

AB 19 (Santiago, Chiu, McCarty) The California Community College Promise

Bill Summary

AB 19 creates the California Community College (CCC) Promise Program to provide tuition-free education at a CCC for one academic year for all first-time, full-time (12 units or more) students who submit a FAFSA or Dream application.

Existing Law

The CCC Board of Governor's Fee Waiver (BOGFW) waives enrollment fees (\$46/unit) for students who (1) meet residency criteria; (2) maintain minimum academic and progress standards; and (3) demonstrate financial need via various methods (Education Code § 76300).

Background

In 2015, former President Obama proposed two years of tuition-free community college for eligible students. Modeled off the Tennessee Promise (which provides two years tuition-free at a community or technical college in Tennessee to certain state residents) and California's own Long Beach Promise (which provides one year tuition-free to eligible students), Obama's proposal has prompted extensive debate across the nation on college access and affordability.

Realizing the benefits of such programs, many community college districts throughout California—and across the U.S.—have implemented local Promise Programs.¹ These Promise Programs have been demonstrated to:

- Expand access to financial aid;
- Promote equity;
- Increase enrollment;
- Improve academic performance; and
- Boost college completion rates.

Need for AB 19

In 2025, California faces an estimated shortage of one million college degree and certificate holders needed to sustain the state's workforce.

To help meet this demand, AB 19 enacts a CCC Promise Program to provide a year of tuition-free education to all first-time, full-time, CCC students.

By creating a college-going culture throughout California, this measure will expand access to financial aid, promote equity, increase enrollment, help improve academic performance, and boost completion rates.

Support

Los Angeles Community College District (sponsor)
Los Rios Community College District (sponsor)
Peralta Community College District (sponsor)
San Diego Community College District (sponsor)
San Francisco Community College District (sponsor)
AFSCME
Berkeley City College
California Alternative Payment Program Association
California Federation of Teachers
California Nurses Association/National Nurses United
Central City Association of Los Angeles
Children's Defense Fund—California
Citrus Community College District
City of Los Angeles Mayor, Eric Garcetti
Columbia College
Faculty Association of CA Community Colleges
Foothill-DeAnza Community College District
Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom
Long Beach City College
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce
Los Angeles College Faculty Guild
Los Angeles Unified School District
North Orange County Community College District
San Bernardino Community College District
San Jose Evergreen Community College District
Santa Monica College
State Treasurer, John Chiang

For More Information

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¹ <http://bit.ly/2IA3EQV>