



2025 REPORT

2021-2023 California Community Colleges Mental Health Legislative Report

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office | Sonya Christian, Chancellor



California
Community
Colleges

SONYA CHRISTIAN
Chancellor

March 18, 2025

Secretary of the Senate
Erika Contreras
State Capitol, Room 305
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Report on Mental Health Grant Funding in California Community Colleges

Dear Secretary Contreras:

Pursuant to California Budget Act of 2021, the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office and the Board of Governors for California Community Colleges are pleased to release the Mental Health Grant Funding report.

This report covers the 2021-22 and 2022-23 academic years, including:

- The amount of funds provided for each community college district.
- A description of how the funds were used.
- A description of the types of programs in which districts invested.
- Other findings and best practices implemented by districts.

For any questions regarding this report, please contact Mia Keeley,
Dean, at MKeeley@CCCCO.edu.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sonya Christian". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Sincerely,

Sonya Christian, Chancellor

Enclosure: Report

CC:
Sue Parker, Chief Clerk of the Assembly
Office of Legislative Counsel
Department of Finance

Chancellor's Office

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2021-2023
CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES MENTAL
HEALTH LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Prepared By

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office

Office of Equitable Student Learning, Experience & Impact

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INTRODUCTION

Many college students experience mental and behavioral health challenges that can impede them from achieving their education and career attainment goals, especially if they lack access to appropriate care and resources. According to findings from 14 California community colleges that completed the Healthy Minds Study (HMS) survey in Spring 2023, only 30% of students report flourishing (which is a measure of overall well-being), while 43% of students report symptoms of depression, 35% report symptoms of anxiety, 13% report suicidal ideation, and 14% report symptoms of disordered eating. Moreover, nearly half (45%) of students describe their current financial situation as always or often stressful and 64% of those students report moderate or severe symptoms of depression or anxiety.

Responses to the HMS survey highlight a critical need for readily accessible mental health services at community colleges. While many students are struggling with their mental health, a significant portion face financial barriers to seeking professional support. This underscores the importance of providing no-cost mental health services, ensuring that all students, regardless of their financial situation, can access the care they need to thrive and succeed.

In recognition of widespread college student needs, the Budget Acts of 2021 and 2022 included \$30 million in ongoing local assistance funds for mental health services in the California Community Colleges. The Chancellor's Office has directed campuses to use the funding for student-centered, evidence-based supports that promote equitable access to culturally responsive mental health services.¹

This report describes how colleges used these funds in the 2021-22 and 2022-23 academic years. In 2022-23, 107 colleges submitted the required year-end report, while 111 colleges submitted reports in 2021-22. This report satisfies the legislative requirements in the Budget Act of 2021, to submit a report by January 1, 2025, and every three years thereafter, including but not limited to:

- (i) The amount of funds provided for each community college district.
- (ii) A description of how the funds were used.
- (iii) A description of the types of programs in which districts invested.
- (iv) Other findings and best practices implemented by districts.

1 Johnston, A., Johnson, N., Trieu, S. L., Perelli, B., & Eisenberg, D. (2024). Mental health outcomes for California community college students experiencing unmet basic needs: Fall 2024. Report. Health Services Association of California Community Colleges, & The Healthy Minds Network.

FUNDING ALLOCATIONS AND EXPENDITURES

In 2021-22 and 2022-23, \$30,000,000 was allocated to the California community colleges to provide for student mental health resources. Colleges are required to submit information to the Chancellor's Office via our Management Information System (MIS) within 30 days after the end of each academic term. As a result, the most complete annual data sets available for analysis and reporting purposes are typically from the "prior, prior year." For instance, the data set used for the 2021-22 mental health allocations was from the 2019-20 academic year. Similarly, for the 2022-23 fiscal allocation, the data set relied upon was from the 2020-21 academic year. These comprehensive data sets are integral to the methodology used for Mental Health Allocations, ensuring that funding decisions are based on the most accurate and complete information available from the colleges. The funding formula included a base amount of \$65,000 for each college, with the remaining appropriation (\$22,525,000) allocated based on student population:

- 75% allocated based on total headcount; and
- 25% allocated based on the number of students who received a Pell grant.

Please see the **Appendix** for the amounts allocated to each community college district.

Exhibit 1 summarizes the mental health funding expenditures. Most funds were used for staff salaries and benefits, accounting for 61% of total expenses. Other operating expenses and services include expanding on-campus mental health services by hiring additional staff, providing stipends for students providing peer-to-peer services, offering telehealth services through organizational partnerships, and organizing outreach events to enhance student awareness and engagement.

Exhibit 1: Mental Health Program Fund Expenditures, by Category	2021-22	2022-23
Instructional Salaries	23%	24%
Non-instructional Salaries	26%	23%
Employee Benefits	13%	10%
Supplies and Materials	3%	5%
Capital Outlay	2%	<1%
Other Outgo	<1%	<1%
Indirect Costs	<1%	<1%
Other Operating Expenses and Services	32%	37%
Total Percentage of Expended Funds	100%	100%

CAMPUS PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

California community colleges are using the mental health funding to expand their programs and services with innovative approaches to meet needs of a diverse student body. Mental health care is an essential resource that can significantly impact student persistence and success. In Vision 2030: A Roadmap for California Community Colleges, the Chancellor’s Office emphasizes “the critical importance of supporting the whole student, delivering support to them where they are and when they need it.”

MENTAL HEALTH SCREENING AND COUNSELING

The most common mental health services that the colleges currently provide are crisis responses or referrals, one-on-one mental health counseling sessions, and enhanced access to customized services, based on accommodation, for students with a mental health disability, including campus-based trainings for early identification, intervention, and campus-based stigma reduction activities.

Screening tools are also utilized by the colleges at intake points for assessing, diagnosing, and monitoring symptoms, including the PHQ-9 (Patient Health Questionnaire), a self-report questionnaire valued in clinical settings for its reliability and accuracy. The PHQ-9 is the most comprehensive PQH, covering nine key symptoms of depression², and aligns with the DSM-5-TR criteria for diagnosing depression. The median mental health counselor-to-student ratio in 2022-23 was 1 counselor for every 2,292 students, which was an improvement over the 2021-22 ratio of 1:3,060.

Exhibit 2: Percentage of Colleges Offering Screening and Counseling Services	2021-22	2022-23
Crisis Responses or Referrals	97%	99%
One-on-One Mental Health Counseling Sessions	97%	98%
In-Person One-on-One Counseling Sessions	91%	97%
Enhanced Access to Services for Students with a Mental Health Disability	91%	93%
Telehealth Services ³	85%	100% ⁴
Campus Mental Health Center	N/A	83%
PHQ-9 or Other Universal Screening at All Access Points	64%	64%

2 Medical News Today. (2023, September 27). Depression screening tools. [Website]. Medical News Today. <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/depression-screening-tools>

3 In the 2022-23 Mental Health Year-End Report, the question about the presence of telehealth services was revised to specify whether services were offered online or by phone.

4 Percentage of campuses that offer online mental health appointments. 83% of campuses offered mental health services via phone appointments.

Exhibit 2: Percentage of Colleges Offering Screening and Counseling Services	2021-22	2022-23
Group Mental Health Counseling Sessions	N/A	63%
Screening Kiosks	17%	18%

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

Exhibit 3: Percentage of Colleges Offering Other Behavioral Health Services and Activities	2021-22	2022-23
Mental Health Awareness	99%	100%
Suicide Prevention and Intervention	95%	98%
Behavioral Intervention	94%	97%
Stigma Reduction Activities	86%	92%
Sexual Assault Awareness	84%	83%
Substance Use Prevention and Intervention	77%	77%
Mental Health-Related Student Club	N/A	47%
Peer Program for Mental Health and Wellness Activities	46%	47%
Screening Kiosks	17%	18%

STUDENT ACTIVITIES AND OTHER SERVICES

Mental health awareness, outreach, education, and stigma reduction activities are an important way that campuses engage students. During student orientation, more than 90% of colleges hold outreach and education training to promote existing mental health resources (93% in 2022-23; 91% in 2021-22).

In the last two years, the number of campus mental health activities and student participants nearly doubled: campuses held a median of 31 mental health activities in 2022-23 with a median of 559 student participants, compared to 16 activities with 300 student participants in 2021-22. Mental health awareness, suicide prevention and intervention, and behavioral intervention activities and services are especially common.

COUNTY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

An increasing majority of California community colleges are partnering with outside agencies and organizations to support their students. One of the three goals in Vision 2030, Equity in Support, focuses on the importance of partnerships with other intersegmental partners, agencies, and community-based organizations to provide students the academic, financial and social supports necessary to thrive by taking education opportunities and the accompanying support to Californians.

Exhibit 4: Percentage of Colleges that have Partnerships with Outside Entities	2021-22	2022-23
Crisis Response Units/Services	73%	90%
Community-Based Organizations	86%	88%
County Department of Mental Health	75%	75%
Domestic Violence Shelters	68%	77%
Healthcare Agencies/Hospitals	59%	74%
Sexual Assault Services	65%	70%
Substance Abuse Services (County- and Community-Based)	56%	67%
Family Services	52%	62%
Colleges and Universities	50%	N/A
County Department of Education	32%	29%

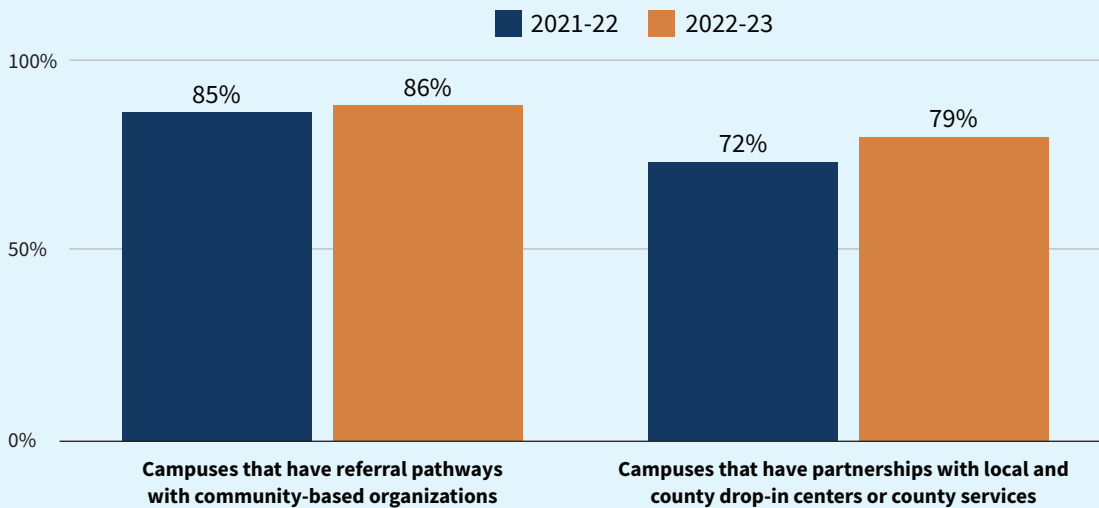
MENTAL HEALTH REFERRALS

Most colleges offer short-term mental health counseling. In 2022-23, the average number of allowed counseling sessions was 8 sessions per student, per semester.

To support students who have complex behavioral health needs or who need longer-term care, it is important that colleges have partnerships and referral pathways with outside providers. Campuses are successfully building these partnerships; they referred a median of 50 students in the 2022-23 academic year and 32 in 2021-22. Moreover, approximately half of California community colleges co-locate services on campus (48% in 2022-23; 45% in 2021-22), which can mean partnering with local counseling or healthcare providers to offer behavioral health services on campus.

Other examples of partners that colleges are co-locating on campus include county mental health agencies, county social services departments, local food banks, Veterans services, immigration and legal services providers, youth services, domestic violence services, and women's centers.

Exhibit 5: Partnerships to Support Students with Complex Behavior Health Needs



STAFF AND EDUCATOR TRAININGS

Colleges are educating all campus staff and faculty about mental health. Nine out of ten campuses offer integrated training regarding mental health needs, access, and services during professional development days (92% in 2022-23; 90% in 2021-22). Colleges are also offering an increasing number of events during the academic year a median of 5 events with 95 faculty and staff participants in 2022-23, compared to 4 events with 70 participants in 2021-22.

OTHER FINDINGS

Participating campuses demonstrated a strong commitment to student well-being by sharing a variety of innovative strategies and best practices for increasing access to mental health services. Two key themes emerged as particularly impactful: embedding mental health into campus culture and expanding access through telehealth services.

Colleges are successfully integrating mental health supports into the fabric of campus life by offering a wide range of free programming and services, including universal mental health screenings, in-person and virtual counseling, support and skill-building groups, mental health peer educators, staff trainings, and outreach events. These initiatives aim to reduce stigma, increase awareness of available supports, build partnerships with community organizations, and foster a strong connection between mental health services and campus culture. Colleges also reported the creation of a centralized locations on campus, bringing together medical, mental health, and basic needs services to make it easier for students to access holistic support.

Beyond the campus, partnerships with local community-based and online organizations have proven essential for providing 24/7 support for students and extending services beyond traditional campus hours. Recognizing the crucial role of professional support in meeting the needs of diverse student populations, 14 participating colleges identified securing ongoing funding to hire licensed clinical staff and increase providers on campus as a critical best practice, particularly for serving the needs of targeted at-risk groups including students who are LGBTQ+ and those with experience in the foster care system.

In addition to describing their mental health programs and services, campuses report data on the number of students receiving mental health services each year, disaggregated by gender, age group, and race or ethnicity. Please note that campuses may vary in whether they collect or require sensitive student information, leading to different aggregate totals.

The number of male and female students receiving services stayed consistent across both years, but almost six times as many students identified as non-binary in 2022-23 compared to 2021-22.

Exhibit 6: Students Served–Gender	2021-22	2022-23
Male	28%	28%
Female	53%	57%
Non-Binary	<1%	2%
Unknown	20%	12%
Total	100%	100%

Many of the community college students receiving mental health services are older than traditional age (25 and older), reflecting the need for a variety of services tailored to the needs of this student population.

Exhibit 7: Students Served–Age Group	2021-22	2022-23
≤ 20	29%	24%
21–24	22%	29%
25–39	29%	36%
40 and over	9%	11%
Unknown	11%	N/A
Total	100%	100%

The California community colleges are providing mental health services to a racially and ethnically diverse population of students. In both years, approximately two-thirds of the students served identified as a race or ethnicity other than White or unknown (67% in 2022-23; 66% in 2021-22).

Exhibit 8: Students Served–Race or Ethnicity	2021-22	2022-23
African American	6%	6%
Asian	7%	9%
Hispanic	45%	44%
Filipino	2%	2%
Native American	1%	1%
Pacific Islander	<1%	1%
White	17%	17%
Multi-Ethnicity	5%	5%
Unknown	18%	15%
Total	100%	100%

CONCLUSION

Many community college students are navigating mental health challenges, and a significant number are prevented from seeking professional help due to financial constraints. The California Community Colleges are successfully addressing this need by using the ongoing Mental Health Program funds to provide a wide variety of evidence-based, student-centric services and supports. This funding is making a tangible difference in the lives of a diverse student body, recognizing that mental health services are crucial for all students, regardless of their financial background. In the two reported years since the initial budget allocation, campuses have significantly expanded their mental health programs, partnerships, and events and trainings. The California Community Colleges are supporting students' mental health with innovative, trauma informed, and culturally relevant approaches, including prioritizing peer-to-peer outreach, leveraging telehealth services and other online tools, and creating unique and impactful partnerships with community stakeholders and organizations. This funding is helping to foster more inclusive campus environments where students can access the essential support, they need to achieve their college goals and to contribute to a thriving California.

APPENDIX: ALLOCATIONS BY DISTRICT

California Community College District	2021-22	2022-23
Allan Hancock Joint Community College District	\$ 253,293	\$ 235,000
Antelope Valley Community College District	\$ 332,567	\$ 269,117
Barstow Community College District	\$ 174,080	\$ 116,872
Butte Community College District	\$ 278,300	\$ 216,639
Cabrillo Community College District	\$ 201,082	\$ 216,731
Cerritos Community College District	\$ 314,300	\$ 435,295
Chabot-Las Positas Community College District	\$ 431,477	\$ 421,756
Chaffey Community College District	\$ 305,945	\$ 391,817
Citrus Community College District	\$ 305,450	\$ 262,426
Coast Community College District	\$ 822,866	\$ 801,638
Compton Community College District	\$ 185,600	\$ 141,522
Contra Costa Community College District	\$ 730,304	\$ 675,386
Copper Mountain Community College District	\$ 109,224	\$ 98,146
Desert Community College District	\$ 197,532	\$ 242,026
El Camino Community College District	\$ 329,123	\$ 410,564
Feather River Community College District	\$ 141,430	\$ 89,246
Foothill-De Anza Community College District	\$ 619,500	\$ 653,467
Gavilan Community College District	\$ 192,345	\$ 147,664
Glendale Community College District	\$ 244,411	\$ 310,322
Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District	\$ 422,678	\$ 491,085
Hartnell Community College District	\$ 221,713	\$ 197,746
Imperial Community College District	\$ 157,434	\$ 208,462
Kern Community College District	\$ 707,071	\$ 750,387
Lake Tahoe Community College District	\$ 152,892	\$ 119,604
Lassen Community College District	\$ 160,299	\$ 91,841
Long Beach Community College District	\$ 370,112	\$ 479,479
Los Angeles Community College District	\$2,832,448	\$ 2,778,355
Los Rios Community College District	\$1,227,131	\$ 1,407,659
Marin Community College District	\$ 170,686	\$ 134,426

California Community College District	2021-22	2022-23
Mendocino Community College District	\$ 159,079	\$ 123,835
Merced Community College District	\$ 220,286	\$ 244,739
Mira Costa Community College District	\$ 228,791	\$ 285,170
Monterey Peninsula Community College District	\$ 189,793	\$ 178,435
Mt. San Antonio Community College District	\$ 578,146	\$ 709,090
Mt. San Jacinto Community College District	\$ 249,971	\$ 298,219
Napa Valley Community College District	\$ 236,478	\$ 134,281
North Orange County Community College District	\$ 731,645	\$ 831,005
Ohlone Community College District	\$ 237,773	\$ 219,414
Palo Verde Community College District	\$ 185,700	\$ 106,717
Palomar Community College District	\$ 353,816	\$ 367,443
Pasadena Area Community College District	\$ 415,632	\$ 485,198
Peralta Community College District	\$ 779,048	\$ 698,484
Rancho Santiago Community College District	\$ 762,952	\$ 803,946
Redwoods Community College District	\$ 160,536	\$ 133,675
Rio Hondo Community College District	\$ 290,126	\$ 315,413
Riverside Community College District	\$ 735,086	\$ 847,035
San Bernardino Community College District	\$ 524,150	\$ 402,006
San Diego Community College District	\$1,073,520	\$ 1,061,268
San Francisco Community College District	\$ 484,416	\$ 412,526
San Joaquin Delta Community College District	\$ 320,059	\$ 342,012
San Jose-Evergreen Community College District	\$ 398,894	\$ 405,393
San Luis Obispo County Community College District	\$ 265,299	\$ 216,453
San Mateo County Community College District	\$ 615,441	\$ 537,535
Santa Barbara Community College District	\$ 281,973	\$ 275,629
Santa Clarita Community College District	\$ 417,637	\$ 392,361
Santa Monica Community College District	\$ 478,660	\$ 479,342
Sequoias Community College District	\$ 243,543	\$ 268,339
Shasta-Tehama-Trinity Joint Community College District	\$ 225,127	\$ 208,748

California Community College District	2021-22	2022-23
Sierra Joint Community College District	\$ 306,690	\$ 328,896
Siskiyou Joint Community College District	\$ 161,661	\$ 96,227
Solano County Community College District	\$ 198,848	\$ 194,750
Sonoma County Junior College District	\$ 403,291	\$ 358,141
South Orange County Community College District	\$ 696,785	\$ 666,338
Southwestern Community College District	\$ 322,320	\$ 356,684
State Center Community College District	\$ 987,834	\$ 986,363
Ventura County Community College District	\$ 654,902	\$ 721,784
Victor Valley Community College District	\$ 222,143	\$ 252,676
West Hills Community College District	\$ 326,613	\$ 262,342
West Kern Community College District	\$ 183,721	\$ 130,953
West Valley-Mission Community College District	\$ 401,541	\$ 351,611
Yosemite Community College District	\$ 433,237	\$ 427,663
Yuba Community College District	\$ 265,544	\$ 287,183
Total	\$ 30,000,000	\$ 30,000,000

Front cover photo: **Sacramento City College**

Photo at right: **College of the Desert**

Back cover photo: **Grossmont College**



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