

TO: Chief Executive Officers
Chief Business Officers
Chief Student Services Officers
Financial Aid Officers

FROM: Paul Feist, Vice Chancellor, Communications and Marketing
Lizette Navarette, Vice Chancellor, College Finance and Facilities Planning
Rebecca Ruan-O'Shaughnessy, Vice Chancellor, Educational Services and Support

RE: 2021 Immediate Action Budget Package - Emergency Financial Assistance to Low-Income Community College Students, CalFresh Outreach and Student Retention & Enrollment

This guidance memo provides information about the 2021 Immediate Action Budget Package (Senate Bill 85), which includes three components: I. emergency financial assistance to low-income community college students, II. CalFresh outreach, and III. student retention and enrollment outreach.

Overview

[Senate Bill 85](#) amends the Budget Act of 2020 by adding \$121.1 million in one-time local assistance funds that provide funding for immediate COVID-19 response and relief efforts where California community college and students need it most, while making investments for an equitable, inclusive and broad-based economic recovery. Specifically, the Budget includes:

- I. \$100 million to support emergency student financial assistance grants.
- II. \$3.1 million to support outreach and application assistance to students applying for CalFresh.
- III. \$18 million to support efforts to bolster CCC student retention rates and enrollment.

Funds are allocated at the district level, and multi-college districts are encouraged to use a data-driven approach to determine how to equitably distribute their allocation to colleges based on the needs of their low-income student populations. While no spending deadline is specified in the budget language, we encourage the rapid disbursements of these funds because they are meant to address the current needs of California community college students. The revenue received for the emergency student financial assistance should be recorded in Fund 74 - Student Financial Aid Trust Fund, which is restricted to student financial aid purposes. The revenue received for the CalFresh outreach, retention and enrollment should be recorded in Fund 12 - Restricted General

Fund. Expenditures should be monitored to ensure that they are in accordance with programmatic requirements. As a reminder, all state funds are subject to audit and/or legislative review. Specific guidance for each budget item is included below.

I. Emergency Financial Assistance to Low-Income Community College Students

A total of \$100 million is allocated to provide emergency financial assistance to low-income California community college students. The allocation funding formula evenly divides the \$100 million appropriation into two factors: (1) number of students exempt from paying nonresident tuition and (2) the number of CCPG fee waivers at each district. District-level allocations are listed in Attachment 1.

I(a). Allowable Use of Funds

Each college or district may establish awarding criteria, award amounts, and procedures to ensure equitable distribution of funds to students. Districts and colleges are encouraged to proactively contact students who have unmet need with information about the availability of direct emergency aid. Emergency aid should not have a negative impact on a student's financial aid package and where applicable, the financial aid office should exercise professional judgment to increase the student's cost of attendance (COA). Funds are meant to supplement, and not supplant, existing student aid provided to qualifying students.

I(b). Student Eligibility Criteria

Grants may be awarded to students who are California residents or are exempt from paying nonresident tuition under [§68130.5](#) of the California Education Code who self-certify* that they meet the following conditions:

- Currently enrolled in at least 6 semester units (or the quarterly equivalent). This includes newly enrolled students.
- Demonstrate an emergency financial aid need.
- Qualify as low-income by meeting the requirements to receive a California College Promise Grant (CCPG) or is projected to receive a CCPG for the upcoming term.
- Earned a 2.0 grade point average at their current or prior institution in one of the previous three semester terms (or four quarter terms) OR Is a student who is receiving additional support or services through a community college's Disabled Student Programs and Services.

*Colleges may use the attached sample Student Self-Certification template or create a similar version.

II. CalFresh Outreach

The Immediate Action Budget Package also includes \$3.1 million to support campus efforts to increase student applications in the CalFresh program. Each district will receive a base amount of \$25,000 with the remaining amount evenly divided by the number of students exempt from paying nonresident tuition and the number of CCPG fee waivers at each district. District-level allocations are listed in Attachment 2. Funds may be used to create outreach materials, host CalFresh sign-up events, support equipment needs, and support application assistance, including hiring staff and student workers to assist students applying for CalFresh and understanding how to use their CalFresh benefits.

II(a). CalFresh Outreach Required Reporting

On or before November 15, 2021, each community college that receives the CalFresh Outreach funding shall report to the Chancellor's Office how the funds were used. A report template will be sent to colleges in the first week of October 2021. On or before December 1, 2021, the Chancellor's Office is required to report to the Department of Finance and relevant committees of the Legislature the information it receives from community colleges.

III. Student Retention and Enrollment Outreach

Included in the Immediate Action Budget Package is \$18 million to support efforts to increase student retention rates and enrollment. Each district will receive a base amount of \$25,000. The remaining amount is a proportional distribution based on reported 2019-20 FTES and the decline in 2020-21 P1 FTES. Districts should use these funds primarily to engage former community college students that may have withdrawn from college due to the impacts of COVID-19, as well as with current community college students that may be hesitant to remain in college and prospective students that may be hesitant to enroll in a community college due to COVID-19. District-level allocations are listed in Attachment 3.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, enrollment statewide has declined significantly, especially among Native American/Alaskan Native, Black/African American and Latinx students. Male students are disproportionately impacted, as are first-time and returning students and older students. Efforts to re-engage former students and retain current students should focus on the populations with the steepest declines and be paired with student supports that look to address their specific challenges.

High touch, personalized contacts with target populations through the use of phone banks, student ambassador programs and other strategies should be at the center of outreach efforts. Colleges should consider the expansion of support services such as tribal liaison activities and

other programs directed at the target populations to complement outreach and which leverage federal HEERF resources.

All college outreach and marketing activities should be coordinated and aligned with statewide enrollment campaign efforts led by the Chancellor's Office and connected to the Immediate Action Budget Package. The Chancellor's Office will develop marketing assets that can be customized by colleges, conduct research on messaging that will be shared with colleges and will keep colleges informed on the scope of statewide advertising and outreach activities, including media buying plans.

IV. III(a). Outreach and Marketing Resources

Colleges are strongly encouraged to consider these and other Chancellor's Office resources in developing outreach:

- Chancellor's Office System-Wide Webinar, Student Centered Enrollment Practices.
- Report and Recommendations for Improving Black and African American Student Outcomes.
- Webinar recording: Accessing email addresses for In-Progress CCCApply applications (In-Progress Apps start at ~40:00 mark).
- Chancellor's Office Communications and Marketing Division research and focus group results* with students, prospective students and influencers.
- Chancellor's Office Communications and Marketing Division marketing assets and statewide media buying plans.*

*Must log into the [Vision Resource Center](#) to view.

If you have questions regarding this memo, please contact Gina Browne at GBrowne@CCCCO.edu.

Attachments

1. Emergency Financial Assistance District Allocations
2. CalFresh Outreach District Allocations
3. Student Retention and Enrollment Outreach District Allocations
4. Emergency Financial Assistance Frequently Asked Questions
5. Sample Student Self-Certification Form

cc: Marty J. Alvarado, Executive Vice Chancellor, Educational Services and Support
Aisha Lowe, Vice Chancellor, Educational Services and Support