

California Community Colleges

Statewide Policy Manual

Student Housing Affordability, Cost of Attendance Accuracy, and Housing Assistance Transparency

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Applies To: California Community College

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Section 1 – Purpose, Authority, and Applicability

PURPOSE

This Statewide Policy Manual establishes a systemwide framework to support compliance with state requirements related to student housing affordability commitments, accuracy of housing and meal plan cost disclosures, and transparency of housing assistance program information for California Community Colleges. These policy areas affect students' ability to make informed decisions about attending college and to understand available housing-related resources.

This manual responds to recommendations issued by the California State Auditor in [Report 2024-111](#) and clarifies community college district and colleges' operating student housing as well as the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (Chancellor's Office) responsibilities for monitoring, disclosure, and corrective action, where applicable.

AUTHORITY

The policies and procedures described in this document are issued pursuant to the Chancellor's Office responsibilities to provide statewide leadership and direction for the California Community Colleges under applicable provisions of the California Education Code, including sections 70901 and 17200-17204, Government Code sections 15820.200-15820.206, and applicable Budget Act provisions. This document is intended to support implementation of statutory affordability requirements, transparency, reporting, and oversight responsibilities associated with the Affordable Student Housing Program and related student housing activities administered or supported by California Community Colleges. Nothing in this document is intended to establish regulations or expand the Chancellor's Office authority beyond applicable law.

APPLICABILITY

Applicability under this manual is differentiated based on the nature of each policy requirement:

- **Long-Term Housing Affordability (Section 3)** applies only to student housing facilities constructed using state funds awarded under the Affordable Student Housing Program.
- **Cost-of-Attendance Disclosures Related to Housing and Meal Plans (Section 4)** applies only to colleges that operate student housing and/or provide meal plans, or that otherwise publish housing or meal plan costs as part of cost-of-attendance disclosures.
- **Housing Assistance Program Information Transparency (Section 5)** applies only to colleges that offer housing assistance programs.

Colleges are subject only to requirements applicable to their specific housing operations or services. This manual does not require colleges to construct or operate student housing, establish housing assistance programs, or modify cost-of-attendance calculation methodologies.

POLICY MAINTENANCE

This manual may be updated as needed to reflect changes in law, audit guidance, or program requirements. Updates will be communicated to the California Community Colleges system to support consistent understanding and implementation.

Section 2 – Definitions

For purposes of this manual, the following definitions apply:

Affordable Student Housing Program: The Chancellor’s Office program for state-supported affordable student housing at California community colleges, including intersegmental projects with University of California or California State University campuses, and related projects and activities authorized under the Higher Education Student Housing and Capacity Expansion Grant Program pursuant to Education Code sections 17200-17204 and the Statewide Lease Revenue Bond financing framework pursuant to Government Code sections 15820.200-15820.206.

Community College District and College Housing Operators: Community college districts, colleges, affiliated auxiliary organizations, or other entities authorized to operate or manage student housing on behalf of a California community college district or college.

Cost-of-Attendance: The total estimated cost for a student to attend college for one academic year, including tuition and fees, housing, food, transportation, books and supplies, and personal expenses.

Housing Assistance Programs: Community college district operated and/or college-supported programs primarily intended to assist students in obtaining or maintaining housing.

State-Funded Housing Facility: Student housing facilities constructed, renovated, or financed with state funds or state-supported financing under the Affordable Student Housing Program, including projects authorized pursuant to Education Code sections 17200-17204 and Government Code sections 15820.200-15820.206.

Section 3 – Policy A: Long-Term Housing Affordability Compliance

POLICY STATEMENT

Community college district and college housing operators must maintain affordable rents or bed rates for the full operational life of any State-Funded Housing facility. The Chancellor's Office will monitor affordability on an ongoing basis to ensure that commitments made at the time of award are upheld over time.

PROCEDURES

A.1 Affordability Standards

The Chancellor's Office will publish affordability reference rates by county to support consistent implementation and monitoring of the affordability requirements established in Education Code sections 17200-17204, applicable Budget Act provisions, and Affordable Student Housing Program award conditions. These rates will be published by June of each year, unless there are delays in releasing these data from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and/or the California Department of Housing and Community Development. Campuses must ensure that rents or bed rates for State-Funded Housing remain compliant with those statutory and award-based affordability requirements, as reflected in the published affordability reference rates.

A.2 Annual Affordability Certification

On or before February 1 of each year, Community college districts, in coordination with college housing operators, must submit an annual affordability certification that includes:

- Current rents or other housing charges applicable to affordable student housing provided under the Affordable Student Housing Program
- Any planned changes to rents or other housing charges for the upcoming year
- Confirmation that current and planned housing charges remain consistent with applicable Affordable Student Housing Program affordability requirements and Chancellor's Office published affordability reference rates for the county in which the housing facility is located

The certification must be signed by the community college district Chief Business Officer or designee to confirm institutional accountability.

A.3 Monitoring and Review

The Chancellor's Office will review submitted affordability certifications for completeness and consistency with applicable statutory requirements, Affordable Student Housing Program award conditions, and published affordability reference rates. The Chancellor's

Office may request additional information or clarification when questions or discrepancies are identified.

A.4 Corrective Action

If, based on its review, the Chancellor's Office determines that a community college district and college housing operator is not in compliance with applicable statutory affordability requirements, Budget Act provisions, Affordable Student Housing Program award conditions, or the published affordability reference rates, the Chancellor's Office will issue written notice identifying the specific areas of noncompliance. The Community college district and college housing operators must submit a corrective action plan within 60 business days describing the steps and timeline for returning to compliance and must implement corrective measures within 130 business days unless an alternative timeline is approved by the Chancellor's Office. Continued or unresolved noncompliance may be considered in evaluating eligibility for future state-funded student housing programs or related funding opportunities.

A.5 Recordkeeping

Community college district and college housing operators must retain sufficient documentation to demonstrate ongoing compliance with affordability requirements for State-Funded Housing for the duration required by applicable statute, Budget Act provisions, and Affordable Student Housing Program award conditions. Such documentation must be made available to the Chancellor's Office upon request for purposes of monitoring, review, audit, or oversight.

Section 4 – Policy B: Cost-of-Attendance Disclosures Related to Housing and Meal Plans

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy applies to Community college district and college housing operators that offer meal plans, or that otherwise publish housing or meal plan costs as part of their cost-of-attendance disclosures. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that prospective students and their families have access to accurate, dependable, and current information regarding cost-of-attendance disclosures related to housing and meal plan costs.

This policy establishes a monitoring and correction process and does not assign the Chancellor's Office responsibility for calculating, approving, or establishing the college's cost-of-attendance methodologies. Community college district and college housing operators retain full responsibility for developing, maintaining, and publishing cost-of-attendance information in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

PROCEDURES

B.1 Annual Monitoring of Cost-of-Attendance Disclosures Related to Housing and Meal Plans

By March 1 of each year, the Chancellor's Office will review publicly available cost-of-attendance disclosures related to housing and meal plan costs for colleges within the scope of this policy. Websites and other published materials provided by the community college district and college will be reviewed to verify that housing and meal plan cost information is complete, accurate, and current.

B.2 Identification and Notification of Disclosure Issue

If, through annual monitoring, the Chancellor's Office identifies housing or meal plan cost disclosures that are inaccurate, incomplete, internally inconsistent, or inconsistent with applicable disclosure requirements, the Chancellor's Office will document the issue and notify the community college district and college housing operators in writing. The notification will identify the specific information requiring correction and reference the applicable disclosure requirement.

B.3 Corrective Action

Following written notification, the community college district and college housing operators must take corrective action to address the identified disclosure issue and update the published information to ensure accuracy and completeness. Once corrections have been made, the community college district and college housing operators must provide written confirmation to the Chancellor's Office describing the corrective action taken and affirming that the updated disclosure reflects current and accurate housing or meal plan cost

information. Correction requirements under this policy are limited to disclosure accuracy and completeness and do not require submission, review, or approval of underlying cost-of-attendance calculation methodologies.

B.4 Follow-Up and Escalation

If community college district and college housing operators do not confirm correction of identified disclosure issues, or if similar issues recur in subsequent monitoring cycles, the Chancellor's Office may initiate follow-up communication with the community college district and college housing operators leadership to support timely resolution and reinforce disclosure expectations. Follow-up actions under this subsection are intended to promote accurate and complete disclosures and do not constitute an audit or approval function.

B.5 Guidance and Technical Assistance

The Chancellor's Office may provide guidance or technical assistance to support community college district and college housing operators in understanding housing and meal plan cost disclosure requirements and in addressing identified issues. Guidance provided under this policy is advisory in nature and does not constitute approval or endorsement of community college district and college housing operators cost-of-attendance calculations or methodologies.

Section 5 – Policy C: Housing Assistance Program Information Transparency

POLICY STATEMENT AND APPLICABILITY

This policy applies only to community college districts and colleges that offer housing assistance programs. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students can easily access accurate, clear, and current information about available housing assistance services.

This policy governs website posting and update requirements only. It does not require colleges to establish housing assistance programs, does not regulate program design, eligibility determinations, funding, or service delivery, and does not assign the Chancellor's Office responsibility for administering or approving housing assistance programs.

Colleges that do not offer housing assistance programs are not subject to the requirements of this section.

PROCEDURES

C.1 Required Website Information

Each college that offers housing assistance programs must maintain publicly accessible information on its website for each active housing assistance program. At a minimum, the posted information must include:

- A description of the housing assistance offering
- Program eligibility criteria
- Instructions on how to apply for assistance

The information must be presented in a clear and understandable manner and be accessible to students without requiring authentication.

C.2 Update Frequency

All community college districts and colleges that help programs are subject to this policy and must review and update housing assistance program information at the start of each academic semester or quarter to ensure that posted information is accurate and reflects current program availability, eligibility criteria, and application procedures.

C.3 Monitoring and Corrective Action

The Chancellor's Office may periodically review college websites to verify that required housing assistance program information is posted and updated in accordance with this policy. If the Chancellor's Office identifies missing, inaccurate, or outdated information, it will notify the college and direct the college to correct the identified issue. Correction under this policy is limited to posting and updating required information and does not involve review, approval, or oversight of housing assistance program operations.

Section 6. Implementation and Oversight

The Chancellor's Office will support implementation of this manual through guidance, technical assistance, and ongoing communication with colleges, as appropriate. Oversight activities under this manual are intended to promote consistency and transparency while recognizing differences in community college district and college housing operations and local implementation approaches.

Implementation of this manual will occur through the policies and procedures described in Sections 3, 4, and 5. Responsibilities under this manual apply only to colleges within the scope of each section, as described in Section 1.

For long-term housing affordability requirements, the Chancellor's Office will implement oversight activities consistent with Section 3. This will include review of community college district and college housing operators certifications, follow-up as needed, and California Community Colleges systemwide reporting to support accountability for State-Funded Housing.

For housing and meal plan cost disclosure accuracy, the Chancellor's Office will implement monitoring and correction activities consistent with Section 4, focused on publicly available disclosures and limited to directing correction of identified inaccuracies or omissions. For housing assistance program information transparency, the Chancellor's Office will implement monitoring activities consistent with Section 5, limited to verification that required information is posted and updated by colleges that offer housing assistance programs.

Nothing in this section is intended to create additional reporting, submission, approval, certification, or training requirements beyond those expressly described in this manual. The Chancellor's Office will implement oversight activities in a manner that is proportionate to the requirements of each section and focuses on ensuring consistent statewide application of this manual.

Section 7. Policy Maintenance and Updates

This manual is intended to function as a living policy framework. The Chancellor's Office may update or revise this manual as needed to reflect changes in law; Affordable Student Housing Program requirements, audit guidance, and emerging best practices related to student housing affordability, cost-of-attendance reporting, and housing assistance transparency. Any updates will be communicated to community college district and college housing operators to ensure continued clarity and consistent application across the California Community Colleges system.