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Cerritos College named national finalist for prestigious Bellwether Award

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NORWALK, Calif. – December 20, 2023 – Cerritos College was selected as a national finalist for the 2024 Bellwether Awards. The college's project, It Takes a Village: Supporting Student Housing and Basic Needs, was among the top 10 finalists in the Instructional Programs & Services category. The Bellwether Award recognizes cutting-edge, trendsetting college programs worthy of replication. Cerritos College was a finalist in 2018 for its California Promise Program [Cerritos Complete](#).

Cerritos College is a pioneer in efforts to increase success among students from underrepresented backgrounds. The college's [Falcon's Nest](#) helps meet students' essential needs with a free campus food pantry, clothing, hygiene support, emergency aid, transportation support, and housing resources, including [The Village](#), California's first community college housing project exclusively for homeless students. Cerritos College is also planning to expand its housing program through affordable student housing, projected to be completed by 2027 to further address home insecurity among its students.

"It is an honor to be recognized as a finalist again for the highly coveted Bellwether Award," said Dr. Jose Fierro, president/superintendent of Cerritos College. "Our Falcon's Nest provides basic needs support, such as food, housing, clothing, and hygiene, to remove obstacles from students' lives so they can focus on their studies and complete their educational goals on time."

The Bellwether College Consortium is comprised of award-winning colleges that address critical issues facing community colleges through applicable research and the promotion and replication of best practices in workforce development, instructional programs and services, and planning governance and finance.

The college will present its innovative Falcon's Nest basic needs program in the final round of competition at the Community College Futures Assembly in San Antonio, Texas, on February 25-27, 2024.

About Cerritos College: Cerritos College serves as a comprehensive community college for southeastern Los Angeles County. Communities within the college's district include Artesia, Bellflower, Cerritos, Downey, Hawaiian Gardens, La Mirada, Norwalk, and portions of Bell Gardens, Lakewood, Long Beach, Santa Fe Springs, and South Gate. Cerritos College offers degrees and certificates in more than 180 areas of study in nine divisions. Annually, more than 1,200 students successfully complete their course of studies. Enrollment currently averages 21,000 students. Visit Cerritos College online at <http://www.cerritos.edu/>.

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