

## WORKFORCE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

# NEWSLETTER

SPRING EDITION • 2026



Dear Colleagues and Partners,  
Last week, during National Apprenticeship Week, we celebrated the growing momentum of earn-and-learn pathways across our system and the many partners who make this work possible.

The Chancellor's Office recently completed a study on the return-on-investment of apprenticeship programs on student completion and wages. While limited to 18 programs, the study found that students in apprenticeship programs earned more during their workforce training, had higher completion rates than students in similarly aligned non-apprenticeship programs, and earned more than their counterparts in the field of their choice up to two years after completion. Apprenticeship programs are working for our regional employers and preparing students for high-wage jobs and future economic mobility.

In addition to news about apprenticeships, this issue highlights important and inspiring work being done across the state for our students. From cross-state exchanges on climate resilience, to new pre-apprenticeship and veterans' programs, innovative sustainability projects, and new tools that support adult learners and employers, our 116 college campuses continue to innovate and open doors for all learners.

Thank you,

Anthony Cordova  
Vice Chancellor, Workforce and Economic Development

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## WEDD PROGRAM UPDATES

Access the latest monthly insights, news and progress reports regarding Workforce and Economic Development on the [Program Updates and Newsletters](#) page.



California Community Colleges

# REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

## CALIFORNIA - NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGES EXCHANGE

In March, leaders and partners from California and North Carolina, met at Pasadena City College for the California-North Carolina Community Colleges Exchange. This cross-state convening focused on how community colleges serve as community hubs for disaster response, recovery, and climate resilience.

Learning from the challenges both states have faced, from the Eaton and Palisades fires in California to Hurricane Helene recovery in North Carolina, the exchange created space for shared learning, stronger partnerships, and ideas for future collaboration.

These cross-state convenings bring to light that throughout the nation we face similar challenges and obstacles, but working together we become stronger and better equipped to identify solutions.

The Foundation for California Community Colleges helped make this exchange possible by facilitating Lumina Foundation support, contributing matching Innovation Fund dollars, and by partnering with Pasadena City College to bring the California / North Carolina summit together, and coordinating the exchange's core group across both states.



(PHOTO - California - North Carolina Community Colleges Exchange)

## VEEP GRADUATION AT BARSTOW COMMUNITY COLLEGE



(PHOTO - VEEP Pre-Apprenticeship Graduation at Barstow Community College)

Barstow Community College celebrated the graduation of the region's first-ever cohort of the [Veteran's Electrical Entry Program \(VEEP\)](#) pre-apprenticeship program. Developed in partnership with the Inland Empire Electrical Training Center and IBEW Local 477, this program helps veterans transition from military service into high-quality electrical apprenticeships. Thirteen veterans completed the five-week program consisting of 200 hours of classroom instruction and hands-on lab experience. The 100 percent completion rate underscored both the strength of the participants and the effectiveness of the partnership model. For employers, this is more than a successful program, it is a replicable strategy for reducing hiring friction and connecting with highly capable workers.

VEEP is a nationwide initiative designed to support transitioning service members and recently separated veterans as they enter the civilian workforce through career education and apprenticeship opportunities. The program addresses two critical needs: supporting veterans transition into high-demand careers while also strengthening the nation's electrical workforce amid a growing shortage of skilled labor. The program is particularly important in the Barstow area due to the strong presence of veterans across San Bernardino County, which is home to both Fort Irwin National Training Center and the Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow. These nearby installations support thousands of our service members and veterans looking to transition into long-term civilian careers after completing military service.

The Inland Empire Electrical Training Center, IBEW Locals 477 and 440, and other community leaders joined the graduation ceremony. To learn more, read this [article from the Victor Valley News](#).

# SHASTA COLLEGE AWARDED EXCELLENCE IN ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY – INNOVATIVE PROJECT AWARD

Shasta College was recently honored by the Board of Governors in Sacramento for its sustainability and innovative environmental practices.

The college received the 2025 Excellence in Energy and Sustainability – Innovative Project award for its “Carbon Sinks” project, focusing on composting food and agricultural waste.

The project is a collaborative effort led by the college’s food services and agriculture and natural resources teams. Students play a significant role in the process, collecting waste from the cafeteria twice a week and transporting it to the college’s farm for composting.

Combined with agricultural waste, the college diverts an estimated 635 cubic yards (more than 128,000 gallons) of material annually. Food scraps from the campus kitchen add up to 600 gallons during the academic year, which are composted in “worm bins.” The process yields nearly 2,000 gallons of compost from food waste annually.

Twice a year, all compost generated is spread on the college’s working farm. The entire process provides hands-on learning opportunities for students across disciplines.

To learn more, read the release from the Shasta College website - <https://www.shastacollege.edu/news/story/shasta-college-honored-with-board-of-governors-energy-and-sustainability-award-for-composting-and-clean-energy-efforts/>



(PHOTO -Shasta College Excellence in Energy and Sustainability Award)

# SAN DIEGO & IMPERIAL COUNTIES REGIONAL CONSORTIUM RELEASES EMPLOYER FIELD GUIDE TO APPRENTICESHIPS

The San Diego & Imperial Counties Regional Consortium just released a newly-developed Employer Field Guide to Apprenticeships, designed with input from employers, to guide conversations with employers, about the power of registered apprenticeships. It is intended to provide guidance for employers navigating apprenticeships and bring clarity to a process that can feel complex and layered.



This guide is a useful tool for community college, K-12, regional staff, workforce intermediaries, and employers as they collaborate to expand and scale “learn-and-earn” apprenticeships for the youth and adult learners in our communities. When employers and colleges are genuinely partnering, and not just coordinating, something different becomes possible for learners.

To read the full report, visit the link on the San Diego & Imperial Counties Regional Consortium website - [https://sdiregionalconsortium.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Employer-Field-Guide-Apprenticeships\\_Final.pdf](https://sdiregionalconsortium.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Employer-Field-Guide-Apprenticeships_Final.pdf)



(VIDEO - YouTube: Action News Now - Shasta College Earns State Recognition for Campus Composting Program)

# APPRENTICESHIPS

This spring, the Chancellor's Office is building on statewide momentum to elevate and expand earn-and-learn opportunities across California. As colleges continue to strengthen their apprenticeship ecosystems, the Apprenticeship Team is deepening partnerships, enhancing technical assistance, and supporting data-informed program growth. During National Apprenticeship Week, we proudly celebrate the innovation, collaboration, and impact underway across our campuses and communities. From regional convenings to hands-on Learning Labs, our shared efforts are helping more Californians access high-quality pathways that lead directly to good jobs and economic mobility.

## STATEWIDE CONVENING ON APPRENTICESHIP PATHWAYS

In March, the Chancellor's Office, the Foundation for California Community Colleges, Rancho Santiago Community College District, and LAUNCH Apprenticeship Network convened 223 college apprenticeship practitioners representing 60 colleges, nine districts, and five Regional Consortia from across the state for the Statewide Convening on Apprenticeship Pathways. The event highlighted the Chancellor's Office's commitment to strengthening and scaling apprenticeship opportunities through coordinated statewide support.

Participants engaged with leading experts—including Santiago Canyon College, Mapping Articulated Pathways (MAP), the Centers of Excellence, the Department of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS), and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)—who shared practical strategies for developing and expanding Registered Apprenticeship Programs. Sessions explored effective program models, campus-level planning around capacity and curriculum, the use of labor market information to guide decision-making, and approaches to deepening employer partnerships.

The convening reinforced the growing momentum behind California's apprenticeship ecosystem and equipped colleges with actionable tools to advance high-quality, sustainable programs.

## STATEWIDE APPRENTICESHIP SPOTLIGHT

The recent [Inside Higher Ed](#) feature on the national expansion of apprenticeship highlights California Community Colleges as a leading force in redefining earn-and-learn pathways. The article underscores the growing integration of apprenticeships into credit-bearing and degree-applicable programs. Chancellor Sonya Christian emphasized the state's significant and sustained investment - approximately \$12,000 per apprentice and \$130 million annually - which formally recognizes community colleges as key public education partners in apprenticeship. The piece also features West Los Angeles College as part of this statewide movement to expand high-quality, industry-validated training pathways that strengthen economic mobility for Californians.



(PHOTOS - Statewide Convening on Apprenticeship Pathways)

## UPCOMING SUPPORT AND ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### [CAI Learning Lab - Infrastructure Increases Impact: Building Capacity to Support Apprenticeship.](#)

Register now for this one-day Learning Lab on **June 12, 2026**, in **San Diego**, with an **optional site visit on June 11th**. Designed for CAI grantees and apprenticeship stakeholders, this convening will explore the infrastructure, systems, and support needed to build successful and sustainable apprenticeship programs.

### [Virtual Office Hours](#)

Connect with the Apprenticeship Team during Virtual Office Hours, held on the **2nd** and **4th** Tuesdays of each month from 2:00–3:00 PM. Sessions include rotating Focused Office Hours on timely apprenticeship topics, including **May 12: CAI Grant Closeout and Reporting** and **June 9: Program Sustainability**, offering targeted guidance and support for colleges at key stages of program implementation.

### [Apprenticeship Community on the Vision Resource Center](#)

Engage with faculty, staff, and administrators statewide who are developing and expanding apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs. This online community offers resources, discussions, and peer learning to support ongoing program growth.

# CALIFORNIA ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM (CAEP)

## VISIT FROM THE COUNCIL FOR ADULT AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

In March, executive leadership from the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) conducted a site visit with the California Community Colleges, marking a significant milestone in the development of a high-impact national partnership centered on adult education.

Over three days, the CAEL's executive team, including CEO Earl Buford and colleagues, joined Chancellor's Office leaders Vice Chancellor Tony Cordova, Associate Vice Chancellor Ioanna Iatridis, Dean Gary Adams, Mayra Diaz, and Sabrina Lopez for immersive visits to San Diego College of Continuing Education (SDCCE) and North Orange Continuing Education (NOCE).

These site visits generate a deep mutual understanding of California's adult learner innovations from equity-driven wraparound services and integrated workforce pathways to pre-apprenticeship programs and Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) strategies. This working meeting produced a set of concrete, nationally significant outcomes, including:

- A shortlist of potential CPL return-on-investment research collaborations between CAEL, individual California Community Colleges, and the Chancellor's Office
- Strategies to elevate California's statewide efforts around pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship work.

In perhaps the most promising idea resulting from the session, the two teams discussed a potential demonstration pilot project, featuring design of a fully integrated apprenticeship pathway from pre-apprenticeship through registered apprenticeship to an Associate of Applied Science and onward to a Bachelor of Applied Science degree. Such a pathway would position California to implement a noncredit-to-credential continuum that no other state has yet achieved, in partnership with CAEL. Both leadership teams identified this opportunity, grounded in California's scale, policy infrastructure, and institutional innovation, as a defining opportunity for both organizations to co-lead a national movement in adult learner economic mobility.



## UPDATES FROM THE DATA AND ACCOUNTABILITY WORKGROUP

The Data and Accountability Workgroup (DAW) is a statewide advisory committee created by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office and the California Department of Education (CDE) on behalf of the California Adult Education Program (CAEP). Established in 2017 to develop metrics to measure the impact of regional adult education coordination, DAW has spent the last seven months seeking practitioner input on how to improve access to and use of data to create more effective, integrated, regional delivery systems that provide education and workforce services to underserved adults.

To that end, K-12 adult schools and community college adult education programs joined representatives from the Chancellor's Office, the California Department of Education, CASAS, and WestEd in monthly meetings, developing recommendations on how to improve CAEP data and its use in pursuit of more successful consortium performance and student outcomes. Topics included:

- Identifying changes needed to existing CAEP metrics
- Identifying metrics to add or subtract
- Improving underlying data systems
- Better connecting and using existing data
- Adjusting existing policies.



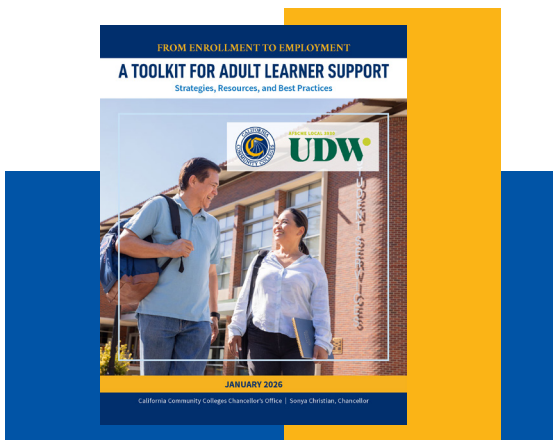
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Throughout the six meetings, several major themes emerged. A consistent focus has been on the complexity and misalignment across the data systems that adult education relies upon, including TOPSpro Enterprise, MIS, DataVista, NOVA, WIOA requirements, and EDD wage files data availability. A second major theme centered around consortium performance targets in their Three-Year Plans, finding that while goal setting is occurring, a more reliable mechanism needs to be in place to ensure regular target and goal analysis occurs. Another common trend was capacity limitations (especially the absence of dedicated data analysts at many programs) impacting the ability of consortia to collect, validate, and use data effectively.

The DAW workgroup finalized a set of draft recommendations to the state covering improvements to the goal-setting process, data infrastructure, policy alignment, and mechanisms for ongoing data and accountability governance. These recommendations reflect months of collaborative work among practitioners, researchers, and state agency partners, and are intended to provide a practical roadmap for ensuring that California's adult education data systems are more accurate, consistent, and genuinely useful to the programs and learners they serve.

## IMPACTFUL PROJECTS

### ADULT LEARNER TOOLKIT



A new toolkit produced by California community colleges, The Center for Economic Mobility at WestEd, and UDW AFSCME Local 3930 is helping to take adult learners from enrollment to employment. This toolkit was produced with significant contribution and input from the field, and helps address the realities of adult student lives, and ensure adult-serving programs are integrated into core college strategies.

**"A Toolkit for Adult Learner Support – Strategies, Resources, and Best Practices"** is a practical, field-facing resource developed through the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) UDW Demonstration Project. Designed for colleges, workforce partners, labor organizations, and community-based organizations, the toolkit highlights implementation strategies and partnership approaches that help translate adult learner engagement into enrollment, persistence, completion, and employment outcomes. It serves as a conversation starter, alignment tool, and implementation guide and can be adapted to regional context. The toolkit reflects cross-sector collaboration and offers actionable practices to strengthen coordinated support for working adult learners across California's community college and workforce systems.

### VALLEY VISION CAPITAL REGION LEGISLATORS ROUNDTABLE

Recently, Valley Vision hosted their initial Capital Region Legislators Roundtable of 2026 at the UC Student and Policy Center in Sacramento. These quarterly, bipartisan conversations help identify areas of alignment and creating space for legislators to move together and better understand opportunities and challenges in regional economic development.

During the roundtable Valley Vision discussed its important role as a workforce intermediary for the Capital Region aligning job training programs with employer needs to ensure a skilled regional workforce. Other participants in the discussion included Stewart Knox, Secretary of the California Labor & Workforce Development Agency, and Vice Chancellor Cordova who spoke about the state's workforce strategy, and the role public-private partnerships play in delivering job-ready talent across priority sectors.

Also participating in the roundtable discussions were faculty from Los Rios and Sierra Colleges including Frank Kobayashi of the Los Rios Community College District on employer partnerships in the healthcare and biotech sectors, and Amy Schulz of Sierra College on the system's

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(PHOTO - Valley Vision Capital Region Legislators Roundtable)

(Valley Vision, continued from page 6)

pipelines toward advanced manufacturing of semiconductors and their Dual Enrollment partners Roseville Joint Union High School District showcasing the collaborative power of the region to train and upskill a new generation of workers to meet critical skills gaps needs.

To learn more about Valley Vision and their mission, please visit their website - <https://www.valleyvision.org>

## ASU+GSV SUMMIT

Chancellor Sonya Christian and Don Harjo Daves-Rougeaux joined the ASU+GSV Summit held recently in San Diego. The ASU+GSV Summit is one of the nation's leading gatherings focused on innovation in education and workforce development. The annual event brings together educators, policymakers, investors, and edtech leaders to explore how learning can better align with economic opportunity.

At the Summit in April, college leaders and system representatives engaged in sessions on topics such as AI in the classroom, short-term credentialing, transfer pathways, and strategies to improve student retention and completion. Discussions also emphasized equity-driven innovation and the importance of building stronger connections between community colleges and regional employers.

To learn more about the ASU+GSV Summit, visit their website - <https://asugsvsummit.com/>.

strategies, highlighted successes, and explored opportunities to evolve in order to meet the demands of a rapidly changing labor market and emerging technologies. Vice Chancellor Cordova and Dean Linda Bermudez shared insights on work from across the state. A highlight was the premiere of student-produced CTE mini-documentaries from around the region like this one about the Microscopy & Histotechnology program at Merrit College - <https://youtu.be/XpJduMusMzc?si=DxITh6D4tYvXasLX>



## CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE ASSOCIATION FOR OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION (CCCAOE) SPRING 2026

In April, the California Community College Association for Occupational Education (CCCAOE) held their annual Spring Conference with a focus on building powerful partnerships that drive CTE forward. Breakout session topics included artificial intelligence and AI literacy in the trades, employer engagement, finance and reporting, working adults, K-16 engagement, and advocacy and influence. The WEDD team participated in a number of discussions throughout the week and on Wednesday, Vice Chancellor Cordova took part in a fireside chat, as seen in the image below.

Advocacy remained central, emphasizing informed leadership, strong partnerships, and a unified voice to advance opportunities for students and institutions. Conversations on artificial intelligence highlighted its potential and the responsibility that comes with integrating emerging technologies. To learn more about CCCAOE and their work, visit - <https://cccae.org/>



(PHOTO - ASU+GSV Summit)

## BAY AREA PRESIDENTS' SUMMIT

The Bay Area Community College Consortium, in partnership with the Workforce Innovation Lab, convened an executive working session of Deans, Vice Presidents, and Superintendents/ Presidents at the Bay Area Presidents' Summit in April. The Bay Area Presidents' Summit is an executive working session focused on how Career Education (CTE) can serve as a strategic lever for institutional resilience, enrollment growth, and regional workforce alignment. Summit participants shared proven



(PHOTO - CCCAOE Spring 2026 Conference)

# STUDENT SUCCESS - STEVE CHIKA

In the late 1990's the perpetual wars of their homeland got to be too much for Steve Chika's family, which in 1999 emigrated from Iraq to the



(PHOTO -Steve Chika)

United States, first to the harsh winters of Michigan, and finally to the sunny suburbs of San Diego. Along the way, Chika's father died, which left him as the prime caregiver for his elderly, diabetic mother, and for a brother disabled by multiple sclerosis. For the next 17 years, he cared for the family through the state's In-Home Support Services program. Now, while maintaining his responsibility toward his mother and brother - and with a wife he married just this year - Chika is poised to take a great leap in life for himself.

As a member of United Domestic Workers of America (UDW), Chika learned through his union of cooperative program between the California Community Colleges system and UDW which encourages and assists union members pursuing vocational education.

The program is part of Vision 2030, a collaborative action plan aimed at increasing student success and closing equity gaps in education by improving access and affordability. The goal of the partnership, which was announced last year by Chancellor Sonya Christian, is to boost the working poor by helping 70 percent of them obtain a professional certificate or postsecondary degree by the end of this decade. The UDW has 171,000 members in California, most of whom are immigrants, refugees and people of color.

"I am a member of the UDW, since 2006," Chika said. "They support me very well, take care of me. Everybody in that office, we are brothers and sisters, and they told me they are offering free classes at the college if I wanted to study, and I said yes."

This year, Chika completed an ESL grammar class at San Diego College of Continuing Education. This fall, he is set to begin a three-semester automotive technology series course at that college. In a year and a half, he hopes to come out of the program with a certificate that will unlock his future.

Once he completes his 930 hours of course work, Chika will be an expert in repairs, servicing, diagnostic analysis—everything required to make him eligible for national certification. The payoff: Certificated auto techs in California make an average of \$28 and some of them as much as \$44 an hour, according to Zip Recruiter.

Chika, who makes \$18 an hour as a homecare worker, said he is interested in more than a higher hourly wage. He wants to start his own business.

"It is my big dream," he said. "My wife is so excited." As powerhouse of organized labor, the UDW of course fights to improve wages, benefits and working conditions for its members. But a major goal of the union in its partnership with the community colleges is to actually reduce its own membership. The hope is that once UDW members obtain college degrees or certification, they can go on to become teachers and accountants or other types of technicians and professionals. Or, in the case of dreamers like Chika, maybe even open their own businesses.

To learn more about the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, the partnership with the UDW, and Vision 2030, visit [www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Vision-2030](http://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Vision-2030). Information about UDW can be found at [www.udw.org/our-union/](http://www.udw.org/our-union/).

## SUBMIT YOUR STORY

Use this [form](#) to submit your story to the story bank!

A screenshot of a web form titled "Add a Success Story" from the California Community Colleges. The form includes a header with the college logo and name, a sub-header "SUCCESS STORY", and a main heading "Add a Success Story". Below the heading is a note: "Please use the form to add a student success story to our collection." There is a small icon of a person in a circle. A note below that says: "The name and photo associated with your Google account will be recorded when you submit. We will email this form. Only the email you enter is part of your response." Below this is a field for "Email \*" with a placeholder "Your email". At the bottom, there is a "Program Type \*" section with four radio button options: "Career Technical Education Programs (CTE)", "California Adult Education Program (CAEP)", "Strong Workforce Program (SWP)", and "K-12 Strong Workforce Program (K12 SWP)".

California Community Colleges