefitsCal/CalFresh applications via the California Statewide Automated Welfare System so that students can apply in their home county before moving.**
   Eliminate the processes of the California Statewide Automated Welfare System (CalSAWS) that prevent eligibility workers from viewing applications from outside their county and create a system in which all eligibility workers can access, transfer, and process any application. In addition, integrate a consumer-friendly scheduling option into CalSAWS that would allow students to select open interview times online if an interview is required as part of the application process.

   State administrative action: *State statutory change to implement.*

10. **Develop a statewide student portal within the BenefitsCal System.**
    Establishing a statewide portal for students to complete their CalFresh applications within the BenefitsCal system would be a critical step in beginning to customize the application process for postsecondary students.

    State administrative action: *State statutory change to implement and new one-time funding.*

11. **Develop a coalition of other states and organizations to advocate for changes at the federal level.**
    Although California has a broad coalition of individuals that can support and advocate at the federal level for the legal and regulatory changes recommended in this report, there likely is more strength in building a broader coalition of other states, organizations, and agencies. Developing such a coalition may involve identifying those organizations and agencies that align to these recommended changes.

    Federal policy action: *Federal statutory change to implement.*

Long-Term Policy and Regulatory Recommendations

1. **Permanently eliminate the federal student eligibility rule.**
   The student eligibility rule is premised on an understanding of student circumstances that no longer holds true, and it should be repealed. The elimination of this rule would greatly accelerate eligibility verification for applicants and substantially reduce the paperwork and processing burden on individual county workers and their offices.

   Federal policy action: *Federal statutory change to implement.*

2. **Verify SNAP recertification for students through the annual FAFSA submission and eliminate the 6-month eligibility status check.**
   Because student financial circumstances do not change considerably while they are attending postsecondary institutions, the federal government should waive completion of the 6-month verification and instead use information collected in the FAFSA to recertify.

   Federal policy action: *Federal statutory change to implement.*

3. **Provide presumptive eligibility for students who are $0 EFC eligible, participants of the FRPM program, or from a household that receives SNAP benefits.**
   This would include recipients of benefits funded through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program or the FRPM program and recipients of the maximum Pell Grant under the new Student Aid Index (SAI). Final verification could be provided with required supplemental information, but automatic access to SNAP benefits under any of these programs would be initiated.

   Federal policy action: *Federal statutory change to implement.*

Together, these short-term and long-term recommendations have the potential to transform the CalFresh experience for California postsecondary students by removing outdated roadblocks, aligning to existing systems, and creating a statewide system for students specifically. This report serves as a roadmap for how to eliminate barriers to CalFresh access for students in the near term while pursuing other reforms that will take more time. The intent of this report is to create a CalFresh system that is truly responsive to the student experience and that helps every California postsecondary student move one step closer to successfully completing their education.

BACKGROUND

Each year California educates over three million students in its postsecondary institutions who are on a path to a successful professional career.[16] Less known is that nearly half of all of California's postsecondary students face food insecurity. Each year, nearly a quarter-million students transition into one of California's three postsecondary education systems from a California K–12 public school where they qualified for and received free or reduced-price meals.[17] Based on the latest available data, approximately 44 percent of University of California (UC) students, 42 percent of California State University (CSU) students, and 50 percent of California community college students are experiencing food insecurity.[18] Students' financial challenges have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has only amplified the issue of postsecondary students' food insecurity. In September 2019, one in three California postsecondary students reported experiencing food insecurity in any given month.[19] A subsequent survey taken early in the pandemic revealed that 7 in 10 students lost some or all their income because of the pandemic, income that was a key source for providing basic needs such as

16 These figures include students attending nonprofit colleges and universities. Johnson, H., & Cuellar Mejia, M. (2019, October). *Higher education in California: California's higher education system.* Public Policy Institute of California. https://www.ppic.org/publication/higher-education-in-california-californias-higher-education-system/

17 Authors' calculations derived from the CDE (2021), *Fingertip Facts on Education in California,* https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/ad/ceffingertipfacts.asp.

18 University of California Global Food Initiative. (2017, December). *Global food initiative: Food and housing security at the University of California.* https://www.ucop.edu/global-food-initiative/_files/food-housing-security.pdf; Crutchfield, R., & Maguire, J. (2018, January). *Study of student basic needs.* The California State University. https://www2.calstate.edu/impact-of-the-csu/student-success/basic-needs-initiative/Documents/BasicNeedsStudy_phaseII_withAccessibilityComments.pdf; Goldrick-Rab, S., Baker-Smith, C., Coca, V., & Looker, E. (2019, March). *California community colleges #RealCollege Survey.* The Hope Center, California Community Colleges. https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/RealCollege-CCCCO-Report.pdf

19 California Student Aid Commission (CSAC). (2019). *2018–19 Student expense and resources survey: Initial insights: An initial look at the obstacles students face affording higher education.* https://www.csac.ca.gov/sites/main/files/file-attachments/2018-19_student_expenses_and_resources_survey_web.pdf?1575327209

food.[20] Increased challenges such as these have led to students dropping out of their postsecondary programs, especially at community colleges.

For low-income students in California's public, private, and nonprofit postsecondary institutions, food benefits must be accessed through a program called CalFresh. CalFresh is the California program that executes the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), one of the most expansive anti-hunger programs in the world. CalFresh is overseen and regulated by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and is managed and administered by local welfare offices in each of the state's 58 counties. This program is targeted specifically to support populations that do not earn sufficient income to provide for basic nutritional food needs. However, importantly for postsecondary students, the SNAP *student eligibility rule* sets a more rigorous and higher threshold for students to access CalFresh benefits. When the original SNAP program was established in 1977, the student eligibility rule was established to exclude college students from qualifying for benefits based on monthly income alone because, at the time, college students were more likely to have substantial family support and come from households whose parents had graduated college.[21]

The CalFresh program offers critical resources that can help offset food costs for students, yet most students do not apply. It is estimated that between 400,000 to 750,000 college students are potentially eligible for federal CalFresh benefits, but only approximately 127,000 students receive these benefits annually.[22] In the face of the outdated and out-of-context student eligibility rule, many California institutions have established workarounds to ensure that postsecondary students have access to CalFresh benefits. Some of these efforts include raising awareness through outreach on campuses or shepherding students through the complex and multistep application process. Yet, students continue to face numerous barriers that make it exceedingly difficult for them to access and maintain CalFresh benefits.

For example, the complicated rules, required documents, multiple verification systems, and lengthy interviews cause backlogs for eligibility workers.[23] In addition, students who have been approved for CalFresh benefits are required to submit paperwork every 6 months to recertify that they continue to meet the means test for their benefits. This recertification requirement causes many eligible beneficiaries to drop out of the program.[24]

20 CSAC & California Education Lab, UC Davis School of Education. (2020, July). *COVID-19 student survey.* https://www.csac.ca.gov/sites/main/files/file-attachments/2020_covid19_student_survey.pdf

21 Garratt, R. (n.d.). *Reexamining SNAP policies for college students.* Community Commons. https://www.communitycommons.org/collections/Reexamining-SNAP-Policies-for-College-Students

22 Note that these data were collected prior to the onset of the pandemic. These figures may have increased since the pandemic began. California Department of Social Services (CDSS). (2020, June). *Senate Bill 77 CalFresh student data report.* https://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/Leg/202006-SB-77-CalFresh-Student-Data-Report.pdf; Granville, P. (2020). *Pathways to simplify and expand SNAP access for California college students.* The Century Foundation. https://tcf.org/content/report/pathways-simplify-expand-snap-access-california-college-students/

23 The approval rate is only about 39 percent for college students compared with 60 percent for the general public.

24 Unrath, M. (2021, January). *Pushed out by paperwork: Why eligible Californians leave CalFresh* [Policy brief]. California Policy Lab. https://www.capolicylab.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Pushed-out-by-paperwork-why-eligible-Californians-leave-CalFresh.pdf

CSAC CALFRESH WORKGROUP

To bring further attention and possible solutions to the challenge of food insecurity within California's postsecondary education systems, the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) convened a CSAC CalFresh workgroup charged with finding ways to support California postsecondary students by enhancing access to CalFresh food benefits.

The workgroup was made up of a cross-section of representatives from California, including representatives from the state legislature, various state agencies, students, researchers, county practitioners, postsecondary institutions, and other local practitioners, and was asked to help close the gap in California between the number of postsecondary students receiving food benefits and those who are eligible and need that support. (See Appendices A and B for the workgroup's members and meeting dates.) The workgroup was convened to study and provide recommendations that address the following goal:

> Increase the number of California postsecondary students currently enrolled and receiving CalFresh benefits measured by year-over-year changes in dispersed benefits by streamlining the process and raising awareness of eligibility.

This goal is consistent with a growing body of research that has highlighted the financial and support needs of postsecondary students beyond tuition and fees. Financial aid has not kept pace with nontuition costs such as food, housing, transportation, technology, books, and supplies. These costs have grown exponentially, making it increasingly difficult for students to pay for a postsecondary education.[25] Especially in California, a lack of affordable housing for and food insecurity among the state's postsecondary students has garnered notable and ongoing attention. According to the 2019 Student Aid Commission's triannual Student Expense and Resources Survey, one out of three students reported experiencing food insecurity, housing insecurity, or both in any given month.[26]

The workgroup aimed to also advance two input goals that they believe are directly linked to achieving the outcome goal:

- Increase the number of students who are aware that they could be eligible for CalFresh, measured by information sent and subsequent engagement (e.g., text responses, website hits, applications received).
- Simplify and streamline the process for students to apply for, gain approval for, and renew benefits.

25 Granville, P. (2020). *Pathways to simplify and expand SNAP access for California college students.* The Century Foundation. https://tcf.org/content/report/pathways-simplify-expand-snap-access-california-college-students/; Mello, F. (2020, June 23). The soul-crushing cost of college in California, explained. *Explainers.* CalMatters. https://calmatters.org/explainers/california-cost-of-college-explained/; CSAC. (2019). *2018–19 Student expenses and resources survey: Initial insights: An initial look at the obstacles students face affording higher education.* https://www.csac.ca.gov/sites/main/files/file-attachments/2018-19_student_expenses_and_resources_survey_web.pdf?1575327209.

26 CSAC. (2019). *2018–19 Student expenses and resources survey: Initial insights: An initial look at the obstacles students face affording higher education.* https://www.csac.ca.gov/sites/main/files/file-attachments/2018-19_student_expenses_and_resources_survey_web.pdf?1575327209

OVERVIEW OF SNAP AND CALFRESH

CalFresh is the program that executes SNAP in California. CalFresh is the primary provider of government-supported nutrition assistance in the state. As in all other states, there are limitations on postsecondary student eligibility for CalFresh benefits in California because of the federal student eligibility rule, which sets a more rigorous and higher threshold for students to access these benefits.[27] The requirements are designed to exclude postsecondary students from eligibility unless they can demonstrate that they are impoverished and do not have access to familial support resources.

The student eligibility rule is longstanding and has its roots in a now outdated set of assumptions about the postsecondary student experience—mainly that students' income and resources might be low while they are attending college but that most have family who will ensure they have consistent access to nutritional food. Congress established the special set of eligibility rules in the 1970s to prevent upper- and middle-income families from receiving food stamps, but today these rules do not reflect the experience of many students and they prevent many students from accessing essential nutrition benefits.[28]

These rules create a complex web of issues for student applicants to navigate and for eligibility workers to understand when approving food benefits. Under federal SNAP regulations, students impacted by the student eligibility rule are aged 18 through 49, physically and mentally fit for employment, and enrolled at least half-time at a public or private institute of higher education. Students are ineligible to participate in CalFresh unless they meet the criteria for at least one of the identified exemptions. Some of these exemptions are accompanied by complex rules and forms that, based on the experiences of students seeking these benefits, are often implemented unevenly across the state. Table 1 provides a summary of criteria for exemption of a postsecondary student from the SNAP student eligibility rule, and these criteria are expanded upon and cited in Appendix D.

27 Legislative Analyst's Office. (2018, February 14). *Overview of select safety net programs: SSI/SSP, CalFresh, and CalWORKs.* https://lao.ca.gov/handouts/socservices/2018/Safety-Net-Programs-021418.pdf

28 *CalFresh access for college students, California Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 2 on Education Finance,* 2021–22 session (2021) (testimony of Alexis Fernandez).

Table 1. Summary of Criteria for Exemption of a Postsecondary Student from the SNAP Student Eligibility Rule

Demonstrated Working Status	Individual/Family Circumstances	Employment/Training Program
• Employed 20 hours a week based on reasonable anticipated monthly average • Receiving federal or state work-study money • Enrolled in Extended Opportunities Programs and Services	• Approved for a TANF-funded Cal Grant A or B • Has children under 12 or is receiving CalWORKS • Does not intend to register for the next normal school term	• Enrolled in CalFresh employment and training (FSET) program • Enrolled in a program to increase employability, including programs for students from a low-income family or from foster care • Enrolled in a Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act program • Enrolled in Extended Opportunities Programs and Services

Source: Adapted from Legal Services of Northern California. (2022). *LSNC guide to CalFresh benefits.* http://calfresh.guide/special-rules-for-students/

Federal, State, and Local Agencies That Oversee, Manage, and Administer CalFresh

One of the complexities of the CalFresh program for college students is that no one organization has authority over this benefits program. The policies and administration of benefits intersect with multiple state, federal, and county offices and colleges and universities, so students must contend with different procedures, rules, and navigation within and across various entities to access their benefits. These entities are as follows:

United States Department of Agriculture. The USDA establishes policies, enforces laws, and issues regulations that determine SNAP program eligibility for benefits, including those for college students nationwide.

California Department of Social Services. CDSS is the state agency that provides aid, services, and protection to needy children and adults while strengthening and encouraging individual responsibility and independence for families. CDSS oversees the CalFresh program and the local offices that process the CalFresh applications.

County welfare directors. Each county in California has personnel to process CalFresh applications. These offices are staffed by county eligibility workers who also process other benefits such as CalWORKS and Medi-Cal.

California Student Aid Commission. CSAC is the principal state agency responsible for administering financial aid programs for students attending public and private universities, colleges, and vocational schools in California. CSAC is not currently involved in the administration of CalFresh benefits, but the agency does send notifications to all students who are exempt from the student eligibility rule and encourages them to apply for CalFresh benefits.[29]

California colleges and universities. There are over 281 colleges and universities in California, including public, private, and nonprofit institutions. CalFresh support varies widely across these schools. Some have basic-needs infrastructure, including food pantries on campus, whereas others do not. Some campuses have agreements with their local county office to have eligibility workers on campus. Many campuses also have CalFresh Outreach teams on their campuses through various types of federal and state basic-needs funding.

A System With Rules Misaligned to the Needs of California's Postsecondary Students

The complex and outdated rules of the federal SNAP program have hampered state policymakers' efforts to devise policy solutions that are better able to address the rapidly shifting needs of California postsecondary students' basic needs. This is further exacerbated by eligibility workers who are overextended by growing caseloads and who must comply with a federal incentive structure that compensates counties based on processing speed and the number of completed approvals. This system does not encourage attention to CalFresh applications for postsecondary students, which can be more complex than those of the general population.

Despite an existing system designed to keep students from qualifying for food benefits, the California legislature and numerous governors have attempted to craft solutions that attempt to meaningfully address postsecondary students' basic food needs. Since at least 2014, California has launched various policy initiatives and programs to alleviate challenges for postsecondary students on hundreds of college and university campuses. Appendix C documents these efforts and dedicated funding during this time.

To address the severe impacts of the COVID-19 crisis, the federal government responded by increasing access to and funding for many public assistance programs, including SNAP. There have been several significant, albeit temporary, steps taken to provide more efficient access to eligible postsecondary students during the pandemic. In particular, the federal government took steps to waive the student eligibility rule for postsecondary students if their expected family contribution (EFC) through federal aid applications such as the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) was $0 or they were eligible to participate in the Federal Work–Study program. This action helped many $0 EFC students who may not have been deemed eligible before this change to receive CalFresh benefits. The federal government also allowed postsecondary students to self-verify their exemption to the student eligibility rule and forego the required interview requirement. These regulatory changes have increased the number of eligible postsecondary students who have been able to gain greater and more efficient access to the program.

29 CSAC. (2020). *Cal Grant modernization: A vision for the future.* Commissioned by AB 1314 and SB 291. https://www.csac.ca.gov/sites/main/files/file-attachments/cal_grant_modernization_report_legislature.pdf?1583522224

STUDENT NEEDS ARE DIFFERENTIAL AND COMPLEX IN REGARD TO ACCESSING CALFRESH BENEFITS

College is a major milestone for many students who leave home for the first time to live on their own. The challenges of this period of transition are exacerbated for students living in poverty or who are undocumented. And, as the demographic of students attending college continues to shift to more students who need supports, there is a growing demand for the CalFresh system to adjust. For example, students who qualified for California's K–12 free and reduced-price meal (FRPM) program or whose family receives CalFresh benefits have no easy way to access a similar benefit when they leave 12th grade or move away from their family. Their benefits under the FRPM are terminated when they graduate from high school, and to receive CalFresh benefits in college, they must apply for them independently of their family.

Undocumented students are prohibited from receiving any federal benefits, including CalFresh and Pell Grants. In California, approximately 50,000 students annually complete a California Dream Act Application (CADAA) that provides access to the state's Cal Grant. This grant covers tuition at 4-year institutions and a $1,648 nontuition grant for community college students and some 4-year students. However, without any assistance for basic food needs, students struggle to stay in college.

These circumstances and the transient nature of postsecondary students create a unique set of challenges that are in addition to an already daunting CalFresh eligibility process. When the workgroup mapped the process for students to access CalFresh benefits, it became evident that students encounter challenges at nearly every step of the process.

CalFresh is a complex program for all Californians to access, and the unique needs of students compound their challenges in accessing CalFresh. All California applicants must schedule interviews through complex mechanisms, participate in an interview, and then complete paperwork to continue benefits at 6 months and 1 year after their initial application. These difficult processes contribute to California consistently being one of the states to provide food benefits to the smallest proportion of eligible beneficiaries in the general population; only five states had a lower participation rate than California in 2017.[30] There are five broad steps students must take to receive CalFresh benefits, including having an awareness of CalFresh, completing and submitting an application, being interviewed, submitting additional documentation to verify eligibility, and completing the steps for recertification.

The difficulties of this process are compounded for students who must meet additional requirements because of the student eligibility rule, who change residences frequently, or who do not adapt to the system's use of outdated communications.

30 Tiano, S., & Abram, S. (2021, February 11). Paperwork problems keep hungry Californians from getting food stamps. *The Imprint.* https://imprintnews.org/child-welfare-2/paperwork-problems-keep-hungry-californians-from-getting-food-stamps/51811

Steps Students Must Take to Access CalFresh Benefits

- Have an awareness of CalFresh
- Complete and submit an application
- Be interviewed
- Submit additional documentation to verify eligibility
- Complete the steps for recertification

CHALLENGES TO POSTSECONDARY STUDENT CALFRESH ACCESS

The workgroup learned that there are unique barriers that postsecondary students must overcome to receive CalFresh benefits. Although many past efforts have focused on increasing outreach in order to identify and assist eligible students, there are more critical barriers to address. These include limited awareness and navigation support, outdated communication tools, complex processes, processing delays, and gaps in benefits.

College students are different from many other CalFresh recipients in that they have already committed to getting a postsecondary education so they can attain full-time employment, pursue a career, and achieve upward financial mobility. The workgroup observed that it is critical for policymakers to understand the barriers students face when trying to access CalFresh benefits and to help students achieve their goals by supporting a most basic need—food. Each of the following explanations captures the discussion and analysis from various workgroup meetings about these challenges.

Students' Key Barriers to Accessing CalFresh Benefits

- Limited awareness and navigation support
- Outdated communication tools
- Complex processes
- Processing delays
- Gaps in benefits

Limited Awareness and Navigation Support

There is no statewide system that supports various agencies in identifying potential CalFresh recipients, alerting them to the benefits, and helping them through the system. When transitioning to postsecondary education, students often have limited awareness of the CalFresh program, and when they do decide to apply for benefits, they must navigate complex application processes.

One of the many transitions students experience when graduating from 12th grade and going to college is figuring out how to pay for food. While still in high school, some students received CalFresh with their families or participated in the K–12 FRPM program. Thus, they proved their eligibility for at least the year they left high school, if not annually for multiple years prior. However, once students graduate high school, these food supports stop, creating a near-immediate gap in their benefits. When high schools inform graduating students about applying for CalFresh in college, they cannot help students enroll for benefits unless the student plans to attend college in the same county. And when students enter college, they may hear about CalFresh benefits when they apply for other basic-needs support, but this is not consistent among California campuses.

Students who enter college after having been out of high school for some time face a different set of challenges, even if they already receive CalFresh benefits. Once they become a student, they are required to qualify under the student eligibility rule requirements. Given the complexity of this set of rules, these students often need support from campus student services personnel to navigate the new requirements for eligibility. It is often stated that students successfully complete the CalFresh application process if they have someone to guide them through each step. Alternatively, if they don't have someone to give direct guidance, they are unlikely to succeed in accessing benefits. The system is not designed for self-service; rather, it requires direct assistance to succeed.

Outdated Communication Tools

The CalFresh program uses communication mechanisms such as postal mail, blocked numbers, and an intercounty transfer process for students moving between counties when applying. These outdated communication mechanisms pose barriers for students who move outside their county for college, have multiple residences, or tend to use various forms of electronic communication.

Currently, a student who will attend college outside of their home county must apply in the county in which they will reside when in school.[31] Often, students reach their new county just before classes begin. As a result, they may be slow to apply for CalFresh in the new county, which could delay their access to CalFresh benefits as they start college. Moreover, if they applied for CalFresh benefits in their home county before moving away to college, they would be dependent on an intercounty transfer process that is rarely used because it has become outdated and unreliable. If facing food insecurity, the delays caused by these processes could be catastrophic for a first-year student just getting started on their college journey.

31 California is only one of 12 states that has delegated this authority to counties.

Once a student's application is received by the county office of jurisdiction and added to the management system, a county eligibility worker receives the application and schedules an interview. The eligibility worker typically sends a paper notice through the mail to inform the applicant of their interview time. Many students don't receive this notice, or the interview time selected by the county does not agree with their schedule. Students have regularly scheduled classes and sometimes are working, which gives them limited time to schedule their CalFresh interview, a key step in gaining approval for food benefits. Various counties are attempting to address this issue. For example, GetCalFresh.org partnered with Los Angeles County to pilot on-demand interview scheduling. Clients, including students, were provided the opportunity to call the county for their interview at a time that worked for them. Results from this pilot showed that this flexibility for clients did indeed improve outcomes.

The interview may occur in person or virtually. The purpose of the CalFresh interview is to help applicants understand the CalFresh program and gather additional eligibility information, including family income. During the interview, applicants learn whether there are other verification documents they need to submit. During the pandemic, interviews have either been waived or conducted over the phone. This has temporarily streamlined the process for students, but CalFresh is expected to return to in-person interviews after the federal COVID emergency order ends.

The current interview notification methods were established long before cell phones and web-based applications were commonplace. Commonly, students miss their interview because they do not receive their letter through the postal service or they have a conflict at the allotted interview time. Unfortunately, rescheduling is often a laborious process. If a student misses an interview, rescheduling an appointment requires calling the county office and potentially waiting on the phone for long periods of time. In some locations, the county office sends text messages to remind students of their interview time. If students have questions, they must either leave a message for their eligibility worker or navigate a customer support center.

Once an application is approved, the final hurdle is that eligibility workers send a mailed letter of approval or denial. If approved, the EBT card and PIN information is sent in two separate mailed letters. Because students move frequently, it is more likely that their EBT card and PIN information will be sent to old addresses, further delaying their access to CalFresh benefits.

Complex Processes

The CalFresh system is a complicated process to navigate and requires that many documents are submitted at different times in the process. The county system is not designed for students, and each county has a different process for how CalFresh applications are assigned and overseen. County eligibility workers are often required to process applications for other eligibility programs in addition to those for CalFresh, and the federal timeline and reimbursement system create disincentives for county offices to prioritize processing college applications.

CalFresh applicants can complete a short preliminary application at GetCalFresh.org. Through this service's user-friendly web portal, applicants answer preliminary questions and submit initial verification documents—often in less than 10 minutes. However, after their interview they must submit additional documentation as requested. Applicants also have an option to complete the full application at a county website or office. Although completing the full application is more time consuming, it does provide all the information needed to begin processing the student's application.

There is a long history of county eligibility workers being overextended in meeting the demand for CalFresh benefit approval. Because county eligibility workers are often required to process applications for eligibility programs other than CalFresh, it is difficult for eligibility workers to understand all the complexities of the student eligibility rule. CDSS often sends out All County Letters (ACL) to provide additional information and clarification regarding new and revised policies, but local county offices have varying staffing resources and timelines to train all eligibility workers on them. For example, DSS has sent out an ACL about allowing a client statement of verification for the student eligibility requirements, yet many eligibility workers continue to request documents to verify these requirements.

Additionally, current federal SNAP guidelines provide reimbursement only for completed CalFresh applications. Eligibility workers strive to process as many applications as possible, but because they are not compensated for incomplete applications, they have less incentive to complete student applications that require a more rigorous review than do applications submitted by the general population.

There are many eligibility workers who spend significant time processing applications that ultimately get denied, but they do not receive compensation for denied applications. Thus, they have less incentive to provide outreach and recruit new students, who are less likely to get approved for food benefits. County offices are already extremely busy and often must triage how they review and approve the greatest number of applications. Even so, many county offices still commit to establishing outstationed personnel on campuses to help students complete and submit their CalFresh applications, even though they have limited resources. However, these efforts have never been brought to scale.

Processing Delays

Students typically submit CalFresh applications at the beginning of each term. This causes seasonal spikes in processing and places great strain on the county system, which can cause significant delays and high application denial rates because of limited county capacity. Additionally, eligibility workers often lack the training to understand how to apply the student eligibility rule when processing student CalFresh applications. And because the student eligibility rule requires more verification than do applications submitted by the general population, student applications take much longer to process and are often delayed or denied.

These unique circumstances are in addition to other challenging conditions county social service support offices have experienced over the last several years. Increasing caseloads and work demands leave little room for building the capacity of staff.

Gaps in Benefits

There are two recertification periods that cause significant CalFresh recipients to be lost each year. Six months after being approved, applicants must submit an eligibility status report to declare whether there have been relevant changes to their income. Proof must be attached to this report. In addition, applicants must complete an annual recertification report. Both reports ask for updates regarding an applicant's situation, such as living arrangements and income.

A large percentage of CalFresh recipients stop receiving CalFresh benefits at the 6-month and 1-year marks not because they no longer need food support, but because they didn't complete an eligibility status report and submit additional verifications. The California Policy Lab, in their 2021 brief *Pushed Out by Paperwork: Why Eligible Californians Leave CalFresh,* looked at data from the previous 15 years and estimated that 500,000 income-eligible households leave CalFresh each year and that there is a significant increase in people leaving during the months when paperwork is required. They further noted that households remain in CalFresh longer when they do not have to verify eligibility frequently.[32] Such frequent verifications may not be necessary for postsecondary students who attend 2- or 4-year programs and typically do not experience significant income gains while in school.

SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM SYSTEMIC POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS THAT AIM TO SUBSTANTIALLY STREAMLINE AND CREATE EFFICIENT ACCESS TO CALFRESH BENEFITS

There are several opportunities for improving the process of becoming eligible for and receiving CalFresh benefits as a postsecondary student in California. Workgroup participants analyzed each step in the process and assessed the program's strengths, barriers, and challenges to generate recommendations that aim to increase the effectiveness of the CalFresh eligibility process. This section includes analysis and recommendations organized into three sections: (1) short-term pilot programs, (2) short-term recommendations, and (3) long-term recommendations. In addition to addressing needs in the short term, these recommendations offer the opportunity to learn and gather experiences that can inform future efforts to improve social services throughout the state.

Short-Term Pilot Programs

These pilot recommendations outline actions at the state level that can be acted upon within 3 to 15 months and implemented within 9 to 36 months.

1. **Establish a pilot portal and regional hubs for students to apply for and be approved for CalFresh benefits, following the Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants model.**
   Because students face a unique set of circumstances and barriers in applying for and receiving CalFresh benefits, creating a pilot statewide portal to assist in processing student applications would provide a vehicle for increasing the efficiency of the process and accessing staff to support the seasonality of student applications. Workgroup participants learned that some of the central challenges students face in accessing CalFresh benefits include their having to move across county boundaries to attend school, the difficulty of navigating the application process, and the

32 Unrath, M. (2021, January). *Pushed out by paperwork: Why eligible Californians leave CalFresh* [Policy brief]. California Policy Lab. https://www.capolicylab.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Pushed-out-by-paperwork-why-eligible-Californians-leave-CalFresh.pdf

significant backlog in processing student applications caused by large numbers of students applying at the beginning of each term. Designating a portal and a regional hub system by a consortium of counties could help mitigate these challenges.

In this pilot program, three to five county offices could opt in to be designated as regional hubs that work with a consortium of county offices in their area to support centralized, student-specific training; coordinate staffing allocations to address the surge of student applicants at the beginning of each term; and allow for a more concentrated focus on students in order to streamline the application, eligibility, and approval processes. Each regional hub site would be staffed by eligibility workers trained specifically to review student applications. This training would focus on areas such as applying eligibility criteria to student applicants and becoming more familiar with documentation that students must provide to validate eligibility. The regional hub, in coordination with other county agencies in the consortium, would be staffed to address surges in applications, which would decrease delays in processing. Finally, this consortium could further streamline the application process by also coordinating to provide help to students who are crossing county boundaries to attend school. This hub system would be accompanied by a pilot portal that would be used to facilitate the operation of the system.

Utilizing a regional hub system to serve a select population in CalFresh would not be a new model for California. Such a system is used currently for Californians who apply for the Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI). In response to the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996, California created the CAPI program in 1999 to provide monthly cash benefits to aged, blind, and disabled noncitizens who are ineligible for SSI/SSP. This eliminated SSI/SSP for most noncitizens who arrived in the United States after August 1996.

As part of how CAPI applicants apply for and receive benefits, depending on their residence their claims are administered by a county or a consortium of counties. This allows counties with few applicants to assist applicants more efficiently by working together to process claims and consolidate staff that specializes in this area.

The county offices that participate in the consortium would be funded through a grant or funding based on the number of approved student applications generated from within their respective counties. This pilot would serve to inform future statewide efforts to improve service to students, such as the new BenefitsCal system and the Cradle-to-Career system.

State policy action: *State statutory change to implement and new one-time funding.*

2. **Establish a new, state-funded pilot food support program for undocumented students who complete the California Dream Act Application.**

The barriers undocumented students experience when trying to access CalFresh benefits are exacerbated by the federal rules and policies that explicitly exclude them from applying for any type of federal benefit assistance program. In recognition of the unique circumstances of undocumented students, California can establish a new, state-funded food access benefit for them that is comparable to CalFresh.

California can administer this proposed benefit by leveraging the existing CADAA, having it serve as the central platform for undocumented students to apply for financial support toward nontuition expenses. Because this would be a state-established program, students could be provided with presumptive eligibility for this benefit based on information already received through their financial

aid application, such as their status as a $0 EFC student (as proposed in long-term recommendation 3). This information would be confirmed through a supplemental application for a food access benefit that secures information consistent with that requested of CalFresh beneficiaries. CADAA-filing students could then renew their eligibility with their annual CADAA submission (as proposed in long-term recommendation 2). This pilot would also present a streamlined model with which California could demonstrate for the rest of the nation how student financial aid application data can be utilized to inform eligibility for other forms of public assistance.

State policy action: *State statutory change to implement and new one-time funding.*

Short-Term Policy and Regulatory Recommendations

These policy and regulatory recommendations outline actions at the state level that can be acted on within 6 to 12 months and implemented within 12 to 24 months.

1. **Use Free Application for Federal Student Aid data to prepopulate CalFresh applications.**
   The FAFSA and CalFresh applications ask many similar questions and require many of the same verification documents. Prepopulating data from the FAFSA to the CalFresh application, along with some supplemental information, would decrease the burden on students to re-enter information they have already provided and to submit the same documentation to two different systems.

   One meaningful step toward implementing this recommendation would be to identify applicable data inputted for the FAFSA from the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS). This step would be spurred by state statute and codified in a data-sharing agreement between the CDE and the CDSS. Further support for students could be provided by high school guidance counselors, who could help students who receive FRPM to complete the CalFresh application the semester before graduation and potentially in tandem with their FAFSA application.

   State policy and administrative action: *State administrative policy change to implement and targeted one-time funding for IT infrastructure.*

2. **Enhance a data-sharing agreement with the California Department of Education to identify all K–12 students who were in the FRPM program.**
   CSAC can enhance an existing data-sharing agreement with the CDE to identify FAFSA filers who were in the FRPM program and to inform them of their potential eligibility for CalFresh benefits. To decrease the burden on students to find and submit documentation, this data-sharing agreement could facilitate exchanging eligibility data and exemption qualifications more easily and could be coordinated with other triggers that identify student eligibility, such as an indication of a $0 EFC on the FAFSA. Sharing student information across state agencies is a complex, but also meaningful, exchange that will require safeguards and access restrictions to protect students' personal information. California's Cradle-to-Career data system, which connects student information from many of the state's disparate data systems, may offer the appropriate vehicle to accelerate the implementation of this recommendation.

   State administrative action: *Enhance a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between CSAC and the CDE.*

3. **Maintain permanent use of $0 Expected Family Contribution status as a metric that determines eligibility to apply for CalFresh benefits.**
   Under the current emergency federal COVID-19 provisions, the USDA determined that all FAFSA filers with an EFC of $0 are eligible to apply for CalFresh benefits without meeting other student eligibility rule requirements. This change enabled more students to receive CalFresh and should be made permanent. If this recommendation were to be acted upon, one administrative step to implement it efficiently would be for CSAC to set up an alert in the FAFSA that would trigger outreach to eligible students to inform them of this benefit and offer them support throughout the application process.

   Federal policy action: *Federal statutory change to implement.*

4. **Eliminate the in-person interview requirement for students.**
   Currently the USDA's pandemic interview requirement waiver is in place. This waiver has expedited the application process for students by eliminating the need for an in-person interview—all communication has been through phone calls and other electronic means. This adjustment has resulted in a more efficient process for determining student eligibility. It has also reduced a significant burden for students, and it is recommended that this waiver be continued. Eliminating the in-person interview requirement permanently for students who have complete applications would streamline the process and address students' unique logistical challenges.

   Federal policy and administrative action: *Federal statutory and regulatory changes to implement.*

5. **Clearly and concisely communicate CDSS directive to county offices that they accept client statements of verification.**
   CDSS now accepts a student's statement as verification of their exemption from the student eligibility rule. The acceptance of this verification effectively exempts students without their having to provide additional documents. Few county eligibility workers are aware of the directive, which sometimes results in student CalFresh applications being unnecessarily delayed or denied. Resources should be marshaled to communicate the directive clearly and concisely to all county offices and to provide training to ensure it is understood. This training would replace the training eligibility workers currently receive regarding the documents required for verification.

   State administrative action: *State administrative change to implement and fund.*

6. **Create a reporting and participation tracking system to collect student data regarding CalFresh.**
   The collection of statewide data on CalFresh college student participation is critical for addressing the issues with the current system. Currently it is unclear how many students start a CalFresh application, what support they require from county offices or out-stationed eligibility workers, how many applications are accepted and denied, and for what reasons applications are denied. It is also unknown how many students do not complete the 6-month eligibility status report or annual certification, how many are dropped from the program, and how many reapply to continue their benefits. Furthermore, it would be helpful to have demographic data to understand whether the system is advantageous or disadvantageous to students from specific racial, economic, or geographic groups.

   State policy and administrative action: *State statutory change to implement and fund.*

7. **Revise the funding allocation methodology for local counties in order to align incentives and address surges in applications in the general and student populations.**
The current funding formula that provides monetary support to county offices that are responsible for the administration, eligibility determination, processing, and tracking of the CalFresh program is outdated and misaligned to current needs. The formula, originated several decades ago, is a state-established allocation methodology that provides a portion of funds based on a county's caseload of CalFresh recipients. The original formula design used the logic that the funding basis would incentivize counties to ensure higher degrees of accuracy regarding applicants who were eligible for the benefit. In practice, this system worked for a time.

   However, the environment has shifted substantially over the past several decades. Larger numbers of Californians who are eligible for CalFresh benefits are entering postsecondary institutions, and the funding incentives for counties have not kept pace. The result has been that the processing of applications is often bottlenecked in counties for which no funding is available to meet the growing need of determining eligibility or to address the acute seasonal needs that arise as postsecondary students apply for benefits from approximately July to September.[33] Neglecting to address this funding issue is a missed opportunity for counties and, in the aggregate, the state to support eligible CalFresh recipients.

   Implementing this recommendation would revise the allocation methodology and increase funding for counties to account for the substantially increased workload of county offices that must determine the eligibility of more applicants and that experience surges in the submission of applications throughout the year.

   State policy action: *State statutory change to implement and fund.*

8. **Direct colleges and universities to require local campus food service venues to accept EBT cards from CalFresh students for food purchases.**
The workgroup heard from students that some colleges and universities have made strides in the processes that allow CalFresh recipients to access food on their local campuses but that transactions remain cumbersome and bring some stigma.[34] Some colleges and universities have transitioned to enabling campus food service venues to accept EBT cards from CalFresh students for food purchases, which has streamlined transactions between students and venues and has reduced any stigma students may feel. As of January 2022, there are 11 college campuses whose food service venues accept EBT cards, including, most recently, Southwestern College, a community college in Chula Vista.

   This recommendation would direct all California colleges and universities to require that the food service venues on their campus accept EBT cards from CalFresh students for their food purchases. This new policy would require a series of administrative changes for the college and the venues, which could be facilitated with a one-time allocation of funding.

   State policy action: *State statutory change to implement and targeted one-time funding to support transition period.*

33 Yolo County Human Services Agency. (2021, November). *CalFresh allocation methodology issues: Falling behind in serving some of California's most food insecure residents.*

34 Panoo, A. (2021, November 23). Most California college students who qualify for "food stamps" aren't using them. *Sacramento Bee.* https://www.sacbee.com/article255912906.html

9. **Allow county office eligibility workers to view, transfer, and process all BenefitsCal/CalFresh applications via the California Statewide Automated Welfare System so that students can apply in their home county before moving.**
   Students are not able to apply in their home county if they are planning to move to another part of the state. It is recommended that the California Statewide Automated Welfare System (CalSAWS) processes that prevent eligibility workers from viewing applications from outside their county be eliminated and that a system be created in which all eligibility workers can access, transfer, and process any application. It is also recommended that this change be accompanied by the integration of a consumer-friendly scheduling option into CalSAWS that would allow students to select open interview times. If an interview is required as part of the application process, students would benefit from being able to choose their preferred time online instead of being assigned an appointed time that may not work for them and that is communicated via a mailed letter they may not receive or a blocked phone number they may not answer.

   State administrative action: *State statutory change to implement.*

10. **Develop a statewide student portal within the BenefitsCal system.**
    Establishing a statewide portal for students to complete their CalFresh applications within the BenefitsCal system would be a critical step in beginning to customize the application process for postsecondary students. A pilot of such a portal would help inform best practices and provide benchmark data on increases to CalFresh participation among postsecondary students.

    State administrative action: *State statutory change to implement and new one-time funding.*

11. **Develop a coalition of other states and organizations to advocate for changes at the federal level.**
    Although California has a broad coalition of individuals that can support and advocate at the federal level for the legal and regulatory changes recommended in this report, there likely is more strength in building a broader coalition of other states, organizations, and agencies. Developing such a coalition may involve identifying those organizations and agencies that align to these recommended changes.

    Federal policy action: Federal statutory change to implement.

Long-Term Policy and Regulatory Recommendations

These policy and regulatory recommendations outline actions at the federal level that can be acted on over a term of multiple years, with possible action beginning in 2 years.

1. **Permanently eliminate the federal student eligibility rule.**
   The student eligibility rule is premised on an understanding of student circumstances that no longer holds true, and it should be repealed. The student eligibility rule (Section 273.5(a) of Title 7 CFR) requires students to provide documentation that shows their exemption from this rule to receive CalFresh benefits. Eliminating this rule would remove a host of extra steps that only students, not the general population, need to complete and would increase large-scale access to nutrition benefits for high-need postsecondary students. It would also substantially reduce

the paperwork and processing burden on individual county workers and their offices. Action by Congress and subsequent implementation by the USDA would be required.

Federal policy action: *Federal statutory change to implement.*

2. **Verify SNAP recertification for students through the annual FAFSA submission and eliminate the 6-month eligibility status check.**
   Because student financial circumstances do not change considerably while they are attending postsecondary institutions, the federal government should waive completion of the 6-month verification and instead use information collected in the FAFSA (or the CADAA for undocumented students) to recertify. A waiver for students would make them exempt from having to complete the 6-month eligibility status report. The workgroup recommends that CDSS request a waiver to eliminate this major barrier to students continuing food support past 6 months. This recommendation could be further supported by a diverse workgroup of California agencies and stakeholders working with the USDA to also explore simplifying the annual verification process, in part by aligning it with annual financial aid submissions.

   Federal policy action: *Federal statutory change to implement.*

3. **Provide presumptive eligibility for students who are $0 EFC eligible, participants of the FRPM program, or from a household that receives SNAP benefits.**
   This would include recipients of benefits funded through the TANF program or the FRPM program and recipients of the maximum Pell Grant under the new Student Aid Index (SAI). Final verification could be provided with required supplemental information. As an example, a student's FAFSA application would provide critical pieces of information that would not need to be provided again through the CalFresh application process. In the short term, students would continue to submit a CalFresh application. Implementing this recommendation would be a critical step toward the design of a system that would require students to submit only a single application that could be facilitated through collaboration between counties and institutions of higher education.

   Federal policy action: *Federal statutory change to implement.*

CONCLUSION

In September 2019, one in three California postsecondary students reported experiencing food insecurity in any given month.[35] The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020 has only exacerbated the situation. The CSAC CalFresh workgroup's efforts from September 2020 to April 2021 served as a meaningful inquiry into how state and local government agencies can shift their policies and practices in a manner that would directly benefit and support students in their efforts to improve their own social and economic standing. Students should not be burdened by having to take time and attention away from their studies to secure consistent access to nutritious food. The student population in particular needs support from various systems that make it easy, efficient, and seamless to gain access to a benefit they are eligible to receive.

Together, the short-term and long-term recommendations presented in this report have the potential to transform the CalFresh experience for California postsecondary students by removing outdated roadblocks, aligning to existing systems, and creating a statewide system for students specifically. Importantly, this report highlights that there is not a single entity or institution that is responsible for or holds the power to dramatically improve the CalFresh experience for students. Being able to accomplish providing a significantly higher proportion of eligible students with the CalFresh benefit will require the cooperation, collaboration, and communication of various government institutions in creating a simpler, more modernized, and more standardized process.

To that end, the recommendations offer specificity regarding the type of action necessary, the level of government at which action is required, and, where applicable, the institution(s) that should be involved. The intent of this report is to facilitate creating a CalFresh system that is truly responsive to the student experience and that helps every California postsecondary student move one step closer to successfully completing their postsecondary education. This report can serve as a roadmap for how to eliminate barriers to CalFresh access for students in the near term while pursuing other reforms that will take more time. In addition, implementing the recommendations in this report can help create a roadmap for the application of other benefits for eligible students in the future.

35 CSAC. (2019). *2018–19 student expenses and resources survey: Initial insights: An initial look at the obstacles students face affording higher education.* https://www.csac.ca.gov/sites/main/files/file-attachments/2018-19_student_expenses_and_resources_survey_web.pdf?1575327209

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APPENDIX A: WORKGROUP MEMBERSHIP

Workgroup members were selected based on their expertise, skill, insight, and interest in contributing to a productive and solution-oriented engagement over the 9-month period of the workgroup.

CSAC Commissioners

- Catalina Cifuentes, Executive Director, Riverside County Office of Education
- Jessica Bartholow, Policy Advocate, Western Center on Law & Poverty[36]

CSAC Staff

- Marlene Garcia, Executive Director, CSAC
- Catalina Mistler, Chief Deputy Director, CSAC
- Jake Brymner, Director of Government & External Relations, CSAC
- Melissa Bardo, Legislative Analyst, CSAC (now with California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office)

California State Legislative Staff

- Jeanice Warden-Washington, Chief Consultant, Assembly Higher Education Committee[37]
- Mark Martin, Consultant, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 2 on Education Finance
- Gail Gronert, Special Assistant to the Assembly Speaker, Human Services
- Olgalilia Ramirez, Principal Consultant, Senate Education Committee
- Lisa Qing, Fiscal and Policy Analyst, Legislative Analyst's Office

Other State Agency Staff

- Alexis Fernández, Bureau Chief, CalFresh and Nutrition Branch, CDSS (now with Code for America)
- Cassandra Wagner, Staff Services Manager, Policy Bureau, CDSS
- Natasha Nicolai, Chief Data Strategist, CDSS
- Kim Frinzell, Director of Nutrition Services Division, CDE

Researchers

- Jesse Rothstein, Faculty Director, California Policy Lab, UC Berkeley
- Anna Doherty, Research Manager, California Policy Lab, UC Berkeley
- Hayley Weddle, Postdoctoral Researcher, UC San Diego

Practitioners and Local Representatives

- Noemi Ramirez, CalFresh Specialist, CSU San Marcos
- Ruben Canedo, Director of Strategic Equity Initiatives, UC Berkeley
- Keith Curry, President, Compton Community College
- David O'Brien, California Community College Chancellor's Office

36 Commissioner Bartholow became a public member of the workgroup upon her departure from serving on the CSAC in January 2021.

37 Ellen Cesaretti-Monroy served as the alternate for Jeanice Warden-Washington when she was not available.

APPENDIX B: WORKGROUP MEETING DATES

Members of the workgroup met over an 8-month period between fall 2020 and spring 2021 for approximately 2 to 3 hours at a time. The meeting agendas were built in an iterative manner with topics that included raising greater awareness of available benefits, addressing the efficacy and efficiency of the process, and carrying forward effective changes in the policy. This approach of sequencing topics within the allotted time for the workgroup allowed the workgroup to cover the current state of the program and uncover opportunities for improving the policy, process, and implementation of access to CalFresh benefits for California's postsecondary students. The dates that the workgroup convened are as follows:

- September 11, 2020
- October 30, 2020
- November 20, 2020
- December 17, 2020
- January 15, 2021
- February 19, 2021
- March 19, 2021
- April 16, 2021

APPENDIX C: ACTIONS BY THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA TO ALLEVIATE STUDENT BASIC NEEDS

Chaptered in 2014, Assembly Bill 1930, authored by Assembly Member Nancy Skinner, required CDSS to establish a workgroup to identify which "state or local job training programs" would exempt a college student from the student work rule. Additionally, it required that the CDSS issue guidance to counties about how to identify and verify participation in one of these programs. The workgroup, established in May 2015, went one step further and issued guidance to counties about how to verify some of the other exemptions to the student eligibility rule. The policies subsequently established were explained in ACLs, one of which included a checklist for advocates and counties to assist postsecondary students in screening for exemptions. AB 214 codified this work and requires CDSS to establish a process to identify programs that qualify students for exemptions.[38]

Electronic Benefit Transfer on College Campuses

Even as more eligible students are being enrolled in the CalFresh program, many of them will find it difficult to use the benefits because of a lack of access to food retailers on campus that accept EBT. There are three ways in which college campuses can provide food retailers that can accept EBT: have restaurants and stores participate in the CalFresh Restaurant Meals Program (RMP), have stores become an approved SNAP retailer, and bring farmers markets that accept EBT to campus

Pantries Are on Every Public College Campus in California

With 3 years of budget investments in the Hunger Free Campus Initiative, the California legislature can be proud of the fact that every single public college in California now has a place where students can go to secure emergency food, either a food pantry or a regular free food distribution on campus. These resources are available to students regardless of their CalFresh eligibility or application status and serve as a place where students can learn more about other anti-hunger services and supports. They can also meet other students who are struggling with hunger or homelessness to establish the kinds of informal support networks needed for a low-income student.[39]

38 Western Center on Law & Poverty. (2020, February). *Addressing college student hunger in California: A whitepaper detailing efforts to date.* https://wclp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/CollegeHungerWhitePaper_Feb2020_Final.pdf

39 There is no single place where a California public college student can go to learn of a pantry on campus, but most campuses post the hours and location of their pantry distributions online.

Food Sharing or Food Vouchers Available at Every UC and CSU Campus

To be awarded funding through the Hunger Free Campus Initiative, UC and CSU campuses had to establish a food sharing program or an emergency meal voucher program and advertise how a student would be eligible for this short-term, emergency assistance. All campuses have confirmed that they administer such a program through their cafeteria programs.

California recently took further steps to address the challenge of postsecondary students gaining access to basic needs, including the February 2021 special budget action and provisions included in the Budget Act of 2021. The February 2021 special budget action included the following actions:

- $6 million to support outreach and application assistance to UC, CSU, and California community college students made newly eligible for CalFresh from provisions included in federal legislation enacted in December 2020 that allow students with $0 EFC to apply.
- $12 million in state funds to support associated county administrative workload.

In addition to increased funding to support public services in K–12 education, higher education, and student aid, this legislation ushered in policy changes that advance and complement many of the recommendations and actions discussed by the workgroup and put forward in this report. Namely among them, the Budget Act of 2021 took actions to

- begin implementing expansion of state-funded nutrition benefits to those who are ineligible for CalFresh or the California Food Assistance Program solely because of immigration status,[40]
- increase funding from General Fund sources for county administration of CalFresh by approximately 2.3 percent to a total of $683.9 million in 2021–2022 because of increased caseload projections for county eligibility workers enrolling CalFresh eligible Californians,[41] and
- provide $30 million in ongoing funding to the California community colleges to establish basic-needs centers on every college campus to be staffed by a basic-needs coordinator.

These policy and budget actions by California policymakers represent an initial step forward in achieving greater levels of effectiveness and efficiency in delivering food security to tens of thousands of students in California's postsecondary institutions.

40 California State Legislature. (2021). *The 2021–2022 state budget June 28th package.* https://sbud.senate.ca.gov/sites/sbud.senate.ca.gov/files/June%2028th%20Package%20Summary%20Final.pdf

41 County Welfare Directors Association of California. (2021, June 2). *FY 2021–22 state budget issues.* https://www.cwda.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/2021-22_budget_tracking_list_6.23.pdf?1622819695

APPENDIX D: CRITERIA FOR EXEMPTION OF A POSTSECONDARY STUDENT FROM THE SNAP STUDENT ELIGIBILITY RULE

The following information is adapted from Legal Services of Northern California (2022), *LSNC Guide to CalFresh Benefits*.

Demonstrated Working Status

(MPP § 63-406.216; ACL 12-37; ACL 17-97; ACIN I-66-16): "Receiving" means when the student is approved for state or federal work–study for the current school term, anticipates working during the term, and has not refused a work assignment (ACL 17-05; ACIN I-89-15). This exemption applies even if a work–study job assignment has not yet begun or is not available. The exemption begins the month the school term starts, or the month work–study is approved, whichever is later. The exemption continues until the end of the month the school term ends (MPP § 63-406.212). CDSS has created a form letter that colleges can use to verify work–study approval (ACL 20-114).

Individual Family Circumstances

(ACL 15-70): The CSAC is required to provide written notification to recipients of Cal Grant A or B awards regarding their potential eligibility for CalFresh (ACL 18-27). The TANF program, which is time limited, assists families with children when the parents or other responsible relatives cannot provide for the family's basic needs. The federal government provides grants to states to run the TANF program (ACL 17-05). Students with children are (a) a full-time student with a child under age 12, (b) a part-time student with a child under age 6 or a child between ages 6 and 12 for which care is not available, or (c) receiving CalWORKs. See ACIN I-36-12 for treatment of applicants declaring intent not to re-enroll (7 C.F.R. § 273.5(c)).

Employment/Training Program

Enrolled in a CalFresh employment and training program, or in other state or local job training programs that USDA will accept (7 C.F.R. § 273.5(b)(11)). Enrolled in a program to increase the student's employability, including programs for low-income students that are operated by a state or local government in which one or more of the components of the program are equivalent to an employment and training component (7 C.F.R. § 273.5(b)(11)). Enrolled in a program to increase employability for current and former foster youth, including Guardian Scholars Program, Foster Youth Success Initiative, Cooperating Agencies Foster Youth Educational Support, Chafee Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program, and Extended Foster Care (ACL 17-05). Enrolled in a Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act program (MPP § 63-406.216; ACL 15-70).

California Community Colleges

Strengthening the Future of Our Students & California

2023-24 System Budget Proposal

September 2022

California Community Colleges
Chancellor's Office
1102 Q Street
Sacramento, CA 95811-6549

Contents

Strengthening the Future of Our Students & California i
Introduction 1
Strengthening the Future of Our Students & California 3
2023-24 SYSTEM BUDGET 5
Strengthening the Future of Our Students & California 5
Reduce Time and Excess Units to Degree 5
Close Statewide Equity Gaps 6
Improve Educational Outcomes 8
Support Intersegmental Collaboration and Data Sharing 11
Establish Clear Pathways to Transfer and Careers 12
One-Time Funding Requests | Proposition 98 13
Non-Proposition 98 13
MULTI-YEAR INVESTMENTS 14
2023-24 LEGISLATIVE REQUEST 17
Provide Sufficient Cost of Attendance Coverage for Student Board of Governors Members 17
Expand Eligibility for AB 540 Nonresident Tuition Exemption 18
Modernize workforce education programs to meet the needs of the 21st-century economy 18

CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
2023-24 SYSTEM BUDGET & LEGISLATIVE REQUEST

Introduction

This document presents the California Community Colleges' System Budget Request for fiscal year 2023-24. The proposal describes the funding needed for the 116-community college system to meet the wide variety of student educational needs that exist in this diverse state.

The California Community College (CCC) system is the largest higher education system in the country and the largest workforce provider in California. Nearly two million students attend California Community Colleges each year to receive educational services including general education courses toward a degree, certificate, or transfer to a 4-year institution, career training, basic skills and remedial education, and adult education. The state's community colleges support Californians' social and economic mobility, with students seeking to build career-related skills to enter or advance in their careers, or earn a degree or transfer to a four-year university.

In 2017, the Board of Governors adopted the *Vision for Success (Vision)*, which identifies the North Star our system must follow if we are to meet California's needs. The California Community Colleges' *Vision* guides interrelated reforms that will make higher education more accessible and equitable for millions of Californians at a time when the state needs it most. In 2022, California Community Colleges were met with a new opportunity. As part of the state budget framework, Governor Newsom unveiled a bold goal - that by 2030, 70% of working age Californians would have a degree or credential. To advance this goal, the Governor and State leaders solidified their support for the *Vision for Success* by including the Roadmap for the Future, an aligned agenda to increase equitable student success. State budget resources were provided to support services to students to improve educational outcomes, reduce equity, close achievement gaps, to address basic needs such as food and housing insecurity, and to help increase college affordability. This aligned direction positions the California Community Colleges to deliver on the *Vision for Success* Commitments adopted by the Board of Governors in 2017:

- Focus on students' goals
- Design with students and their experiences in mind

- High expectations and high support
- Foster use of data and evidence
- Own student performance
- Thoughtful innovation and action
- Cross-system partnership

2023-24 Budget Request Overview

Existing law requires the Board of Governors, in consultation with institutional representatives of the California Community Colleges and statewide students, faculty and staff organizations, to develop criteria and standards for the purpose of making the annual budget request for the California Community Colleges to the Governor and the Legislature.

In June, the Chancellor's Office began the process to develop the Board of Governors' budget and legislative request for the 2023-24 fiscal year, with a working session and discussion with members of the Consultation Council about concepts for inclusion in the proposal. During those discussions, members engaged in a review priorities and opportunities to advance the Vision for Success through investments in the 2023-24 budget. In addition to discussions at Consultation Council meetings, Chancellor's Office staff distributed a survey to stakeholders and Consultation Council members requesting a priority ranking of all potential Budget and Legislative Request items. In light of historic world events and changing social dynamics, members of the Consultation Council and stakeholders sought an approach that leverages prior year investments, advances existing commitments, and strengthens students' future success. The Chancellor's Office has incorporated feedback from that consultative process into this document.

The Board of Governors' Budget and Legislative Request for 2023-24 furthers the *Vision* by proposing budget adjustments and policy changes that respond to these clear signals from state leaders about the outcomes necessary to support the state's future. It largely prioritizes additional resources that advance the *Vision* and Roadmap while allowing local level decisions and innovations. The request responds to the input received from educators, advocates, and students themselves about what support is necessary to further the implementation of recent reforms and achieve the *Vision* goals. It also emphasizes the need for continual review of existing laws and policies to determine whether they are advancing—or constraining—colleges' ability to achieve the *Vision*.

Strengthening the Future of Our Students & California

California Community Colleges and the students it serves have endured substantial hardships, many of which were not new but were exacerbated by the multi-year pandemic. These hardships increased basic needs insecurities, caused fluctuations in enrollment, and affected our most vulnerable student communities. Thanks to the substantial recovery of the state's finances, the 2022-23 Budget Act increased overall funding for community colleges, allowing colleges to pave the road for our students' and our state's recovery. These investments position California Community Colleges to advance educational equity and socio-economic mobility. Importantly, the resources allow our system to rethink structures that are not working and to design a new normal that better meets students' needs.

As we prepared for the 2023-24 request, system leaders recognized one important truth: we must effectively leverage and implement prior year investments to tackle the most stubborn challenges our student face. Specifically, as our system tackles enrollment uncertainties, it is critical to recognize that these are larger symptoms of poverty that can no longer be ignored. As such, the 2023-24 requests centers students and the scaffolding needed to support our students' educational success, paths out of poverty, and limiting the number of new programs and initiatives that districts and colleges implement.

To reflect an emphasis on funding needs that first and foremost support students' economic mobility, align with our *Vision for Success* Commitments, and to provide educational equity to our students, the 2023-24 budget request is organized to advance the goals in the Roadmap for the Future:

Reduce time and units to degree

Close statewide equity gaps

Improve educational outcomes

Support intersegmental collaboration and data sharing

Establish clear pathways to transfer and careers

The requested investments focus on a students' full journey – from enrollment, persistence, and supports along the journey, to student success and economic mobility.

Multi-Year Framework

In crafting this request, it was also important to complement the investments made by the Governor and the Legislature and deliver on their aspirations and goals for the system. In doing so, we outline steps to further strengthen our role in improving economic equity and advancing social mobility – even in the face of economic uncertainty. To accomplish this, the 2023-24 request considers our students' and system needs for the future and presents a multi-year framework. Our goal in presenting a multi-year framework is to align to key deliverables in the Roadmap for the Future and identify long-term funding needs of our system so that state leaders can partner and design for the future with us.

Overall, the 2023-24 system budget request, *Strengthening the Future of Our Students & California*, which totals over $700 million in ongoing resources, represents a crucial step in a multi-year framework to equitably reach the state's goals and support our students' economic mobility.

2023-24 SYSTEM BUDGET

Strengthening the Future of Our Students & California

The California Community Colleges (CCC) budget request identifies resources necessary for colleges to provide high-quality educational services, to continue strategies to remove structural barriers that inhibit student access, persistence, and completion, and to meet the state's core priorities, including those outlined in the Roadmap for the Future. The CCC system maintains its commitment to dismantling systemic inequities so that colleges can meet the challenges of the state's workforce and educational needs for the 21st century.

This *2023-24 System Budget Proposal* was developed by the Chancellor's Office to ensure that colleges can function at maximum effectiveness to support the equitable success of all students in meeting their educational goals. The proposal identifies core priorities for funding that target gains in key goal areas: reduced time and excess units to degree, closing equity gaps, improving educational outcomes, supporting intersegmental collaboration and data sharing, and establishing clear pathways to transfer and careers. Details of each of these areas are provided below.

Reduce Time and Excess Units to Degree

Incentivizing Bold College Strategies to Reduce Excess Units

($23 million one-time)

Over the last five years, state leaders have provided key resources to support colleges' work to reduce institutional barriers and streamline complicated structures that often hinder student success. Such investments include Guided Pathways, Strong Workforce, basic needs, Student Success and Completion, Student Equity and Achievement, Equitable Placement, and numerous categorical funds. With these foundational elements in place, colleges have the opportunity to act. Yet, meaningful progress and impact on our collective goal to decrease time and excess units to degrees begins with understanding the extent of the problem. Colleges are instrumental to understanding unit attainment patterns, to honing in on the barrier students may face, and in leading progress. This proposal seeks to provide incentive awards to colleges that 1) conduct robust analyses of structures and processes that may be leading to excess units to degrees; 2) adopt bold goals to reduce excess units to degree and improve time to degrees and credentials; and 3) implement local strategies that

leverage existing funding structures to ensure students have access to holistic and streamlined supports, guidance that enables equitable success, structured degree and credential pathways designed for timely completion, and deployment of interventions so that no student is lost. Incentive awards will be provided to colleges that take the important step of setting goals and designing bold institutional strategies. Awards will serve as seed money to embed these strategies into the fabric and culture of the institution.

Close Statewide Equity Gaps

Supporting Students with Dependent Children

($150 million one-time, $80 million ongoing)

At the core of our efforts to enroll and retain students must be our recognition of the barriers students face, and a lack of safe, dependable, affordable, accessible childcare is a key impediment for many community college students and potential students. Recent Strata Education research and national surveys reinforce these points - many students are interested in enrolling, but require financial and other resources, such as child care, to help them prioritize education. Expanding childcare options for community college students could help increase degree and certificate attainment, increase transfers to four-year institutions, and close equity gaps.

California is currently experiencing a shortage of childcare providers, but even in the best of times, many parents are prevented from attending college because they lack affordable options for supervising their children while they attend classes. And breakdowns in childcare plans are a common cause of students dropping out of classes or college altogether. Many community colleges provide some access to childcare already, but these programs are often much too small and inflexible to meet the needs of our students.

This proposal would establish a Childcare Expansion Fund with an initial investment of $150 million one-time funds for upgrading and expanding facilities and enhancing partnerships dedicated to childcare on college campuses and $80 million in ongoing funds to cover staffing and other ongoing costs. Drop-in daycare centers with afterschool programming could help increase enrollment, not only by supporting working parents to attend afternoon, evening, and/or weekend classes but also by connecting students to their local community colleges in a positive way.

Advance Accessibility and Universal Design

($60 million ongoing, $20 million one-time)
Across California Community Colleges, college leaders are prioritizing accessibility and universal design as a strategy to create welcoming learning environments and educational experiences for students with disabilities. Importantly, while universal design promotes access for individuals with disabilities, it also benefits all students. Universal design improves access and outcomes for everyone through a variety of strategies.

Funding is necessary to increase colleges' capacity to increase access to critical instructional and support services for students with disabilities, including Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and to support innovations in teaching and learning in alignment with the system equity priorities. This proposal requests an ongoing increase of $60 million to the Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS) Program and a one-time investment of $20 million to strengthen the support infrastructure for students with disabilities. With an increase in ongoing funding, DSPS programs could reach students that could benefit from their services but are not currently being served. One-time funding would be utilized to implement the recommendations of the California Community Colleges Universal Design Learning (CCC UDL) Task Force, which include structural redesign concepts that maximize existing system resources or universal design-based instructional practices, equitable student support services, and low- or no-barrier accommodations.

Supporting Foster Youth

($2 million ongoing)
This proposal would provide additional funding to sustain, enhance, and expand the Foster and Kinship Care Education (FKCE) Program, a program offered at 53 community colleges, To support the effectiveness of this program, this request would also update statute to reflect the current terminology in Child Welfare services and broaden the population served by the FKCE program to include biological parents with children at risk of out-of-home placement.

A $2 million ongoing commitment of Proposition 98 dollars would leverage a federal match, bringing approximately an additional $3 million dollars to FKCE programs and allow for a transformation of the funding formula used to allocate funds. Additional funding is critical in the short-term to increase the program capacity to serve families, meet the demand for training, reduce the negative impacts that social determinants of educational success have on foster youth, and broaden the enrollment pipelines of foster youth and adult learners into community colleges.

Improve Educational Outcomes

Effective Local Financial Aid Support Services

($10 million ongoing and policy changes)

The 2022-23 state budget presented current and prospective community colleges students with several new or expanded financial aid programs designed to provide greater affordability and an opportunity to enroll at a greater unit intensity. Maximizing access to financial aid requires high-engagement strategies and the support of financial aid professionals. Currently, the formula used by the Department of Finance for Student Financial Aid Administration (SFAA) is based on the 108 community colleges in existence in 2003, creating a 6% deficit in funding statewide over the past 18 years. Additionally, the funding formula used only considers California College Promise Grant (CCPG) fee waiver data. Many of the legislative and budget changes in the last 7-10 years provided funding for additional student awards and payments but provided little or no resources to colleges for the required additional financial aid administration. While the 2022-23 state budget provided critical resources to begin to close exciting gaps in the financial aid administration programs, structural reforms are still needed. Such reforms can ensure students are effectively connected to all available financial aid resources, supporting increased student access, persistence, and completion during a time of stagnant enrollment.

To address this problem, we are proposing three solutions:

- A revision to the Student Financial Aid Administration and Board Financial Aid Programs (SFAA-BFAP) allocation funding formula used by the Department of Finance to include additional data points such as total headcount and counts of low-income students (Pell Grant recipients);
- A cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) to the Student Financial Aid Administration base and capacity funding; and
- Ensuring the BFAP 2% allocation is directed to support financial aid administration.

Of the resources provided, 5% will be utilized by districts and colleges for professional development focused on strategies to braid supports together for students, advancement of culturally competent practices, and holistic student onboarding. Our goal is to leverage the talent and skills contained in financial aid offices to actively in reaching out to students that can benefits from financial and basic needs supports. Professional development can also bring

attention to student populations that face exceptional barriers and the role financial aid can play in presenting student from stopping-out.

We believe the *Vision for Success* goals cannot be achieved without sufficient student financial aid administration capacity. Financial aid plays a significant role in successfully closing educational and equity gaps, and it is critical that the funding needs of the administration of financial aid programs be prioritized at both the state and institutional level.

Supporting Implementation of Equitable Placement

($70 million ongoing)

In 2018, AB 705 advanced equitable placement and completion to help students enter and complete transfer-level coursework in English and math within a year. By ensuring that students aren't stuck in remedial courses, this helps more students reach their goals sooner. This proposal would appropriate resources to ensure districts receive timely resources to advance equitable placement and implement AB 705 support courses, including through implementation of corequisite support models that effectively meet students learning needs. Models include embedded tutors, paired courses, extended instructional time, academic support services, and technology mediated support, supervised tutoring, and other evidence-based innovations. Ongoing funding for corequisite supports can help achieve the goal of maximizing completion of transfer-level coursework in English. Funding would be contingent on the use of strategies with strong evidence of effectiveness and minimum eligibility criteria. Importantly, the $70 million ongoing investment would ensure that every student receives the help they deserve to succeed in transfer-level courses and beyond.

Robust Faculty Supports

($50 million ongoing)

Structured investments in an array of faculty supports, including full-time faculty, part-time office hours, and professional growth, can create the conditions for student success, student unconditional belonging, and increasing diversity among our faculty so that they may reflect the rich diversity of our students. As such, for 2023-24, to support this effort, we are requesting $50 million to support faculty hiring, parity, curriculum development, and office hours, while also encouraging colleges to use Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) best practices when hiring. The proposed investments in full-service faculty supports will help create the institutional capacity for progress in closing equity gaps and improving student outcomes. These resources can also create opportunities for improving curriculum to make sure it is culturally responsive and up to date. Our goal is to transform our colleges to be

institutions where faculty can fully participate in creating the conditions for the equitable academic success of their students.

Funding Rate Increases to Support District Capacity and Transformation

($400 million ongoing)

Community colleges are an essential partner in meeting the bold and necessary goal of supporting 70% of working age Californians in earning a degree or credential. Ongoing operational resources that reflect growing cost and provide inflationary adjustments are critical to advancing the community college missions, serving the diverse needs of each community throughout the state, and to achieving the student success goals outlined in the *Vision for Success*.

This request seeks an ongoing funding rate increase to address districts' growing inflationary cost-drivers, such as salaries and wages, pensions, energy, and healthcare, in ways that compliment districts efforts to support student learning, campus experiences, and equitable success. As such, California Community Colleges request $400 million in ongoing resources to increase Student Centered Funding Formula rates and continue to support districts' important local transformation. Such an investment, and the accountability to make progress on Vision goals, supports further implementation of institutional structures students demand and provides resources to improve the outcomes of our most underserved students.

Analysis of Online Learning Innovations

($231,000 one-time)

Online education in community colleges in California has been steadily increasing, and even before the pandemic, student enrollment in online courses increased by 154% from 2002 to 2016. While enrollments in online courses have increased significantly over time, the improvement of course success rates (proportion of students who earn a letter grade C or better) in online courses has been slower. Prior research on online education in different states has found a positive relationship between online course offerings and completion with slight reductions in time-to-degree and transfer. While a positive link has been found between taking online courses and completion measures such as graduation at the university level – very few studies have focused on community colleges and the linkages between online course taking and graduation.

With the onset of the pandemic, online educational offerings exponentially increased, with many colleges planning to continue offering more online courses and support services for students as they look ahead. With colleges planning for and implementing expanded academic and non-academic offerings and supports, it will be critical now more than ever, to understand and identify practices that promote equitable and successful online learning experiences for students.

This proposal seeks funding to support a research study to understand and elevate effective online learning practices. Findings from this study can be used to inform distance education practices and policies, professional development related to online teaching and learning, and student services that fully support online students. The proposed budget of $231,500 one-time would support the design and implementation of a statewide survey of online learners; data analyses of student-level outcomes by college and discipline area; virtual student focus groups; virtual interviews with practitioners; dissemination of findings to a variety of stakeholder groups; and project coordination activities.

Support Intersegmental Collaboration and Data Sharing

Technology Capacity to Support the Future of Teaching & Learning | Categorical Program

($30 million ongoing)

In today's environment where pandemics and the effects of climate change are likely to occur, colleges cannot always provide in-person education—making the case for investing in education technology. Prior to COVID-19, distance education served a limited role in comparison to brick-and-mortar environments. Moving forward, many of our students will continue to expect and demand flexible learning modalities, technology supported classrooms, and online support services, the extent of which were not contemplated before the pandemic.

Further, malware and ransomware attacks have significantly increased in the last decade and the level of sophistication of attacks is expected to increase. In 2022-23, state lawmakers provided an important investment in technology modernization and security that recognizes the changing nature of education. To support the continuity of classroom modernization through the use of technology and continued improvements in data security management, this proposal requests an ongoing $30 million technology capacity categorical program. A

modest, yet sustained investment in technology can build the capacity to integrate technology in the instructional process in a manner that is safe, sustainable, and effectively supports teaching and learning.

Streamline Reporting Process

($200,000 ongoing and $2.2 million one-time)
The Chancellor's Office requests funds and statutory changes to support the development and statewide scaling of a streamlined reporting process and tool that enables colleges to more effectively use data integrated with budgeting and planning efforts to inform program decisions and improve student outcomes. The new process is designed to be consistent with Guided Pathways, the system's chief framework for achieving the *Vision* goals.

This proposal is the Chancellor's Office's direct response to *Vision for Success* Commitment Two, where system leaders pledged to review reporting and budgeting processes to identify and eliminate unnecessary or duplicative requirements. In addition, it creates the infrastructure necessary to achieve the requirement in the trailer bill language that created the Student Centered Funding Formula (AB 1809, 2018), which was for each "community college district to align its comprehensive plan with the adopted local goals and align its budget with the comprehensive plan."

The proposal requests $200,000 ongoing to develop the streamlined reporting process, and $2,226,000 one-time to support the creation of the reporting tool. This proposal reimagines the approach to meet legislative reporting requirements that both simplifies for colleges and districts and is designed with alignment to the *Vision for Success* and Roadmap in mind.

Establish Clear Pathways to Transfer and Careers

Intersegmental Transfer Success Collaborative

($2.7 million one-time)
Much progress has been made on smoothing the transfer process among the segments, with the Associate Degree for Transfers between the CCC and CSU systems and the UC Transfer Pathways between the CCC and UC systems serving as two primary example. However, further collaboration and work is necessary to assess and coordinate the transfer pathways across all three segments of higher education, particularly within disciplines where there are currently differences in preparatory lower division pathway curriculum. Coordination and

closer alignment is possible and worthy of further exploration. Effective communication of this information to CCC students is also a priority that merits close examination by disciplinary faculty and their respective admissions teams. The California Community Colleges seek funding to support the creation of an Intersegmental Academic Senate Task Force on Transfer to improve the transfer process by: 1) identifying the 20 most popular majors among transfer students and determine the degree of alignment in these majors across the CSU and UC systems; and 2) determining how best to communicate this information to CCC students.

Specifically, the request seeks $2.7 million to be spent primarily over two fiscal years (2023-24 and 2024-25). Each segment would receive $450,000 per year to fund 15-20 disciplinary faculty from their segment and jointly fund any necessary travel, facilitation, or convening costs, including instructional release time and summer stipends.

One-Time Funding Requests | Proposition 98

Deferred Maintenance & Instructional Equipment

($150 million one-time)

This year's one-time deferred maintenance augmentation was a substantial boost in addressing the approximately $1.1 billion in deferred maintenance backlog. The need to maintain and upgrade our facilities and equipment, particularly as we seek to reengage and support welcoming campus experiences for students is paramount to both campus operations and student success. As such, the California Community Colleges seek a one-time investment of $150 million in deferred maintenance and instructional equipment.

Non-Proposition 98

Continue Investments in Affordable Student Housing

($900 million one-time)

The 2021 and 2022 state budget acts set into motion historic investments in student housing, changing the paradigm from seeing student housing as college and university enterprise services to basic needs, affordability, and completion strategies. California Community Colleges across the state have responded with enthusiasm to this new direction, with over 70 colleges preparing plans and conducting feasibility studies. In support of these efforts, the

California Community Colleges, thanks to the support of the Governor and legislature, are launching an affordable student housing program and unit to assist colleges' successful implementation. To ensure continued momentum around affordable student housing, we request $900 million one-time for construction grants to address the needs of our homeless/housing insecure student population.

Pension Relief

AB 1469 (2014) set in place a plan stipulating that CalSTRS costs will be shared, with the state paying approximately 20 percent toward the amount unfunded, teachers paying 10 percent, and the remaining 70 percent is the responsibility of schools and community colleges. Under AB 1469, the CalSTRS employer contribution rate has been increasing each year since 2013-14 resulting in millions of dollars in additional annual costs to districts, beginning in FY 2015-16. CalPERS also faces a long-term deficit. While employer rates are set by the CalPERS Board rather than by statute, colleges face significant CalPERS contribution increases each year. As the CalSTRS and CalPERS contribution rates continue to rise, districts must often forego spending on student services, infrastructure, faculty, and program improvements.

For 2023-24, we are requesting a one-time allocation to provide relief around increases to CalPERS and CalSTRS retirement contributions. This request would permit colleges to redirect resources toward the student success goals outlined in the *Vision for Success*. We are supportive of these important retirement systems and the benefit they provide our employees; however, the mandated rate increases are significantly affecting district budgets.

MULTI-YEAR INVESTMENTS

Supporting California's Diverse Teacher Workforce

($10 million ongoing)

The current teacher workforce crisis requires mobilizing around intentional strategies to meet these urgent sector needs. California Community College prepare 85% of the early childhood education (ECE) workforce in California and over 60% of current K-12 credential teacher applicants attended a California Community College. These statistics reinforce the fact that we are the workforce preparation engine for this sector and as such, need an organized response to addressing our state's teacher workforce crisis. This proposal seeks funding to support the creation a CCC Teacher Preparation Program to strengthen college-level teacher preparation programs within the CCC system and to assist California in meeting

the significant workforce needs in the areas of early care and education, transitional kindergarten, after-school, special education, bilingual education, and STEM areas. Funding will be used for technical assistance providers, work-based learning in teacher preparation programs, and development of dual enrollment and transfer pathways in these fields. The goal of this proposal is to strengthen, scale, and align the community college role in diversifying the teacher workforce and meeting workforce demands in education throughout California.

Platform for Digital Innovation | Common Enterprise Resource Planning (Common ERP)

($392.3 million ongoing)

While many of our system reforms are interconnected, each district is left to their own devices when it comes to implementing technology reforms, each making different decisions about how to structure data, how to leverage existing systems, how to introduce new technology, etc. creating enormous inefficiencies and multiplying the opportunity for error in development and submission of all reporting. To date, all districts have independently selected and operated their own administrative systems that collect, store, and manage student and campus data; this data is provided months after the end of the term or academic year to perform these ongoing analyses. Historically, the collection has been slow, sometimes non-uniform, and suffered from both omission of data and noncompliance. Aside from the regulation-required analysis represented by MIS or 320 reports, the decentralization of administrative systems precludes real-time data-driven decision-making at the CCCCO; contributes to the inability to answer reasonable questions from the Board of Governors, legislators, or the Governor's administration; and lends the appearance that the CCC system overall does not have a grasp on the cybersecurity or fraud protection elements required by ED 70901(b) (2) and (3).

Importantly, the *Vision for Success* embraced the notion that it will take interconnected reforms to achieve bold student-centered goals, and yet the technological underpinning is such that the state leader and the CCCCO do not have access to timely or consistent data across the 73 districts, the 73 districts themselves are forced to fit the reforms into their specific technology environment, and the students are left with a fractured student experience that remains district-centric rather than student-centric.

This proposed 2024-25 request would seek one-time and ongoing funding to centrally operate the Platform for Digital Transformation. The Platform would support: 1)

enhanced systemwide information security and increased support for intercollege enrollment and employment; 2) real-time, actionable data to drive continuous improvement and information-based intervention; and 3) district and system level institutional resilience. This project would extend the domain of centralized and standardized technology applications to the administrative systems that handle student enrollments, human resources, finance, and financial aid by moving the system in its entirety from a collection of aging and unconnected on-premise systems to a singular cloud-based software as a service (SaaS) system that is locally configurable yet centrally managed and free of today's burdensome accumulated technical debt. For districts, systemwide integration would provide real opportunities to improve outcomes and completion, supporting fiscal health and resilience.

Modernize Grant Tracking Accountability Platforms

($900,000 ongoing)

The NOVA platform was initiated in 2016 to track plans, outcomes, and funding for the Strong Workforce Program. Since then, NOVA has expanded to include additional programs such as Adult Education, Perkins, Nursing, Guided Pathways, and Apprenticeship. Now, NOVA supports over two dozen Chancellor's Office programs across divisions. Currently, funding for NOVA comes through a variety of grant set-asides and has largely relied on professional services vendors. State operations budget and staffing has been insufficient to establish the necessary structure to effectively support and operate the NOVA system in-house. Efforts to address ongoing and increasing challenges include transfer of management of the NOVA platform to the Digital Innovation and Infrastructure (DII) Division to increase agency oversight of NOVA to align with State of California standards for information systems. Simultaneously, the Chancellor's Office has begun investing in reusable functionality and self-service tools to reduce development costs and over-reliance on the development vendor for basic changes. This proposal requests $963,000 in ongoing General Funds to support five additional staff within the Chancellor's Office. By bringing the system into Chancellor's Office control, the agency will achieve improved compliance with State of California regulations for information systems, improved oversight and responsiveness to business needs, and overall cost savings to the state compared to the vendor-hosted and operated scenario currently in place. This proposal could generate cost savings in future years of between $800,000 and $1.2 million annually compared to the current operational approach.

2023-24 LEGISLATIVE REQUEST

The legislative portion of the 2023-24 System Budget and Legislative Request is focused on closing equity gaps and ensuring that students can afford the total cost of attending and succeeding in college. Thanks to the courageous leadership and advocacy of California Community Colleges student leadership, the Board of Governors, and our allies, and the partnership of the California Student Aid Commission, the 2022-23 State Budget enacted a new "Cal Grant Equity Framework" that will provide equitable access to State financial aid for all community college students for the first time.

This year's legislative proposals also aim to address the total cost of attendance, for specific populations of students too often overlooked by large-scale, expansive efforts – student leaders serving at the system office level, and undocumented adult learner students seeking to transfer to a four-year university and earn a bachelor's degree.

Provide Sufficient Cost of Attendance Coverage for Student Board of Governors Members

Student members of the Board of Governors receive no compensation for their service, other than a modest per diem and coverage of travel and other expenses. This often forces student Board members to work multiple jobs to support their total cost of attendance, requiring them to balance their academic studies, work, and their service to the State and their fellow students as a Board of Governors member. In order to ensure that student Board members can focus on their studies and their Board service, this proposal would automatically award them a Student Success and Completion Grant (SSCG) for the duration of their service on the Board.

The SSCG, established in the 2017-18 budget, is a supplemental financial aid program designed to support community college students who can attend full time. Students already receiving a Cal Grant B are eligible, as of the enactment of the 2022-23 state budget, for additional aid of up to $8,000 per year if they are taking 15 units or more. This proposal would remove those eligibility provisions for student Board of Governors members, automatically providing them with the award in lieu of compensation for their service to the State of California and their fellow students as Board members.

Expand Eligibility for AB 540 Nonresident Tuition Exemption

In the more than 20 years since its passage, Assembly Bill 540 has successfully expanded opportunities for a college education and reduced opportunity gaps among the 72,000 undocumented students attending a California community college by removing the burden of out-of-state tuition. However, a key equity gap remains in place. Adult Dreamer students seeking to transfer from a community college to a four-year institution must have three combined years of prior high school or college experience earned in California, which forces many undocumented students to attend community college for a third, superfluous year even after they have earned the units they need to transfer.

Senate Bill 1141 (Limón, 2022), sponsored by the Chancellor's Office, addressed one component of the inequities that remain for AB 540 students, by allowing the third required year to be taken as credit courses, rather than noncredit, as has long been the case. However, in order to fulfill the goals of the Vision for Success and the Roadmap of reducing excess unit accumulation and increasing time to completion, this proposal would provide that a community college student who has completed 60 units or earned an Associate Degree for Transfer is automatically eligible for the AB 540 nonresident tuition exemption when they transfer to a four-year university.

Modernize workforce education programs to meet the needs of the 21st-century economy

The Economic and Workforce Development (EWD) program was established in the 1990s, and although the program has been renewed several times since then, the core language has not been updated in nearly 30 years. This proposal would generally recast and revise the provisions governing the EWD program and remove the sunset date. The reauthorization would integrate the lessons learned from prior program models and emphasize regional collaboration, coordination, and innovation necessary to support a student centered approach that expands work-based learning for students. The reauthorization would streamline the statute, place greater emphasis on key data collection that aligns with *Vision for Success* goals and metrics, and eliminate references to outdated programs since the introduction of the Strong Workforce program.

The purpose of this proposal is to update the legislative language for the Economic and Workforce Development (EWD) program. Assembly Bill 183 (Statutes of 2022) extended operation of the program by two years to be repealed on January 1, 2025. The updated legislative language would increase the focus on student success as advances are made for California's economic growth and global competitiveness through education, training, and services that contribute to continuous workforce improvement.

San Bernardino Community College District
Board Legislative Committee
December 9, 2022

Item: 2023 Legislative Principles (Draft: First Read)

Summary:
This item presents the San Bernardino Community College District's legislative principles for fiscal year 2023-24. These principles are the basis by with the SBCCD Board Legislative Committee and Chancellor's Office will evaluate local, state, and federal policy proposals and recommend action to support, oppose, or remain neutral.

Recommendation:
The Board Legislative Committee may make a recommendation to the full SBCCD Board of Trustees to approve SBCCD's 2023 legislative principles at the January 2023 meeting.

San Bernardino Community College District
2023 Legislative Principles

Overview: The legislative principles outlined below serve as a basis by which the SBCCD Board of Trustees directs the Board Legislative Committee and the Chancellor's Office to evaluate local, state, and federal policy proposals and recommend action to support, oppose, or remain neutral.

Eliminate Barriers to Student Access and Success

The SBCCD Board of Trustees supports public policies that increase student success, including completion, transfer, and employment while closing equity gaps and nurturing an anti-racist educational environment.

Increase Public Investment in Community College Students

The SBCCD Board of Trustees supports advocacy to increase state and federal funding, resources, and legislation that strengthen community colleges' ability to meet student equity and workforce development goals.

Improve College Affordability & Basic Needs Support

The SBCCD Board of Trustees supports legislation and other reforms to make college more affordable, and measures to address student basic needs, including food, housing, transportation, and access to technology.

Support Local Decision-Making

The SBCCD Board of Trustees affirms its responsibility to make decisions in the best interests of the local community, district, and colleges.

Strengthen State and Federal Partnerships

The SBCCD Board of Trustees will advocate for legislation where state or federal intervention is justified.

Promote Civic Engagement

The SBCCD Board of Trustees will be a leader and partner in addressing regional issues that enhance the quality of life. Additionally, SBCCD will advocate for adequate representation of the Inland Empire on legislatively-formed boards, commissions, task forces, study groups, and other bodies that may have an impact on SBCCD's educational mission.

San Bernardino Community College District
Board Legislative Committee
December 9, 2022

Item: 2023 Board Legislative Committee Charge (Draft: First Read)

Summary:
This item presents the purpose and charge of the Board Legislative Committee for the 2023-24 legislative and fiscal year.

Recommendation:
The Board Legislative Committee may make a recommendation to the full SBCCD Board of Trustees to approve the 2023 SBCCD Board Legislative Committee charge at the January 2023 meeting.

San Bernardino Community College District
Board Legislative Committee
2023 Committee Charge

The SBCCD Board of Trustees Legislative Committee exists as a standing, advisory committee comprised of less than a quorum of Board members and is subject to the California Public Meetings Brown Act.

The committee is charged with:

- Increasing the efficiency of the Board of Trustees by performing time-sensitive legislative research on its behalf.

- Improving clarity by providing a platform for detailed questions not conducive to the flow of monthly business meetings.

- Promoting transparency of SBCCD's legislative advocacy priorities through discussions in an open forum.

- Fostering an environment of understanding by communicating findings and formulating recommendations to the full Board of Trustees.