



February 12, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Skinner  
Chair, California State Senate Budget and  
Fiscal Review Committee  
State Capitol Room 5019  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Phil Ting  
Chair, California State Assembly Budget  
Committee  
State Capitol Room 6026  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Early Action Emergency Financial Aid for California Community College Students**

Dear Chair Skinner and Chair Ting:

The Institute for College Access & Success ([TICAS](#)) is a trusted source of research, design, and advocacy for student-centered public policies that promote affordability, accountability, and equity in higher education; and the Student Senate for California Community Colleges ([SSCCC](#)) is recognized by the state legislature as the official voice of 2.1 million California community college (CCC) students with the mission of pursuing policies that will improve student access, promote student success, engage and empower local student leaders, and enrich the collegiate experience for all CCC students.

**We write in support of allocating \$100 million for early action emergency financial aid for community college students** and urge you to structure the funds in a way that maximizes local flexibility to enable colleges to address students' emergency needs nimbly and quickly. In particular, *we respectfully request that you remove eligibility limitations related to students' full-time enrollment or full-time employment, past or future*. Such limitations would exclude many community college students struggling with unexpected costs and basic needs, and the verification of eligibility would also serve to delay students' receipt of aid and consume college resources during a challenging time.

In a recent survey of California college students, conducted by TICAS in partnership with Hart Research Associates and with support from the Michelson 20MM Foundation (complete analysis forthcoming), the overwhelming majority of students who received COVID-related financial assistance from their colleges said it was important to their continued enrollment. This was particularly true for part-time students at community colleges. Most recipients spent the resources on food, highlighting the critical role emergency aid has played in supporting students' basic needs

during the crisis and underscoring just how important covering basic needs is in facilitating continued enrollment.

Ensuring these critical resources can be deployed smoothly and efficiently is key to supporting vulnerable students' ability to enroll – or remain enrolled – and have their basic needs met so that they can be successful, which is the intent of the emergency financial aid program. While students may want to attend full time, they may be unable to do so for a variety of reasons, including work, family, and other responsibilities that have only been magnified by the pandemic; in Fall 2020, for example, nearly 70% of students were enrolled part time. Additionally, low-income communities and communities of color have been most impacted by un- and underemployment during the ongoing crisis, which may affect their ability to meet eligibility limitations. According to TICAS' report [\*What College Costs for Low-Income Californians: 2020\*](#), low-income students at community colleges across the state must work 24-40 hours a week to attend college full time.

To realize these resources' full potential in supporting students facing financial challenges brought on or exacerbated by this pandemic, we respectfully urge you to support the early action \$100 million allocation for emergency financial aid for community college students without any enrollment, employment, verification, or other barriers, recognizing that just because a student is part time, they do not have a part time need.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Andrew Nickens*

Andrew Nickens  
Vice President of Legislative Affairs  
Student Senate for California Community  
Colleges



Debbie Cochrane  
Executive Vice President  
The Institute for College Access & Success

CC: Senator Toni G. Atkins, Senate President pro Tempore, California State Senate  
Assemblymember Anthony Rendon, Speaker of the Assembly, California State Assembly  
Senator John Laird, Chair, California State Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee,  
Subcommittee #1 on Education  
Assemblymember Kevin McCarty, Chair, California State Assembly Committee on Budget,  
Subcommittee # 2 on Education Finance  
Jennifer Pacella, Deputy Legislative Analyst, Legislative Analyst's Office  
Paul Steenhausen, Principal Fiscal & Policy Analyst, Legislative Analyst's Office  
Members, California State Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee, Subcommittee #1  
on Education

Members, California State Assembly Committee on Budget, Subcommittee # 2 on Education  
Finance

Lande Ajose, Senior Policy Advisor for Higher Education, Office of Governor Gavin  
Newsom

Chris Ferguson, Assistant Program Budget Manager, California Department of Finance

Michelle Nguyen, Principal Program Budget Analyst, Department of Finance