



California Community Colleges

SYSTEM WEBINAR SUMMARY: Reimagine Apply (May 2026)

This [webinar](#) covered the ongoing development of a more student-centered admissions process. Guest presenters included Dan Watkins of Ventura County CCD, Elaine Kuo of Foothill College, Victor DeVore of San Diego CCD, and Joe Moreau of Higher Digital.

Why Reimagine the Application Process?

- Research we conducted with students and system stakeholders demonstrates that students don't think about applying and enrolling in our colleges as brands or platforms (i.e., CCC Apply), but in terms of the steps to get started, and they are often confused or intimidated by our current process.
- The goal of the [Reimagine Apply](#) effort is to make it easier for students to begin their educational journey with us by telling them in plain, direct language exactly what to do, to reduce confusion and hesitation.
- By reimagining CCCApply, we aim to improve the student entry experience with a mobile first platform, streamline the process, better support equitable access across student populations, and increase data accuracy while protecting against fraud.
- The changes have been guided by a steering committee of constituency group leaders, district leads, and technology leads. An implementation advisory group made up of cross-department representatives from the 11 districts that have joined the first wave of implementation has supported the project.

What is Changing?

- The new entry experience will guide students through a simpler step-by-step process with fewer unnecessary questions, built-in security, and other improvements shaped by student feedback.
- The language "Start" resonated strongly with students, as opposed to "apply" or "enroll." "Start" is a better communicator of the action students need to take, and it reduces anxiety over potential acceptance/rejection implied by the other terms. So, the new process will begin with some variation of "Start Your Future" and offer several options for on ramps.
- For internal stakeholders needing common language for the platform, the new process will be referred to as CCCStart (rather than CCCApply), with an entry point at ccstart.org that will direct students to a college.
- Other major highlights of the changes include:

- A single application consolidates credit, noncredit, international, and dual enrollment into one platform to create a more coherent experience.
- There will be fewer questions overall, clearer question wording, and journey-based logic that asks only applicable questions. Most students, based on their journey, will need to answer under 100 questions, compared to well over 150 questions that everyone filled out through CCCApply. One set of questions that will be simplified are those related to residency. For example, rather than asking students about residency status, we will ask directly whether they have one of the specific visa types that preclude them from establishing California residency, which is the main reason we need to know a student's residency status.
- Colleges will gain visibility into a dashboard showing submissions in progress and completed, with email and text messaging capabilities for outreach.
- Fraud detection will be built in, with fraud status shared across colleges in a single dashboard. Identity verification with ID.me and CA DMV Wallet will continue, with additional systemwide guidance forthcoming.
- OpenCCC account creation will remain relatively unchanged during the transition to CCCStart.
- A demonstration of the new platform will be available for colleges soon.

When and How Will the New Process Be Implemented?

- Student and community testing completed in April, and full system testing to the local ERP level is in progress, with the final product expected to be ready by June 1.
- Wave 1 district rollout plans are being finalized (11 districts, 30 colleges), which includes a cross-section of district types, geography, and size.
- Implementation packets and training plans are under development. They will be refined based on the experience of Wave 1 districts.
- There will be 3 additional waves of implementation, with phased implementation within each wave to ensure ample support during the cutover. Colleges can [sign up](#) to be in one of the future waves through the [Reimagine Apply](#) web page. Colleges that are part of the same district will need to move to the new platform together.
- Over the next 14 to 16 months, CCCApply and CCCStart will coexist during the transition, and the student journey may vary depending on the college they choose and its implementation wave.
- Clear messaging, routing, and wayfinding will be essential for students during the rollout. Suggested language, communication tools, and templates will be provided for colleges to use, along with FAQ and talking points for frontline staff and counselors.
- To learn more, join an upcoming targeted webinar, to be held on May 20 (Communications & Outreach), May 21 (Student Services), May 27 (IT), and May 28 (IR).