The CALIFORNIA ALLIANCE *for*
STUDENT PARENT SUCCESS

Request for Applications for The Alliance's Empowering Single Mothers & Parenting Students Community of Practice

Background

[The California Alliance for Student Parent Success](#) (The Alliance) is a collaboration between [EdTrust-West](#) and [California Competes: Higher Education for a Strong Economy](#) (California Competes). Together, these organizations have formed The Alliance, guided by the following mission and vision:

- **Mission:** Through research, policy advocacy, capacity building, and community engagement, The California Alliance for Student Parent Success supports the postsecondary success and comprehensive well-being of California student parents and their families.

- **Vision:** The California Alliance for Student Parent Success envisions a California where higher education systems equitably support and empower student parents on their paths to earning meaningful credentials and securing gainful employment. The Alliance commits to driving systems change and advocates for investing in resources and services that propel student parents and their families forward. We work to ensure that student parents and their families are recognized and supported, effectively bridging equity gaps and strengthening systems that will enable current and future generations to truly thrive.

Overview

To empower bright futures for all Californians, we must begin with California Community Colleges (CCCs), where nearly one in ten students are parenting. By strengthening the institutional policies and practices at CCCs, we hold the potential to support the system's parenting students and facilitate a path to higher education attainment for 3.9 million Californians who have children but no college degree. Although state policymakers have recently invested billions of dollars in higher education to increase the number of Californians completing college, parenting students are often excluded or deprioritized in the design and implementation of these investments. The lack of family-serving policies and practices at colleges and universities hinders single mothers and parenting student success, and forces current and aspiring students to choose between their education, career, and familial obligations. Despite having higher grade point averages than their non-parenting peers, student parents complete college at a lower rate, likely because they face many challenges, including housing and food insecurity, at greater rates than students without dependent children. Supporting single mothers and parenting students – the majority of whom are Black, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Native American – will also help close persistent racial equity gaps in college readiness, access, completion, and degree attainment.

Purpose

As part of its goals to **(1)** increase single mother and parenting student degree attainment and **(2)** shift policies, practices, resources, relationships, decisions, and beliefs in favor of these students, The Alliance will launch a technical assistance pilot from September 2024 through February 2025 with two community colleges in California. Participating colleges will engage in a Community of Practice model (CoP) and meet in person and virtually to inform the development and implementation of campus action plans geared toward explicitly supporting student parents. By the end of the CoP, participating colleges will conduct or refine relevant data collection and identify at least two policy or practice changes to implement that better serve single mothers and student parents.

The Opportunity

Participating colleges can anticipate increasing their knowledge of the barriers, intersectional identities, and assets of single mothers and parenting students, which will be used to implement targeted policies and practices:

- **Teams:** Colleges will form teams of six to collaborate with parenting students, staff, faculty, and administration across departments on their campus and from another institution.

- **Monthly Engagement:** There will be a total of six CoP sessions held between September 2024 and February 2025. The first in-person session, aimed at fostering community building among facilitators and cross-campus teams, is scheduled for September 23, 2024. Additional sessions will be held virtually, using interactive online tools and shorter sessions to optimize participant engagement.

- **Insights:** Colleges will gain insights from research on single mothers and parenting students to enhance their campus' ability to serve them more effectively.

- **Peer Learning:** In the CoP model, participating college teams will learn through discussing and sharing their experiences, challenges, and best practices with facilitators and another college team.

- **Technical Assistance:** Colleges will receive in-kind technical assistance, helping collect data and implement at least two policy or practice changes to better support their campus' single mothers and parenting students.

Eligibility

All California Community Colleges are eligible to apply. Two colleges will be selected based on their commitment, demonstrated need, and engagement capacity.

Note: Please visit the California Community Colleges website to view a list of all California Community Colleges.

Selection Criteria

Applicants should demonstrate a commitment to developing the knowledge, skills, and abilities of their campus teams to support single mothers and parenting students. Additionally, applicant colleges should demonstrate the following:

- **Need:** Applicants should demonstrate a need for technical assistance (e.g., no systemic campus data collection on student parents or low retention rates among student parents at their campus).

- **Potential Impact:** Applicants should be able to discuss how the technical assistance will strengthen existing campus supports for single mothers and parenting students or outline how it will facilitate new campus initiatives.

- **Leadership and/or Cross-Campus Support:** To demonstrate support, applications must include a signed Letter of Support from their campus president **or** the leaders of three relevant campus programs (e.g., women's resource center, campus childcare center, Extended Opportunity Programs and Services). Please note that a Letter of Support signed by your campus president on the institution's letterhead is required if a member of campus leadership does not complete your application.

- **Capacity:** Applicants should demonstrate their team's capacity and ability to engage in all CoP sessions and to implement the resulting campus action plan.

- **Previously Implemented Program:** Preference may be given to colleges that have previously implemented family-serving institutional policies and practices, which may include implementing flexible attendance and absence policies and providing Child Care Access Means Parents In School (CCAMPIS) vouchers and subsidies.

- **Diversity:** Preference may be given to schools with diverse student populations, including students from underrepresented racial and ethnic backgrounds, Pell-eligible students, DACA and undocumented students, veterans, justice-impacted students, and former foster youth.

Key Dates

Request for Applications issue date:
May 1, 2024

Informational webinar: Register for the informational webinar on May 15, 2024, 1:30 PM PDT

Request for Applications deadline:
June 1, 2024, 5:00 PM PDT

Notice of decision to applicants:
June 17, 2024

Public announcement:
August 1, 2024

Implementation period:
September 2024 – February 2025

How to apply:
Applications will be accepted through The Alliance website: castudentparentalliance.org/what-we-do/capacity-building/.

Questions

Please refer to our frequently asked questions guide or email studentparentsuccess@californiacompetes.org.

Sessions

All sessions will be between three to four hours.

- **Session 1:** September 23, 2024 (Oakland, California)

- **Session 2:** October 16, 2024 (virtual)

- **Session 3:** November 13, 2024 (virtual)

- **Session 4:** December 18, 2024 (virtual)

- **Session 5:** January 16, 2025 (virtual)

- **Session 6:** February 19, 2025 (virtual)

Award

While no direct funding will be provided to colleges to participate, we estimate colleges will receive in-kind technical assistance valued at $75,000 per team.

Note: We will cover transportation expenses for participants to attend the in-person kick-off session in Oakland, California, on September 23, 2024.

Expectations

- Each selected college will participate in six CoP sessions (one held in person, and five conducted remotely) from September 2024 through February 2025.

- All team members **must** attend the in-person kick-off session in Oakland, California, on September 23, 2024. Additionally, they must participate in all virtual sessions scheduled thereafter.

- Selected colleges will commit to collecting data about single mothers and parenting students and identify at least two policy or practice changes to implement.

- Each selected college is required to have a team of six members with staff from each of the following departments or functional areas listed below and one parenting student:

  1. Student Services
  2. Academic Affairs
  3. Institutional Research
  4. Financial Aid
  5. Campus Administration
  6. Parenting Student
  7. Child Care Center Staff*

* Colleges may invite a staff member from their campus-based childcare center to form a team of seven, though it is not required.

The **ALLIANCE**

CAStudentParentAlliance.org