

EDGE Policy Update

End of Session Edition

October 2021

Over the course of the 2021 legislative session, and in light of the ongoing global pandemic, the CA EDGE Coalition has focused on various education, training, and workforce policy efforts centered on the needs of low/no-income students, adult learners, workers, and employers. Specifically, our [policy priorities](#) sought to move and support policies intended to secure a social safety net for underserved communities; keep community colleges and their programs functioning; and work with our industry partners to stabilize their workforce – all while ensuring strategic funding and policy initiatives were developed and implemented through a racial equity lens.

As the Governor's deadline to take action on pending legislation came to a close on October 10th, all of us at EDGE are excited to see several priority bills chaptered into law! Building upon last year's efforts to support and uplift working families and bolster California's economy, the Governor signed critical measures that EDGE has been supportive of throughout the year in the areas of broadband access, expansion of workforce training opportunities, and support services for justice-involved students attending community colleges.

In addition to legislation, EDGE also strongly advocated in support of various budget items that were approved by the Legislature and Governor, such as investments in student financial aid, career technical education, apprenticeship programs, social safety net services, and skills training. These budget priorities were part of the final [2021-22 State Budget Act](#), a historic \$262.6 billion spending plan that will support California's students, working families, businesses, and the economy.

Moving forward into the 2022 legislative cycle, EDGE remains committed to working alongside our partners, the Legislature, and Administration to chart a path towards economic equity and mobility that ensures California's most underserved communities, particularly communities of color, women, and undocumented immigrants, have the resources they need to reach their career goals and obtain pathways to family-sustaining jobs; while also supporting our industry partners to keep businesses open and strengthen their workforce.

Below are EDGE's priority bills and their final outcomes.

EDGE Priority Bills

[AB 99 \(Irwin\)](#) California Cradle-to-Career Data System.

Position: Support

Summary: Would implement the recommendations of the CA Cradle-to-Career Data System Legislative Report, which describes the planning process and recommendations for phase one of the Cradle-to-Career Data System. The bill would set the vision, mission, and strategic objectives of the data system.

Status: 2-Year Bill – framework implemented in the budget

[AB 106 \(Salas\)](#) Regions Rise Grant Program.

Position: Support

Summary: Would establish the Regions Rise Grant Program within GO-Biz to support regional innovative strategies to address housing, homelessness, workforce, sustainability, and public health. The state program intends to provide competitive grants for multijurisdictional collectives that involve local and regional governments, labor, community-based organizations, and private and civic organizations covering locally-defined economic regions, to adopt a comprehensive shared prosperity strategy focused on the priority challenges of the respective region.

Status: 2-Year Bill – framework implemented in the budget

[AB 221 \(Santiago\)](#) Emergency food assistance.

Position: Support

Summary: Would require the Department of Social Services (DSS) to provide food assistance benefits statewide to low-income Californians, regardless of immigration status; contract with certain entities to issue the food assistance benefits; and conduct a study to provide recommendations to a permanent food assistance program for low-income California residents experiencing food insecurity, regardless of immigration status.

Status: Held in Senate Appropriations

[AB 417 \(McCarty\)](#) Rising Scholars Network: justice-involved students.

Position: Support

Summary: Would authorize the Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges to establish the Rising Scholars Network program to enter into agreements with up to 50 community colleges to provide support services funding for justice-involved students.

Status: Chaptered

[AB 628 \(E.Garcia\)](#) Breaking Barriers to Employment Initiative.

Position: Support

Summary: Would build upon the Breaking Barriers to Employment legislation by expanding access and eligibility for community-based organizations to provide training and support services.

Status: Chaptered

[AB 1036 \(E. Garcia\)](#) CA Manufacturing Emergency Preparedness Act of 2021.

Position: Support

Summary: Would enact the CA Manufacturing Emergency Preparedness Act of 2021, which would authorize I-Bank to establish the Manufacturing Disaster Loan Program for the purpose of attracting, retaining, retooling, and expanding manufacturing capacity in the state. Specifically, the loan program would need to meet certain objectives, including the protection and enhancement of the state's long-term manufacturing capacity, and support quality jobs that provide high wages, including benefits.

Status: Vetoed by the Governor. Full veto message [here](#).

[AB 1456 \(Medina\)](#) Student financial aid: Cal Grant Reform Act.

Position: Support

Summary: Would enact the Cal Grant Reform Act, which would revise and recast the provisions establishing and governing the existing Cal Grant programs and the Middle-Class Scholarship Program into a new Cal Grant Program. The new Cal Grant Program seeks to remove barriers to access financial aid, considers the total costs of attendance in award amounts, and will be based on student need.

Status: Vetoed by the Governor. Full veto message [here](#).

SB 4 (Gonzalez) Broadband for All Act.

Position: Support

Summary: Would secure ongoing funding and implement a number of critically needed reforms to the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) program administered by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). The changes will help close the digital divide and meet the connectivity needs of Californians, while also providing digital skill-building so adult learners & workers have the tools to advance in today's workforce

Status: Chaptered

SB 28 (Caballero) Rural Broadband and Digital Infrastructure Video Competition Reform Act

Position: Support

Summary: Would place accountability measures by authorizing the state to collect critical data from network service providers to ensure broadband connectivity in rural & underserved communities.

Status: Chaptered

SB 464 (Hurtado) California Food Assistance Program: eligibility and benefits.

Position: Support

Summary: Would make undocumented immigrants eligible for the California Food Assistance Program (CFAP) if they satisfy all eligibility criteria for participation in CalFresh.

Status: 2-year bill – pending in the Assembly

SB 609 (Hurtado) CalFresh.

Position: Support

Summary: Would provide eligibility to individuals participating in adult education and career tech education programs into the CalFresh program.

Status: Chaptered

SB 753 (Roth) California Workforce Development Board: program outcomes.

Position: Support

Summary: Would require the CWDB to evaluate program outcomes for all grant programs it administers, including program participant outcomes, regardless of funding source. SB 753 also requires EDD to permit the use of wage data with the CWDB in order to assist the board in its obligation to evaluate program outcomes for the grant programs it administers.

Status: Chaptered

SCR 25 (Hurtado) Adult Education Week.

Position: Support

Summary: This resolution proclaims the week of April 18 to April 24, 2021, as Adult Education Week - honoring the teachers, administrators, classified staff, and students of adult education programs statewide for their efforts, persistence, and accomplishments.

Status: Chaptered

EDGE Budget Priorities

As mentioned, EDGE also advocated in support of various critical budget investments related to career technical education, apprenticeship programs, social safety net services, skills training, small businesses, and broadband access. Below is a list of EDGE's budget priorities that were accomplished in the 2021-22 budget cycle.

- **\$18 million** investment to establish for the first time in California, a statewide longitudinal data system – integrating K-12, higher education, social services, financial aid, workforce training, and employment data in a secure system – fully leveraging quality data to

improve outcomes for all students and adult learners from “cradle to career.” Currently, the governing board is being established and the implementation is in progress. Stay engaged by signing up for alerts [here](#).

- **\$155 million** to eliminate the age and time out of high school eligibility requirements for the Cal Grant entitlement program for community college students and adult learners. This new funding in student financial aid will be ongoing and will grow to \$332 million by 2025. Although [AB 1456](#) was vetoed by the Governor, which would have transformed the Cal Grant program and provide more opportunities for underserved students and adult learners, EDGE will remain committed to working alongside our partners, Legislature, and Governor to strengthen and expand the program in the 2022 session.
- **\$5.8 million** ongoing to further support Dreamer Resource Liaisons and support services for immigrant students, including undocumented students attending community colleges.
- **\$10 million** one-time funding to create a workgroup that will develop recommendations to support **competency-based education (CBE)**, in addition to implementing a CBE pilot. This has been an ongoing priority for EDGE – to ensure California offers more flexible postsecondary learning approaches, enabling Californians to participate in postsecondary education and achieve marketable skills and credentials.
- **Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA)** of 1.7% increase was made for various community college student support programs, including the Extended Opportunity Programs and Services, campus child care, CalWORKs, Disabled Students Program and Services, child nutrition and mandates block grant.
- **\$371.2 million** to support community college's COLA of 5.07% and also pays down all of the deferrals from 2020-21. This is a critical investment for community colleges as they continue to navigate an unpredictable year.
- **\$12.5 million** ongoing increase of a 4.05% COLA to support the CA Adult Education Program, in addition to \$1 million ongoing to provide technical assistance to adult education regional consortia. The budget also authorizes the CA Department of Education and the Community College Chancellor's Office to collaborate on distributing adult education funding to program sites in a more timely manner.
- **\$42 million** ongoing to expand funding for the Community College Strong Workforce Program, which provides career technical education programs and regional workforce planning.
- **\$100 million** one-time increase to provide additional opportunities in High Road Training Partnerships - bringing in a total of \$115 million. These training partnerships provide skills training for the current workforce while creating pathways for new hires and prioritizes workers from underserved communities.
- **\$30 million** one-time funding for the Breaking Barriers to Employment Initiative, which assists individuals who face systemic barriers to employment in obtaining the skills necessary to prepare for work in high-demand industries. To build upon this investment, [AB 628](#) was also approved by the Governor, which will expand access and eligibility for community-based organizations to provide workforce training and support services.
- Increased **child care access** by 200,000 slots – 120,000 in 2021-22 and phasing in an additional 80,000 over the next 4 years – in the following programs: Alternative Payment,

General Child Care, Migrant Child Care, bridge program for foster children, and prioritizes ongoing vouchers for essential workers currently receiving short-term child care.

- **\$50 million** one-time funding for the Employment Training Panel to support training opportunities for new and incumbent workers and address skills gaps in underserved regions of the state.
- **\$35 million** one-time funding for the CA Dream Fund, which supports micro-grants up to \$10,000 to seed entrepreneurship and small business creation for underserved populations that are facing opportunity gaps.
- **\$20 million** one-time funding for IBank's Small Business Loan Guarantee Program to continue to provide loans as businesses recover from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- **\$600 million** one-time funding to create the Community Economic Resilience Fund (Fund). The Fund will provide financial support to regional collaboratives to plan and implement region and industry-specific economic strategies, with a specific focus on supporting high road jobs.
- The **Food for All** initiative, approved in the budget, lays the groundwork to expand the California Food Assistance Program (CFAP) in order to provide state-funded nutrition benefits to those ineligible for CalFresh or CFAP due to immigration status. \$5 million is included to expand CFAP in 2021-22, \$25 million in 2022-23, \$280 million in 2023-24, and \$280 million ongoing in 2024-25. Additionally, the budget provides close to \$300 million one-time to support food banks across the state.
- **\$100 million** one-time (over 3 years) to address community college students' basic needs such as food, child care, and housing insecurity. Also provides \$30 million ongoing for colleges to establish basic needs centers and hire basic needs coordinators, and \$30 million ongoing to support student mental health services.
- **\$35 million** one-time funding (over 5 years) to establish a Universal Basic Income pilot program intended to support Californians that are paid low incomes. These programs would be administered by cities or counties, and require a local-match commitment, and ensure low-income Californians receive this financial support.
- **AB 832** by Assemblymember Chiu was signed in late June, which extended the rent moratorium until September 30, 2021, and expanded the Rent Relief Program to provide up to 100 percent assistance for rent and utility payments. AB 832 allows the state to maximize the \$5.2 billion federal funds for rent, utilities, and housing-related expenses to assist Californians hit hardest by the pandemic.
- **\$6 billion** to expand broadband infrastructure and enhance internet access for unserved and underserved communities across the state. The broadband package also includes grant funding for digital literacy training programs for low-income communities facing socioeconomic barriers to broadband access. [SB 4](#) (Gonzalez) and [AB 14](#) (Aguiar-Curry) add additional provisions to address the digital divide. These bills were chaptered into law.

For any questions related to EDGE's positions on legislation and budget items, please contact Anna Alvarado, Policy Director, at aalvarado@caedge.org.