



LINKED LEARNING ALLIANCE

California Career Pathways Trust and Regional Educational and Workforce Preparation

Dear College Leaders,

As community college leaders committed to improving public education and workforce readiness, you are aware of the importance of student preparation prior to college entry as a means to support student success. The following letter outlines how community colleges can best leverage the unique opportunity provided by the California Career Pathways Trust to advance regional educational attainment and workforce preparation. As the application deadline for Implementation Grants is February 6th, 2015, it is imperative to act with urgency.

As you may already be aware, the Career Pathways Trust is a \$250 million competitive grant advanced by former Senate President pro Tempore Darrell Steinberg and State Superintendent Tom Torlakson. These grants are intended to mobilize regional collaboration between employers and educators across K-12 and higher education in order to expand career pathway options and strengthen alignment to employer needs.

Community colleges benefit from regional strategies that reduce remediation needs; increase degree, certificate, and transfer attainment; and improve the responsiveness of programs to employer needs. Commitment to develop systemic, regional workforce preparation through the alignment of colleges, school districts and employers is critical for career pathways to effectively prepare students for the workforce and transfer to four-year universities, and will be a determining factor in the competitiveness of regional grant applications.

The maximum grant award for a regional application is \$15 million. **Coordination among key regional partners is paramount**; applications that demonstrate commitment of comprehensive regional partnerships will have competitive advantage. A comprehensive strategy is one that supports regional economic and workforce development, and that improves student outcomes both before and during postsecondary studies.

The most important role community colleges can play is to commit to the development of systemic regional partnerships with K-12 school districts, universities, and employers that lead to articulated K-16 pathways aligned with regional economies, expand programs that build from a sequence of certificate, degree and transfer-eligible dual credit opportunities, and reduce remediation barriers.

Key Regional Partners in Strategy Development and Implementation

- Public school districts
- Community college districts
- Universities

- Employers who represent regional sectors of strength
- Workforce investment board and other workforce development organizations
- Civic leaders and elected officials
- Foundations and philanthropic entities

Key Regional Infrastructure Opportunities

- Create systemic articulation and enrollment agreements with school districts and public universities to streamline and accelerate degree, transfer, and certificate program completion.
- Create comprehensive career pathways within industry sectors.
- Share and analyze student data across K-12 and college districts to regularly inform reforms and collaboration at all levels.
- Establish K-16 externship programs and professional communities of practice that bring together educators and industry professionals to improve program and workforce alignment.
- Create sector-themed work-based learning sequences that begin in middle school or high school that culminate in employment and paid or unpaid internships at the high school and community college levels.
- Develop pre-entry programs and support services to prepare high school pathway students for entry to community college programs, including strategies that aid students in passing diagnostic or placement assessments, and the development of alternate assessments.
- Collaborate with school districts and civic partners to develop transition strategies, policies, and programs for high school career pathway students to facilitate assessment, matriculation, and enrollment in community college programs of study.
- Partner with school districts, public universities, industry partners, and other community colleges or college districts to develop programs of study which can be adopted by any high school to meet entry requirements, or dual enrollment requirements, for community college programs.

Because applications for **Career Pathways Trust Implementation Grants** are due **February 6, 2015**, we urge applicants and potential partners to act quickly.

Information about Linked Learning can be found at www.linkedlearning.org.

Sincerely,



Christopher Cabaldon, Executive Director
Linked Learning Alliance