

TO: Chief Executive Officers
Chief Instructional Officers
Chief Business Officers
Chief Student Services Officers
Career Technical Education Deans
Regional Consortia Chairs

FROM: Sandra Sanchez, Interim Vice Chancellor
Workforce and Economic Development Division

CC: Dr. Aisha Lowe, Executive Vice Chancellor
Office of Equitable Student Learning, Experience and Impact

LaCandice Ochoa, Dean
Workforce and Economic Development Division

RE: Expanded Uses of Strong Workforce Program Funding

This memorandum provides community college districts with additional guidance regarding the expanded uses of the Strong Workforce Program (SWP) funding.

Expanded Uses of SWP Funding

The Fiscal Year 2023 – 2024 enacted State budget included expanded uses of SWP funding as outlined in [Education Code section 88825](#). SWP funds apportioned directly to a community college district may also be used for all of the following:

- i. Providing funds for student grants to cover fees for third-party certification and licensing;
- ii. Enhancing student services to support retention, work experience, and job placement; and
- iii. Providing students with an integrated educational program that connects academic curricula to applied and experiential learning in the workplace including, but not limited to, work-based learning programs and models.

(i) Providing funds for student grants to cover fees for third-party certification and licensing.

The intent of the Chancellor's Office is not to impact a student's financial aid award. Therefore, our guidance is for colleges to procure vouchers for third-party certification or licensing fees as instructional supplies or materials and maintain records of students who receive these vouchers. Procurement of third-party certification or license fee vouchers should be associated with enrollment in a capstone course for a student completing a certificate and or degree in a Career Education pathway.

Fees for third-party certification and licensing can vary widely depending on the industry, the specific certification or license, and the organization or agency responsible for overseeing the process. Covered fees must be a requirement in the industry for students to obtain employment post completion of an approved Career Technical Education (CTE) program and be linked to an approved local project plan in NOVA. Examples of fees associated with third-party certification and licensing include but are not limited to:

- Professional Licenses
- Trade Licenses
- Specialized Driver's Licenses
- Health Care Certifications
- Information Technology (IT) Certifications
- Automotive Certifications
- Construction Certifications
- Culinary Certifications

(ii) Enhancing student services to support retention, work experience, and job placement.

Refining student services to bolster retention rates, cultivate work experience, and facilitate successful job placements is an integral component of fostering student achievement. SWP funding offers a valuable opportunity to amplify services, with a particular focus on leveraging and utilizing SWP funds to build a robust infrastructure that help districts and colleges achieve the intended student outcomes as outlined in Table 1: SWP Metrics. Such services collectively contribute to elevating student achievement and career readiness.

Table 1: SWP Metrics

Metric Type	Metric
Progress	Strong Workforce Program Students Who Earned 9 or More CTE Units in the District in a Single Year
	Strong Workforce Program Students Who Completed a Noncredit CTE or Workforce Preparation Course
Credential Attainment	Strong Workforce Program Students Who Earned a Degree or Certificate or Attained Apprenticeship Journey Status
Transfer	Strong Workforce Program Students Who Transferred to a Four-Year Postsecondary Institution
Employment	Strong Workforce Program Students with a Job Closely Related to Their Field of Study

Metric Type	Metric
Earnings	Median Annual Earnings for Strong Workforce Program Exiting Students
	Median Change in Earnings for Strong Workforce Program Exiting Students
	Strong Workforce Program Exiting Students Who Attained the Living Wage

(iii) Providing students with an integrated educational program that connects academic curricula to applied and experiential learning in the workplace, including, but not limited to, work-based learning programs and models.

The Chancellor's Office recently released [implementation guidance for the work experience education regulation revisions](#) to Title 5. These regulations became effective on **August 26, 2023**, and districts have one hundred and eighty (180) days from the effective date, or **until February 22, 2024**, to conform their policies and procedures to the regulatory requirements. (See 5 Cal. Code Regs. § 52010.)

§ 55250. Purpose and Definition of Work Experience Education.

(a) The purpose of work experience education is to provide students with an integrated instructional program that provides opportunities to connect academic curricula to applied experiential learning in the workplace. Work experience education should be substantive in nature, linked in a way relevant to a student's educational pathway, and contribute to demonstrable learning outcomes that have value towards a degree or certificate.

SWP funding can be invested into modernizing curriculum and enhancing apprenticeship, internship, and work experience opportunities. Apprenticeships span various industries and provide individuals with hands-on training and experience while earning a wage. Internships provide relevant hands-on experience in various fields. Work experience opportunities offer valuable insights into industry sectors and help students develop skills and competencies relevant to their career goals.

For additional questions about the expanded uses of SWP funding, please contact the SWP helpdesk: strongworkforcehelpdesk@cccco.edu.