



March 26, 2020

Resources and Next Steps for Supporting College Opportunity and Success Through the COVID-19 Crisis

There is no playbook for how to best respond to a global pandemic, but the extraordinary efforts of our public college and university leaders as they work nonstop to keep our students, faculty, and staff safe while learning continues has been exemplary. We are incredibly grateful to them!

At the federal level, we have joined over 50 organizations across the nation to [urge Congress to support students](#) in response to campus closures and restrictions. The Senate has since passed a bill that includes an "Education Stabilization Fund" for states, K-12 districts, colleges, and universities. It is expected to be signed by the President within the next few days. But the work continues, and we will continue to advocate for funding, financial aid, and other resources to ensure that students in California and across the nation can attend and succeed in college.

As one of the state's leading racial equity advocates in higher education, we want to ensure vulnerable students do not fall off their college pathways as this crisis evolves. That is why we support policy and campus efforts that target support for vulnerable students. We urge policymakers and college leaders to:

INVEST IN STUDENTS' EMERGENCY AND BASIC NEEDS

For many students, especially low-income, first generation, and students of color, this is a time of tremendous financial stress. The abrupt and necessary move to online instruction has left some on-campus students with unexpected costs related to moving out and getting back home. Students are losing on and off-campus jobs as much of the service sector shuts down due to necessary state and local rules. Many students are losing their source of housing and food.

- Invest in emergency grant aid and coordinate with social service providers to address basic needs such as food, transportation, housing, and health care;
- To the extent possible, allow students with extenuating circumstances to access campus food pantries and housing; and,
- Target additional aid for our lowest-income students, undocumented students, and formerly incarcerated students.

ENSURE STUDENTS CAN LEARN AND SUCCEED

Colleges are rapidly innovating instruction. Student success depends on quality online courses, quality support services, and a keen understanding of new barriers students are facing, such as financial stress, internet access, and adequate space for learning.

- Ensure students have access to broadband internet to participate in online learning;
- Regularly monitor the quality and effectiveness of online instruction, student success outcomes by race/ethnicity, and develop appropriate interventions;
- Communicate frequently with students and families, keeping them informed of instructional changes and supports while collecting feedback on their experiences and challenges; and,
- Provide flexible options for students to meet financial obligations, including tuition/fees, deposits, loan repayment, fines, etc.

GUARD COLLEGE OPPORTUNITY FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

Our future college students are also facing challenges. The move to online learning has left many high school seniors without access to counselors to guide them in deciphering and comparing financial aid packages and ultimately deciding which college or university to attend. Rising seniors have already lost two opportunities to take the SAT/ACT, the standardized tests required for admission to many universities.

- Extend the Statement of Intent to Register deadline for all California State University (CSU) and University of California (UC) campuses to June 1st, so students have more time and support to make informed decisions amidst this global pandemic;
- Urge the UC Regents and CSU Trustees to employ a standardized test-optional policy for the Fall 2020 freshman application cycle given limited testing opportunities for students; and,
- Prepare to reevaluate financial aid awards and eligibility given the rapid loss of income that students and their families may be experiencing.

We are still a long way from the end of this pandemic and the economic fall-out that could follow. History has shown that during a recession, enrollment demand at colleges and universities skyrockets, just as the need for financial aid increases. We also know that those who weather the storm best are college graduates. That is why it is important that our leaders provide students with adequate supports to enable them to succeed and join the workforce to contribute to the state's economic recovery.

We are fortunate to live in a state with one of the best community college and public university systems in the entire world. As the nation's number one driver of economic growth, California has a duty to fortify college opportunity to ensure our residents, state, and country continue to innovate and thrive, especially in times of crisis.

RESOURCES

California Colleges and Universities

- California Community College resources, click [here](#)
- California State University resources, click [here](#)
- University of California resources, click [here](#)
- Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU) resources, click [here](#)

General

- [Supporting #RealCollege Students During COVID19](#) by Sara Goldrick Rab at The Hope Center
- [Supporting students, colleagues, and community during COVID-19](#) by the Center for Urban Education
- [10 strategies to support students and help them learn during the coronavirus crisis](#) by Mays Imad at Pima Community College
- [Los Angeles Community Resources](#)

Food Resources

- Foodbank locations or food resources can be found by visiting www.auntbertha.com or by the Why Hunger hotline at **1(800) 5-HUNGRY**
- Some students may be or become eligible for [SNAP](#).

Internet Connectivity

- Internet Essentials is offering 2 months of free services. For more information visit their [website](#).
- Beginning March 16, [Charter Communications](#) will make its internet and WiFi services available for free for 60 days to households with K-12 and/or college students who don't already have internet through the company. WiFi hotspots will also be open for public use.

Health and Safety

- Medi-Cal Eligibility formation can be found [here](#) and local county eligibility offices can be found [here](#).
- Mexican Consulate Ventanilla de Salud information can be found [here](#).
- For those who may be worried about quarantining in a home where they do not feel safe, help is available from the National Domestic Violence Hotline 24/7/365 by [chat](#) or by calling their hotline at **1-800-799-7233**.

Undocumented Student Resources

- [COVID-19 Resources for Undocumented Communities](#)
- [Supporting Immigrant Communities in Uncertain Times](#)
- Department of Social Services [Immigration Legal Services](#) resources
- The Coalition for Human Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA) COVID-19 resource page can be found [here](#).
- Immigrants Rising's comprehensive resource page can be found [here](#).

Other

- [U-Haul](#) is offering free storage to college students.