



April 22, 2020

Senator Holly Mitchell, Chair
Senate Budget Committee
State Capitol, Room 5019

Assemblymember Phil Ting, Chair
Assembly Budget Committee
State Capitol, Room 6026

RE: Strong Workforce Program

Dear Senator Mitchell and Assemblymember Ting:

Thank you for your continued support of the California Community Colleges and our Strong Workforce Program (SWP). Our colleges are proud to offer the most affordable, accessible, and up-to-date career technical education programs in the country. At no time has the value of Strong Workforce funding been more evident than during this global pandemic. At this critical time, your support in protecting the current level of SWP funding for our colleges is our most critical ask.

As you know, the Strong Workforce Program was created in 2016 to lift one million workers into living-wage careers through innovative education programs designed to offer industry's most advanced technical skills training. What you may not know is just how impactful the funding has been. The number of career education students who earned a degree, certificate, or apprenticeship journey status increased 15% in the academic years from 2015-16 to 2017-18. Also students hourly wages increased by 56% (\$8.33 overall increase in hourly wages) after completing. In addition, SWP funding has improved our classroom environments by providing students with the most recent technologies used by industry. SWP investments across every region in California have enabled community colleges to offer this impactful education in an equitable way that gives new opportunity and hope to populations who would otherwise struggle to afford higher education and related living expenses.

Our community college students graduate and become our state's essential workers, entrepreneurs, business owners, employers, and economic drivers. Our California Community Colleges provide training for more than half of all 457 CISA-identified essential occupations across a variety of industry sectors. Seven out of ten California nurses receive education at the California Community Colleges. Our California College Programs that utilize this funding include allied health, EMS training, police and firefighter training, nursing, cybersecurity, advanced transportation, logistics and so many more. Our California Community Colleges also provide numerous career pathways in advanced manufacturing, such as medical devices and biotechnology, some of which are only available in California. SWP allows our allied health professionals, including nurses, medical assistants, respiratory therapists, and critical related manufacturing technicians to support California in its time of greatest need.

Lastly, history has proven time and time again that Californians turn to our community colleges in times of recession for access to programs for economic vitality. We need to be certain we are prepared for those students. We cannot fully do our job without stable SWP funding.

Thank you again for your continued support.

Sincerely,

John Jaramillo, President



California community colleges are the state's largest workforce training provider

- Community colleges are California's largest workforce training provider, serving more than two million students annually and issuing associate degrees and short-term job training certificates in more than 175 fields of study.¹
- Statewide, California community colleges served more than one million students in 2017/18 with Strong Workforce Program funding.²
- In a recent academic year, the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) found that 35% of community college students in California participated in career education programs.³
- The number of career education students who earned a degree, certificate, or apprenticeship journey status increased 15% between 2015-16 and 2017/18.⁴

California community colleges are essential to the state's critical infrastructure workforce

- California community colleges provide training for a majority of CISA-identified essential occupations across a variety of industries. Across the state, community colleges offer training for more than half of all 457 essential occupations.
- Seven out of 10 CA nurses receive their training at a California Community College.⁵
- Eight out of 10 police officers, firefighters, and EMTs are trained at a California community college.⁶

Career education programs at California community colleges result in upward economic mobility for students

- The results of the 2019 CTE Employment Outcomes Survey (CTEOS) show that, “completing CTE studies and training--whether or not a credential is earned--is related to positive employment outcomes.”⁷ The survey finds the following:
 - Students increased hourly wages by 56% increase in hourly wages after completing training (\$8.33 overall increase in hourly wages)
 - 92% of students reported being very satisfied or satisfied with their training
- On average, the PPIC finds that students completing a career education program in California significantly increase annual earnings. Students completing associate degrees in health career programs double their earnings. A majority of students completing career education programs earn middle income wages within one year of completion.⁸

¹ PPIC Higher Education Center, “Higher Education in California.” October 2019 <https://www.ppic.org/wp-content/uploads/higher-education-in-california-october-2019.pdf>

² California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office Launchboard <https://www.calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/Home.aspx>

³ Bohn, Sarah, Niu Gao, Shannon McConville. “Fact Sheet: Career Technical Education In California.” Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC). June, 2018. <https://www.ppic.org/wp-content/uploads/jtf-career-technical-education.pdf>

⁴ Ibid, Launchboard.

⁵ CCCCO Key Facts, <https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Key-Facts>

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office Career Technical Education Outcomes Survey (CTEOS). <https://cteos.santarosa.edu/>

⁸ Bohn, Sarah, Jackson, Jacob, Shannon McConville. “Career Pathways and Economic Mobility at California Community Colleges.” Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC). June, 2019, p. 3, 9. <https://www.ppic.org/wp-content/uploads/career-pathways-and-economic-mobility-at-californias-community-colleges.pdf>



Middle-skill jobs are essential to California's workforce and economy

- The Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce found that good jobs requiring less than a bachelor's degree increasingly require more training and education beyond high school. The center also found that the workforce is shifting to skilled services.⁹ The report found that California led the nation in the number of middle-skill jobs, 3.4 million, but the character of these jobs is changing. Between 1991 and 2015, California lost 235,000 middle-skill blue collar jobs due to automation and offshoring, but gained 265,000 middle-skill, skilled service jobs in health care, finance, and information technology.¹⁰

The Strong Workforce Program is indispensable to meeting the state's workforce needs

- The Strong Workforce Program grew out of the need to meet the middle skill challenge in California. The community colleges' Board of Governors convened a task force in 2014-2015 to survey and convene statewide stakeholders to craft the program to meet the needs of the state's economy and workforce.¹¹
- A report from the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) on the state's higher education master plan and the state's workforce readiness finds broad needs for the state's higher education system to enhance regional alignment with workforce and industry needs. The report touts the efforts of the Strong Workforce Program to connect career education programs to employer needs, and recommends continued state investment.¹²

⁹ Carnevale, Anthony, et. al. Good Jobs That Pay Without a BA. Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce. 2017. <https://goodjobsdata.org/wp-content/uploads/Good-Jobs-wo-BA.pdf>

¹⁰ Ibid. State-by-state analysis, California. <https://goodjobsdata.org/wp-content/themes/cewgoodjobs-main-site/state-profiles/California.pdf>

¹¹ California Community Colleges Task Force on Workforce, Job Creation, and a Strong Economy: Report and Recommendations. August, 2015. <https://luminafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/task-force-on-workforce.pdf>

¹² Governor's Office of Planning and Research. The Master Plan for Higher Education in California, and the State's Workforce Needs: A Review. December, 2018. pp. 48-51, 58. http://opr.ca.gov/docs/20181226-Master_Plan_Report.pdf