

2023 Annual Report



CALIFORNIA

e | d | g | e
coalition

Education, Diversity, and Growth in the Economy

MISSION

To advance state policy and investments that create and sustain pathways into the middle class for all Californians, including those facing barriers to social and economic mobility.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mission	2
A Message from the Executive Director	3
How We Coalesce for Shared Prosperity	4-5
Meet Our Board	6-7
Meet Our Staff	8
Top 10 from the Capitol	10-11
Lending our Expertise to Connecting Work and Postsecondary	12-13
Special Thanks to Our Investors!	14
Skills for California	15

A Message from the Executive Director



Dear colleagues, partners, and friends,

I am delighted to present the CA EDGE Coalition's 2023 Annual Report, highlighting the remarkable accomplishments we've achieved in the past year. As the Executive Director, it's a great privilege to share with you the inspiring journey of our organization and the transformative impact we've had on California's education and workforce development landscape.

In 2023, EDGE continued to lead the charge in fostering innovation, collaboration, and progress in education and workforce development. Our collective efforts, alongside dedicated partners, have resulted in numerous successes that have helped shape the future of our state. This year's report is a testament to the unwavering commitment of our board, staff team, and partners in building a more inclusive, prosperous, and equitable California.

Join us in celebrating the achievements of the CA EDGE Coalition as we work together to make a brighter future for all Californians. Thank you for your ongoing support and dedication.

Warm regards,
Zima Creason
Executive Director

HOW WE COALESCE FOR SHARED PROSPERITY

Influencer Engagement and Partner Collaboration

Participation in statewide summits, meetings, webinars, and influencer videos to engage legislators, staff, and allies in the fight to improve education, training, and employment opportunities for Californians who are paid low wages.

How We Work

EDGE unites business, labor, social justice, education, and workforce organizations, and we've worked collaboratively with our partners to build a broadly shared prosperity. Our partners over the last year include, but are not limited to: Education Trust-West, National Skills Coalition; ReWork the Bay; The Institute for College Access and Success; New Ways to Work; California Opportunity Youth Network; California Alliance of Dual Enrollment Partnerships; and Mental Health America of California.

Who We Represent

EDGE is widely recognized for the depth and diversity of our coalition along with the expertise we offer policymakers on improving career technical education, adult education, basic skills education, job training, and other issues related to closing California's opportunity gap. The EDGE Coalition includes the California Hospital Association, California Manufacturers and Technology Association, California Workforce Association, Career Ladders Project for the CA Community Colleges, PolicyLink, Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA), Small Business Majority, and the State Building and Construction Trades Council of California.

COMMUNICATIONS & ADVOCACY



Reach

11/1/22 - 10/31/23:

48,256

Represents the number of people who saw content shared by EDGE

Engagement

11/1/22-10/31/23:

9,435

This represents the number of times someone liked retweeted, commented, or shared an EDGE post

Impact

A robust \$310 billion spending plan was approved in the 2023-24 state budget, placing emphasis on crucial sectors like education, workforce training, and social safety net services. This budget focuses on uplifting underserved Californians grappling with persistent socioeconomic challenges. The budget plan also closes a shortfall of more than \$30 billion by implementing various funding shifts, delays, and trigger cuts, while also preserving key investments that were promised in last year's budget such as youth workforce programs, dual enrollment pathways, childcare access, and student support programs at community colleges. EDGE staunchly continues its mission to push forward education and workforce development initiatives, aiming to pave the way for economic growth and opportunities for every Californian.

Meet Our Board



Linda Collins - EDGE Board President;
Executive Director, Career Ladders Project



Peggy Wheeler - EDGE Board Vice President/Secretary;
Vice President, Rural Health and Governance,
California Hospital Association



Rita Medina - EDGE Board Treasurer;
Deputy Director, Latino Coalition for a Healthy CA



Lawrence Gayden - Policy Director, California Manufacturers
and Technology Association



Bianca Blomquist - California Policy Director/Northern
California, Outreach Director National Future of Work,
California Small Business Majority

Meet Our Board



Bob Lanter - Executive Director,
California Workforce Association



Jeremy Smith - Director of Workforce Development,
State Building and Construction Trades Council



Abbie Langston - Director Equitable Economy, Policy Link



Gloria Cruz - Director of Policy and Advocacy,
Coalition For Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)



Rebecca Hanson - Executive Director, SEIU-UHW Joint
Employer Education Fund and the Shirley Ware Education Center

Meet Our Staff



Zima Creason - Executive Director



Anna Alvarado - Policy Director



Jaclyn Moreno - Program Director



I am honored to have championed ACR 16, which highlights the importance of proactive investment in education and workforce development for our opportunity youth. This collaboration with EDGE will help illuminate the path to a brighter future for our young Californians.

- Assemblymember Mike Fong

Top 10 from the Capitol

Below are the top 10 legislative and budget victories that EDGE supported and advocated for throughout the 2023 legislative session. Full highlights of EDGE’s accomplishments can be found [here](#).

1

Dual Enrollment Opportunities:

AB 368 by Assemblymember Holden refines the “underrepresented in higher education” definition for the College & Career Access Pathways (CCAP) program to prioritize dual enrollment for groups like undocumented students and foster youth. It also calls for tracking student demographics and course outcomes.

2

Empowering Opportunity Youth:

ACR 16 by Assemblymember Mike Fong, and co-sponsored by EDGE, CA Opportunity Youth Network (COYN), and New Ways to Work, was approved by Governor Newsom. This resolution urges California to develop a comprehensive plan prioritizing educational and workforce training for OY. Additionally, \$78 million ongoing budget investment will permanently fund the Youth Job Corps program, creating and expanding youth employment opportunities that provide valuable job skills, public service career pathways, and help youth engage with their communities.

3

Expanding Student Financial Aid Access:

AB 789 by Assemblymember Berman supports students facing academic challenges by simplifying financial aid access. Nearly a quarter of first-year, low-income students in higher ed do not meet Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) criteria, often discontinuing their education. AB 789 standardizes SAP requirements, eliminates overly stringent rules, and clarifies paths to restore financial aid.

4

Advancing Career Tech Education:

Protected investments to the Golden State Pathways Program (GPS), maintaining \$500 million. GPS is intended to provide integrated programs of study, work-based learning, dual enrollment, and career tech opportunities for underserved youth in sectors critical to regional economies.

Top 10 from the Capitol

5

Strengthening Statewide Data Efforts:

\$4.9 million ongoing to support implementation and capacity efforts for the Cradle-to-Career Data System. The data system will provide tools to help students reach their career goals & provide critical information on education and workforce outcomes.

6

Social Safety Net Access:

The budget maintained the commitment to expand the CA Food Assistance Program (CFAP) for undocumented immigrants 55+. Child Care efforts received \$2.8 billion over two years for preschool and child care reimbursements, and family fees were waived until September 2023. These social safety net investments will support working families facing socio-economic barriers.

7

Investments for Community College & Adult Education Students:

\$790 million ongoing for the Student-Centered Funding Formula aimed at supporting underserved students, including an 8.22% COLA increase – \$678 million. This same COLA increase was also provided to the Adult Education program, as well as student support programs, basic need centers, and mental health services.

8

Supporting the Immigrant Workforce:

SB 467 by Senator Portantino ensures that immigrant students with an individual tax identification number (ITIN) can not be denied entry into community college apprenticeship or internship programs based on background check requirements.

9

Supporting Women in Construction:

Protected \$15 million investment to establish the Women in Construction Priority Unit at the Department of Industrial Relations – intended to support women and nonbinary individuals in the skilled trades sector.

10

Breaking Barriers to Employment Program:

\$5 million one-time funding to support workforce and wraparound services for individuals facing barriers to employment opportunities.

LENDING OUR EXPERTISE TO CONNECTING WORK AND POSTSECONDARY LEARNING

Cradle-to-Career Community Engagement Advisory Board:

EDGE Policy Director, Anna Alvarado, completed her term as a member of the Community Engagement Advisory Board for the Cradle-to-Career Data System. Anna joined 31 other highly respected researchers, advocates and educators to serve on the two advisory boards: Data & Tools and Community Engagement. Throughout the year, EDGE provided feedback related to the data system's branding, provided recommendations for additional education and workforce data points, and uplifted outreach strategies to increase awareness of the data system in underserved communities. Advisory board members are critical in shaping a successful data system, helping to ensure that the data tools provide actionable information that decision makers and community can use to support evidence-based decision making.

ReWork the Bay:

EDGE Executive Director, Zima Creason, serves on ReWork the Bay's Equity at Work Council. ReWork brings together values-aligned leaders across economic justice, education and training, business, and philanthropy to achieve an equitable Bay Area future where everyone has access to quality jobs that enable full lives with security, dignity, and agency.



California Workforce Association Panel Discussion:

EDGE participated on a panel alongside California Labor Secretary Stewart Knox, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Legislation Michael Young for the Labor Agency, Region 6 Administrator Annie Leonetti with the United State's Department of Labor, Director of Better Career Initiatives Leslie Payne with the Irvine Foundation, and Executive Director Bob Lanter with the CA Workforce Association where we discussed current trends impacting workforce development systems.

Tipping Point Community Executive Summit:

EDGE Executive Director, Zima Creason, participated in a panel addressing the executive directors of 50+ Bay Area based nonprofit organizations that work across the areas of early childhood development, education, employment, foster youth, housing, and youth homelessness. The discussion was grounded in the theme of navigating change as a nonprofit leader.

California Youth Apprenticeship Committee:

EDGE spearheaded advocacy efforts and submitted recommendations to the Youth Apprenticeship Committee under the Division of Apprenticeship Standards uplifting the importance of securing social safety net resources that support basic needs, prioritizing funding strategies for youth who live in underserved communities, and developing outreach strategies for youth who have been disconnected from the education and workforce systems.

Californians for College Affordability Panel Discussion:

EDGE participated on a panel hosted by TICAS for the 10 year anniversary of Californians for College Affordability where we discussed the importance of strengthening our education-to-workforce pipeline and strategies to advance an inclusive economy.

AB 705 Coalition:

EDGE is a member of the AB 705 Coalition where we provide input and feedback on issues related to AB 1705/705 implementation - equitable placement for community college students, including advocacy opportunities.

California Alliance of Dual Enrollment Partnerships (CADEP):

EDGE was elected to serve as an organizational representative on the CADEP Board of Directors. CADEP is a unified coalition committed to the advancement of equity, student success, and quality in dual enrollment programs in California.

California Opportunity Youth Network (COYN):

EDGE joined the COYN network and serves on the steering committee. COYN works to transform systems, policies, investments, and narratives to ensure all youth and young adults in California have the opportunity to flourish in adulthood.

Center for Caregiver Advancement (CCA):

EDGE Executive Director, Zima Creason, was elected to serve on the CCA Board of Directors. CCA focuses on building a workforce of highly trained caregivers, high-quality training options, research, policy, and advocacy.

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR INVESTORS!

NATIONAL SKILLS COALITION (NSC)

In partnership with NSC, EDGE leads Skills for CA, a statewide network of organizations advancing workforce development policies that remove systemic barriers and promote an inclusive economy for all Californians.

THE BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION

Provides support to EDGE with advocacy related to the Cradle-to-Career statewide longitudinal data system, development education reform, and dual enrollment implementation.

THE CONRAD N. HILTON FOUNDATION

Supports EDGE's expanded efforts to include opportunity youth and uplift their unique barriers in our workforce development, education and training advocacy.

REWORK THE BAY

Supports EDGE's participation in ReWork the Bay's Equity at Work Council. ReWork brings together values-aligned leaders across economic justice, education and training, business, and philanthropy to achieve an equitable Bay Area future where everyone has access to quality jobs that enable full lives with security, dignity, and agency.

THE JAMES IRVINE FOUNDATION

Supports EDGE's goal of advancing economic mobility and shared prosperity for all Californians through statewide advocacy and policy-maker education focused on workforce development and training.

THE TIPPING POINT COMMUNITY

Partners with EDGE to increase engagement in the Skills for CA network while centering policy priorities such as the ongoing development of the Cradle-to-Career Data System, advancement of earn and learn opportunities, and increasing resources to meet the basic needs of students.



Skills for CA is a statewide network of organizations advancing workforce development policies that remove systemic barriers and promote an inclusive economy for all Californians. Skills for CA is led by the CA EDGE Coalition and EDGE is a member of the National Skills Coalition’s SkillSPAN Network. Skills for CA’s guiding principles are equity, pathways to good jobs, and systems innovation. We believe that access to, and completion of, high-quality education and training are critical to advance economic mobility for all Californians. More information about Skills for CA and our shared policy goals can be found [*here*](#).

CALIFORNIA

e|d|g|e
coalition

Education, Diversity, and Growth in the Economy

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

CA EDGE Coalition
2017 O Street
Sacramento, CA 95811
Phone: (916) 706-0160
Email: info@caedge.org
www.caedge.org