



California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Request for Proposals (RFP)

Rising Scholars Network – Juvenile Justice Program

RFP Specifications

Release Date:	Sept. 1, 2025
Responses Due:	Oct. 15, 2025, 11:59 p.m. (PST)
Term of Agreement:	Dec. 1, 2025 - Aug. 31, 2029
Funds Available	Up to \$750,000
Funding Source	California Budget Act of 2022-23 for Rising Scholars Network
Questions Deadline:	Written questions concerning the specifications of this RFP must be submitted via email by 5 p.m. on Sept. 15, 2025 to RisingScholars@CCCCO.edu .
Bidder's Conference	None
Eligible Respondents:	Open to Qualified Respondents
Number of Awards:	1
Division Vice Chancellor	Gina Browne
Submit all proposals electronically to:	Rising Scholars Network Juvenile Justice Program Evaluation RFP

Administered by the
California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
Educational Services and Support
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Sacramento, CA 95811

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1.0 JUVENILE JUSTICE PROGRAM EVALUATION

Introduction and Background

Serving incarcerated and formerly incarcerated students is central to the California Community Colleges mission and directly aligns with the Vision 2030 goal to increase equity in access, support, and success among traditionally underrepresented student groups. The California Community Colleges Rising Scholars Network programs reach and serve nearly 20,000 justice-involved students on campus and within prisons, jails, and juvenile detention centers statewide. The Chancellor's Office has established a strong foundation to support this student population through high-quality professional development and technical assistance.

In 2018, California committed \$5 million in one-time funding to serve incarcerated and formerly incarcerated students, resulting in 44 grants to California community colleges. The State reinforced this commitment with a \$10 million ongoing allocation in the 2021 budget and the passage of [Assembly Bill 417](#) (McCarty, 2021), which established the Rising Scholars Network as a categorically funded program.

The 2025-26 Budget Act increased the annual allocation for this initiative to \$35 million, resulting in 95 grant funded adult programs and 45 grant funded juvenile justice programs. This additional funding has provided the capacity to expand support services and include more colleges.

A Juvenile Justice Program in California Higher Education

Momentum has grown in California to use higher education as a tool to mitigate the effects of mass incarceration, as it reduces recidivism, transforms lives, and strengthens communities. While California has expanded resources at community colleges to serve justice-impacted students, these efforts have largely focused on adults, leaving a critical need to support justice-impacted young people. In 2022, the state committed to addressing this gap by investing in higher education for youth impacted by the juvenile justice system.

[Senate Bill 823](#) (SB 823), passed in 2020, closed California's state-run Division of Juvenile Justice and shifted responsibility for youth rehabilitation to counties, with the goal of providing more developmentally appropriate, locally based services. To realize this vision, the state has leveraged the Rising Scholars Network to ensure that juvenile justice-involved youth have access to higher education. Recognizing the need for strong local partnerships, the 2022-23 Budget Act allocated \$15 million to establish dedicated Juvenile Justice programs within community colleges, and the 2025-26 Budget Act increased the annual allocation to \$21 million. These programs are now being launched at 45 community colleges,



each required to offer dual enrollment opportunities as a condition of their grant. The Rising Scholars Juvenile Justice programs illustrate what is possible when young people are given the support, advocacy, and learning environments that all students deserve.

The Rising Scholars Network – Juvenile Justice Program is just one of several initiatives aligned with the Vision 2030 goals. Its overarching objective is to increase participation and success among juvenile justice-involved students in community colleges. To accomplish this, successful grantees are expected to focus rigorously on the following Vision 2030 goals:

1. Increase the number of California community college students annually who acquire associate degrees, credentials, certificates, or specific skill sets that prepare them for an in-demand job.
2. Increase the number of California community college students transferring annually to a University of California (UC), the California State University (CSU) or four-year independent colleges/universities.
3. Decrease the average number of units accumulated by California community college students earning associate degrees.
4. Reduce equity gaps across all the above measures by accelerating improvements for traditionally underrepresented student groups.

Juvenile Justice Program Objectives

The Rising Scholars Network - Juvenile Justice Program is structured around the following three broad principles:

1. On-site programming in juvenile facilities and at community and alternative schools
 - a. In-person and online instruction supported by technology access
 - b. Comprehensive educational offerings:
 - i. Courses for UC/CSU credit and college readiness workshops
 - ii. Multiple pathways for degrees, transfer, and/or certificate attainment
 - iii. Dual enrollment opportunities to complete high school diploma while earning college credit
2. Structured Support for college transition upon release
 - a. Direct transition support: high school transcript attainment, placement, and counseling
 - b. Campus tours and orientations
 - c. Comprehensive wrap-around student support services:
 - i. Dedicated counseling and financial aid support
 - ii. Basic needs resources (food, transportation, housing stipends)



- iii. Stipends for textbooks, technology, and other college materials
3. College buy-in and commitment to program success
 - a. Dedicated college program staff: program coordinator, retention specialist, counselor, and faculty who receive specialized training
 - b. Dedicated on-campus space: office for students to meet with program staff and dedicated space for social, peer, and academic support
 - c. Committed community partners: local high school districts, County Offices of Education, probation departments, and community-based organizations

2.0 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF WORK

The Chancellor's Office is requesting proposals from research organizations with demonstrated experience in the following areas to conduct a comprehensive five-year program evaluation of the currently funded 45 colleges serving juvenile justice-impacted students:

- **Evaluation of community college programming** for juvenile justice-impacted students, including prior experience assessing program outcomes and effectiveness.
- **Peer-reviewed, mixed-methods evaluation**, including both quantitative and qualitative approaches, with experience in longitudinal program evaluation.
- **Equity-centered research, demonstrating** sensitivity to the barriers faced by justice-impacted populations.

Evaluation Key Focus Areas

The evaluation should be comprehensive and designed to inform future program development, guide policy recommendations, and assess the overall effectiveness of the Rising Scholars Network's juvenile justice initiatives.

1. Program Landscape Analysis

- a. Analyze program structures across all participating colleges to document variations in design, delivery, staffing, and partnerships with juvenile facilities and county agencies.
- b. Examine how instructional modalities (in-person, hybrid, online) are utilized within facilities and on-campus and assess the impact of these modalities on access and outcomes.

2. Student Outcomes and Impact Analysis



- a. Conduct a longitudinal mixed-methods study tracking juvenile justice-impacted students over five years, examining academic outcomes, degree or certificate completion, retention, persistence, and transfer rates.
- b. Disaggregate data to identify outcomes by race/ethnicity, gender, region, academic program, facility type, and student background (e.g., first-generation, system-impacted, housing insecure).

3. Implementation Fidelity and Institutional Capacity

- a. Assess the fidelity of program implementation relative to Rising Scholars Network model components, including on-site programming, transition support, and wraparound services.
- b. Evaluate institutional capacity and commitment, including staffing, dedicated space, integration with campus systems, and partnerships with probation, K–12, and community-based organizations.

4. Equity and Policy Analysis

- a. Identify local and systemic barriers that limit student access, persistence, or success, including facility-based policies, probation conditions, and misalignment between education and justice systems.
- b. Analyze current state and local policies affecting program design, student enrollment (e.g., dual enrollment, transfer eligibility), and program delivery (e.g., restrictions on technology use in facilities).
- c. Provide policy recommendations to improve system coordination and eliminate structural barriers to equitable student outcomes.

5. Evaluation Framework and Methodology

- a. Develop and deploy validated evaluation instruments, including surveys, interviews, and focus groups with students, faculty, and program partners.
- b. Employ a longitudinal tracking system and, where feasible, quasi-experimental or matched comparison designs to assess the impact and added value of model programming.

As part of the evaluation, the following questions regarding juvenile justice programming should be addressed:

- a. How do local Rising Scholars Network programs promote equitable access and success for juvenile justice-impacted students both in custody and post-release?
- b. How do implementation structures vary across colleges and how do these variations affect student outcomes?
- c. What gaps exist in current policies, practices, and resource allocation that limit the impact of these programs?



- d. What are the cost considerations and return on investment associated with full program implementation?
- e. What best practices can be scaled or replicated across the system to ensure sustainability and equity in serving justice-impacted youth?

The evaluation will result in progress reports and, ultimately, a final report submitted to the Legislature.

3.0 PROPOSAL SUBMISSION AND REVIEW PROCESS

All proposals received on or before the final submission deadline will be evaluated as outlined below by a Review Committee appointed by the Chancellor's Office. The award of a vendor agreement will be made to the applicant whose proposal best serves the interests of the California Community Colleges. The Chancellor's Office reserves the right to modify or suspend any aspects of this procurement, to request additional information from any applicant, to waive any informality or irregularity in the form or content of this RFP or any related response, to be the sole judges of the merits of the proposals received, and to reject any or all proposals.

Key Proposal Areas

Each proposal will be reviewed and compared to all eligible proposals. Proposals will be evaluated based on the criteria below and ranked according to the strength, clarity and thoroughness of responses in each category:

1. Organizational Experience

- a. Staff Experience
 - i. Proposed personnel possess the qualifications and expertise necessary to carry out comprehensive program evaluations related to justice-impacted students and post-secondary education.
- b. Prior Work Experience
 - i. Demonstrated ability to conduct relevant evaluations, including document reviews, quantitative research, qualitative research, and policy analysis.

2. Work Plan and Evaluation Approach

- a. Program and Policy Evaluation Framework
 - i. Presents a clear and robust methodology for evaluating Rising Scholars Network programs, including detailed data collection and analysis plans.



- ii. Describes alignment with Rising Scholars Network core program components and the ability to assess implementation fidelity, student transition outcomes, and educational success.
 - iii. Includes evaluation tools such as surveys, interviews, focus groups, and data dashboards.
- b. Systemic and Local Policy Analysis
 - i. Demonstrates knowledge of state and local policies affecting justice-impacted students, including access to education in custody and transition pathways post-release.
 - ii. Includes a plan to review and analyze legislative and institutional policies, identify barriers, and provide actionable policy recommendations.
- c. Data Use and Disaggregation
 - i. Demonstrates the ability to work with sensitive and disaggregated institutional data (e.g., by race/ethnicity, age, gender, geography, justice-involvement).
 - ii. Shows capacity to build a data dashboard that supports both public-facing visualization and internal program monitoring.
- d. Equity and Inclusion Integration
 - i. Evaluation is grounded in equity principles that address the unique needs of justice-impacted students.
 - ii. Shows understanding of how equity considerations inform evaluation priorities, data interpretation, and overall recommendations.

3. Budget

- a. Detailed Budget
 - i. Cost estimates include clear breakdowns for:
 - 1. Identification of positions funded, including associated salaries and fringe benefits
 - 2. Time allocation by position
 - 3. Operating and administrative expenses
 - 4. Estimated travel and per diem
 - 5. Indirect costs
 - 6. Other expenses
- b. Budget by Evaluation Component
 - i. The cost estimate clearly outlines the costs associated with addressing each evaluation question.
- c. Cost Effectiveness and Return on Investment



- i. Budget provides realistic estimates of costs based on the Chancellor's Office understanding of the work required.
- ii. Demonstrates a reasonable return on investment relative to the proposed costs.

Proposal Content and Format

Proposals must be professional in both content and presentation, with clear and concise descriptions that provide sufficient detail to minimize questions or assumptions. Proposals may not exceed **10 pages** and must follow the required format outlined below, including all listed items. Proposals that do not comply with these instructions may be disqualified from consideration.

All proposals submitted in response to this RFP become the property of the Chancellor's Office upon receipt. The Chancellor's Office is not responsible for any costs incurred in the preparation of proposals.

The instructions below outline the mandatory written proposal format. All proposals must follow these instructions and include all listed items. Failure to comply with the required format may result in disqualification from proposal evaluation.

Required Proposal Components

Table of Contents

A Table of Contents must be included in the proposal.

Doing Business in California

A statement acknowledging that the respondent and any subcontractor(s) involved in the project have been in operation as business entities providing services similar in scope and magnitude as required in this RFP for at least three years in California. Respondents must also confirm they are in good standing with the State of California by attaching a copy of a valid business license.

Organizational Experience

Provide a description of the organization's experience conducting similar research, including examples of prior work and staff experience as outlined in the key proposal areas section.

Workplan and Evaluation



Provide a description of respondent's approach to each of the five primary research topics outlined in the Purpose and Scope of Work above.

Where applicable, include details of the organization's plan for data collection, data management, data security, and protection of human subjects.

Budget Proposal

Provide the total cost of the project, including a detailed breakdown showing how costs were determined for the overall project and a proportional cost for each of the five research topics outlined in the Purpose and Scope of Work.

Timeline

Include an estimated timeline for each phase of the research.

Other information

Any additional information that the respondent would like to share related to the RFP. While this RFP specifies a timeline and cost estimate, respondents are encouraged to provide details on more substantive or longer-term research in this area.

In addition to submitting a written proposal, the highest ranked applicants will be invited to a brief pitch meeting with Rising Scholars Network leadership and review committee to present their proposal and discuss their evaluation approach.

Proposal Scoring Rubric

Criteria	Weight	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Organizational Experience	25%	Demonstrates extensive experience with juvenile justice, postsecondary program evaluations, and equity-focused research. The team has highly qualified staff with strong track record.	Relevant evaluation experience with some juvenile justice or higher ed projects. Team has strong but not comprehensive qualifications.	Limited relevant experience; team qualifications uneven.	Little or no relevant experience; qualifications inadequate.



Criteria	Weight	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Work Plan & Evaluation Approach	40%	Comprehensive, clearly articulated methodology aligned with RFP priorities. Strong integration of equity principles, disaggregated data, and policy analysis. Tools and timelines are feasible and innovative.	Clear and appropriate methodology with minor gaps. Equity and data plans included but not fully integrated.	Methodology partially addresses requirements; lacks clarity on tools, timelines, or equity integration.	Weak or incomplete methodology; fails to align with RFP scope.
Budget & Cost Effectiveness	20%	Budget is detailed, reasonable, and transparent. Clear link between costs and evaluation activities. Demonstrates strong return on investment.	Budget is mostly clear and reasonable. Some minor gaps in linking costs to activities.	Budget lacks sufficient detail or justification. Questionable cost effectiveness.	Budget is unrealistic, incomplete, or misaligned with scope of work.
Capacity for Equity & Inclusion	10%	Evaluation plan deeply embeds equity considerations; shows nuanced understanding of justice-impacted populations.	Equity addressed adequately, with some integration into plan.	Equity mentioned but not clearly integrated into approach.	No meaningful attention to equity or inclusion.
Timeline	5%	Timeline is realistic, detailed, and clearly aligned with project milestones and deliverables.	Timeline is generally clear and feasible, with minor gaps.	Timeline is somewhat unclear or overly ambitious.	Timeline is unrealistic, incomplete, or missing key milestones.



4.0 CALENDAR OF KEY DATES

Date	Event
Sept. 1, 2025 - Oct. 15, 2025	Application Submission Window
Sept. 15, 2025	Questions Submission Deadline
Oct. 15, 2025	Proposals Due
Oct. 27-28, 2025	Proposal Presentation Meetings
Nov. 3, 2025	Award Announced
Dec. 1, 2025	Performance Period Begins

5.0 AWARD OF AGREEMENT AND APPEAL

Notice of Intent to Award

Following the submission and acceptance of the Review Committee's recommendation, the Chancellor's Office will issue a Notice of Intent to Award, identifying the respondent deemed most qualified to receive the agreement, if any. The selected respondent will be required to sign a vendor agreement. The Chancellor's Office reserves the right to modify the vendor agreement at any time prior to execution by the selected respondent.

Appeal of Award

An appeal of the award must be submitted in writing and signed by respondent's president or designee. The appeal must be emailed to the Vice Chancellor of Educational Services Division, Gina Browne at GBrowne@CCCCO.edu within ten (10) calendar days of the date the notice of intent to award is posted.

The appeal must specify the grounds for the appeal and must be based on the process and/or procedures used in the review and recommendation of applications for awards. The Chancellor's Office will review all information submitted and render a decision within ten (10) calendar days of receipt. The decision of the Chancellor's Office is final.

6.0 GENERAL CONDITIONS

Respondent Inquires



During the RFP process (from release of this RFP through the final award), respondents are not permitted to contact any Chancellor's Office employees, except to fulfill pre-existing contractual obligations. No gratuities of any kind will be accepted, including meals, gifts or trips. Violation of these conditions will constitute immediate disqualification.

It is the responsibility of the respondent to seek clarification on any RFP requirements that are not understood. Responses to inquiries will be disseminated via email. Refer to cover page for respondent inquiry deadlines and the designated Chancellor's Office contact.

Public Records

Respondents are hereby notified that the Chancellor's Office is a public agency subject to the California Public Records Act (CPRA). Any proposals, or portions thereof, submitted in response to this RFP may be subject to disclosure under CPRA.

Reserved Rights

The Chancellor's Office reserves the right to select any organization or reject any or all organizations at its sole discretion; make such selection without holding interviews or oral presentations; request additional information; and negotiate the final terms and conditions of a vendor agreement with the selected organization.

Oral Statements

The Chancellor's Office shall not be bound by oral statements or representations contrary to the written specifications.

Ownership and Use of Documents

All documents, reports, proposals, submittals, working papers or other materials submitted to the Chancellor's Office by a respondent shall become the sole and exclusive property of the Chancellor's Office. These materials are considered part of the public domain, are not the property of the respondent, and may be subject to public disclosure under the CPRA. Respondents shall not copyright, or cause to be copyrighted, any portion of the materials submitted in response to this solicitation. Furthermore, the Chancellor's Office may utilize concepts or ideas submitted via proposal without compensation.

Qualifications of Respondent

The Chancellor's Office may conduct any investigations it deems necessary to determine the ability of the respondent to perform the work. The respondent shall provide all information and data requested by the Chancellor's Office to support this determination. Execution of Contract. A contract will not be binding in the



Chancellor's Office until it has been approved by the Chancellor's Office and approved by the parties' respective legal counsel and fully executed by all parties.

Errors in Proposal

If a respondent discovers an error in its proposal submitted in response to this RFP, it is the respondent's responsibility to submit all corrections during the RFP window (the period from the RFP release date to the proposal submission deadline). Corrections received after this window may result in disqualification from consideration.