

October 17, 2025

ESS 25-69 | Via Email

TO: Chief Executive Officers
Chief Instructional Officers
Chief Student Services Officers
Disabled Students Programs and Services Directors and Coordinators

FROM: Sonya Christian, Chancellor

RE: Institutional Responsibility to Ensure Equal Access and Support for Students with Disabilities

The California Community Colleges system is committed to the principle that every student deserves equitable access to a high-quality education. To achieve this, our institutions must fully uphold their responsibility to provide the accommodations, services, and inclusive environments required by law and by our mission.

Background

As a reminder, federal and state statutes—including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and California Government Code Section 11135—require colleges and districts to provide reasonable accommodations, auxiliary aids, and support services to students with disabilities. These obligations extend beyond the resources of Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS); rather, they are shared across the entire institution. Federal guidance affirms that all institutional resources must be leveraged to ensure compliance and equity.

Institutional Responsibility

Ensuring access is not solely the role of DSPS or a single office. It is an institutional obligation that requires leadership, faculty, staff, and administration to work together. Compliance is the floor; true commitment to equity demands that we create learning environments where students with disabilities can thrive.

Funding Expectations and Use of DSPS Allocations

In addition, while the responsibility for providing access rests with the entire institution, colleges and districts must ensure that Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS) are fully supported. Although colleges receive a state allocation for DSPS, this funding alone may not be sufficient to meet all program needs. Colleges and districts should regularly review their budgets and be prepared to dedicate additional institutional resources to DSPS to ensure students receive timely and appropriate accommodations, staff and faculty have the support they need, and compliance obligations are met. Providing robust funding and resources to DSPS is both an

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investment in student success and a critical responsibility of the institution. District and college's timely use of annual DSPS allocations is imperative to ensure fidelity of local programs and student success. As outlined in memo [ESS 25-09](#), districts and colleges should do all possible to spend down funds within the same year allocated. If funds are not fully expended within the same year of allocation, the remaining funds should be the first funds expended in the following year.

Institutional Actions

I encourage every college and district to:

- Regularly review policies, instructional practices, and campus services to ensure accessibility and equity.
- Ensure DSPS has adequate funding to properly support students with disabilities.
- Make sure DSPS funds are expended solely on staffing and expenses that align with DSPS regulations and allowable expenses.
- Engage facilities administrators with ADA responsibility, DSPS Directors, and legal counsel to stay aligned with current requirements and best practices.
- Integrate accessibility considerations into facilities, digital platforms, instructional design, and student services.
- Reinforce with all employees that accessibility and inclusion are responsibilities shared by the entire institution.

By meeting these responsibilities, we not only comply with the law but also fulfill our mission to serve the people of California with integrity and equity. Students with disabilities are valued members of our community, and it is our duty to ensure that they have the opportunity to succeed.

Chancellor's Office Contact

For questions regarding this memorandum, please contact Vice Chancellor for Student Services Stacey Shears at SShears@CCCCO.edu.

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