



NONCREDIT EDUCATION

POLICY BRIEF

April 2014

Community College League of California

BACKGROUND

Currently, the nine noncredit education categories eligible for community college funding established in Education Code §84757 are:

- Elementary and secondary basic skills
- English as a second language
- Immigrant education (citizenship and workforce preparation)
- Programs for adults with disabilities
- Short-term career technical education
- Parenting
- Older adult programs
- Health and safety
- Home economics

| Funded FTES | 2008-09 Final | | 2013-14 P1 | | Decline | |
|--------------------|----------------------|-----|-------------------|-----|----------------|------|
| Credit | 1,109,057 | 92% | 1,049,137 | 94% | (59,920) | -5% |
| Non Credit | 51,656 | 4% | 28,266 | 3% | (23,390) | -45% |
| Non Credit CDCP | 45,028 | 4% | 34,874 | 3% | (10,154) | -23% |
| | 1,205,741 | | 1,112,277 | | | |

Last year in the May Revision, the Governor proposed that five noncredit categories (elementary and secondary basic skills, English as a second language, immigrant education, adults with disabilities, short-term career technical education) be funded by a new “Adult Education Partnership” program; however, a community college district could still be funded through the regular apportionment for all nine noncredit categories.

COURSES AND GOALS

Five of the categories are of particular importance for the success of students because these courses provide a demonstrated pathway to enrollment in credit programs, entry or re-entry into the job market, and critical citizenship and workforce skills for New Americans. It should be noted that these five categories are the focus of the Assembly Bill 86 adult education planning process currently underway. Specifically, these areas of noncredit instruction provide:

- Students in need of remedial coursework with basic skills in reading, writing and computation to enable them to be successful in college-level coursework. (Data show that 71% of those who are prepared for college work at entry to community colleges are successful in meeting their goals; while very few are successful if they arrive with less-adequate preparation.) These noncredit courses can provide the essential “bridge” to enable students to be ready for college-level work and ultimately increase the numbers of Californians who receive certificates and degrees.
- Immigrants with English language skills needed to gain employment, become citizens or pursue further academic study.
- Basic skills or vocational education for students with disabilities to enable them to achieve maximum independence.
- Short-term career technical education to provide students with the skills needed for job entry or re-entry, as well as career advancement or change. Noncredit CTE programs enable students to enter gainful employment while pursuing their long-term educational goals.

FUNDING

In 2013-14, community colleges received \$4,636 per FTES for credit courses; \$3,282 per FTES for “enhanced” noncredit (noncredit courses in Career Development and College Preparation [CDCP]), and \$2,788 per FTES for regular noncredit instruction. The disparity in funding between the noncredit CDCP rate and the credit rate means that districts which offer essential noncredit programs are unable to provide the additional supports which have been shown to lead to greater student success. These include: full-time faculty, faculty office hours, and other critical supports for increasing the successful completion of these courses and programs. These supportive services are currently missing from CDCP programs but particularly important for this

segment of the population because these are students who are not academically prepared for credit college level work or need vital English skills to fully engage in American society. In addition, noncredit programs need professional development resources, the finalization of metrics to evaluate noncredit programs, and dedicated Student Success and Support Program (SSSP) resources to provide orientation, assessment, placement, counseling and education plans for noncredit students.

RATIONALE

The current level of apportionment for CDCP (Career Development and College Preparation) enhanced noncredit classes and programs at only 71% of the credit rate, does not provide adequate funding for noncredit programs that endeavor to support job readiness, provide a gateway to enrollment in credit classes, and attract and retain quality faculty and staff. Therefore, the *Report of the Workgroup on Community College Finance* (2004) recommended, and there was general agreement that, apportionment funding should be increased for CDCP courses to the full credit rate when funds were available to increase student success and completion. CCLC supports the equalization of funding rates between credit instruction and the Career Development and College Preparation (CDCP) program. Based upon the number of CDCP FTES funded at the 2013-14 First Principal apportionment, it is estimated this would cost roughly \$50 million. The reality within the community college system is that roughly 75% of students arrive at the colleges unprepared for college level and need remediation. If reimbursement rates were equalized, the financial disincentive to primarily offer pre-collegiate credit instruction would no longer exist. Such an approach would provide community colleges with another option to address remediation and students with another delivery method for instruction. Noncredit students would pay no fees to enroll in remediation courses, which would be better designed and more flexible for this student population. Short, intensive formats with open-entry enrollment would be the norm rather than the traditional 16-week regular credit course. Instruction could be provided in an acceleration format or some other intensification environment which could be an option for CTE or Basic Skills courses. Finally, because a student would pay no fees, the student could delay the start of their financial aid eligibility “clock” and have only credit classes count toward the degree, certificate or educational goal they choose.

The need for additional resources for more effective programs was also cited in *In a Time of Scarce Resources: Near Term Priorities in Adult Education*¹ whose authors note the importance of adult education for meeting the economic and social needs of 21st century citizenry. They argue that “the present adult education system [must be transformed] into a more effective and coordinated adult education and workforce development system” and that doing so requires reaching a broader population base as well as moving to a model of high intensity and managed enrollment, articulation with K-12 programs, providing guidance and counseling to develop learning plans for each student, introducing some technology where appropriate, and collecting research and data to assess the effectiveness of these programs to accelerate learning gains and provide better services for these students.

WHY IS THIS AN IMPORTANT ISSUE NOW AND NOT IN THE PAST?

EdSource researchers have written: “...although this triad [developmental, occupational and academic transfer] of functions reflects the reality of what the California Community Colleges do, the commitment to developmental education is neither as firmly entrenched nor as widely accepted as the other two commitments.”

Various examinations of the history of the community colleges explain some of the reasons....

[Patrick] “Callan² points out that , ..[when the Master Plan for Higher Education was developed in 1960], there was little formal recognition that graduates from the state’s K-12 education system might arrive at college unprepared for college-level academic work. In the years since, the proportion of community college students identified as needing developmental education has grown steadily, likely for several reasons. The state has seen a dramatic increase in the number and proportion of high school graduates who pursue postsecondary education, in part because of increasingly sophisticated workplace demands and the growing complexity of our society and economy. Demographics also play a role: the state’s population has become more diverse at the same time that inequities in access and success among different student groups have become more visible and less tolerated. Simultaneously, California’s K-12 education system has weakened in terms of the resources provided to schools compared with most other states.”³

Thus, this issue has reached crucial proportions which require that California renew its commitment to pre-collegiate basic skills so that California Community Colleges can innovatively meet the needs of these students to become full participants in the economy and active citizens of this state.

¹Forrest Chisman and Gail Spangenberg, Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy, New York, July 25, 2012.

²President, Higher Education Policy Institute; former president, National Center for Public Policy & Higher Education, former staff director, California’s Joint Committee on the Master Plan for Higher Education.

³Perry, M.; Bahr, P.R.; et.al. (2010) Course-taking Patterns, Policies, and Practices in Development Education in the California Community Colleges. Mountain View, CA: EdSource. Page 3.