



Frequently Asked Questions

RISING SCHOLARS NETWORK (VRC)

UPDATED FEBRUARY 10, 2022

- 1) ARE COLLEGES ELIGIBLE TO APPLY IF THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS HAVE NOT BEEN MET?**
- 2) WHAT IS CONSIDERED A “RISING SCHOLARS PROGRAM”? DID OUR COLLEGE HAVE A RISING SCHOLARS PROGRAM IF WE DID NOT RECEIVE A 2019 REENTRY GRANT?**
- 3) WHAT IS A ‘RISING SCHOLARS’ STUDENT?**
- 4) WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ‘SERVE’ RISING SCHOLARS STUDENTS?**
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- 15) IF THE QUESTION ASKS ABOUT AN MOU, BUT WE HAD A CONTRACT INSTEAD OF AN MOU, CAN WE SAY “YES”?**



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24) WHAT IS THE MINIMUM NUMBER OF POINTS?

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34) CAN MORE THAN ONE COLLEGE IN A DISTRICT APPLY?

35) WE HAVE A DEDICATED SPACE NOW BUT DID NOT HAVE ONE IN 19-20. WE HAD A 2019 REENTRY GRANT. SHOULD WE ANSWER YES OR NO IN THE 19-20 COLUMN?

RESPONSES

1) ARE COLLEGES ELIGIBLE TO APPLY IF THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS HAVE NOT BEEN MET?

ANSWER: Yes. The application has been amended and the Minimum Requirements have been removed. Instead, the questions that were in the Minimum Requirements are now called “General Standards” and they are worth ten points. The total amount of points available in the application has been raised from 80 to 90. All community colleges are eligible and may apply.

2) WHAT IS CONSIDERED A “RISING SCHOLARS PROGRAM”? DID OUR COLLEGE HAVE A RISING SCHOLARS PROGRAM IF WE DID NOT RECEIVE A 2019 REENTRY GRANT?

ANSWER: For purposes of the RFA, any college that had a program to provide services explicitly for incarcerated or formerly incarcerated students had a Rising Scholars Program, whether or not they received a 2019 Reentry Grant. Any community college could open, create, or establish a Rising Scholars program at their campus and could receive technical assistance from the Chancellor’s Office and the Regional Coordinators. Colleges do not have to use the term “Rising Scholars Program,” so long as incarcerated and/or formerly incarcerated students are explicitly and directly the recipients of the college’s program services.

3) WHAT IS A ‘RISING SCHOLARS’ STUDENT?

ANSWER: Rising Scholars are students who are currently incarcerated or detained, or students with a prior adult conviction or juvenile adjudication. Students not incarcerated or detained, or who don’t themselves have a prior conviction or adjudication, should not be counted as Rising Scholars students for purposes of this RFA.

4) WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ‘SERVE’ RISING SCHOLARS STUDENTS?

ANSWER: Any time a formerly or currently incarcerated student seeks services and they are provided support by the program, that is considered served for purposes of this RFA. If you have provided assistance once or repeatedly, the student can be counted.

5) CAN WE ADD A NARRATIVE TO EXPLAIN A “NO” RESPONSE?

ANSWER: The Chancellor’s Office expects that all applicants will have a number of “no” responses for which they have an explanation. The application does not have a space for those explanations because the Chancellor’s Office does not have an objective means by which to evaluate them. Changing an applicant’s score because of a narrative explanation would be inherently subjective and unfair to other applicants. The application, therefore, does not have a space for explanations. If a criterion is not fully



met and completed by the end of the time period, applicants must select “no” even if the applicant has an explanation.

6) WHAT IF OUR COLLEGE’S SG04 AND/OR SG15 DATA IS NOT ACCURATE IN THE CHANCELLOR’S OFFICE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (COMIS)?

ANSWER: As noted in the application, the Chancellor’s Office will use COMIS for the General Standards” questions and for the tie breaker. The Chancellor’s Office may also look to COMIS if a response to questions 1 through 60 is being verified. The Chancellor’s Office and the Rising Scholars regional coordinators have been notifying colleges with Rising Scholars programs for over a year that COMIS would likely be used to make funding determinations if categorical funding were obtained. If an applicant believes their data to be incorrect, a letter may be submitted signed by the college President or Superintendent, explaining the discrepancy and providing correct information. Applicants should expect that such letters will be accepted only for this first year of funding, and that the Chancellor’s Office will rely on COMIS in the future. Letters should be submitted by email to MAnderson@cccco.edu and lwoodyar@cccco.edu.

7) WHAT COUNTS AS DEDICATED SPACE?

ANSWER: Question 8, required for all applicants, requires that the college designate an office or other defined space on the campus explicitly for the Rising Scholars program. The space need not be exclusively used by the Rising Scholars program, but must be a permanent space on campus where the Rising Scholars program and Rising Scholars program staff are located. The space should have an address, building and/or office number, or equivalent.

Question 47, required for applicants with an on-campus, jail or youth program, requires that the college provide a dedicated and defined space large enough for Rising Scholars students to meet and congregate. The space must be exclusively for Rising Scholars students and the Rising Scholars program.

8) IS BUDGET INFORMATION REQUIRED IN NOVA?

ANSWER: The application does not require colleges to submit a proposed budget. Colleges will submit a budget proposal upon receiving the grant award. More information will be provided after preliminary awards have been announced on March 30.

9) WILL THERE BE RESTRICTIONS ON USAGE OF FUNDING?

ANSWER: Rising Scholars funding must be used to support incarcerated and/or formerly incarcerated students. Applicants submitting an application in category 1 (prison) must use the funds to support students in prison and applicants submitting an application in category 2 (campus/jail/juvenile) must use the funds to support students on campus and/or in county jail and/or in juvenile detention. Applicants may use the funds for students in both categories but colleges making this choice will be required to report on student outcomes in both categories. Successful applicants will be asked to submit a budget after the grants are approved in the Board of Governors meeting on May 23. Success applicants may choose how to spend the funds in the manner that they believe will best achieve positive student outcomes. In building their budgets, colleges should be aware that Rising Scholars grants are Prop 98 funds. Other budget restrictions, if any, will be provided after preliminary awards have been announced on March 30.



10) WHAT IF WE WANT TO SERVE RISING SCHOLARS STUDENTS BUT DON'T QUALIFY FOR FUNDING IN THIS ROUND?

ANSWER: The Chancellor's Office intends to offer a grant opportunity for colleges that did not receive a 2019 Reentry Grant and do not qualify for funding in this RFA.

11) ARE 'INDIRECTS' INCLUDED OR OPTIONAL WITH THIS GRANT?

ANSWER: This question is answered by question 9, above.

12) IF WE HAD A 2019 REENTRY GRANT, SHOULD WE ANSWER BOTH COLUMNS IN SECTIONS A AND B?

ANSWER: Yes. If you had a 2019 Reentry grant you should respond "yes" or "no" in the "Existing Reentry Grantee 2019-20" column and in the "Existing Reentry Grantee 2020-21" column. Provide the accurate response for each year, regardless of when or how you spent the 2019 Reentry Grants funds.

13) QUESTION 33 ASKS IF ALL INCARCERATED STUDENTS RECEIVED THEIR BOOKS AND MATERIALS IN THE FIRST WEEK OF THE TERM. WHAT IF STUDENTS ARE ADDED TO THE CLASS AFTER THE FIRST WEEK?

ANSWER: You may respond "yes" to this question if all incarcerated students in the class during the first week of the term received their books and materials no later than the end of the first week of the term.

14) IF PART OF A FACULTY COUNSELOR'S RESPONSIBILITY IS TO EXPLICITLY SUPPORT RISING SCHOLARS STUDENTS, IS THAT "FACULTY REASSIGNED TIME"?

ANSWER: No. The application asks if a faculty member had reassigned time explicitly to support the Rising Scholar program. This means that the faculty member has been released from some of their otherwise expected contractual duties in order to support the Rising Scholars program, often through a reduced teaching load. A faculty counselor who is counseling and supporting students within their regular job description, even if a portion of the counselor's caseload is designated for Rising Scholars students, has not had reassigned time to support the Rising Scholars program.

15) IF THE QUESTION ASKS ABOUT AN MOU, BUT WE HAD A CONTRACT INSTEAD OF AN MOU, CAN WE SAY "YES"?

ANSWER: Yes.



16) SECTION C ASKS IF PRIORITY REGISTRATION WAS OFFERED TO RISING SCHOLARS STUDENTS. WHAT IF THEY RECEIVED PRIORITY REGISTRATION BECAUSE OF OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH ANOTHER PROGRAM LIKE EOPS?

ANSWER: If all Rising Scholars students had the opportunity for priority registration because of their status as Rising Scholars students, the answer is yes. If some Rising Scholars students receive priority registration only when they also qualify for a different program, the answer is no.

17) HOW WILL THE CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE VERIFY RESPONSES?

ANSWER: The Chancellor's Office may verify any response by looking at COMIS or applicant's 2019 Reentry Grant reporting, gathering information from the Regional Coordinators, asking applicant for additional information, or any other means that may be relevant to the verification. If an applicant's response is questioned after the verification review, the Chancellor's Office will notify applicant and provide applicant an opportunity to respond.

18) WHAT IF WE DID NOT HAVE STUDENTS IN 19-20 OR 20-21, BUT WE HAVE A PROGRAM IN 21-22?

ANSWER: All community colleges are eligible to apply for this grant. Applicants must respond to the questions with accurate information for the requested time period.

19) WHEN WILL THE CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE LOOK AT COMIS DATA?

ANSWER: For purposes of this RFA, the Chancellor's Office will look at COMIS data after applications are received and before preliminary awards are announced.

20) CAN ONE FTE BE COMPRISED OF MORE THAN ONE EMPLOYEE?

ANSWER: Yes.

21) WHAT IS CREDIT ENROLLMENT?

ANSWER: Credit enrollment is the number of enrollments in credit courses in a particular term. An individual student can comprise more than one credit enrollment if the student is taking more than one credit course. If one student enrolls in two credit courses, that is two credit enrollments.

22) IF A QUESTION ASKS ABOUT THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS, DOES IT MATTER IF THE STUDENTS ARE FACE-TO-FACE, DISTANCE, OR CORRESPONDENCE?

ANSWER: Unless the question specifies a particular modality, all modalities can be counted.

23) IF THE QUESTION ASKS ABOUT IN-PERSON, CAN WE INCLUDE DISTANCE MODALITIES SUCH AS TEAMS OR ZOOM?

ANSWER: No. Question 4 in Section A asks if all of applicant's Rising Scholars students would have had frequent in-person contact with Rising Scholars program faculty or staff, but for the pandemic. Question 8 in Section C asks if more than 90% of applicant's courses in prison would have been face-to-face, but for the pandemic. Both questions require that applicant would have had in-person, face-to-face contact, not



distance or correspondence, had there not been a pandemic. If applicant had in-person, face-to-face contact with students prior to the pandemic and will return to in-person, face-to-face contact as soon as permitted, the response would be “yes” even if applicant had to utilize another modality during the pandemic. If applicant utilized a distance modality such as teams or zoom during the pandemic, but cannot show that they would have been in-person or face-to-face had we not had a pandemic, the answer is “no.”

24) WHAT IS THE MINIMUM NUMBER OF POINTS?

ANSWER: Applications under 63 points will not be funded. An earlier version of the application mistakenly noted the prior minimum (56 points) on page 28. That has been updated and the minimum is 63 points, 70% of the total available points.

25) WHAT IF WE HAD A REENTRY GRANT FOR ON-CAMPUS, BUT WE WANT TO APPLY NOW FOR PRISON?

ANSWER: Applicants are free to choose whichever category they prefer for this application regardless of their 2019 Reentry Grant. Responses should be accurate for the chosen category of students at your college for the specified time period, regardless of where you spent your 2019 Reentry Grant funds.

26) CAN CENTERS APPLY?

ANSWER: Centers must apply through their affiliated fully accredited college or through their district.

27) IF WE ARE SUBMITTING A DISTRICT APPLICATION AND ONLY SOME OF THE COLLEGES IN OUR COLLABORATION RECEIVED A 2019 REENTRY GRANT, WHICH COLUMNS DO WE FILL OUT?

ANSWER: District applicants should complete the two “Existing Reentry Grantee” columns if any of the colleges in the collaboration received a 2019 Reentry Grant. Responses may be based on data and verifiable practices at any one of the colleges in the collaboration, or by combining data from the colleges in the collaboration. If any colleges in the collaboration had a 2019 Reentry Grant, do not fill out the “No Prior Reentry Grant” column.

28) IF THE QUESTION ASKS ABOUT OUTREACH TO PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS, CAN WE INCLUDE OUTREACH CONDUCTED BY ZOOM?

ANSWER: Yes.

29) HOW DO WE ACCOUNT FOR STUDENTS IN NON-CREDIT?

ANSWER: If a question asks about the number of students in credit courses, count only those students in credit courses. If the questions about the number of students and does not specify the type of course, you may count all students including those in non-credit.



30) WHEN COUNTING THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO COMPLETED COURSES, DO WE CLAIM STUDENTS BY SEMESTER OR BY YEAR?

ANSWER: If the question asks about the number of students in an academic year, count each student once no matter how many terms they enrolled during that academic year.

31) FOR THE QUESTION ABOUT INVOLVING STUDENTS OR PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR INCLUSION OF STUDENTS' VOICES IN GUIDED PATHWAYS, WOULD OUR CAMPUS COORDINATOR COUNT?

ANSWER: If your coordinator is a formerly incarcerated or detained student, they count. This question is asking about student participation in Guided Pathways meetings or other opportunities for Rising Scholars students to be directly involved and participate in the Guided Pathways rollout at your college.

32) IN CALCULATING OUR NUMBER OF STUDENTS, MUST THE STUDENTS BE ENROLLED?

ANSWER: If the question specifies that the students had to complete courses, the students must have been enrolled. If the question asked about students who received services, colleges may include students who were accurately coded as SG15 even if not enrolled so long as the student received services as part of a categorical program, consistent with the reporting domain for SG files. The 2019 Reentry Grant may be considered a categorical program.

33) IF THE QUESTION ASKS ABOUT A FULL-TIME DIRECTOR OR COORDINATOR, DOES THAT MEAN FULL-TIME 100% FOR RISING SCHOLARS?

ANSWER: Yes.

34) CAN MORE THAN ONE COLLEGE IN A DISTRICT APPLY?

ANSWER: Yes. Any community college can apply, and any district can apply. District applications are not required to include all the colleges in the district. Individual colleges must choose between applying independently and being part of a district collaboration.

35) WE HAVE A DEDICATED SPACE NOW BUT DID NOT HAVE ONE IN 19-20. WE HAD A 2019 REENTRY GRANT. SHOULD WE ANSWER YES OR NO IN THE 19-20 COLUMN?

ANSWER: All answers must be accurate for the specified time period, whether or not you had a 2019 Reentry Grant. For the "Reentry Grant 19-20" column, the answer should be yes if the criteria were fully met and completed by the end of the 19-20 academic year. For the "Reentry Grant 20-21" column, the answer should be yes if the criteria were fully met and completed by the end of the 20-21 academic year. For the "No Prior Reentry Grant 19-20 and/or 20-21" column, the answer should be yes if the criteria were fully met and completed by the end of 19-20 or 20-21 academic year.