



**2022 REPORT**

# LGBTQ+ Legislative Report

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office | Sonya Christian, Chancellor





California  
Community  
Colleges

**SONYA CHRISTIAN**  
Chancellor

September 22, 2023

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor of California  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Legislative Report

Dear Governor Newsom:

On behalf of the Board of Governors for the California Community Colleges, I am pleased to present to you the California Community Colleges report on LGBTQ+ programs. This report is written in response to Assembly Bill 132 and the Budget Act of 2021.

In this report, the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office presents a detailed summary on how funding to provide additional support for LGBTQ+ students at California community colleges has been allocated and used. The report also details recommendations for future state funding.

Executive Vice Chancellor for the Equitable Student Learning, Experience and Impact Office Support Aisha Lowe may be contacted for questions and comments at [ALowe@CCCCO.edu](mailto:ALowe@CCCCO.edu).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sonya Christian".

Sonya Christian  
Chancellor

Enclosure: Report

# LGBTQ+ LEGISLATIVE REPORT

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Prepared By

**California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office**

## INTRODUCTION

In Fiscal Year 2021-22, the governor and the State Legislature allocated \$10,000,000 in one-time funding to provide additional support to LGBTQ+ students and specifically directed the investment toward evidence-based practices, including ([AB 132 SEC 89. \(a\)](#)):

- (1) LGBTQ+ centers.
- (2) Development of safe zones and providing safe zone training.
- (3) Mental health services.
- (4) Housing insecurity services.
- (5) LGBTQ+ learning communities.
- (6) Support for gay and straight alliance clubs.
- (7) LGBTQ+ curriculum development.
- (8) Lavender graduation.
- (9) Workshops or speaker series.
- (10) Other proven initiatives.

It is the responsibility of the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office to report to the Legislature on the use of funds appropriated; the number of colleges receiving funds; the amount per college; how colleges plan to use these funds; and any recommendations for future state funding ([AB 132 Sec 89. \(e\)](#)).

Research shows that campus cultures that fail to welcome, affirm, and prioritize students, denounce discrimination, equalize disproportionate levels of homelessness, and support basic needs decimate LGBTQ+ students' college success (Johnson, et al., 2022). Therefore, it is imperative to recognize unconditional belonging as a powerful force that shapes the equitable higher education journey of every student. Additionally, this new state investment further advances the System's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) commitment by recognizing and addressing the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ+ students while reinforcing the call for the removal of inequitable structures from the "right to fail" era. Unconditional belonging transcends the confines of identity, reaching across all facets of education to create an environment where each student feels valued, respected, and empowered to excel. Creating safe and inclusive spaces for LGBTQ+ students contribute to the broader goal of ensuring that every student, regardless of their background, identity, or orientation, has equal access to educational opportunities and resources. This comprehensive approach not only enriches the educational experience for LGBTQ+ individuals but also bolsters the collective strength and resilience of the entire community college system in California.

This report delves into the diverse range of activities implemented to support the success of LGBTQ+ students, while illuminating how designing educational spaces in general with their experiences in mind yields benefits that extend to every corner of the student body.

## FUNDING ALLOCATION FORMULA AND DISTRICT ALLOCATIONS:

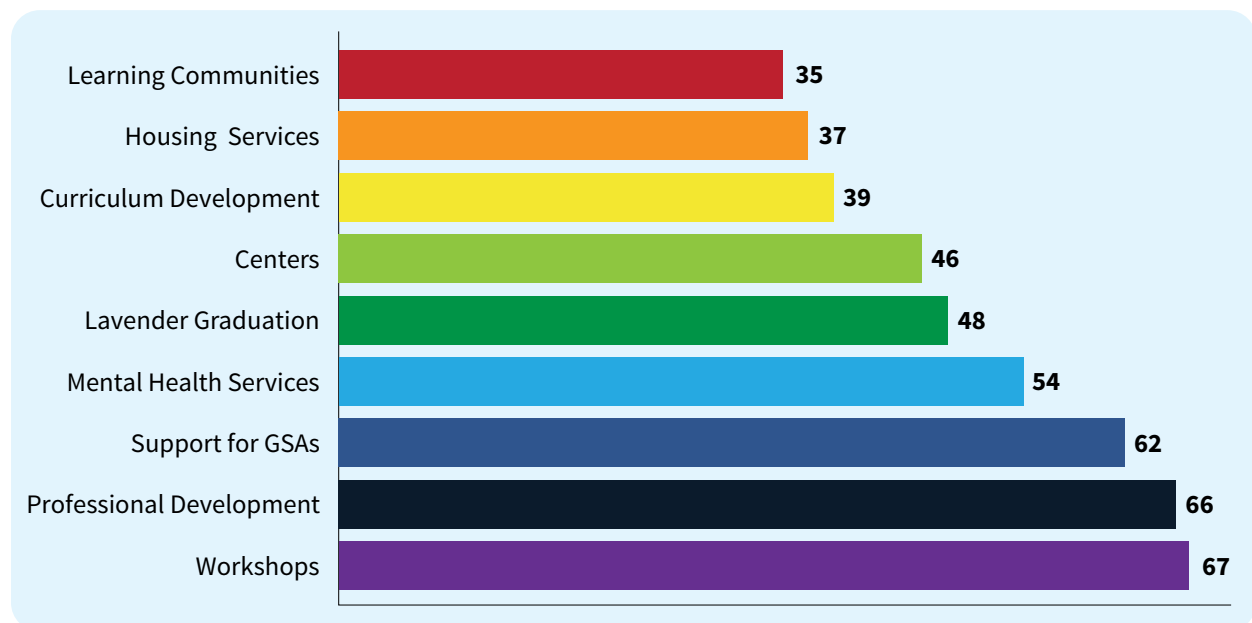
Education Code mandates that a grant of up to \$500,000 shall be provided to “community college districts based on the proportional share of students they serve and equity metrics to ensure that small rural colleges are able to access... the grants.” [AB 132 Sec 89. \(b\)\(2\)](#) To that end, the Chancellor’s Office calculated community college district allocations for this grant based on the formula detailed below:

- Capped allocation per district to \$500,000;
- Baseline funding of \$15,000 for each college;
- 75% of the remaining appropriation calculated based on student headcount; and
- 25% of the remaining appropriation calculated based on the number of Pell Grant recipients.

## USE OF FUNDS

Since the inception of the program, the LGBTQ+ program coordinators have been focused on prioritizing work to intentionally improve all aspects of campus culture to strengthen a sense of unconditional belonging while providing targeted support for LGBTQ+ students. Figure 1 summarizes the key activities the 73 community college districts have engaged in or plan to dedicate their resources to advance the outcomes of LGBTQ+ students.

**Figure 1: Districts with at least One LGBTQ + Center**

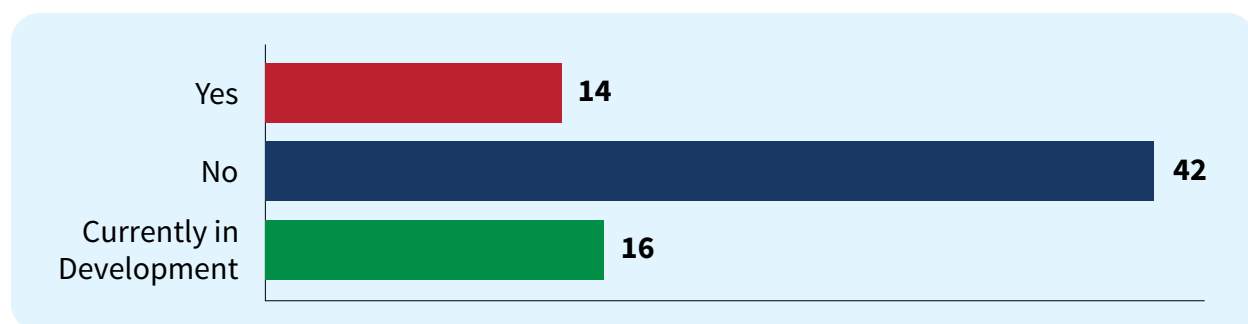


Nearly all districts prioritize the LGBTQ+ funds on workshops/speaker series, professional development/training on serving LGBTQ+ students, and support for Gay and Straight Alliance (GSA) clubs. These efforts directly address the need to create a more welcoming environment for LGBTQ+ students (Johnson, et al., 2022) and increase the cultural competency of the practitioners on campuses. Two-thirds of the districts intend to use these funds to support Lavender Graduation ceremonies on their campus. Lavender Graduations create a space of acceptance for LGBTQ+ students, like other graduation ceremonies for specific groups of students. Much like Pride Parades and Drag Shows, celebrations like Lavender Graduations promote institutional efforts of acceptance and understanding by proudly celebrating the accomplishments of the LGBTQ+ community (Ayala, 2022).

Just over half of the districts are using the funds to develop LGBTQ+ learning communities where cohort model learning focused on shared experiences and affirming of identity have been shown to lead to high rates of retention and academic achievement (Taylor, et al., 2003). Other districts are utilizing the funds to help faculty infuse curriculum with LGBTQ+ content and support pedagogical practices that affirm the queer and trans community. Research has shown that the inclusion of LGBTQ+ content across all disciplines provides LGBTQ+ students the ability to see themselves in the curriculum (Seelman, 2017) and promotes student success. For example, including LGBTQ+ history in civil rights discussions, reading literature by LGBTQ+ authors, and highlighting the contributions of LGBTQ+ luminaries in the field of study. Examples of inclusive classroom environments and pedagogical practices include using LGBTQ+ examples in coursework and exam questions, appropriate usage of lived names and pronouns, awareness of and comfort with directing LGBTQ+ students to resources, and outward signs of allyship and support for the community (e.g., using one’s own pronouns when introducing themselves, including a progressive Pride flag in their email signature or on their office door, including statements of support for LGBTQ+ community in their syllabi and in class conduct expectations).

Many districts are using the funds to establish an LGBTQ+ Center to further unconditional belonging for LGBTQ+ students (Mitchell & Davidson, 2021). As seen in Figure 2, fourteen districts have at least one LGBTQ+ center on one of their college campuses and sixteen are currently developing at least one center in their district. Districts reported challenges in locating and funding a suitable space for the center as the top barrier to the further scaling of the centers that can effectively serve LGBTQ+ students.

**Figure 2: Districts with at least One LGBTQ + Center**



As districts have increasingly recognized the important of mental health services for the wellbeing of our students, they are also recognizing the disproportionate rates of depression, bipolar depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and suicidal thoughts experienced by LGBTQ+ students (Conron, et al., 2022).

The overwhelming majority of districts supplement their currently offered mental health services with the following services:

- Crisis text lines.
- Suicide Prevention hotlines.
- Medi-Cal/Covered California enrollment.
- Peer to peer mental health support programs.
- Contract mental health services through external vendors.
- Provide prevention, early intervention, suicide prevention, and stigma reduction training activities for faculty, staff, and students.
- Partner with student advocacy groups to better understand mental health needs.
- Partner with county behavioral health and community-based mental health service providers.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS TO MAXIMIZE PROGRAM IMPACT AND ADVANCE STUDENT SUCCESS**

This one-time investment has resulted in some fundamental infrastructure on campus that supports LGBTQ+ students and contributed to the strengthening of DEIA-affirming campus culture across our System. However, ensuring that the progress achieved through this investment endures and continues to propel LGBTQ+ student success forward hinges upon strategic and sustained measures. The following recommendations outline key strategies to sustain and amplify the positive outcomes of this program:

### **1. Enhancing Data Collection and Analysis**

Robust data collection and analysis are vital for understanding the nuanced experiences and challenges faced by LGBTQ+ students. By gathering disaggregated data that captures the intersectionality of identities, institutions can tailor interventions and allocate resources more effectively. However, fear of discrimination and stigma continues to make it difficult to accurately measure the size of the LGBTQ+ student population on campuses and understand their unique challenges. Research indicates that 75% of LGBTQ+ students do not identify their LGBTQ+ status to their college campuses (Conron, et al., 2022). This also means that students are less likely to seek assistance when facing LGBTQ+ specific challenges, further deviating their pathway to completion, transfer, and gainful employment, as well as compromising the validity of self-reported data (Conron, et al., 2022).



The data collection methods our system deploys also does not recognize the fluidity of LGBTQ+ identities. Currently, the districts use data obtained from CCCApply, which is the one-time application all students use to apply to enroll in the California Community Colleges. Districts enhance their learning by leveraging additional local data sources for comparative representation, adding gender identity and sexual orientation questions on campus climate surveys, and working with categorical programs which may collect more granular demographic information. By investing in data collection infrastructure and data analysis capabilities systemwide, institutions can better capture the diverse experiences of LGBTQ+ students and gain critical insights necessary for tailor interventions and continuous improvement.

## **2. Ongoing Funding to Sustain LGBTQ+ Support Infrastructure**

The impact of LGBTQ+ support infrastructure, such as LGBTQ+ centers and evidence-based interventions, cannot be overstated in fostering an inclusive educational environment for the LGBTQ+ students. However, the significance of these initiatives extends far beyond their initial implementation; it lies in their lasting influence on the lives of LGBTQ+ students. To ensure the enduring presence of such critical resources, an unwavering commitment to ongoing funding is essential. LGBTQ+ centers serve as vital hubs for community-building, providing a haven where students can find understanding, acceptance, and the resources they need to thrive. These centers facilitate networking, offer educational programs, and provide mental health support, all of which contribute to improved academic success and overall well-being. By dedicating continuous financial support, educational institutions demonstrate their dedication to creating a lasting impact on LGBTQ+ students' lives, ensuring that they have access to a support system that uplifts and empowers them throughout their educational journey.

## **3. Strengthening Mental Health Service Design and Delivery for LGBTQ+ Students**

The mental health journey of LGBTQ+ students is often marked by distinct challenges that require tailored approaches to design and delivery of mental health services. Navigating an environment that may not always be fully affirming of their identities, these students contend with issues like stigma, discrimination, and internalized shame, all of which can significantly impact their psychological well-being. Therefore, it is imperative that mental health services are thoughtfully designed to cater to the unique needs of LGBTQ+ students.

Currently, colleges are providing student mental health services with the ongoing investment from [Senate Bill 129 \(Budget Act of 2021\)](#). Although this investment is necessary, it is insufficient to address the diverse mental health needs of our students, resulting in inconsistent experiences by the LGBTQ+ students. It is critical for the System to advocate for resources and invest in intentional collaboration between campus LGBTQ+ organizations and mental health centers to ensure that mental health services are inclusive and affirming of LGBTQ+ students, including: cultural competency training, creating visible and welcoming spaces within mental health facilities, tailored support groups, culturally relevant services, LGBTQ+ inclusive resources. By embracing the unique needs of LGBTQ+ students in the design and delivery of mental health services, the System takes a crucial step towards addressing mental health inequity and fostering a sense of unconditional belonging for the LGBTQ+ students.

#### 4. Unwavering Commitment toward Unconditional Belonging

In the journey toward creating a truly inclusive and equitable learning environment for LGBTQ+ students, the concept of intersectionality emerges as a crucial lens through which we must view the experiences of LGBTQ+ students. Addressing intersectionality is pivotal because it acknowledges the interconnectedness of various identities – gender, sexual orientation, race, socioeconomic status, and more – which collectively shape an individual’s experiences. LGBTQ+ students often face unique and compound challenges due to their intersecting identities.

Therefore, while targeted investments in the LGBTQ+ program are essential to providing specific resources and support, it is equally important to leverage the System’s DEIA efforts to address systemic barriers and promote a culture of unconditional belonging. These efforts include cultivating a campus climate that removes inequitable barriers and student friction points, ensuring a culturally relevant curriculum that celebrates diversity and empowers students to see themselves reflected in their education, and strengthening robust professional development activities that deepen the System’s competency to deliver culturally competent services that are resonate with diverse student populations. By focusing resources and efforts on both sustaining the LGBTQ+ program and accelerating the System’s DEIA priorities, we have a unique opportunity to tap into a comprehensive strategy that will not only magnifies the positive impact of the LGBTQ+ program but also enables a more comprehensive and transformative change that benefits not only LGBTQ+ students but also the entire campus community.

#### REFERENCES

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## APPENDIX A

Amount Allocated Per District:

DISTRICT	ALLOCATION
Imperial	\$51,013
Kern	\$244,642
Lake Tahoe	\$49,290
Lassen	\$52,222
Long Beach	\$133,894
Los Angeles	\$500,000
Los Rios	\$436,949
Marin	\$56,222
Mendocino-Lake	\$51,713
Merced	\$75,533
Mira Costa	\$78,804
Monterey Peninsula	\$63,661
Mt. San Antonio	\$214,871
Mt. San Jacinto	\$87,063
Napa Valley	\$81,965
North Orange County	\$264,476
Ohlone	\$82,357
Palo Verde	\$62,126
Palomar	\$127,529
Pasadena Area	\$151,646
Peralta	\$262,381
Rancho Santiago	\$276,618
Redwoods	\$52,281

<b>DISTRICT</b>	<b>ALLOCATION</b>
Rio Hondo	\$102,700
Riverside	\$255,466
San Bernardino	\$183,800
San Diego	\$387,367
San Francisco	\$178,367
San Joaquin Delta	\$114,435
San Jose-Evergreen	\$139,810
San Luis Obispo	\$93,124
San Mateo	\$208,997
Santa Barbara	\$99,603
Santa Clarita	\$152,507
Santa Monica	\$176,274
Sequoias	\$84,622
Shasta-Tehama-Trinity	\$77,465
Sierra	\$109,214
Siskiyou	\$52,743
Solano	\$67,185
Sonoma	\$146,890
South Orange County	\$250,913
Southwestern	\$115,287
State Center	\$343,805
Ventura	\$224,276
Victor Valley	\$76,246
West Hills	\$106,737
West Kern	\$61,327
West Valley-Mission	\$135,873
Yosemite	\$148,237
Yuba	\$82,829

Front cover photo: Fresno Pride Parade

Photo at right: Napa Valley College

Back cover photo: Allan Hancock Pride Flag Ceremony



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