

CA EDGE Coalition's 2024 Policy Priorities

Advancing Education, Diversity, & Growth in the Economy

The California EDGE Coalition unites business, labor, social justice, education, and workforce organizations to build a broadly shared prosperity. We share a commitment to the idea that post-secondary education and training is the doorway into economic mobility for individuals and communities. Our coalition believes that when individuals have the opportunity to develop the skills and abilities needed in today's labor market, California will be positioned to thrive and prosper based upon the diversity, talent, and strength of its people.

EDGE has identified the following priorities to guide our work in 2024, and further our mission - to advance state policy and investments that create and sustain pathways into good jobs for all Californians, including individuals facing barriers to economic and social mobility, while supporting businesses to meet their workforce needs.

Increased Education/Training Participation and Completion Rates

- **Expansion of credit for prior learning and competency-based education.** Many students have earned credit for participating in education and training programs or have competencies from past experience. Often, these achievements are not recognized when students enter new education and training programs. EDGE seeks to expand recognition of prior learning and competencies, which will allow students to complete education and training programs faster.

- **AB 1705/AB 705 implementation.** These important laws are intended to ensure students attending community colleges are not placed into remedial courses that may delay or deter their educational progress and entry into the workforce. Through ongoing implementation of these laws, California must ensure community colleges are supported, student support services are accessible, and that racial equity is at the forefront of implementation.

- **Expand implementation of dual enrollment offerings.** Dual enrollment allows learners to earn college credit while they earn their high school diploma or equivalency. This offering saves students money, allows them to complete postsecondary education programs faster, and can increase the number of qualified candidates available to meet workforce demands.

- **Strengthen and expand whole student support offerings to assist with the total cost of attendance.** It is incredibly difficult for students to focus on their education and employment goals when they struggle with child care, transportation, housing, and food insecurity. Further, many adult learners and opportunity youth lose money while engaging in education and training programs due to lost wages. When students have the resources necessary to meet their basic needs, including increased access to student financial aid, they are better positioned to engage in, and complete, programs that will provide them with the training necessary to secure good jobs.

Raise awareness of the needs and unique barriers priority populations experiencing poverty face when engaging in training, education, and the workforce. Priority populations include:

- **Adult learners**
- **Dislocated workers**
- **Opportunity youth**
- **Black and Brown communities**
- **Immigrants and refugees**
- **Individuals with mental health challenges or in recovery from substance use challenges**
- **Justice-involved individuals**

More Californians in good, high-demand jobs with family-supporting wages and benefits:

● **Increased collaboration between industry and education entities.** It is essential for education and training providers to have a close relationship with industry to ensure students are qualified for the workforce and they are supported to secure good, family-sustaining jobs after they complete their program.

● **Strengthen career technical education offerings.** CTE provides students with a hands-on educational experience that ties academics to real-world workplace training. It is important to prioritize policy change and investments that strengthen CTE programs and broaden access to these programs, including the expansion of online learning. Strengthening CTE pathways for adult learners, opportunity youth, and workers is key to increasing short and long-term training opportunities that lead to quality, industry-recognized credentials, and certificates.

● **Expand earn and learn opportunities.** Earn-and-learn opportunities, such as apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeship programs, provide Californians with career opportunities in various trades and industries, including traditional and non-traditional occupations, that build an inclusive workforce and pathways to economic mobility.

Strengthen and expand the use of data to inform policy and investment decisions:

● **Implementation of California's Cradle-to-Career Data System.** The C2C data system will integrate statewide education, workforce, and human services data which can provide decision-makers and the public with a more complete picture of what does, and does not, lead Californians to good jobs.

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