



California Community Colleges

SYSTEM WEBINAR SUMMARY: Financial Aid and Basic Needs Coordination (Sept. 2024)

This [webinar](#) described findings from the IEPI community of practice on student-centered solutions for financial aid and basic needs coordination. Guest presenters included Holly Siino of Jobs for the Future (JFF), Katarina Barela-Perez of Fullerton College, and Laura Salinas of Lake Tahoe Community College.

What is the Financial Aid and Basic Needs Community of Practice?

- The community of practice was built on the premise that student financial stability is a critical component of achieving Vision 2030 goals.
- Participants included Fullerton College, City College of San Francisco, Lake Tahoe Community College, Oxnard College, and Foothill College, who worked together on the project for about 18 months.
- Colleges learned from subject matter experts, engaged with each other for peer support, met individually with the technical assistance provider (JFF) for support, and received policy advice and feedback from experts.
- Support and collaboration were structured around colleges' action plans, which included their goals for change and how they wanted to accomplish the goals.

How are College Participants Working to Coordinate Financial Aid and Basic Needs?

- Fullerton College
 - Project participants included staff from the basic needs, behavioral health and financial aid offices, faculty, and the Vice President of Student Services.
 - Accomplishments include:
 - Hiring a basic needs director and securing a location for the new [Hornets Resource Center](#) that brings together resources for food and housing assistance, emergency financial support, and connections to help with admissions, registration, and support programs.
 - Fostering a partnership between financial aid and the center, working to create more seamless referrals and to co-locate a financial aid technician in the center to increase aid applications.
- Lake Tahoe Community College
 - The project team included directors, counselors, support staff, campus

- leadership, and students.
- Accomplishments include:
 - Strengthening collaboration and networks via hiring a FA/BN liaison, cross training across departments, and engaging with student support programs, faculty, staff, leadership, and students.
 - Making data-informed decisions by identifying students, creating academic profiles, providing student academic progress (SAP) and other at-risk support, and understanding campus connections.
 - Increasing holistic support via shared access points and resources, data coaching, case management, and specialized support for DI groups.
 - Shifting campus culture through basic needs ally trainings, a map of available services across the campus, doing targeted in reach and outreach, coordinating communications, destigmatizing the need for support, and changing conceptions and practices.

What Can the CCC Take Away to Support Vision 2030 Goals?

- Equity in Access
 - *Collect and Use Data:* Coordinate data collection on student outcomes in target populations and leverage the data to support innovation.
 - *Share Knowledge to Improve:* Leverage resources to measure impact of efforts and create a campus culture of continuous improvement.
- Equity in Support
 - *Revise Financial Aid Policies:* Update campus policies and procedures to maximize student outcomes (e.g., SAP policies) and advocate for supportive state policy.
 - *Improve Financial Aid Navigation:* Centralize support at the state level and create a single entry point for student access to information.
 - *Partner for Solutions:* Engage in cross-sector partnerships to support student success.
- Equity in Success
 - *Increase Awareness of Resources:* Center student financial stability in planning and evaluate communication efforts.
 - *Develop Champions:* Create a unified campus voice and develop external champions to share information.
 - *Update Systemwide Guidance:* Promote national initiatives that support student success and elevate coordination of financial aid and basic needs as a best practice to promote student financial stability.
 - *Share Funding Innovation:* Explore best practices for funding use and champion innovative approaches to sustaining practices and outcomes.