



**AB 19 (Santiago) - California College Promise  
Chapter 735, Statutes of 2017**

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*AB 19 establishes the California College Promise, administered by the California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO). Upon appropriation by the Legislature, the Chancellor will distribute funding to community college districts that satisfy program participation requirements. Colleges are directed to use funding to advance the outlined program goals.*

*The text of this bill can be read in full [here](#).*

***What is the intent of AB 19?***

AB 19 supports the California Community Colleges (CCCs) in accomplishing all of the following goals:

- Increasing the number and percentage of high school students who are prepared for and attend college directly from high school and increasing the percentage of high school graduates who are placed directly into transfer-level mathematics and English courses at a community college.
- Increasing the percentage of students who earn associate degrees or career technical education certificates that prepare them for in-demand jobs and increasing the percentage of students who report being employed in their field of study.
- Increasing the percentage of students who successfully transfer from a community college to the California State University or the University of California and increasing the percentage of students who graduate from college with a baccalaureate degree.
- Reducing and eliminating regional achievement gaps and achievement gaps for students from groups that are underrepresented at the California Community Colleges, including, but not limited to, underrepresented students, low-income students, students who are current or former foster youth, students with disabilities, formerly incarcerated students, undocumented and AB 540 students, and students who are veterans.

***How does AB 19 assist colleges in accomplishing these goals?***

AB 19 establishes a framework for the California College Promise and incentivizes colleges to adopt best practices in support of student enrollment and completion through providing an avenue for the college to receive additional funding. While AB 19 does not provide funding to support the California College Promise, the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) is working to ensure funding is provided in the 2018-19 Budget Act to support this program. In order for a college to be eligible to receive future program funding, a college must meet various program participation requirements.

***What are the requirements for a college to participate in the California College Promise?***

AB 19 requires that the California College Promise advance the goals outlined in the legislation and establishes participation requirements that include all of the following:

- Partnering with one or more K-12 schools to establish an Early Commitment to College Program, to provide K–12 students and families assistance that includes, but is not limited to, learning about college opportunities, visiting campuses, taking and completing college preparatory courses, and applying for college and financial aid.
- Partnering with one or more K-12 schools to support and improve high school student preparation for college and reduce postsecondary remediation through practices that may include small learning communities, concurrent enrollment, and other evidence-based practices.
- Utilizing evidence-based assessment and placement practices at the community college that include multiple measures of student performance (including high school performance) and using evidence-based practices to improve outcomes for underprepared students.
- Participating in the California Community College Guided Pathways Grant Program in order to clarify the academic path for students, help students enter a pathway, help students stay on an academic path, and ensure students are learning.
- Maximizing student access to need-based financial aid by leveraging the California College Promise Grant (formerly the Board of Governors fee waiver), ensuring students complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and Cal Grant application or Dream Act application, and participating in a federal loan program (colleges not currently participating in the loan program would have until January 1, 2019 to enter the loan program).

***Who determines if a college has met the requirements to participate in the California College Promise and receive funding?***

The CCCCO is responsible for certifying that a college meets the requirements outlined in statute and any implementing regulations. Only after a college is certified by the Chancellor will it be eligible to receive future available funding.

***How much funding is a college eligible to receive under the California College Promise?***

There is no funding currently provided to support the implementation of AB 19. The CCCCO is working to ensure that funding is provided to support the California College Promise in the 2018-19 Budget Act. The amount of money each college will be eligible to receive will depend on how much funding is provided in the 2018-19 Budget Act to support this program.

Pursuant to the provisions of AB 19, the Chancellor shall establish a funding formula that advances the goals of the program. It is the intent of the Legislature that sufficient future funding be

provided to each CCC to waive all first-time, full-time student fees. For future funding in excess of the funding sufficient to waive all student fees, the funding formula shall take into account the number of full-time equivalent students at a community college and the number of students at a community college who satisfy the requirements to receive federal Pell grants and AB 540 status.

***Does AB 19 provide “free tuition” to first-year college students?***

There is no funding currently provided to support implementation of AB 19. Upon appropriation of funds by the Legislature, an eligible college *may* use those funds to waive some or all of the fees for up to one year for first-time CCC students who are enrolled at the college full time, and complete and submit either a Free Application for Federal Student Aid or a California Dream Act application. Colleges are not required to use California College Promise funds to provide fee waivers, and should use funds to advance the goals of the legislation.

***Is a college required to use funding received pursuant to the California College Promise to provide “free tuition” to first-year college students?***

There is no funding currently provided to support implementation of AB 19. Provided future funding is made available, a college is not required to use funding to provide “free tuition”. Pursuant to AB 19 (Section 76396.3(b) of the Education Code) a community college *may* use funding appropriated pursuant to this article to waive some or all of the fees for up to one year for first-time community college students who are enrolled at the college full time, and complete and submit either a Free Application for Federal Student Aid or a California Dream Act application.

Legislative intent provides that colleges use future funding to advance the goals outlined in the program. These goals focus on improving college readiness, increasing completion rates and closing achievement gaps. A college might determine that local factors, such as an existing locally funded tuition waiver program or high levels of unmet financial need among low-income students, mean that there are other funding uses to best accomplish those program goals. For example, a college could provide low-income students with additional grants to offset the costs of textbooks and/or transportation. A college might determine that providing low-income students who are also parents with access to campus-based childcare centers will best help achieve the goals of the program. A college with underserved high school students could determine that outreach, dual enrollment and data sharing agreements will best accomplish the goals of the program.

***What should a college do if it already has a locally funded College Promise that includes a tuition waiver that is duplicative of the tuition waiver allowed in this program?***

A college is not required to expend any future monies received pursuant to this program on providing a tuition waiver to students. Pursuant to Legislative intent, a college should use funding to advance the goals outlined in the program. These goals focus on improving college readiness, increasing completion rates and closing achievement gaps. As previously indicated, a college could provide additional grant aid to low-income students, assist students with awareness

of and support in completing financial aid applications, or conduct other activities that would best accomplish the goals of the program.

***If a college determines that using funding to provide a tuition waiver to students is the best way to achieve the goals of the program, for which students can the college use California College Promise funding to waive fees?***

There is no funding currently provided to implement AB 19. Provided that future funding is made available for this purpose, a college may provide a fee waiver under the following criteria:

- The student is eligible for the fee waiver for only be for one academic year.
- Fees shall only be waived for the summer term and each semester or quarter of that year in which the student maintains full-time status.
- A fee waiver provided pursuant to this subdivision shall not be available to a student who is charged a tuition fee pursuant to Section 76140 of the Education Code.

Under the provisions of AB 19, “full time” means 12 or more semester units or the equivalent, and “one academic year” means the total of the summer term that immediately precedes the first semester or quarter of the fall term, and the two consecutive semesters or three quarters that immediately follow that summer term.

These criteria only apply to funding provided pursuant to the California College Promise under the statutory structure of AB 19. Please keep in mind that the Legislature could establish additional criteria at the time funding is provided. The CCCCO will provide colleges with additional updated information as it becomes available. AB 19 does not directly affect the structure or criteria for locally established and funded tuition waiver or “promise” programs.

***What does first-time community college student mean? How does dual enrollment affect first-time status?***

AB 19 does not define the term “first-time” and it does not limit “first-time” to students who enroll in a community college right out of high school. A high school student previously enrolled in a community college course through dual-enrollment does not affect a student’s determination as a “first-time” student for purposes of AB 19.

***Is a college required to participate in the California College Promise?***

Participation in the California College Promise is voluntary. A college is not required to establish a College Promise program nor is a college with an existing College Promise program required to change that program. However, if a college seeks to access any future funding provided by the State to support the California College Promise, the college would need to comply with the requirements outlined in the bill.

***When will this bill take effect?***

The statutory structure will take effect on January 1, 2018. However, funding has not yet been appropriated to support the program. Until funding is provided, colleges will need to find alternative resources if they would like to offer one year of free tuition for students that do not qualify for the existing fee waiver program.

***How much will full implementation of AB 19 cost?***

The CCCCO estimates a cost of \$31 million annually to waive enrollment for first-time, full-time students, based on enrollments in the 2015-16 academic year. However, this bill establishes goals that include improving student access and success. Increases in students participating in the California College Promise will also have implications for program costs.

***How does AB 19 affect a student who currently qualifies for free tuition under the California College Promise Grant (formerly the Board of Governors Fee Waiver)?***

The California College Promise Grant, formerly known as the Board of Governors Fee Waiver, provides approximately 1 million students – nearly half of the 2.1 million students enrolled at California community college campuses – with free tuition. AB 19 does not alter the existing requirements of this program.