

CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES  
**FINISH LINE**  
SCHOLARS PROGRAM

**Program Report**  
2020–2024  
Submitted November 2024



FOUNDATION *for* CALIFORNIA  
COMMUNITY COLLEGES



California Community Colleges



# An Innovative Program Designed to Meet the Moment

The innovative California Community Colleges Finish Line Scholars Program (Finish Line) was intricately designed to meet the moment, launching in October 2020 in the midst of an unprecedented global pandemic thanks to a 20-year pledge of \$100 million from the Jay Pritzker Foundation. Focusing first on emergency financial aid for students impacted by COVID-19, Finish Line supported more than 8,000 students during the 2020-21 academic year. Since then, Finish Line has provided support to more than 17,600 students through its unique combination of scholarship awards and emergency financial aid, student-centered guiding principles, and clear program guidelines that allow participating colleges to implement the program to best meet the needs of their students and communities.

Finish Line's mission is to help eliminate regional educational gaps (Goal 6 of the original Vision for Success) through distribution of scholarships to students who are well on their way toward a finish line goal of transferring to a college or university or completing a certificate/degree along with emergency financial aid to students facing unexpected hardships. Based on statewide community college data and regional community demographics, the new program was rolled out to the three regions of California with the lowest rates of adult higher education attainment: Central Valley, Far North, and Inland Empire. Thirty four colleges

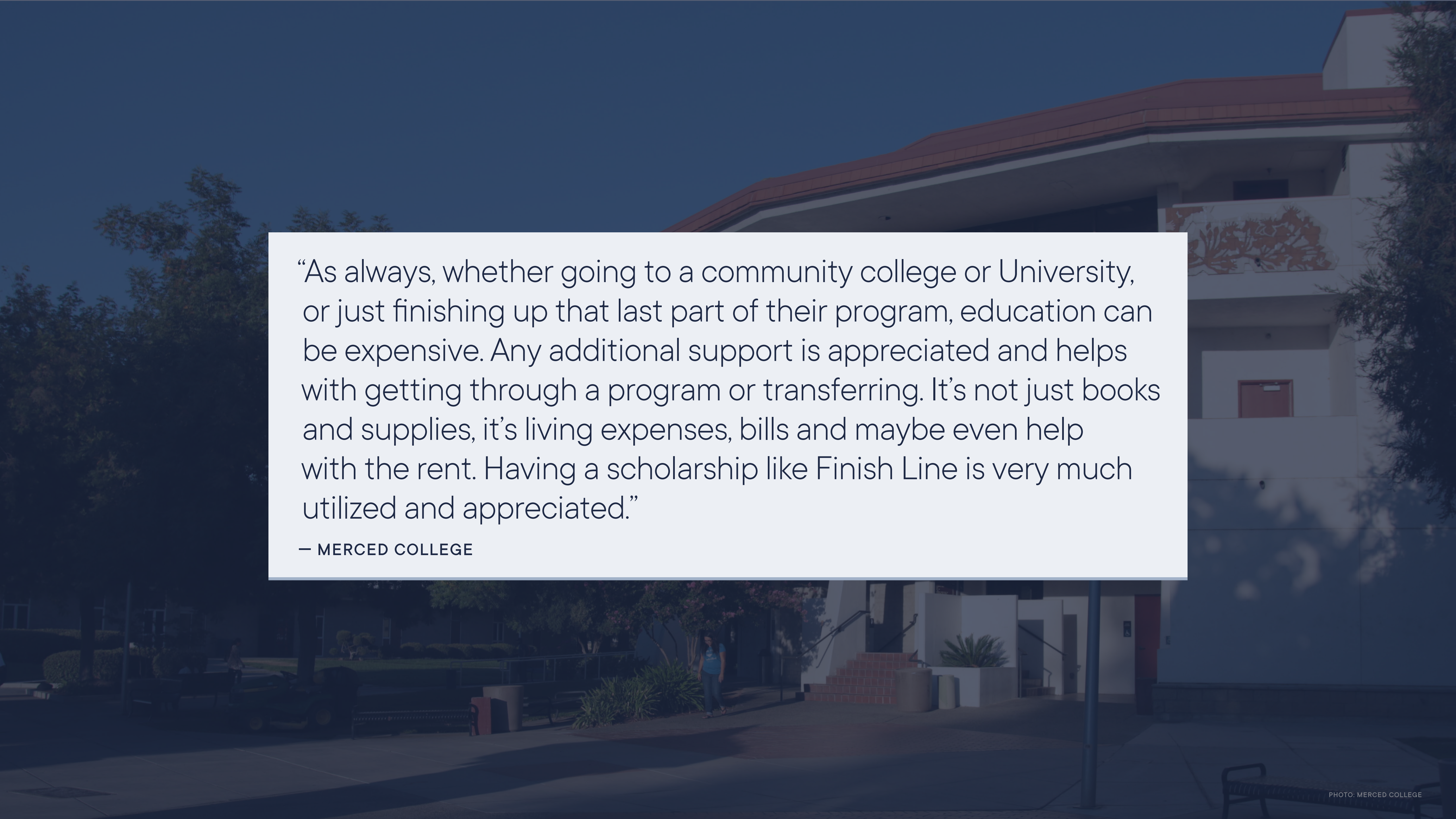
across these regions were invited to be part of Finish Line and have received annual grants since the program's inception of \$125,000 for smaller colleges (fewer than 10,000 students) or \$150,000 (more than 10,000 students).

Finish Line has proven to be a well-designed and thoughtfully implemented program that positively impacts students' lives by helping them to persist in and complete their educational goals. Now in its fifth year, the program again is ready to meet the moment as it prepares to enter its next five-year phase.

*I was a recipient of the Finish Line Scholarship Fall of 2023 and Spring of 2024. If I did not qualify for the scholarship, I am not sure I would have continued with my degree in the time that I did. After returning to school after years off, it was nice to have the encouragement to continue. I would like to thank those involved in making the Finish Line Scholarship available to students.*

— KIMBERLY W.,  
LASSEN COLLEGE





“As always, whether going to a community college or University, or just finishing up that last part of their program, education can be expensive. Any additional support is appreciated and helps with getting through a program or transferring. It’s not just books and supplies, it’s living expenses, bills and maybe even help with the rent. Having a scholarship like Finish Line is very much utilized and appreciated.”

— MERCED COLLEGE



Because of its design, Finish Line has made a significant difference for a diverse range of students. Among emergency aid recipients, 47% identified as Latino, 29% were first generation, and 58% were female. Scholarship recipients represented a similar student population, with 53% identifying as Latino, 42% as first generation students, and 60% as female. Without support from a program such as Finish Line, these students might otherwise be unable to persist and complete their educational programs.

“The scholarships provided by the Finish Line Scholars Program continues to help us address a significant financial need among traditionally marginalized and disadvantaged populations.... As such, these funds have a very positive and substantial impact on the ability of our students to get to the finish line at San Bernardino Valley College. The educational experience here at SBVC is often the first step on a pathway out of poverty and to a better life for many of our students.”

— SAN BERNARDINO VALLEY COLLEGE

Despite the fact that California Community Colleges have the lowest tuition and fees among California’s public higher education institutions, the true cost of college to low-income students can often be higher at a community college than at a California State University (CSU) or a University of California (UC).<sup>1</sup> This discrepancy is primarily due to the fact that community college students aren’t

eligible for the same types of financial aid as students at a CSU or UC and also receive a smaller number of financial aid awards overall. As a consequence, the students who struggle with affordability are less likely to succeed in college:

*Affordability challenges can [ ] present themselves in low rates of full-time enrollment, as seen at the CCCs, which hinders students’ ability to persist, graduate, and transfer. Although attending college part time frees up more time to work (if employment opportunities are available), spending more time engaged with school – whether in classes or focusing on course material – increases students’ ability to learn, pass their courses, and ultimately graduate... California’s low-income students, including the majority of underrepresented students of color, have long struggled under the weight of college affordability challenges that impact their ability to successfully reach their higher education goals.*

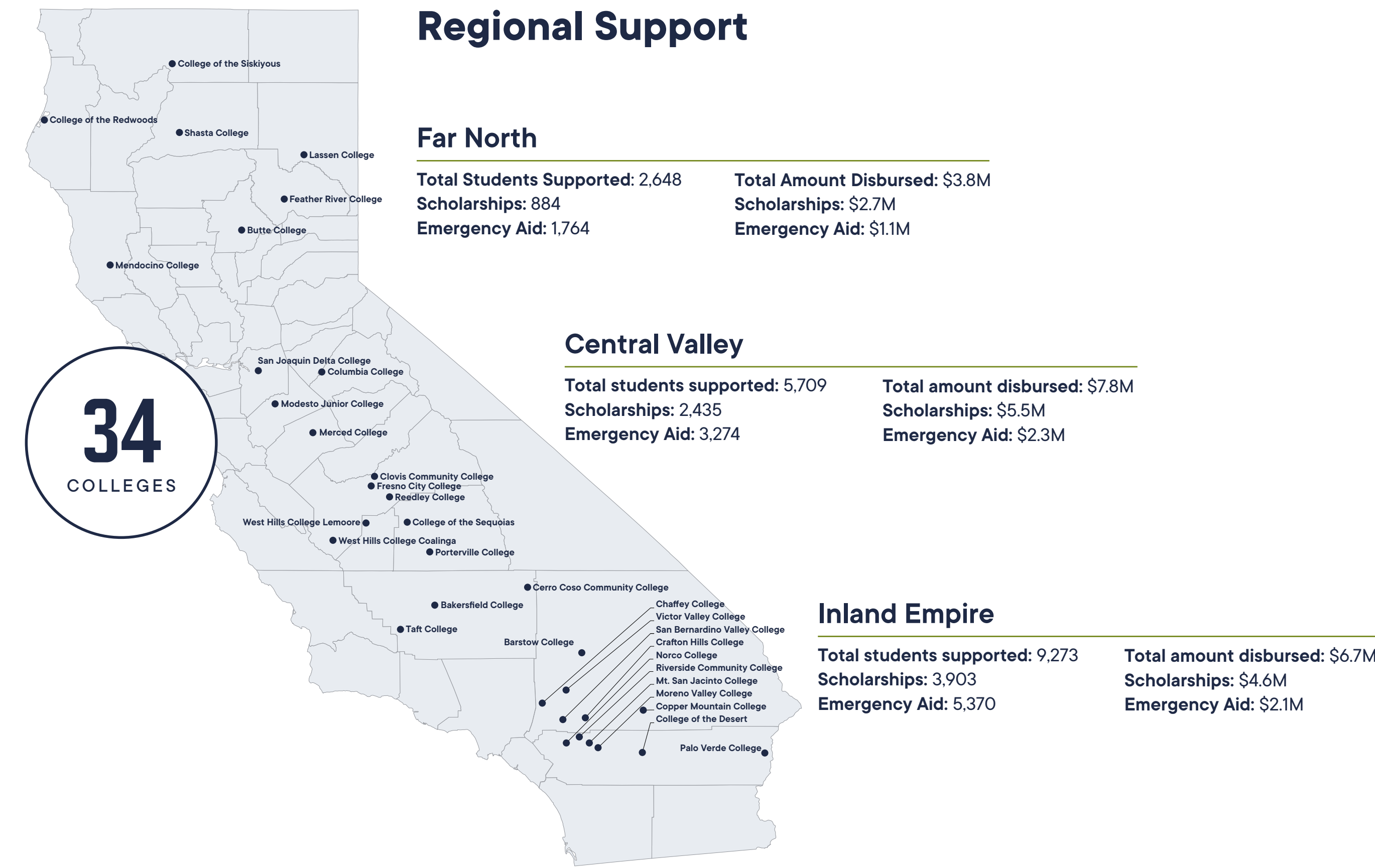
The Finish Line Scholars Program specifically aims to support low-income students making progress on their educational goals to mitigate these affordability challenges, especially for students who tend to receive less aid than others. Students who identify as Latino, for example, receive less aid overall compared to White and Asian students.<sup>2</sup> Based on quantitative and qualitative data since the program’s inception in October 2020, Finish Line has had a notable impact on these students by supporting their educational tenacity and leading them to higher completion rates, as well as improved career and economic mobility.

<sup>1</sup> Information in this paragraph and the excerpt below come from the report “What College Costs for Low-Income Californians: 2020,” July 2020, The Institute for College Access and Success (TICAS).  
<sup>2</sup> The Institute for College Access and Success (TICAS). California Community College Financial Aid Facts: Student Race/Ethnicity, May 2021.

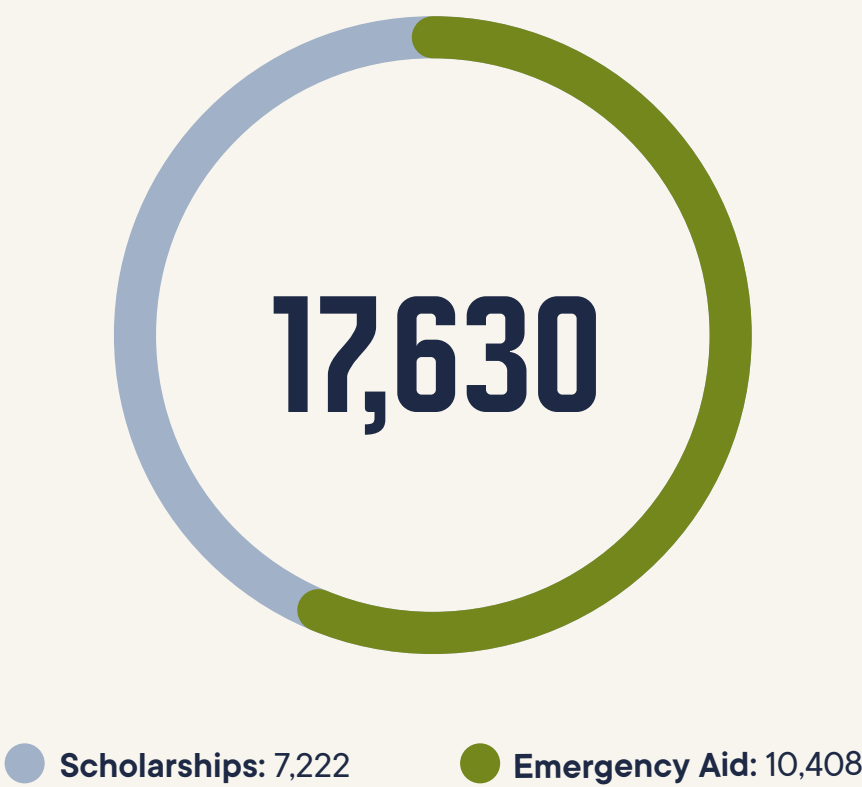


# Catalyzing Student Success

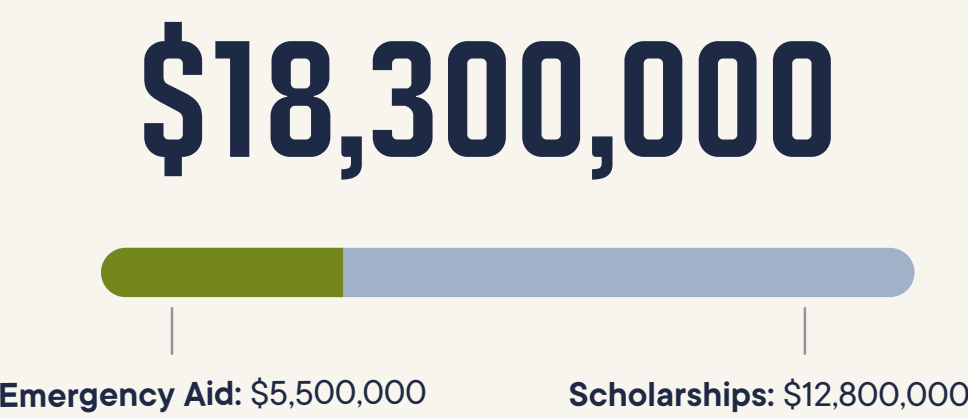
Since FY21, Finish Line has supported 17,630 students, allocating \$18.3 million across scholarships and emergency aid.



Total Number of students supported



Total funds distributed to students





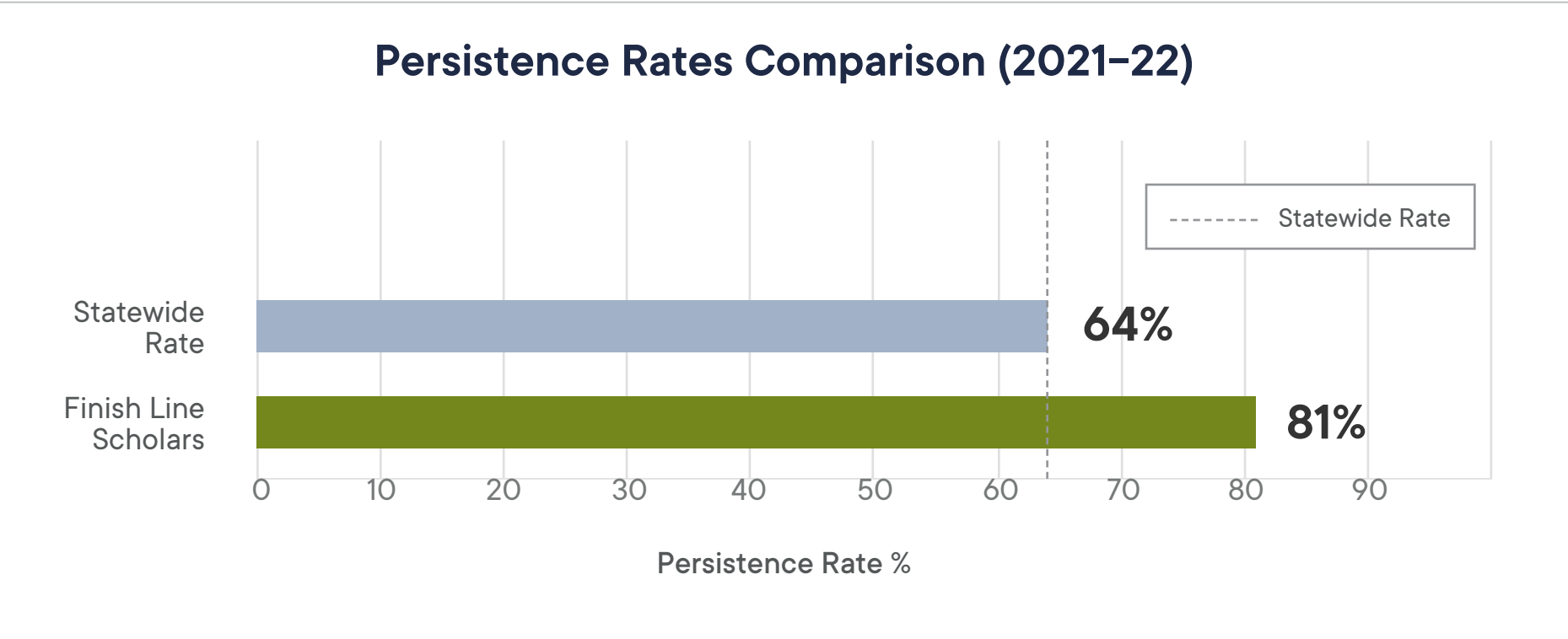
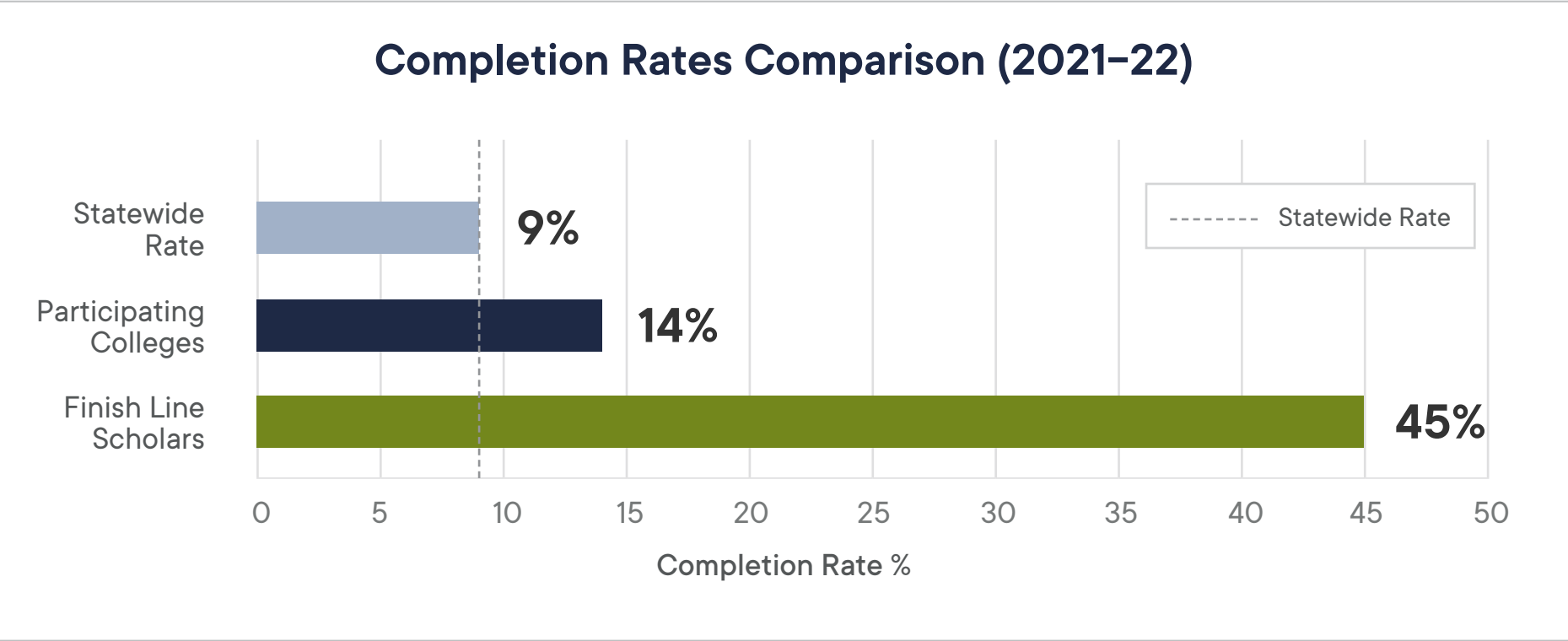
# Student Success

Students who receive scholarships through Finish Line have significantly higher rates of completion compared to peers at their own colleges and statewide.

Over the past four years, Finish Line has supported more than 17,000 students through scholarships and emergency financial aid, making a transformative difference in their educational journeys.

Finish Line scholarships target students with significant financial need who have already demonstrated progress toward completing a certificate, degree, or transferring to a four-year institution. Students can receive the scholarship for up to two years, so program success is measured by tracking both the completion rates of students while receiving the scholarship and their persistence in continuing their studies into the following year.

In the first full year of implementation (2021-22), **Finish Line scholars were more than three times more likely to complete their programs**, achieving a **45% completion rate** compared to a **14% rate at participating colleges** and just **9% statewide for California Community Colleges**. Additionally, scholars who were still progressing toward their goals had an **81% persistence rate**, significantly higher than the **64% statewide persistence rate**.





While complete system data for comparison is not yet available for subsequent years, **early results from 2022-23 indicate steady performance among Finish Line scholars.** The **completion rate held at 45%**, while the **persistence rate adjusted slightly to 70%**, potentially influenced by ongoing economic challenges in some regions. However, anecdotal reports suggest a rebound in college enrollment over the past two years.

**Finish Line scholars showed increased success in the most recent academic year of 2023-24**, with a **completion rate rising to 51%**, compared to just **10% for the overall student population at Finish Line colleges.** This improvement reflects a positive trend, especially as college enrollments have recovered to pre-COVID levels, suggesting a growing number of students will be eligible to benefit from the program’s support in the coming years.

These outcomes demonstrate the powerful impact of targeted financial aid: students who receive the resources they need are significantly more likely to stay on track and reach their educational goals. Many recipients are non-traditional learners, often balancing work, caregiving responsibilities, or returning to school after time away. They may also be the first in their families to attend college, facing unique challenges as they pursue higher education. Despite these obstacles, Finish Line scholars are making steady progress, and the trend of increasing completion rates is expected to continue as they persist and achieve their goals.

“All the students who receive the scholarship in the Fall either complete their program or enroll again in the Spring semester. We also show a much higher completion rate for students in the Finish Line scholarship than any other scholarship and much higher than the general student population.”

— WEST HILLS COLLEGE DISTRICT  
(COALINGA COLLEGE, LEMOORE COLLEGE)



# Program Success

“This funding is so critical for so many students that the impact we are able to make with it is incredible.”

— MODESTO JUNIOR COLLEGE

After four years of program implementation, participating colleges have evolved in their capacity to successfully administer Finish Line. Some colleges have made improvements based on data analysis and learnings shared with other colleges, ensuring the program meets their student’s needs and supports the overall goal of completion. Essential components of the program’s success include comprehensive and customized support from the Foundation for California Community Colleges (FoundationCCC) at the statewide level in combination with continuous quality and capacity improvement at the regional and college level.

“This program is ideal in so many ways – significant and impactful funding, supportive staff that respects and trusts us to run a program suited to our community, and the opportunity to share ongoing challenges and successes with colleagues.”

— COLUMBIA COLLEGE

“The flexibility in how the Finish Line scholarships can be awarded has been a key component in being able to try innovative approaches – such as using the scholarships as an incentive for students who are considering re-enrolling and completing their degrees. Also, the value of Emergency Aid cannot be underestimated. So many students face multiple unexpected financial obstacles during the semester – the opportunity to receive immediate financial support has allowed students to continue their pursuit of their academic goals.”

— SHASTA COLLEGE





# FoundationCCC Support

To support successful program administration, FoundationCCC provides a variety of support to participating colleges.

## Dedicated Program Staff

A cross-departmental team of FoundationCCC collaborates to support Finish Line, including two staff from the Strategic Support for Colleges & Scholars portfolio of the Resource Development team, three Guided Pathways Regional Coordinators who are part of the Success Center, and several colleagues in Finance & Accounting and Legal Operations. Other research and policy staff from the Success Center have also continued to be involved in the program as a part of the Advisory Committee and by providing input and assistance for data collection, aggregation, and analysis.

“We continue to appreciate the effort taken to streamline applications and reporting, as well as the efforts made to help us connect with peers to share ideas and best practices.”

— COLUMBIA COLLEGE

“You all have been so helpful since this program was first introduced. I can't thank you enough for what you are doing for our students in our little community!”

— LASSEN COLLEGE

An important hallmark of FoundationCCC’s support of Finish Line college partners is our concierge-style approach to providing timely, personalized, and ongoing touchpoints with each college throughout the year. Strategic Support staff meet at least twice annually with each college to conduct individual check-ins, allowing us to learn about successes and promising practices and to help problem-solve any emerging challenges to program implementation. In addition, all college partners know they can reach out to Strategic Support staff directly via email or phone for additional technical assistance and ad hoc support. Staff take care to respond quickly, within one business day at the latest. These strong relationships have been solidified over the past year and a half thanks to in-person site visits to all 34 colleges.



**Community of Practice**

The goal of the Finish Line Community of Practice is to support campus staff efforts to ensure students stay on track toward completion of their educational goals and reduce regional education opportunity gaps in the Central, Far North, and Inland Empire regions. Created and facilitated in partnership with the Guided Pathways Regional Coordinators from each of the three Finish Line regions, the Community of Practice was designed to create a trusted circle of Finish Line stakeholders come together for three primary purposes:

- › Utilize a student-centered approach by using data-informed decisions to design policies, procedures, materials, and evaluation processes.
- › Build individual, college, regional, and statewide capacity by creating opportunities for learning and critical assessment to maximize program administration and success.
- › Create a support network for practitioners and by practitioners to reduce silos and promote the co-creation of innovative strategies that lead to equitable student outcomes.

The Community of Practice has convened regularly at least three times per semester since program inception and has proven to be an effective mechanism for peer support and ongoing communications among and between the colleges and FoundationCCC.

“The Communities of Practice are very helpful – they provide a great opportunity to share best practices and to connect with other colleges. We have incorporated things that we have learned from other colleges into our program.”

— SHASTA COLLEGE

**Vision Resource Center**

FoundationCCC actively maintains a CCC Finish Line Scholars Community within the Vision Resource Center (VRC), the online professional development platform that serves as a centralized portal for CCC faculty, staff, and leaders statewide to access crucial information and make connections. The VRC Finish Line Scholars Community facilitates opportunities for colleges to engage with each other through discussion forums, acts as a library for program documentation and guidelines, and provides additional resources on best practices for administering financial aid and scholarships. The VRC also contains links to the recordings and presentation slides for each Community of Practice sessions and serves as a mechanism for easily sharing materials and information among Finish Line colleges.



## Expert Advisory Committee

The Finish Line Advisory Committee includes representatives from the Chancellor’s Office, college financial aid experts, participating Finish Line colleges, and other community college stakeholders and leadership. The Advisory Committee provides key insights and feedback that can help shape the program and ensure colleges deliver positive results and serves as a cohort of program champions to share information with the field. Advisory Committee members were recruited through personalized invitations and have convened twice a year since Spring 2021.

### Advisory Committee members include the following:

- › **Gina Browne**, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Strategy and Operations, CCC Chancellor’s Office
- › **Dr. Nicky Damania**, Dean of Students, Bakersfield College (Finish Line | Central region)
- › **Amparo Diaz**, Manager, Policy Development, Success Center, FoundationCCC
- › **Tim Foster**, Director, College of the Sequoias Foundation (Finish Line | Central region)
- › **Tim Morehouse**, Guided Pathways Lead Regional Coordinator, North/Far North, FoundationCCC
- › **Tammera Shinar**, Dean, Student Enrollment Services, Butte College (Finish Line | Far North region)
- › **Dr. Linda Williams**, Director of Enrollment Services and Financial Aid, Sierra College

Thanks to the Finish Line Scholar Scholarship, I achieved my goal of graduating in just two years with a 4.0 GPA and a total of 85 units completed. The scholarship covered essential expenses like textbooks, school supplies, and transportation, freeing up my time and energy to excel in my coursework. The financial aid from the Finish Line Scholar Scholarship has **empowered me to graduate debt free** and well ahead of schedule, paving the way for a bright future in my cybersecurity career. I am deeply grateful for this opportunity, and it has **ignited a passion within me to contribute to scholarships like this one in the future**, ensuring that other deserving students can pursue their academic dreams without financial constraints.

— HENRY Y.,  
RIVERSIDE CITY COLLEGE



# Promising Practices

A number of promising practices have emerged from colleges during the first phase of Finish Line. The best way to understand these practices is to hear from colleges themselves about how they administer the program.

## Implementing Administrative Processes that Facilitate Greater Access for Eligible Students

“To simplify access, the program uses a proactive approach by selecting students from the college’s database based on their academic progress and financial need, without requiring a traditional application. Faculty recommendations and thorough data analysis are used to identify and verify eligible students, with scholarships awarded directly to their accounts.”

— BAKERSFIELD COLLEGE

“We shared our application with the entire student body, encouraging all those graduating within the 2023-2024 academic year to apply. Our priority was to support students from underserved backgrounds, including but not limited to single parents, undocumented students, first-generation college students, Umoja students, foster care students, and low-income students with high unmet needs.”

— CERRO COSO COMMUNITY COLLEGE

“We did not utilize an application process, instead we worked with Institutional Research to identify eligible students.”

— CLOVIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

“We made the application easier with five demographic questions on a google form (name, student id, major, GPA and estimated graduation date)”

— COPPER MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

“As we learned in previous years, our students do not like filling out applications so our focus for them is completing their FAFSA and then we do the work for them in regards to awarding the Finish Line.”

— LASSEN COLLEGE



## Focusing on High-Cost and Regional Workforce Priority Programs

“The Financial Aid Office designed the program for students who were accepted into and enrolled in one of our specialized programs– Nursing, Respiratory Therapy, Law Enforcement Academy, Fire Fighter Academy, Welding, Advanced Manufacturing. We focus primarily on students in programs for whom other forms of financial aid is limited or pursuing a career that aligns with regional workforce needs, providing students with enough support so they could work fewer hours while in these programs.”

— BUTTE COLLEGE

“ These funds especially benefit those students who have no other funding available to them. Without the Finish Line Scholars programs many students wouldn't have any aid to attend school. This is especially helpful for Nursing students who often commute to participate in the program coursework and commute to their clinicals.”

— MENDOCINO COLLEGE

“We also always take into account the programs we have here at Modesto Junior College that have a high price tag outside of the tuition and fees traditional students have. These would be programs like nursing, accounting, and fire sciences.”

— MODESTO JUNIOR COLLEGE

“MSJC focused Finish Line Scholarship funds to help eliminate opportunity gaps found in underrepresented populations, with a focus on programs of study that support regional workforce priorities in allied health fields.”

— MT. SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

“The funding proved to be a critical resource to all our students who were offered an award this cycle, given the rise in living expenses and food insecurity with our student population. It became extremely beneficial to our Nursing students specifically, who often incur additional costs relating to the program, such as supplies, child care and a reduction of work hours to meet program demands.”

— REEDLEY COLLEGE

“[A] focus has been on our Dental Hygiene students who are working and trying to get their degree completed.”

— TAFT COLLEGE



## Connecting Students to Wraparound Services

“Many resources were leveraged to support the success of students... through referral to additional financial and non-financial support on campus and in the community, including but not limited to mental health, tutoring, mentoring, food, and housing services.”

— BUTTE COLLEGE

“With the \$30,000 allotted to emergency services, 87 students received emergency grants. This funding often makes the difference between a student staying in school or forced to discontinue their studies to fund basic needs... Our team works with the students and their families to provide emergency resources as part of the "college experience" to encourage students to seek support and eliminate any shame or stigma associated with receiving emergency aid.”

— CHAFFEY COLLEGE

“Students were provided with additional resources, such as food resources, laptop and internet access, books and supplies, and mental health services.”

— CLOVIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

“In addition to Finish Line funding, our students may also receive services offered by Basecamp HQ which houses the Student Food Pantry, Coat Closet, coordinated CalFresh services, and much more.”

— COLLEGE OF THE SISIKYOUS

“All emergency grant recipients received information on basic needs services such as CalFresh, transportation and housing aid, and were connected with academic counselors, special programs, and financial aid staff.”

— COLUMBIA COLLEGE

“These students are also provided Basic Needs services through our campus food pantry, Basic Needs Center, EOPS program, WIOA program, and CalFresh opportunities.”

— PORTERVILLE COLLEGE

“We worked closely with The Hub, our basic needs center, to provide the referred students with additional support and services.”

— SHASTA COLLEGE

“Finish Line Emergency funds have been a tremendous help and relief in being able to assist students with everything from books and materials, to paying professional exam fees, to paying for utilities and basic medical needs for students.”

— VICTOR VALLEY COLLEGE



Utilizing Institutional Data to Identify Priority Student Populations

“We focused our outreach on our students who we knew already met the requirements for Finish Line. We pulled this data out of our SIS. From there, we selected recipients based on how close they were to completing their program and who had the most financial need.”

— BARSTOW COLLEGE

“Students were identified by using our Student Success and Equity Plan and targeting our disproportionately impacted populations, to include: Dreamers, Black/Latinx, Men, First Generation, Veterans, and students in categorical programs like EOP&S, TRiO, CalWorks, and CARE”

— CLOVIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

“We used our student information system to identify the most economically underserved student population.... The students were auto-awarded the funds to ensure that there were no delays which has been our biggest success for this program.”

— COLLEGE OF THE DESERT

“The College of the Redwoods Finish Line Scholars Program focuses on supporting the District's Vision for Success goals of increasing completion and transfer rates. The Redwoods Community College District has identified nine populations that have lower success rates in completing degrees, certificates, and transfers”

— COLLEGE OF THE REDWOODS

“Students who received a finish line scholarship were in at least one of the following groups: Foster Youth, African American Males or Females, Hispanic Males, Re-entry students, DSPS, LGBTQ, Veterans, or Homeless. Our focus in prioritizing these groups is to reduce observed achievement gaps.”

— CRAFTON HILLS COLLEGE



PHOTO: VICTOR VALLEY COLLEGE



### Supporting Students Through Ongoing Touchpoints

“In 2023-2024, 100% of our scholarship awardees participated in at least one individual session with a COS Student Success Coordinator to help ensure each awardee was knowledgeable of all of the support services available at the college. We learned that a hard requirement for the scholarship matched with a gift card incentive for completing the session was most effective in getting 100% participation and meaningful engagement with the students.”

— COLLEGE OF THE SEQUOIAS

“To assist students in meeting their goals, the program offers free tutoring, academic advising, FAFSA assistance, financial literacy workshops, transfer workshops and trips, student success workshops, cultural events, and scholarships.”

— FEATHER RIVER COLLEGE

“In addition to the funding our students received counseling services through multiple contacts per term.”

— FRESNO CITY COLLEGE

“Students who were awarded the Finish Line Scholarship participated in an orientation centered around financial literacy and resources, and academic support.... The program used data to evaluate student progress at the end of each primary term (Fall, Spring, and Summer) to determine if they were progressing towards their goal and meeting program requirements. If they were not, interventions were implemented to help them get back on track and, as needed, students were linked to additional resources on campus and off-campus to satisfy unmet needs.”

— MORENO VALLEY COLLEGE

“For Scholarship recipients, the advancement office works holistically with the student services to ensure that the student is on track to finish their program of study and is given every opportunity to succeed.”

— PALO VERDE COLLEGE

“The student must check in with a Counselor once per semester to make sure they are staying on track. The student must check in with their Success Coach once per semester.”

— SAN JOAQUIN DELTA COLLEGE



## Establishing Cross-Campus Partnerships

“Students were selected in partnership with Institutional Research, coming from a pool of students meeting the scholarship criteria.”

— CHAFFEY COLLEGE

“We worked with our faculty and other campus groups to get the word out. We learned to monitor applications and make sure to contact the area Deans of STEM programs to make sure they also notified their faculty groups.”

— MERCED COLLEGE

“Norco College focused on assisting students participating in programs such as EOPS, Veterans, Puente, Men of Color, Phoenix Scholars, Umoja, and TRIO, ensuring they receive comprehensive counseling and specialized services tailored to their needs. Each program distributed applications to eligible students who had completed at least 50% of their academic goals. Academic counselors and program managers then reviewed the applications to select students for consideration. The Financial Aid Office assessed students' financial needs and awarded funds accordingly. These funds were disbursed after the census each term, enabling students to continue their studies without the burden of loans.”

— NORCO COLLEGE





# Ripple Effects

Thanks to the innovative program design and flexible guidelines, the Finish Line Scholars Program has had ripple effects in many colleges, as demonstrated in the selected examples below.

## Inspiring a Complementary Completion-Focused Scholarship

To celebrate the contributions of the Columbia College Foundation Executive Director upon her retirement at the end of September 2024, the College Foundation launched a new named scholarship in her honor. The *Amy Nilson Completion Scholarship* will provide \$1,500 each year to 20 students for 10 years to support completion of a certificate or degree. This scholarship will be available to students who are nearing completion but don't meet all of the eligibility criteria for Finish Line. According to Amy, the idea for this new scholarship was inspired directly by Finish Line and the positive impacts the program has had on student success outcomes at Columbia College.

## Launching a New Student Incentive Program for Persistence & Completion

Chaffey College was one of the California Community Colleges that received a significant unsolicited gift from Mackenzie Scott. The college allocated \$400,000 of this donation to pilot a new student persistence and completion program, *It Pays to Succeed*, which was inspired by and aligns with the college's Finish Line Scholars program. Through this initiative, students will be eligible to receive up to two \$50 incentive payments when they create an education plan and a follow-up progress check-in. Students will move through the phases of Explorer (first term), Navigator (first term to second year), and Achiever (second year to final term), and progress will be tracked through the student portal. *It Pays to Succeed* launched in Fall 2024, and college foundation staff are excited about offering this new opportunity to support student success as a complement to Finish Line.



**Instituting a More Inclusive Process for Scholarships**

The Palo Verde College Foundation decided to implement blind scoring of the Finish Line applications this past year to ensure a fairer and more equitable process. The college is based in a small community, where most people know each other or have some connection to many of the students. For this reason, using a blind scoring strategy helped the review committee to avoid any potential conflicts of interest or biases. The process was very successful, as only one member of the college foundation staff was aware of which applicants had been selected to receive a Finish Line scholarship prior to the announcement at the awards ceremony. Feedback from the review committee members and other staff indicated that the process was more streamlined, efficient, and equitable by using this approach.

“Based on what we have learned from the Finish Line process, we have implemented blind scoring into all of our scholarship awarding process in order to make it a more fair and inclusive process.”

— PALO VERDE COLLEGE

**Bringing Students Back to Complete Their Degrees**

At Shasta College, Finish Line has become part of the college’s efforts to reach out to community members who have some college but no degree. College foundation staff recognized that Finish Line could be an appropriate source of support for adult learners to return to college to complete their educational credential and could fill a funding gap for these students since they were largely ineligible for other sources of financial aid. College foundation staff utilized college data to identify and outreach to these prospective students to form one of their cohorts for the 2023-24 academic year. This strategy has proven to be successful, and the college plans to continue to include this student population in its Finish Line Scholars program.

“Some [students] had returned to college through the adult-learner Accelerated College Education (ACE) program and were close to completion. Other potential returners were identified by our Degrees When Due (DWD) program, and they had a handful of classes remaining. Program staff worked with institutional research to identify qualified students who were invited to become Finish Line Scholars... Being able to provide Finish Line scholarships as incentives to return to college to finish their degrees is very powerful. This addresses a need that is not covered by other funding or financial aid.”

— SHASTA COLLEGE



# Looking Ahead for the Next Five Years

“These scholarships are helping us achieve meaningful and life-changing impacts for our students.”

— SAN BERNARDINO VALLEY COLLEGE

The Finish Line Scholars Program was designed with a long-term vision and perspective in mind, thanks to the generous 20-year pledge by the Jay Pritzker Foundation. The program was envisioned as a learning model, with opportunities for retrospective analysis and refinement after each five-year increment in addition to ongoing quality improvement and monitoring through annual reporting.

FoundationCCC is excited to be on the cusp of launching the next five-year phase of Finish Line and to continue learning from college practices that will serve as a framework for future program iterations, always keeping at the forefront the overarching vision of reducing regional education equity gaps by helping students to persist and complete their educational goals.

“We are hopeful that the Finish Line Program can remain in place in future years given the support it's providing to population groups that have lower graduation and transfer rates.”

— COLLEGE OF THE REDWOODS

“This program is extremely important to Mendocino College. We are so grateful to be able to provide this support to students and hope to be able to provide more in the future.”

— MENDOCINO COLLEGE

“The scope of things that we are able to help students with because of this program is incredibly valuable. The Finish Line Program is very much meeting the goal of being a catalyst for perseverance and success here at Victor Valley College.”

— VICTOR VALLEY COLLEGE



# Financials

To make this program possible, support from the Jay Pritzker Foundation has been directed primarily toward annual grants for student scholarships at the 34 Finish Line colleges. The allocation of funds was determined using student headcount data from the California Community College Data Mart. Colleges with a headcount under 10,000 were categorized as “smaller” and could receive grants of up to \$125,000, while colleges with 10,000 or more students were classified as “larger” and could receive grants of up to \$150,000. This approach was designed to offer support based on the size and needs of participating colleges.

In the first round of funding during the academic year 2020-21, colleges focused their grants on emergency financial aid for students. In subsequent years, at least 80% of funds were allocated for scholarships, with colleges retaining flexibility to use up to 20% for ongoing emergency aid, depending on student needs and available resources.

A portion of the funding was also used to support program implementation by FoundationCCC, including staffing, materials, program supplies, webinar development, and travel for in-person site visits and presentations at statewide and national conferences to share insights and successes. In line with the grant agreement with the Jay Pritzker Foundation, administrative costs for FoundationCCC did not exceed 12% of the annual award during the first two years and reduced to 10% in subsequent years.





# Student Stories and the Faces of Finish Line



Jackson was one of those very active high school seniors when he came to the College of the Sequoias. He quickly found out that he could join many clubs and programs here, too. While here, he, like many college students, changed his focus of study. He moved from engineering to political science and earned his associate's degree in political science. During his last semester here, COS faculty helped him secure an internship through the Maddy Institute and he served the Visalia office of CA Assemblymember Devon Mathis. He is now set to attend UC Davis in the fall.

— JACKSON B.,  
COLLEGE OF THE SEQUOIAS



Tillie Wendt really engaged in her time at the College of the Sequoias. She earned units through attending in-person classes at the main Visalia Campus and the two centers in Tulare and Hanford and even some online. She became a member of two clubs that aligned with her interests in agriculture and horticulture. And she represented COS as a student athlete in women's tennis. Tillie has now transferred to Oregon State, attending fully online to earn her bachelor's degree in horticulture while working part-time at a Visalia flower shop. We are happy that Tillie is pursuing her career, earning her degree, and staying in her community.

— TILLIE W.,  
COLLEGE OF THE SEQUOIAS





This scholarship helped me to maintain my bills along with uniforms for the EMT program and the supplies that I needed to be successful in my classes. I was able to obtain my Fire Tech Degree in the fall '23, and I will be completing the rest of my business administration degree in the Spring '24 semester. I am a single mom of a 14 year old. I pay all my own bills, utilities, rent, and whatever needs my son has. I also work graveyard shifts delivering newspapers. This made life a little easier to be able to progress in my life and provide a better life for my son.

— CARA W.,  
CRAFTON HILLS COLLEGE



I want to make video games for people to enjoy. I am in progress in making a physics engine for my games, and I am trying my hardest to learn all the math and physics I can in order to make one of the best engines possible. Thanks to my interest in learning these subjects, I not only earned my associates in Computer Science, but I also earned a Math Associates and a Physics Associates. Without the scholarship, I would not have the ability to work with people in my field and afford university at the same time.

— DANIEL R.,  
CRAFTON HILLS COLLEGE



I am currently in the paramedic program at Crafton Hills College to become a firefighter. I have been working as an EMT for four years at American Medical Response (AMR), and my experience there has undoubtedly helped me prepare for the paramedics program. The Finish Line Scholars scholarship has been instrumental in helping me achieve my educational goals. With this scholarship, I have been able to focus more on my studies and worry less about the financial burden of tuition fees and educational expenses. It has relieved significant stress and allowed me to immerse myself fully in my education and pursue my educational aspirations with a renewed sense of purpose and determination. .

— DEAN F.,  
CRAFTON HILLS COLLEGE





Receiving a Finish Line Scholars Program Scholarship while completing my nursing degree has been a transformative experience for me. It has not only provided financial assistance, but has also opened doors to various opportunities and resources that have helped me in my journey to becoming a nurse. As a full-time student with limited financial means, the scholarship has alleviated the burden of books and other expenses, allowing me to focus on my studies and clinical experiences. Having additional financial assistance has also enabled me to use the extra time that I will not need to spend trying to find additional work, but now instead to volunteer in events that have further developed my passion for nursing and given me a broader perspective on the profession and my community.

— STEPHANIE S.,  
PALO VERDE COLLEGE



As a mom of three children, the Finish Line Scholarship has positively impacted my success as a college student. I started pursuing my Associate's Degree in Health Information Technology in 2021, and with the help of this scholarship, I am now graduating this May of 2024 with my Associate's Degree. I am beyond thankful to have been a recipient of this scholarship because it enabled me to get my degree by easing financial worries of school costs. Thank you for making sure that students reach their goals and succeed!

— KELCEY E.,  
SHASTA COLLEGE





As a single parent supporting her daughter, Tara took a personal and financial leap to come back to college. She was determined to shift from her work as a pharmacy technician into biomedical engineering, where she felt she could make a difference in the medical field. While she was excelling in her increasingly difficult courses, she needed the financial help from the Finish Line that allowed her to reduce her work hours in her final two semesters. She finished as a top student at Columbia in the spring, and will be transferring to Cal Poly-San Luis Obispo in the fall. Her scholarship, she said, played "a pivotal role" in achieving her aspirations.

— TARA A.,  
COLUMBIA COLLEGE



A single parent who grew up in a low income Chicago neighborhood, Alejandra never thought she would be able to succeed at college, and was hesitant to even try. But the COVID shutdown left her without a job, and looking for a fresh start. She started with a short summer school course at Columbia, and was on her way. Two years later, despite demands from work, parenting, and medical issues, she has now completed two associate's degrees in Child Development and Social and Behavioral Science, earned a 4.0 GPA, and this fall will start as a junior at UC Santa Cruz. The decision to cut back on work so she could finish and transfer this spring, she said, wasn't easy. "I said 'I'm just going to jump and hope it works out.'" The Finish Line Scholarship, she said, "came at the right time. It was a godsend."

— ALEJANDRA R.,  
COLUMBIA COLLEGE



# Finish Line College Profiles

The 34 colleges participating in the Finish Line Scholars Program are located in the three regions of California with the greatest need for supporting students to complete their higher education: Central Valley, Far North, and Inland Empire. These brief profiles demonstrate the geographic reach and diversity of colleges supported by the program.

## Central Valley Colleges



### Bakersfield College

Bakersfield College was established in 1913 and is located in the southern part of the Central Valley. The college serves more than 30,000 students each year with locations including the

153-acre main campus in northeast Bakersfield, the Delano Campus 35 miles north of Bakersfield, the Weill Institute in downtown Bakersfield, and BC SouthWest in southwest Bakersfield. Classes are also offered at several alternative community locations. Based on student headcount, Bakersfield College is the largest college participating in the Finish Line Scholars Program.

**College Contacts:** Tye Mccovery, Scholarships Manager; Walter Rivas, Supervisor, Financial Aid; Ruthie Welborn, Assistant Director, Financial Aid



### Cerro Coso Community College

As one of three colleges in the Kern Community College District, Cerro Coso Community College provides educational opportunities for widely separated desert, mountain, and

valley communities across a four-county region of eastern

California. The college supports four instructional locations, including the main campus in Ridgecrest, and covers the largest geographical service area (18,200 square miles) of any community college in California. The College officially opened in 1973 and serves just over 7,000 students each year..

**College Contacts:** Kathryn Bachman, Dean of Enrollment and Retention; Victoria Koivan, Director of Financial Aid



### Clovis Community College

As part of the State Center Community College District, Clovis Community College serves over 19,000 students in the Central Valley area. The college has been recognized multiple times

by the Campaign for College Opportunity as a Champion of Higher Education thanks to the college’s success in implementing the Associate Degree for Transfer. The college has also earned recognition for its equity efforts.

**College Contacts:** Rebecca Kinlow, Director of Financial Aid; Kira Tippins, Vice President of Student Services



### Coalinga College

Coalinga College is part of the West Hills Community College District, serving the educational needs of the west side of the San Joaquin Valley for more than 80 years. The district

traces its roots back to 1932, when the Coalinga Extension Center for Fresno State College was founded to offer classes through the local high school district. In 1961, the school separated from the high school district and became known as West Hills College in 1969. The college provides educational opportunities to close to 3,000 students each year.

**College Contact:** Alexis Perez, District Foundation Executive Director



Central Valley Colleges, (cont.)



**College of the Sequoias**  
College of the Sequoias serves residents in Tulare and Kings counties with a student population of just over 18,000. The college was established in 1926 and moved to its current 62-acre main campus in Visalia in 1940. In addition to the campus in Visalia, the college operates a full-service center in Hanford that is home to the college’s police and fire academies. The Sequoias District opened The Tulare College Center in 2013 as a second full-service college center and the home of the college’s agriculture programs.

**College Contacts:** Tim Foster, Foundation Director; Peighton Sisk, Scholarship Specialist



**Columbia College**  
Columbia College is part of the Yosemite Community College District, which also administers Modesto Junior College. Columbia College was established in 1968 as Columbia Junior College and dropped “Junior” from its name in 1978. The campus is located on 280 acres of forestland in Sonora, part of the historic Mother Lode region, and serves more than 3,500 students annually.

**College Contact:** Amanda Stephens, Foundation Specialist



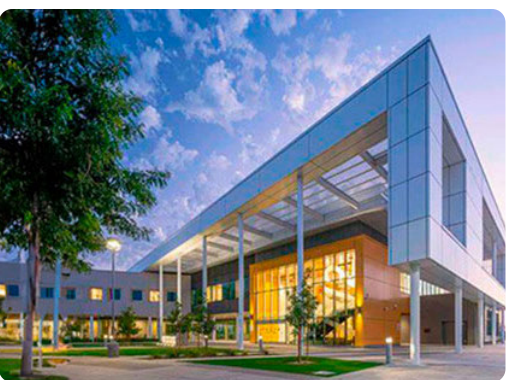
**Fresno City College**  
Fresno City College, California’s first community college, was established in 1910. The campus was originally located at the former Fresno High School campus, and combined in 1921 with the former Fresno Normal School, which later became Fresno State College and is currently California State University Fresno, to operate the junior college on the same campus as the four-year school. By 1956, the college moved to its current location, which includes a number of historic buildings as well as an arboretum, and now serves nearly 23,000 students each year.

**College Contacts:** Sean Henderson, Dean of Student Services; Mikki Johnson, Director of Financial Aid; Melissa Mendoza, Financial Aid Specialist



**Lemoore College**  
Lemoore College is part of the West Hills Community College District, which covers nearly 3,500 square miles and includes colleges in Coalinga and Lemoore, the North District Center in Firebaugh, eight child development centers in neighboring rural communities, and the Farm of the Future facility at the north end of Coalinga, which also houses the district office. Lemoore earned college status from the Board of Governors in 2001 and full accreditation in 2006, giving the district two separate colleges. The college serves close to 5,000 students annually.

**College Contact:** Alexis Perez, West Hills Community College District Foundation Executive Director



**Madera Community College**  
Madera Community College is the newest California community college and serves approximately 8,000 students annually. The college is part of the State Center Community College District and began offering classes as Madera Community College Center in 1988 in a partnership with Madera High School. The campus opened in 1996 on a 114-acre site donated by local landowners and in 2020 was recognized by the California Community Colleges Board of Governors as the 116th California Community College.

**College Contact:** Gary Nicholes, Director, Financial Aid



**Merced College**  
Founded in 1962, Merced College is situated in the heart of California’s agricultural Central Valley. The college has received national recognition for its workforce development and training programs with its Customer Service Academy and Emerging Leaders Institute. With campuses in Merced and Los Banos and a Business Resource Center in downtown Merced, the college serves more than 16,000 students each year.

**College Contact:** Jason Judkins, Financial Aid Director



Central Valley Colleges, (cont.)



**Modesto Junior College**  
Modesto Junior College has been serving Modesto and the surrounding communities for 100 years. With two campuses, the college provides educational opportunities for more than 24,000 students each year. The West Campus also provides community resources such as a planetarium and the Golden Valley Museum, which provides an annual field trip destination for all local third graders.

**College Contacts:** Emily Lawrence, Foundation Executive Director; Melissa Clark, Scholarship Program Specialist



**Porterville College**  
Porterville College, located on approximately 85 acres at the base of the scenic High Sierra Mountain Range in southeastern Tulare County, serves more than 5,000 students each year.

Porterville is within three hours commuting time to the Pacific coast or to the metropolitan Los Angeles area. Porterville College is the northernmost college in the Kern Community College District, which serves an area of 24,000 square miles in all or portions of Kern, Tulare, Inyo, and San Bernardino Counties.

**College Contact:** Tiffany Haynes, Director of Financial Aid



**Reedley College**  
Reedley College was established in 1926 and moved to its present site in 1956. The campus encompasses 420 acres, including a 300 acre farm adjacent to the main campus. As part of the State Center Community College District since 1963, the college serves more than 13,000 students annually. One of its signature offerings is a comprehensive flight and aviation program, and the college recently established a flight school at the Reedley Municipal Airport.

**College Contacts:** Melanie Highfill, Vice President Administrative Services; Christina Cazares, Director of Financial Aid; Myranda Diquirico, Scholarship Specialist



**San Joaquin Delta College**  
Located in the San Joaquin Valley, San Joaquin Delta College serves more than 26,000 students. The college got its start in the 1930s and includes campuses in Stockton and Mountain House. The San Joaquin Delta Community College District encompasses 2,300 square miles, making it larger than the states of Delaware or Rhode Island.

**College Contacts:** Shawn Domingo, Director Financial Aid & Scholarships and Christy Lenzi, Scholarship Specialist



**Taft College**  
Taft College was founded in 1922 and moved to its current campus in 1956. Located about 120 miles north of Los Angeles, the college provides some on-campus residence halls for students. Each year, the college serves more than 6,000 students and acts as a hub for the community, including students at the adjacent middle and high schools. The college has been designated as a Military Friendly School.

**College Contact:** Sheri Horn-Bunk, Executive Director Foundation and Institutional Advancement

Far North Colleges



**Butte College**  
Butte College serves approximately 15,000 students a year and is located 75 miles north of Sacramento. The 900+ acre main campus in Chico has been dedicated as a wildlife refuge since 1973. In 2011, Butte College became the first college to become ‘grid positive,’ meaning that the College had the capacity to generate enough electricity from its solar arrays to fully offset its electricity cost.

**College Contacts:** Jeannie Lybbert, Director, Financial Aid and Veterans Services; Cheri Taylor, Manager, Grants Research and Development



Far North Colleges (cont.)



**College of the Redwoods**  
College of the Redwoods is located in Humboldt, Del Norte, and the Western edge of Trinity Counties, bordered by the Pacific Ocean. Redwoods Community College District was formed in 1964 and launched with construction of the college’s Eureka Campus. Serving more than 5,000 students each year, the college also includes the Del Norte Education Center in Crescent City, the Mendocino Education Center south of Fort Bragg, and the Klamath-Trinity Instructional Site on the Hoopa Indian Reservation 60 miles northeast of Eureka.

**College Contacts:** Marty Coelho, Executive Director of College Advancement & the CR Foundation; Rebecca Gwin, Scholarship Program Coordinator



**College of the Siskiyous**  
Established in 1957, College of the Siskiyous is located at the base of Mount Shasta in far northern California, offering educational opportunities to students in both California and from across the border in southern Oregon. Its 250-acre primary campus is centered in the historic lumber town of Weed. In addition to its primary campus, the college operates a smaller campus in Yreka, 30 miles north of Weed. The college serves close to 3,000 students annually.

**College Contact:** Dawnie Slabaugh, Director, Public Relations & College Foundation



**Feather River College**  
Feather River College was founded in 1968 through the annexation of Plumas Unified School District with Peralta Community College District in Oakland. The college moved to its current location in 1971 and de-annexed from the Peralta District in 1988 to better serve Plumas County through a locally controlled community college district. Each year, the college serves nearly 3,000 students and offers some on-campus housing for students.

**College Contacts:** Vanessa Gibson, Director of Financial Aid; Carlie McCarthy, Vice President of Student Services



**Lassen College**  
The forerunner of Lassen Community College began in 1925, when the Junior College Department of the Lassen Union High School District was established and began conducting classes on the Lassen High School campus. Lassen Community College District was established in 1965 and separated from the high school district. The current 165-acre campus, located just north of Susanville, opened in 1971. The college offers a limited amount of on-campus housing and serves almost 3,000 students annually, including students from across the state border in nearby Nevada.

**College Contact:** Davis Murphy, Dean of Student Services



**Mendocino College**  
The Mendocino-Lake Community College District was formed in 1972 with the first classes offered in 1973. Expansion of the District occurred the following year, and the District boundaries encompass 3,200 square miles of service area. Serving more than 7,000 students each year, the college includes the main campus in Mendocino along with the Lake Center in Lakeport, the North County Center in Willits, and the Coast Center in Fort Bragg, which College of the Redwoods had previously operated.

**College Contacts:** Bonnie Lockhart, Director of Student Life and Support; Yuliana Sandoval, Director of Financial Aid & EOPS; Ulises Velasco, Vice President of Student Services



**Shasta College**  
Shasta College was founded in 1948 as part of Shasta Union High School District and opened its doors in 1950. The college is part of the Shasta-Tehama-Trinity Joint Community College District, which serves residents in Shasta, Tehama, and Trinity Counties, including parts of Lassen, Modoc and Humboldt Counties—an area that is more than 10,000 square miles and larger than the state of Massachusetts. Based in Redding, the college includes five campus locations that serve more than 15,000 students each year.

**College Contacts:** Andree Blanchier, Foundation Executive Director; Jennie Dougherty, Foundation Coordinator



Inland Empire Colleges



**Barstow Community College**  
Established in 1959, Barstow Community College District encompasses a vast service area, stretching from the Nevada border on the East to Kern County on the West, and from Inyo County in the North to the San Bernardino Mountain range in the South. The college serves more than 5,000 students annually and also maintains a satellite learning center at the U.S. Army National Training Center in Ft. Irwin, which serves military personnel and their families.

**College Contacts:** Heather Minehart, Dean of Enrollment Management and Services; Wendy Packer, Financial Aid Technician III



**Chaffey College**  
Chaffey College was founded in 1883, making it one of the oldest community colleges in the state. The college first offered classes in Ontario and relocated to its Rancho Cucamonga location in 1960. Based in San Bernardino County, the college serves 29,000 students in more than seven communities and four districts. Students can take classes at three different locations, including the main campus in Rancho Cucamonga as well as campuses in Fontana and Chino.

**College Contacts:** Heather Parsons, Director, Foundation and Community/Alumni Partnerships; Marie Baston, Foundation Coordinator



**College of the Desert**  
Founded in 1958, College of the Desert officially opened in 1962 and is the number one source of transfer students to California State University, San Bernardino. Governed by Desert Community College District and located in Palm Desert, the college serves more than 26,000 students each year. In addition to the main campus, the college offers programs at satellite campuses in Desert Hot Spring, Indo, Mecca/Thermal, and Palm Springs as well as sites at multiple high schools offering non-credit and adult learning classes.

**College Contacts:** Kristin Milligan, Director of Financial Aid; Caroline Maloney, Director of Institutional Grants



**Copper Mountain College**  
Located six miles east of Joshua Tree, Copper Mountain College was founded in 1966 as part of the Desert Community College District. The campus was built through community fundraising, with the first phase completed in 1984. Through legislative action, the college formed its own district in 1999 and gained full accreditation in 2001. Classes are offered to more than 2,000 students at the Joshua Tree Campus and in other locations convenient to neighborhood residents. Based on student headcount, Copper Mountain College is the smallest college participating in the Finish Line Scholars Program.

**College Contacts:** Sandy Smith, Foundation Executive Director; Sara Hutson, Foundation Executive Assistant



**Crafton Hills College**  
Opened in 1972 as part of the San Bernardino Community College District, Crafton Hills College is located in Yucaipa and currently serves more than 9,000 students each year. The college is the primary trainer for paramedics in San Bernardino and Riverside counties. Based in San Bernardino County, near the border of Riverside County, the college welcomes students from both areas. The main campus includes extensive protected conservation areas.

**College Contact:** Michelle Riggs, Director of Institutional Advancement, Crafton Hills College Foundation



**Moreno Valley College**  
Moreno Valley College opened in 1991 and now serves more than 15,000 students. The college is located in Moreno Valley, the second largest city in Riverside County based on population and one of the fastest growing cities, offering access to popular Southern California destinations. In addition to its main campus, the college also includes the Ben Clark Training Center for public safety training in Riverside.

**College Contacts:** Sandra Martinez, Dean of Enrollment Services and Engagement; Juan Carlos Ponce, Director of Student Financial Services



Inland Empire Colleges, (cont.)



**Mt. San Jacinto College**  
A single college district, Mt. San Jacinto College serves a 1,700 square-mile area from the San Gorgonio Pass to Temecula. The Mt. San Jacinto Community College District was formed in 1960, and the San Jacinto Campus opened in 1965. The college serves a population of over 25,000 each year at three campuses in Menifee, Temecula, and San Jacinto.

**College Contacts:** Rebecca Orlauski, Director of Foundation and Donor Initiatives; Aimee Bravo, Foundation Administrative Associate



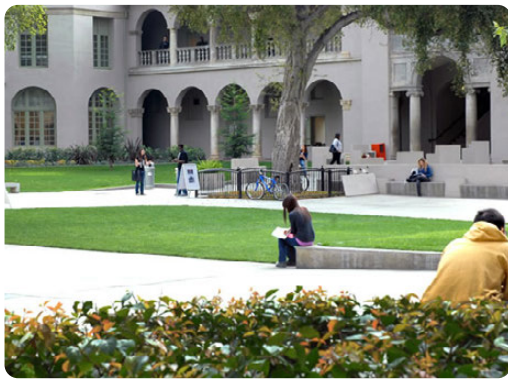
**Norco College**  
Norco College is one of the three colleges in the Riverside City Community College District and is located approximately 40 miles east of Los Angeles. Established in 1991, the college was fully accredited in 2010. Norco College serves over 16,000 students annually in the cities of Norco, Corona, Eastvale, Jurupa Valley, Temescal Valley, and surrounding communities. Sited on a 141-acre campus, the college has been designated as a Military Friendly School.

**College Contact:** Michelle Rodriguez, Assistant Director, Student Financial Services



**Palo Verde College**  
Palo Verde College opened in 1947 and is now based on a 200 acre-campus in Blythe. In 1999, the district expanded to include eastern San Bernardino County and the City of Needles, which led to the renovation of the Needles Center in 2009. Located near the Arizona state border, the college’s service area encompasses the Blythe and Palo Verde Valley regions; Needles, Bullhead, and Mojave, CA; and Quartzite and Parker, AZ. The college serves more than 7,000 students annually, many of them through distance education courses including offerings at local correctional facilities.

**College Contacts:** Stephanie Slagan, Foundation Executive Director; Bianca Rodriguez, Advancement Services Specialist



**Riverside Community College**  
Riverside City College is the largest of three colleges in the Riverside Community College District. Serving 30,000 students annually, the college is located in downtown Riverside on a 108-acre campus that features historic architecture. Just a few miles away are two additional teaching facilities, the Henry W. Coil Sr. and Edna Coil School for the Arts and the Culinary Arts Academy, which houses a full-service restaurant. A third educational center is located at Rubidoux Annex.

**College Contacts:** Elizabeth Hilton, Director, Student Financial Services; Alexis Urena, Student Financial Services Analyst



**San Bernardino Valley College**  
San Bernardino Valley College was established in 1926 by San Bernardino Valley Union Junior College District. Centrally located in San Bernardino County, the college serves over 13,000 students each year. The campus features a new \$95 million Applied Technology Building, a zero-emission building planned with sustainability in mind that earned recognition from the U.S. Green Building Council of Los Angeles before construction even began.

**College Contacts:** Michael Layne, Foundation Director; Phylicia Sanchez, Development Coordinator



**Victor Valley College**  
Established in 1961, Victor Valley College has served as a centralized community provider of higher education for more than 60 years. The college’s 253-acre main campus is located 90 miles north of Los Angeles and covers a geographic area of approximately 2,220 square miles. Today the college serves 32 feeder schools and approximately 20,000 students each year. In addition to the main campus, the college offers programs at the Regional Public Safety Training Center in Apple Valley, the School of Aviation Technology and the High Desert Training Center in Victorville, and a high school site in nearby Hesperia.

**College Contacts:** Kirsten Acosta, Foundation Executive Director; Christopher Nunez, Director of Fund Development & Scholarships





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Their commitment to student success in higher education has enabled the creation of transformative opportunities for thousands of California Community College students. We gratefully acknowledge their partnership and shared vision for a brighter future.

