# Recovery with Equity Taskforce

Pre-Reading for October 13th Taskforce Meeting

OCTOBER, 2020

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1 | Taskforce Arc and Methodology

This comprehensive set of data analysis will serve as a lens to begin interrogating potential solution ideas emerging from our working groups

August 6th Meeting
- Vision-setting
- Defining equity

Working Groups Launch
- Organized around priority solution areas
- Solution options, constraints, scenarios

October 27th Meeting
- Refine a full set of solution options and possible scenarios
- Focus on actionable strategies and timeframes

September 10th Meeting
- Preliminary research and data analysis
- Address underlying equity gaps
- Root cause analysis
- Determine priority solution areas

October 13th Meeting
- Vet and give feedback on early solution options
- Informed by updated research on intersegmental gaps and student-centered needs

November 10th Meeting
- Finalize taskforce recommendations
- Determine appropriate next steps

The Taskforce's work is guided by an intentional Equity by Design approach that blends User-Centered Design and Co-Design

Design without Users *Stakeholders consulted little*	**User-Centered Design** *Stakeholders consulted more*	**Co-Design** *Stakeholders part of design team*	**User-Created Design** *Stakeholders as designers*
The idea that someone who is not a user can design solutions that are appropriate (i.e., will solve/address user's problem) and accurate (i.e, will carry a low risk of failure in implementation), without engaging with end users, but using a design process	Innovation is occasioned by watching/observing people, and then designing something on their behalf, thus putting the designer in charge	The idea that understanding of a problem and/or solution can be improved if designers, suppliers and consumers look at it together	Process in which designers guide people through the process of describing and solving problems for themselves, thus putting the user in charge

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Using an Equity by Design approach, we are engaging people most proximate to the problem throughout our work, using initial empathy-based research and scenario feedback

FRAME the PROBLEM

META - EMPATHY

Things You'll Learn:
Understand who you are and your proximity to the problem/context
Positively collaborate with people most proximate to the problem (PPP)
Avoid savior mentality and instead co-design as partners

Mindsets:
Practice humility and open-minded listening
Understand our power and positionality

PROBLEM DEFINITION

Things You'll Learn :
See the problem in new lights
Identify what the core challenge is
Define a problem equitably

Mindsets:
Incorporate historical context, interviews, boundaries and margins, roles and more into framing of the problem
Iterate the problem
Redefine expertise

DEVELOP a CONCEPT

IDEATION

Things You'll Learn:
Generate lots of ideas to reach more innovative approaches
Practice equitable process for selecting ideas to move forward

Mindsets:
Defer judgment
Build on others' ideas
Go for quantity
Evaluate based on outcome-based criteria

PROTOTYPING & TESTING

Things You'll Learn:
Bring ideas to life to test pieces before piloting whole thing
Test elements of concept early
Incorporate co-designers into the process

Mindsets:
Build to think
Bring ideas to life
Show unfinished work
Gather feedback to redesign the concept or problem definition

Equity framework: The commitments that will hold us accountable to an equity-centered process

Vision-Setting	We will agree to a shared understanding of **equity representation** and priority **stakeholder groups** in the development of an **equity-focused process**.
Research Collection and Data	We will collect **disaggregated data** and identify the impact of current strategies, policies and programs on **priority stakeholder groups**.
Stakeholder Engagement	We will conduct multiple **regionally-based virtual conversations** with stakeholders to better understand and incorporate the experience of those most proximate to the problem.
Coherence Framework and Scenario Development	We will assign more weight in our coherence strategies to **strategies expected to have the greatest impact on equity** for the priority stakeholder groups of Black, Latinx and adult students in California.
Recommendations and Dissemination	We will **prioritize the needs of priority stakeholder groups** regarding policy, implementation capacity and resource allocation, and ensure Taskforce recommendations are **accessible** to all stakeholders.

The more detailed Equity Framework for the Taskforce can be found here.

In preparation for the October 13th Taskforce meeting, please review this updated set of comprehensive statewide and regional education and workforce data to inform our conversation

Disaggregated statewide and regional data illuminate disparities in educational opportunity across the state.

Stakeholder data on the California postsecondary *experience* and the impact of COVID-19 on students, families, higher education institutions and the workforce provide insight into the ways the pandemic has presented both challenges and opportunities for transformation in public education.

Please consider the following questions related to this pre-reading in preparation for the October 13th Taskforce meeting

- What in the findings, if anything, surprised you?

- When you look at the data, what do you think is left "unsaid" or "unaddressed"? What questions do you still have?

- What will be possible in California if we change the overall paradigm and proactively solve for the challenges presented here?

- What will it take to get people on board to fully embrace change? What will cause them to stay where they are?

- Who needs to participate in the work in California beyond the usual suspects?

2 | Statewide Data

California is the most populous state in the nation and is highly diverse, with 63% people of color and 27% immigrants

Population Distribution by Race/Ethnicity

|	African American	American Indian/Alaska Native	Asian/Pacific Islander	Two or More Races	Latinx	White
2000	7%	1%	11%	5%	32%	47%
2019	7%	2%	16%	4%	39%	37%

■ 2000 ■ 2019
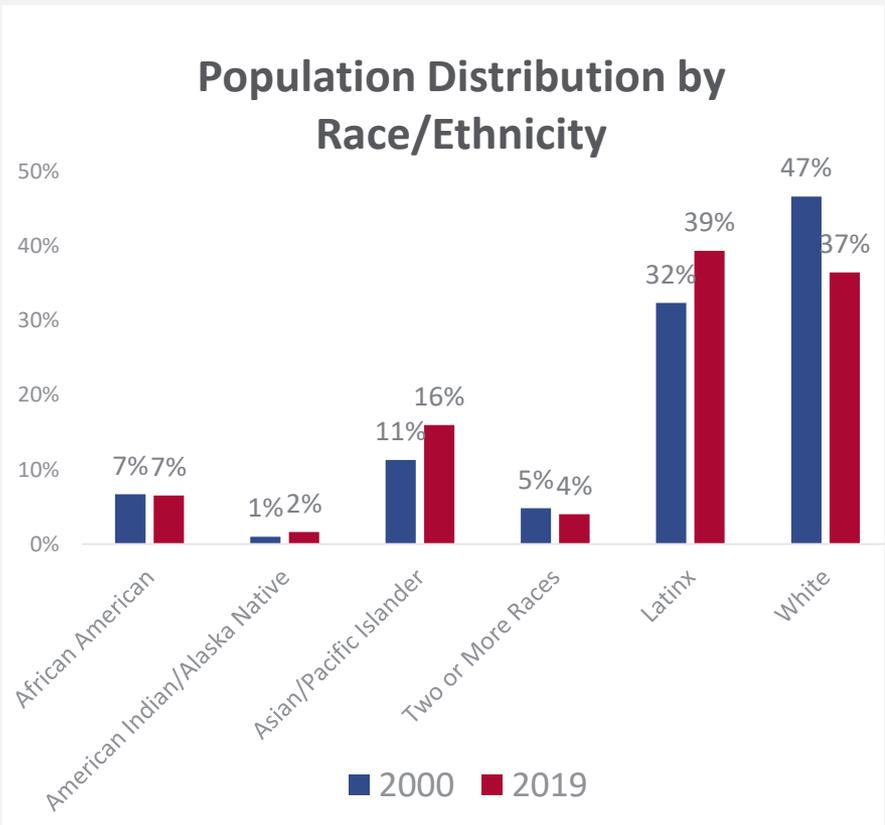
Latinx residents are the most populous racial/ethnic group in California, surpassing White residents in the last decade.
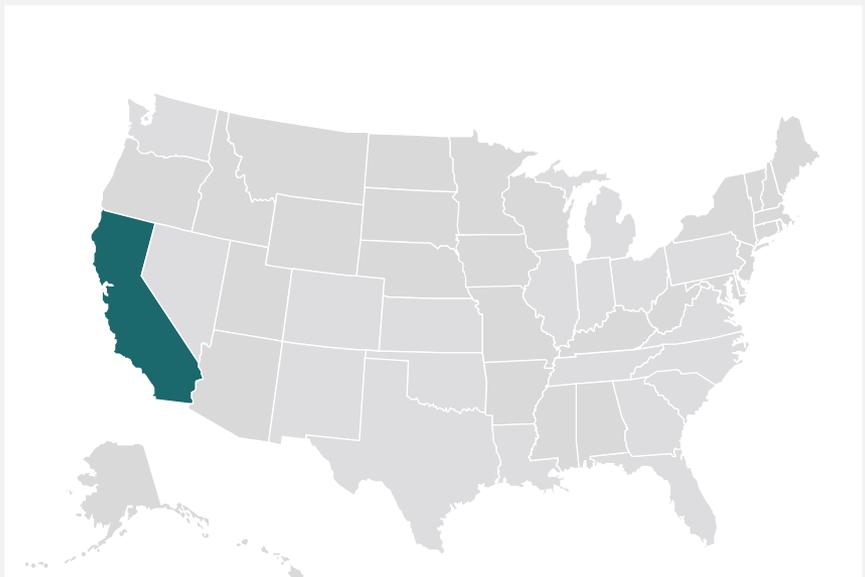
California is the most populous state at almost 40 million people, with 1 in 8 U.S. residents living in California.

1 in 4 Californians are immigrants.

California has the 5th highest unemployment in the nation, and unemployment is highest for Black and Latinx residents as well as in the inland regions

12-month Average Unemployment Rate by Race/Ethnicity and Age, as of June 2019 and 2020

Bar chart data (June 2019 / June 2020):
- White: 4.1% / 6.8%
- African American: 6.0% / 8.2%
- Hispanic: 5.0% / 7.9%
- Total: 4.1% / 7.0%
- Age 16-19: 15.2% / 20.0%
- Age 20-24: 7.5% / 11.8%
- Age 25-34: 4.1% / 7.1%
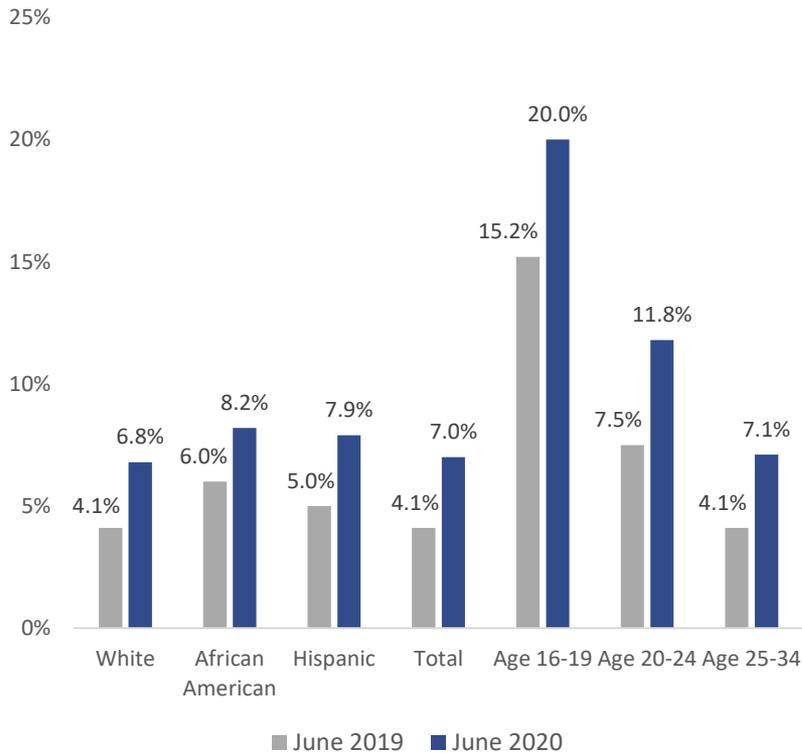
■ June 2019   ■ June 2020

June 2020 Unemployment Rate by Region

San Joaquin Valley Unemployment: 29%

Bay Area Unemployment: 12%

Inland Empire Unemployment: 14%

Los Angeles Unemployment: 19%

Imperial Valley Unemployment: 27%

San Joaquin Valley and Imperial Valley are at 29% and 27% unemployment respectively, which are depression-level rates.

California has the fifth highest unemployment in the nation.

**Black and Latinx residents face higher unemployment rates than their White counterparts.**

Note: In our research and equity frameworks we generally prefer the terms **"Latinx" and "Black,"** but some data sources still use the terms "Hispanic," "Latino," and "African American." We keep the original term from the original data source in order to maintain fidelity to the data, for example, in the graph above.

Note: Current unemployment rates by race/ethnicity are not available. These data reflect an average of the last 12 months and so only partially reflect the economic downturn due to COVID-19.

Most of the fastest-growing occupations in California require postsecondary education: a workforce credential, Associate's degree, Bachelor's degree or higher

Fastest-growing Occupations in California	Projected Increase in Job Openings	Education Required	Median Annual Wage
Solar Photovoltaic Installers	65%	High school diploma or equivalent	$47,995
Statisticians	41%	Master's degree	$109,663
Physician Assistants	34%	Master's degree	$127,456
Information Security Analysts	33%	Bachelor's degree	NA
Personal Care Aides	32%	High school diploma or equivalent	NA
Nurse Practitioners	31%	Master's degree	$132,748
Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary	30%	Doctoral or professional degree	$107,896
Software Developers, Applications	29%	Bachelor's degree	$123,085
Speech-Language Pathologists	29%	Master's degree	$95,056
Physical Therapist Assistants	29%	Associate's degree	$71,713
Operations Research Analysts	28%	Bachelor's degree	$97,293
Respiratory Therapists	28%	Associate's degree	$84,178
Cooks, Restaurant	28%	No formal educational credential	$31,335
Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	28%	Associate's degree	$100,174
Phlebotomists	27%	Postsecondary non-degree award	$45,982
Physical Therapist Aides	26%	High school diploma or equivalent	$29,511
Tile and Marble Setters	26%	No formal educational credential	$52,702
Floor Layers, Except Carpet, Wood, and Hard Tiles	25%	No formal educational credential	$53,104
Medical Assistants	25%	Postsecondary non-degree award	$38,772
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	24%	Bachelor's degree	$71,900

Note: Wages are from the 2018 first quarter and do not include self-employed or unpaid family workers. An estimate could not be provided for fields listed as NA. Occupations with employment below 5,000 in 2016 are excluded.

Yet only 42% of residents 25 or older hold an Associate's degree or higher, and only 34% hold a Bachelor's degree or higher (slightly above the national rate of 32%)

California Population Aged 25 and Older by Highest Level of Education Attained

When workforce credentials are added into the educational attainment rate, California is estimated to have 51% attainment according to data from the Lumina Foundation

CALIFORNIA RESIDENTS AGES 25–64

51.1% attainment

| 7.9% | 7.5% | 18.0% | 15.5% | 8.4% | 8.0% | 22.1% | 12.6% |

high school graduate (including GED)
some college no credential
bachelor's degree
graduate or professional degree
9th-12th grade no diploma
associate degree
less than 9th grade
short-term credential

Because of rounding, the sum of these percentages may exceed 100.

Short-term credentials include certifications (2.9%) and certificates (5.5%).

51.1% California — 8.4% short-term credentials / 42.7% associate degree and higher

51.3% Nation — 8.1% short-term credentials / 43.2%

51.1*%

| 38.6 | 38.7 | 38.8 | 38.9 | 39.7 | 39.6 | 47.2* | 47.5 | 48.4 | 49.1 | |
2008 ... 2018

Image; The Lumina Foundation (2020)

Due to California's decentralized data systems, analyses of educational attainment can vary. The Lumina Foundation's analysis on this slide is similar to our own, though with some variations in the data.

Importantly, the Lumina Foundation's analysis of California's attainment rate includes **8.4% of Californians with short-term credentials**, which should be included in postsecondary attainment calculations. This brings California up to **51% attainment, which matches the nation's average**.

While California's attainment rate has been rising over time, the state will need to do more to become a leader in the country. In particular, **the following slides describe significant regional, racial/ethnic and other disparities in attainment.**

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Gaps in educational attainment exist regionally, with coastal regions far exceeding inland regions in percentage of residents with postsecondary degrees; this trend mirrors socioeconomic disparities between the coastal and inland regions

Percentage of Population Aged 25 and Older with Associate's and Bachelor's degrees or higher

San Joaquin Valley:
Associate's or higher: **26%**
Bachelor's or higher: **16%**

Bay Area
Associate's or higher: **56%**
Bachelor's or higher: **44%**

Inland Empire
Associate's or higher: **30%**
Bachelor's or higher: **20%**

Los Angeles:
Associate's or higher: **40%**
Bachelor's or higher: **31%**

Imperial Valley
Associate's or higher: **20%**
Bachelor's or higher: **14%**

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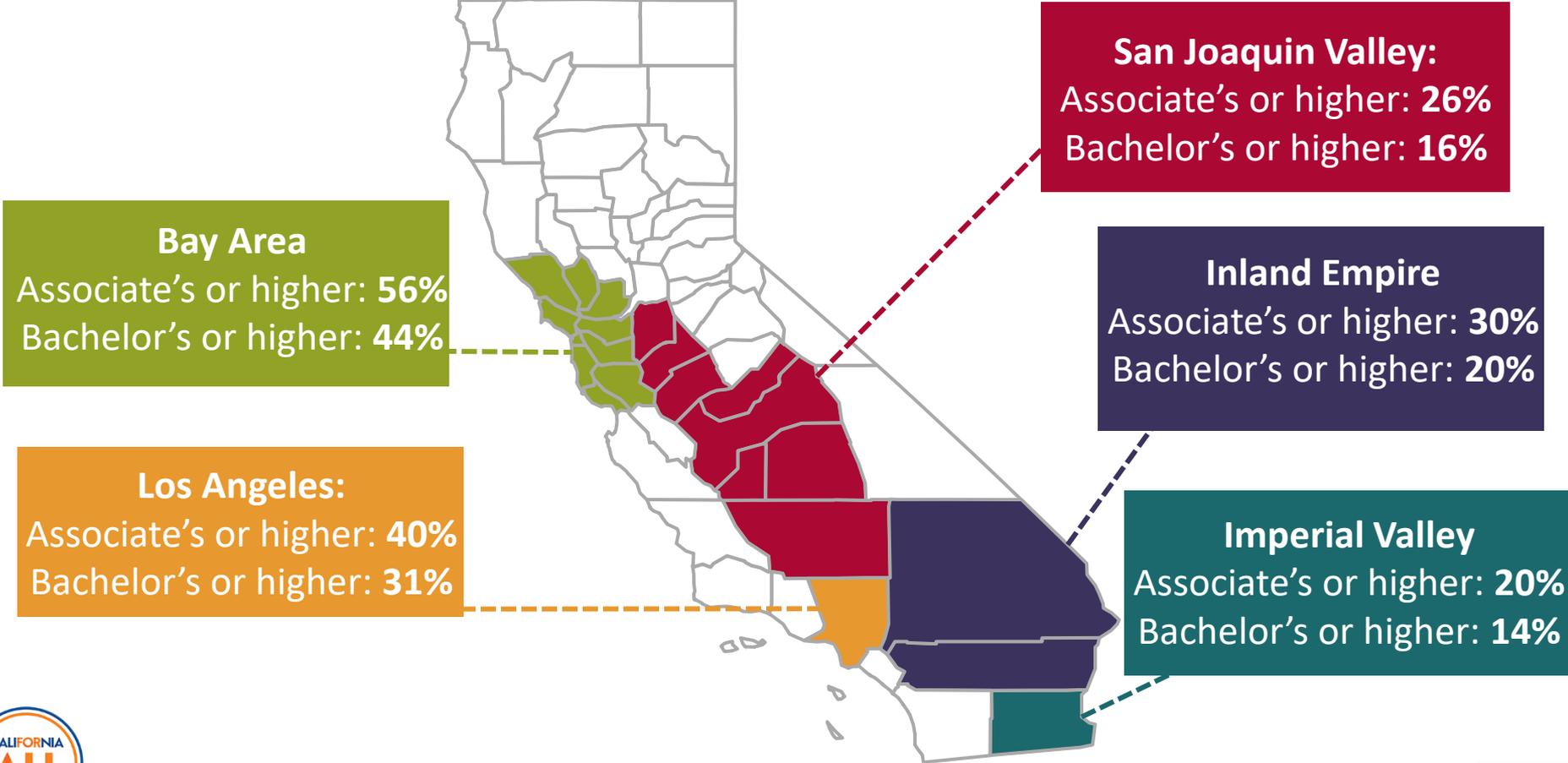
The inland regions have fewer options for postsecondary education compared to their geographies and populations

Bay Area
26 CCC
5 CSU
4 UC
40 Private For-Profit
37 Private Nonprofit
1 Public Adult Education

Los Angeles
26 CCC
5 CSU
1 UC
97 Private For-Profit
61 Private Nonprofit
3 Public Adult Education
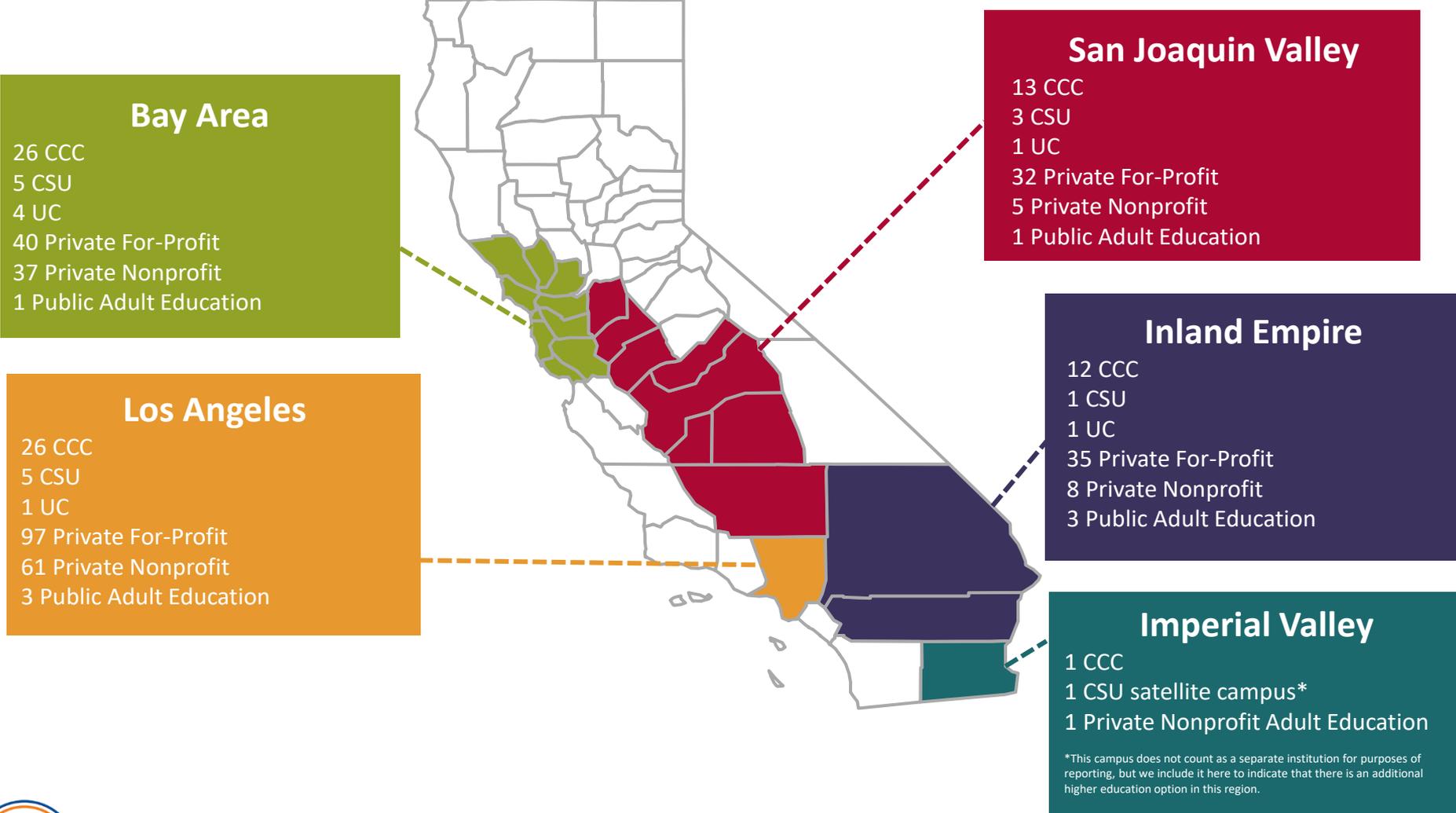
San Joaquin Valley
13 CCC
3 CSU
1 UC
32 Private For-Profit
5 Private Nonprofit
1 Public Adult Education

Inland Empire
12 CCC
1 CSU
1 UC
35 Private For-Profit
8 Private Nonprofit
3 Public Adult Education

Imperial Valley
1 CCC
1 CSU satellite campus*
1 Private Nonprofit Adult Education

*This campus does not count as a separate institution for purposes of reporting, but we include it here to indicate that there is an additional higher education option in this region.

Gaps in educational attainment also exist by race and ethnicity, which in some cases have widened over time

Percentage of Californians Age 25 or Older with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher: 2000 and 2018

	Asian	White	African American	Latinx	Two or more races	Total
2000	41%	30%	16%	10%	23%	24%
2018	54%	45%	27%	14%	41%	34%

■ 2000 ■ 2018
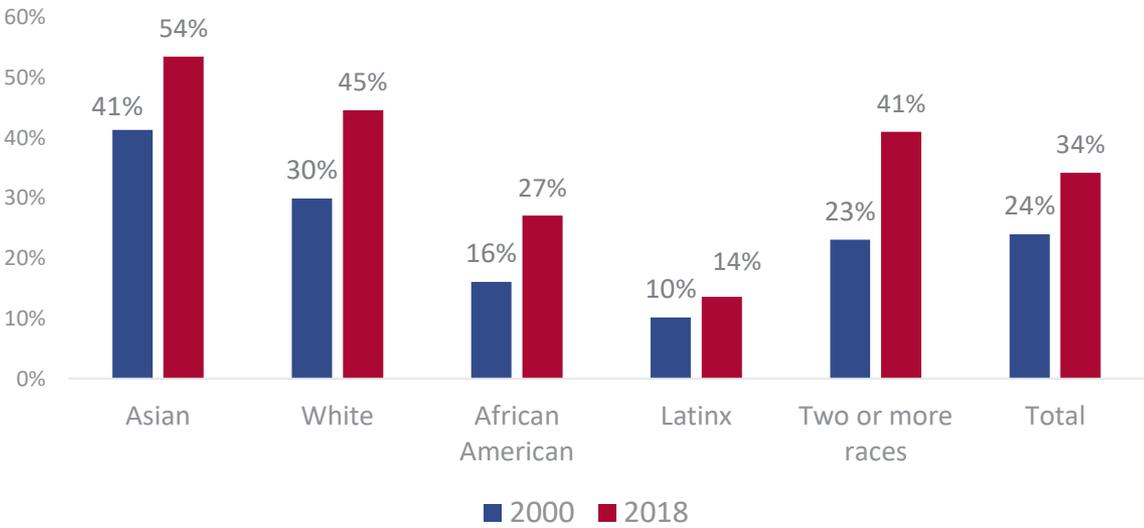
According to our analysis of U.S. Census data, the **largest gap in attainment of a *Bachelor's* degree or higher** exists between **Asian and Latinx students**.

Percentage of Californians Age 25 or Older with an Associate's Degree or Higher: 2020

RACE AND ETHNICITY

- ▣ Asian and Pacific Islander
- ▣ African-American
- ▣ American Indian
- ▣ Hispanic
- ▣ White
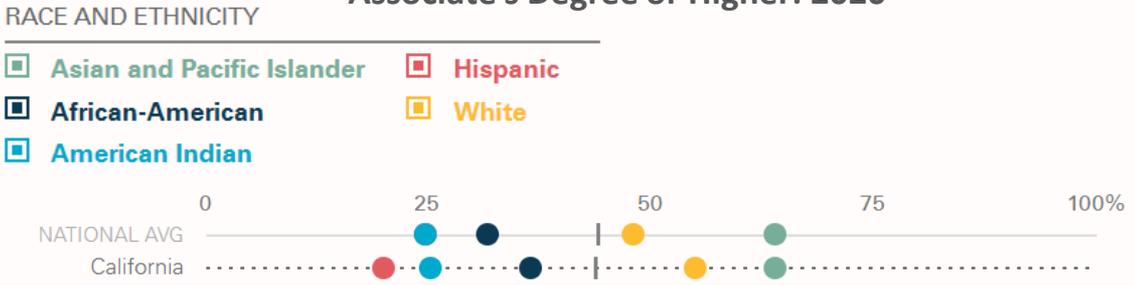
According to the Lumina Foundation's analysis, the **largest gap in attainment of an *Associate's* degree or higher** also exists between **Asian and Latinx students.**

Image; The Lumina Foundation (2020)

Half of California high school students complete the A-G requirements necessary for admission to UC and CSU; Black, Latinx and other priority* student groups complete A-G at lower rates

A-G coursework completion, required for admission to UC and CSU

Gender		
Female		56%
Male		45%

Race/Ethnicity		
Asian		75%
Filipino		67%
Two or more races		55%
White		55%
Race unknown		49%
Latinx		44%
African American		40%
Pacific Islander		40%
American Indian/Alaska Native		31%

Other Student Characteristics		
Socioeconomically disadvantaged		43%
Migrant youth		31%
Homeless youth		29%
English learners		26%
Foster youth		20%
Students with disabilities		18%

Total		
Total		51%

*Priority student groups are defined in our Equity Framework.

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Black, Latinx and other priority student groups are significantly less likely to enroll in postsecondary education within 12 months

Enrollment in Postsecondary Education of Public and Charter High School Graduates within 12 Months

Group	UC	CSU	CCC	In-state Private	Out-of-State	Not Enrolled
Asian/Pacific Islander	20%	16%	31%	5%	8%	20%
African American	4%	10%	35%	3%	8%	40%
Latinx	4%	12%	37%	2%	2%	42%
American Indian/Alaska Native	4%	6%	31%	2%	6%	50%
Two or more races	8%	11%	34%	5%	11%	31%
White	6%	11%	35%	4%	14%	30%
Students with Disabilities		3%	38%	1%	2%	55%
English Learners		4%	35%	1%	1%	58%
Homeless Students	3%	7%	36%	2%	2%	50%
Socioeconomically Disdvantaged	5%	11%	36%	2%	2%	43%
All High School Graduates	7%	12%	35%	3%	7%	36%

Legend: ■ UC ■ CSU ■ CCC ■ In-state Private ■ Out-of-State ■ Not Enrolled

Within 12 months of graduating high school…

3% Of high school graduates enroll at an **in-state private institution**

7% Of high school graduates enroll at a **UC**

7% Of high school graduates enroll at an **out-of-state institution**

12% Of high school graduates enroll at a **CSU**

35% Of high school graduates enroll at a **Community College**

36% Of high school graduates are **not enrolled in postsecondary education**

For students who do enroll in postsecondary education—either directly after high school, or later—Latinx students are more likely to attend community college than other students

Distribution of Undergraduates by Institution Type Attended

Group	Private For-profit	Private Non-profit	Community Colleges	CSU	UC
All Undergraduates	8%	6%	65%	14%	7%
Nonresident alien	5%	13%	30%	24%	27%
Two or more races	7%	8%	62%	14%	9%
White	7%	9%	66%	12%	6%
Pacific Islander	19%	9%	59%	9%	4%
Latinx	6%	4%	72%	14%	4%
African American	18%	6%	65%	9%	3%
Asian	5%	6%	59%	16%	15%
American Indian/Alaska Native	14%	7%	68%	9%	2%
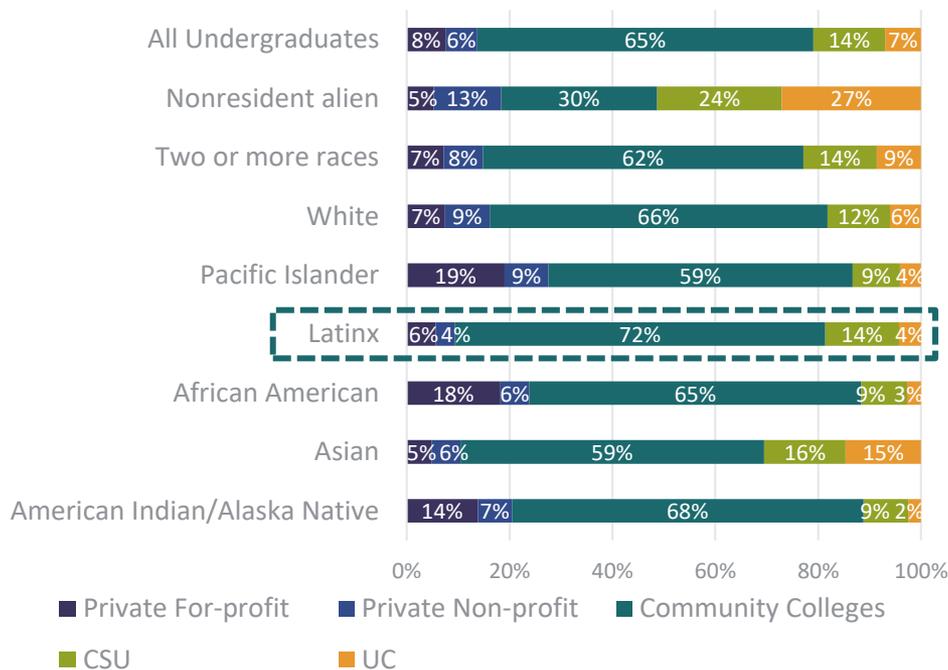
65% of all California undergraduates attend community college, while 72% of Latinx students attend these institutions.

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Close to 1/3 of California's postsecondary students are 25 or older, and these students are over-represented at private for-profit institutions and community colleges

While older students make up 29% of overall undergraduate enrollment, they make up 57% of enrollment at private for-profit institutions and 37% of enrollment at community colleges.

Distribution of Undergraduates by Age
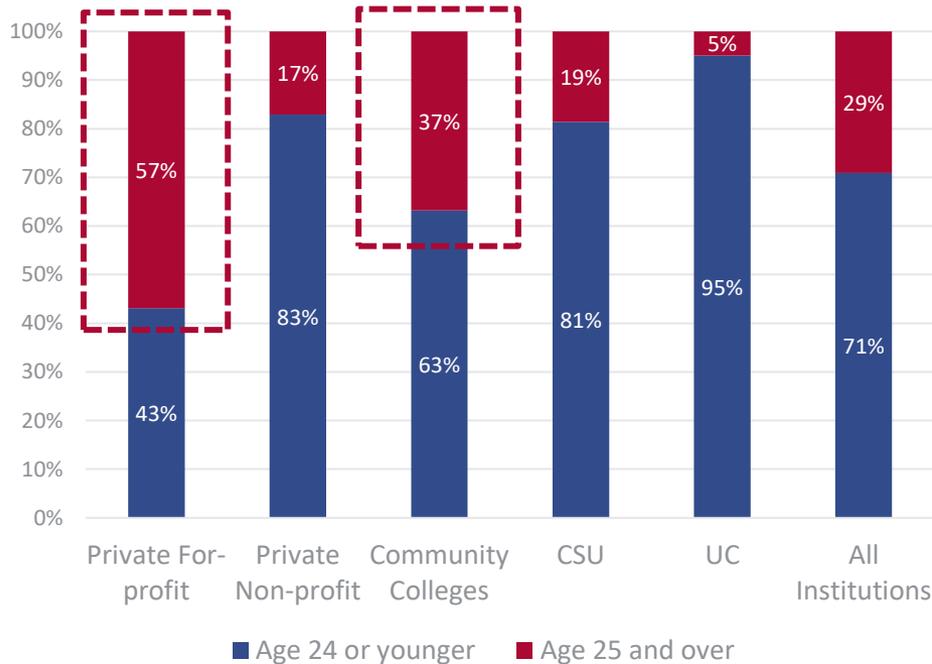
Distribution of Undergraduates by Institution Type and Age
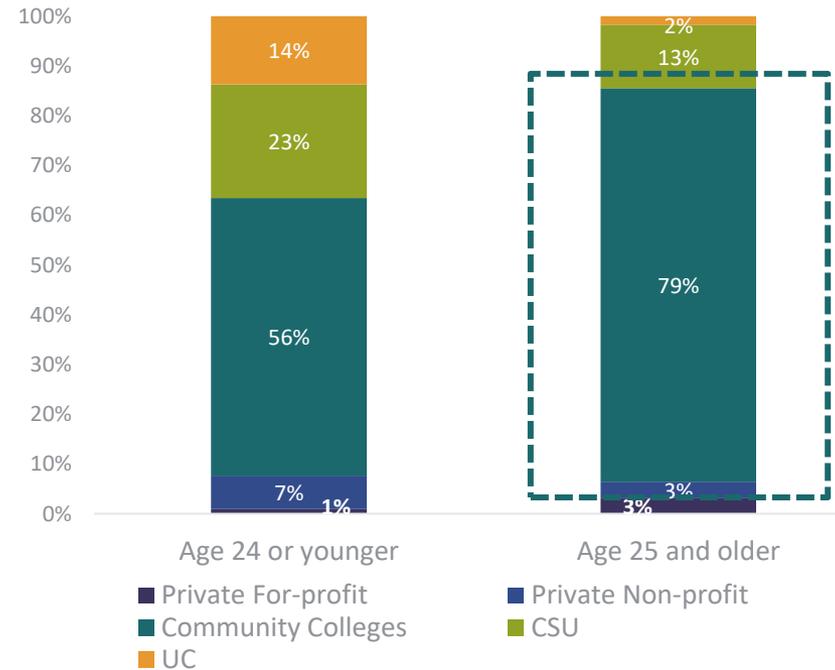
In terms of college affordability, the lowest-income California students face greater expenses despite Cal Grant and other aid

The **lowest income** students in the state spend **significantly larger portions of their family incomes** paying for postsecondary education than higher-income students.

=

This is in part due to **high non-tuition costs of college attendance** not always covered by financial aid like food, books, technology, housing, childcare, and transportation. For low-income students, these expenses can be a bigger chunk of their overall income compared with higher-income students.

+

Additionally, **students who apply for Cal Grant more than one year after graduating high school or transferring from community college are unlikely to receive Cal Grant funds.** This particularly affects older students.

Half of CA college graduates leave with student loan debt (averaging $23,000) and the majority of these students are low-income to begin with.

8 in 10 CSU students graduating with debt are from households with family incomes of $54,000 or less.

5 in 10 UC students graduating with debt are from households with family incomes of $56,000 or less.

Despite challenges, California has the best-funded state financial aid program in the country, and **continues to invest in improving financial aid.**

In January 2019, the state raised the number of funded Cal Grants, increased aid for student-parents, and increased funding for the College Promise Program. Legislation was introduced in 2019 to reform the entire Cal Grant system (AB 1314) as well as create a new grant program specifically for community college students (SB 291). **The California Student Aid Commission released a major report in March 2020 outlining an entirely new approach to state financial aid.**

Outcome disparities exist between federal Pell Grant recipients across segments; Pell Grant recipients are also less likely to transfer from community college than other students

Outcomes for Students Entering California Postsecondary Institutions in 2010-11 by August 2018, by Sector and Pell Grant Status

Sector	Student Group	Earned Degree/Certificate	Still Enrolled	Transferred	Not Enrolled/Status Unknown
CCC	Pell Recipients	37%	2%	27%	34%
	Other Students	22%	2%	37%	39%
	All Students	25%	2%	35%	38%
CSU	Pell Recipients	69%	1%	18%	12%
	Other Students	73%	1%	17%	10%
	All Students	71%	1%	17%	11%
UC	Pell Recipients	84%	2%	8%	6%
	Other Students	89%	1%	6%	4%
	All Students	87%	1%	7%	5%
Private Non-Profit	Pell Recipients	65%	1%	16%	18%
	Other Students	70%	1%	15%	14%
	All Students	68%	1%	16%	15%
For-Profit	Pell Recipients	40%	0%	18%	41%
	Other Students	42%	1%	21%	36%
	All Students	41%	1%	19%	39%

Pell Grant recipients transfer at a lower rate than other students out of community college.

Pell Grant recipients earn a degree at UC at a significantly higher rate than in other segments.

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There are several known barriers to college access and persistence in California which provide some insight into the disparities shown in the data

Limited seats at the CSU: In 2018, the CSU turned away 32,000 eligible students because they could not accommodate them. While in 2019 the CSU started a program to redirect denied students to CSU campuses with more space, only 900 of the 20,000 redirected students actually enrolled at the new campus (the destination of the other students is unknown).

Limited course availability at colleges and universities: Course availability can inhibit students from taking courses in their major and can extend the time needed to graduate.

Financial aid is insufficient: There is not enough state financial aid for all eligible students, and many students who do receive aid still face high non-academic expenses. This is particularly true for low-income students and older students, and can often lead to students reducing their course loads in order to work, lengthening the amount of time it takes to graduate.

Lack of clear pathways through higher education in California: Students enrolling at community college through graduate degrees must navigate complex systems, digesting enormous amounts of disparate information and bridging disconnects between the CCC, CSU and UC systems and the workforce. Advising resources are often insufficient to provide students with the personalized counseling needed to make smart decisions about their intended pathway through higher education from enrollment to completion.

Persistence barriers: Lack of clear goals and pathways—and the support needed to discover those pathways—can affect student's ability to persist and complete school, particularly for community college students.

Transferring is complicated: The transfer process from community college to a four-year college can be complicated and confusing for students, including campus-specific articulation agreements.

Lack of a statewide data system for higher education: California does not have a statewide data system for higher education to track students and coordinate around student success.

Students' basic needs are not being met: Basic needs include food, housing, financial security, childcare, mental health services, transportation, and basic learning tools (e.g., internet, devices, adequate study space, technology literacy). When these needs aren't met for students, it is challenging to persist and succeed academically.

Public postsecondary is addressing some barriers and inequities, however there is still room for growth (1 of 4)

California Community Colleges

Vision for Success	AB 705	AB 19	Associate Degree for Transfer
In 2017, CCC adopted this strategic vision to improve student success. Vision for Success includes Guided Pathways, an organizing framework to guide the initiatives aimed at achieving the Vision for Success goals. The Vision for Success goals include: - Grow the number of students who successfully complete college with an associate's degree, credential or certificate - Increase the number of students transferring annually - Reduce equity and regional achievement gaps - Decrease units accumulated - Increase employability of existing CTE students	Passed on 2017 and implemented in 2018, Assembly Bill 705 requires that community colleges maximize the probability that students can access college-level courses within one year of entering college (as opposed to remedial courses). For placement into English and Math courses, community colleges must use one or more of the following: high school coursework, high school grades, and high school GPA.	Also passed in 2017, Assembly Bill 19 establishes the California College Promise through which community colleges can receive additional funding for adopting a set of practices to improve student enrollment and completion. The goals of the California College Promise include: - Increase college enrollment directly after high school - Increase the percentage of students in credit-bearing Math and English classes - Increase the number of certificates, associate's degrees, and university transfers - Reduce achievement gaps	The CCC system continues to strengthen the Associate Degree for Transfer pathway, originally established in 2010. This pathway makes it easier for community college students to transfer to the CSU and guarantees them junior standing. In 2015, the program was expanded to provide pathways to 37 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU's) across the country. In 2018 the program was again expanded to over 30 private nonprofit institutions of higher education.

Public postsecondary is addressing some barriers and inequities, however there is still room for growth (2 of 4)

Career Technical Education

Strong Workforce Program

The Strong Workforce Program was introduced in the California Community Colleges in 2016 and in K12 in 2018 to support K12 local education agencies, community colleges and industries/businesses in strengthening CTE programs and pathways aligned with regional workforce needs.

CTE Incentive Grant

This grant was established as a state education, economic and workforce development initiative to provide K12 students the knowledge and skills necessary to transition to employment and postsecondary education. The program encourages, maintains and strengthens the delivery of high-quality CTE programs. In 2019, over 300 local education agencies received grants ranging from $30,000 to $9.1 million.

California Career Pathways Trust

Signed into law through Assembly Bill 86 in 2013 and added into the Education Code in 2014, the California Career Pathways Trust provides funding to motivate the development of sustained K through 14 career pathways programs that connect K12, community college and businesses/industries. Under the Trust, one-time competitive grants are made available to school districts, county superintendents of schools, direct-funded charter schools and community colleges to establish or expand career pathway programs. In exchange, grantees are required to set aside funding from their own budgets (and obtain additional funding) to supporting the program for at least 2 years beyond the state-funded grant.

Public postsecondary is addressing some barriers and inequities, however there is still room for growth (3 of 4)

California State University

Graduation Initiative 2025

In 2015, CSU launched this initiative to increase graduation rates for all CSU students and eliminate opportunity and achievement gaps. The initiative sets tailored goals for each CSU campus and also has these system-wide goals:

- Raise the four-year graduation rate from 19% to 40% (the 2019 rate was up to 28%)
- Raise the two-year graduation rate for transfer students from 31% to 45% (the 2019 rate was up to 41%)

General Education and Remedial Education Changes

In 2017 the CSU made policy changes to streamline general education requirements and eliminate remedial education. The changes meant that students' college readiness would be determined by high school performance instead of a placement test, and that students can take college-level credit-bearing courses toward their degree immediately upon entry to the CSU (with extra supports like tutoring and built-in study sessions).

Public postsecondary is addressing some barriers and inequities, however there is still room for growth (4 of 4)

University of California

UC 2030	Enhancing Student Transfer
In 2019, the UC adopted a multi-year plan to help more students earn a degree. The goals of UC 2030 include: - Produce 200,000 more degrees on top of the 1 million undergraduate and gradate degrees UC is already projected to produce (a 20% increase) - Achieve a 90% graduation rate up from 84%, and close achievement gaps that affect low-income, first-generation and underrepresented student groups - Invest in faculty and research by adding 1,100 ladder rank faculty over four years	In 2018 the UC and CCC systems entered into an agreement entitled "Enhancing Student Transfer" to increase access to a four-year college degree at UC for CC students and ensure transfer students' academic preparation and support. Under the MOU, CCC students who successfully complete one of the 21 UC Transfer Pathways and achieve the required GPA are guaranteed a place within the UC system. However, Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) recipients still do not have an admission guarantee to the UC.

Key findings from our interviews across all five regions. . .

1. COVID-19 has exacerbated existing inequities in society. This has heightened barriers to students getting their basic needs met.

Students need to meet basic needs in order to engage in education. **COVID-19 has raised additional barriers to getting these needs met, particularly for students who were already experiencing disadvantage in the system.** These needs include food, shelter, healthcare, internet, employment and mental health services. How can higher education institutions find their role in meeting these needs *and* how can higher education partner with outside organizations to meet needs?

> **"We cannot serve our students quickly enough. There are not enough resources to fill the gap."**
> —Higher education systems leader
>
> **"This pandemic means that some jobs are permanently lost. Not coming back."**
> —Higher education systems leader
>
> **"I need us to think as one ecosystem…be co-dependent and not independent."**
> —Higher education systems leader

2. The digital divide—access to and cost of both devices and internet connectivity—has been fully exposed and exacerbated by COVID-19.

Particularly **for low-income students and students in more remote areas, access to internet can be extremely challenging.** In some places, connectivity is not available, and in all places, connectivity adds to family expenses. For families with children, a higher level of bandwidth is needed to accommodate K12 learning and online college classes at the same time. In addition, homes must have multiple devices to effectively accommodate multiple learners engaged at the same time. While schools and universities tried to provide connectivity through wifi hot spots by working with internet providers or extending service to school parking lots, each came with its own challenges, creating additional costs or inconvenience.

3. Funding and budget cuts due to COVID-19 exacerbate existing financial challenges and inequities in the higher education system.

Across and within the three segments, higher education stakeholders perceive that funding is inequitable between them, and that institutions serving the highest-need students get the least funding. In addition, they feel funding is not necessarily focused on students who could benefit most. For example, returning adults or students who have stopped out do not qualify for all of California's financial aid programs. Many institutions will be losing significantly more funding from not having students on campus than they are even expecting to lose in state funding. All have additional cost pressure due to the pivots necessary for the shift to online learning. With any significant enrollment shifts—which are also expected—institutions are hit on costs from all sides.

Key findings from our interviews across all five regions. . .

4. The connections between higher education and workforce need to be strengthened.

Pathways, internships, work-based opportunities, micro-credentials and support for working students can both **help students more easily find their way to and through postsecondary credentials, and also help them target their career and gain valuable experience** along the way. Strengthening connections between higher education and workforce is important to helping students prepare for and choose jobs that are in-demand, help their prospects, and increase the value proposition of attaining credentials and degrees that support the state's economic recovery in an equitable and sustainable way.

5. Lack of flexibility within the higher education system (and related policies) creates barriers to equity-focused change.

Lack of coherence across segments makes it difficult for students to easily navigate from one segment to the next in predictable and smooth ways to earn credentials and degrees. Policies intended to support students—like the "50 percent rule"—can limit the flexibility of institutions to tend to student needs (e.g. advising) and limit statewide transferability.

6. The value proposition of higher education is changing due to students' perceptions of the quality of distance learning.

The way faculty and institutions design, teach and support courses needs to be more closely aligned to student needs, especially nontraditional students. Students, especially nontraditional students, have a diverse set of needs both inside and outside of the classroom, and expressed in focus groups that their courses do not appear to be designed with those needs in mind, nor do their professors and/or institutions always provide the type of support they need to be successful in their courses. Students expressed this was true before COVID and has been exacerbated by the switch to online classes.

Key findings from our interviews across all five regions. . .

7. California needs a statewide data system.

Without a statewide data system it is extremely difficult to know how students are moving through the education pipeline and how best to understand both regional and statewide needs. While California approved the Cradle-to-Career Data System Act in 2019 and that work is still moving forward, ensuring ample funding and an accelerated timeline could be important considerations. California needs a data system that both protects student privacy, supports intrusive advising and can illustrate students movement from K12 to postsecondary, as well as across the three postsecondary segments. Data that track completion in an on-time and cost-efficient manner and that allow for measuring both persistence and success in degree and workforce engagement are critical tools for supporting students at scale and throughout their K12-postsecondary-workforce journey.

"Getting people to believe that this is possible. I think when you have large issues that go back hundreds of years (systemic racism, closing opportunity gaps, etc.) there is this hopelessness…like 'well, we've tried everything.' We need to look much deeper."
—K12 education systems leader

8. The impact of racial injustice is real. And if not addressed, the long-term impact of inequities and racial injustice could be even more dramatic going forward.

Racial injustice—which was present pre-COVID-19—combined with economic uncertainty and the removal of students from school and college environments where they have relationships and support, is taking a toll on students' sense of belonging. **Students in focus groups wondered aloud, "What is my place in the world? Am I going to be welcome at college?"** It will take ongoing and consistent action to support students along the path to and through college, as well as a mindset shift for some, from "college is only for some kids" to the belief that it is truly for all.

Key findings from our interviews across all five regions. . .

9. Some industries may not fully recover, which will disproportionately impact Black and Latinx students.

The pandemic impacted industries dominated by Black and Latinx workers (e.g., hotel, tourism, construction, agriculture, manufacturing, etc.). Workforce partners believe that some of these industries may not fully recover to pre-pandemic levels due to the state's reliance on technology and automation. **The demand shift has created the need for speedy and agile programming to retrain and upskill the workforce.**

"We build on the concept of doing the uncommon uncommonly well. Essential skill sets are what our professional educators need and what our students need, because those will drive us through whatever change that will happen. We can all develop our own playlist for education or whatever that looks like in the future.
—K12 education systems leader

10. The unpredictable nature of COVID-19 is a major factor limiting recovery efforts.

The unpredictable nature of the virus causes leaders to hesitate about timelines for systemwide recovery. **The availability of a vaccine, public health responses to COVID-19 outbreaks, and the flu season's onset, influence recovery efforts across the state.** Some institutions are choosing to maintain distance learning exclusively until conditions improve. However, for those institutions operating on hybrid schedules, student compliance with social distancing guidelines is a key determinate of recovery timelines.

Interviewees highlighted barriers students face within California's postsecondary education system

|		
EQUITY	**There is broad support across stakeholder groups for a commitment to equity in the postsecondary education system—the system currently works for some, not all**	"What has kept our colleges and universities from doing this work many years ago? It comes down to structural racism. The white supremacy permeates every policy. The task force needs to look at why this system in 2020 is talking about equity and what has prevented us from doing it before." **Nonprofit Leader**	"Because it's such a large system, I feel like we didn't address highest needs first and then systemwide. We didn't adopt a human-centered design, around the extreme users, because we didn't have time to discuss equity-centered approaches to designing the system, and that's really disappointing." **Local Civic Leader**
BASIC NEEDS	**COVID-19 diminished students' access to or stability of their most basic needs: food, housing, employment, transportation, mental health services, and the basic tools for online learning**	"The perception of the division and exclusion of certain groups and individuals from being fully enfranchised has led to stronger voices around what we call system basic needs. Those who didn't have food banks 6–7 years ago now have them." **Higher Education Leader**	"Students are not going to be able to participate and be productive learners until those basic needs are met. Schools must help with that. There must be recognition that some of the students that we're committed to serving—first generation students, students from immigrant families, and students from African American families—have several other issues facing them." **Higher Education Leader**
FUNDING AND BUDGET CUTS	**System partners want more flexibility in funding models, suggesting a deeper examination of their capacity for flexibility**	"Being a resource-constrained institution, we didn't have the reserves or the philanthropic base to pull on to support our work. We need a way to put more grant dollars in the hands of students." **Higher Education Leader**	"The way we fund education sucks. Even if you have the leadership, how are you going to do all of these things? At the end of the day, we just didn't have the resources we needed because of decades of not fully funding the needs of our communities." **Nonprofit Leader**

3 | Statewide COVID-19 Impact

COVID-19 has disproportionately affected the Latinx population in California, with Latinx residents comprising 39% of the population but 59% of the COVID-19 cases and 47% of the deaths

Percentage of COVID-19 Cases and Death as of 8/10/20, by Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Cases	Death	CA Population
Latino	59%	47%	39%
White	17%	30%	37%
Asian	5%	12%	15%
African American	4%	8%	6%
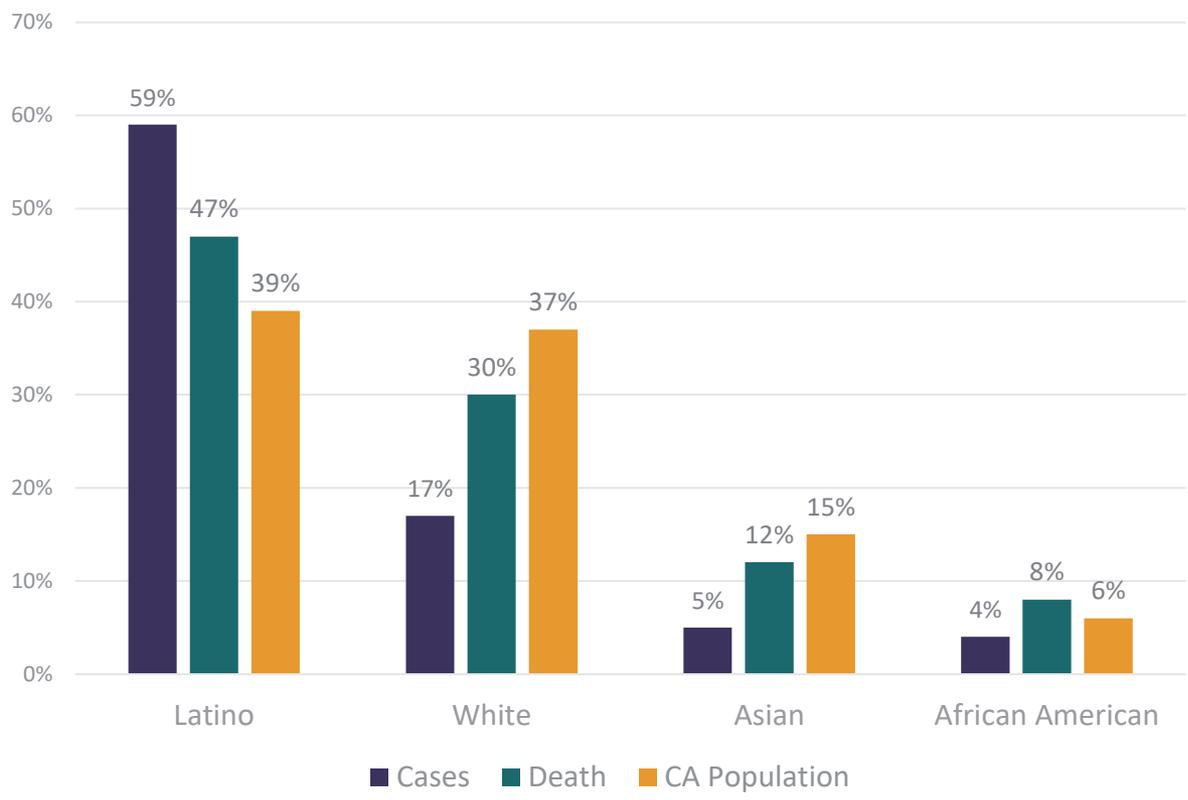
In **Imperial County,** for example, an estimated 95% of deaths are Latinx residents.

These rates may be partially explained by **Latinx residents being over-represented in low-wage, in-person work deemed "essential"** during the pandemic, like grocery store and warehouse workers.

Additionally, Latinx residents may be suffering from a **weaker social safety net** than other residents:
- Latinx residents comprise over half of **uninsured** California residents.
- Many undocumented immigrants are **not eligible for unemployment benefits**.
- The **CARES act** for coronavirus relief **excludes many undocumented immigrants** and members of their households.

Note: In our research and equity frameworks we generally prefer the terms **"Latinx" and "Black,"** but some data sources still use the terms "Hispanic," "Latino," and "African American." We keep the original term from the original data source in order to maintain fidelity to the data, for example, in the graph above.

CALIFORNIA ALL

The pandemic is ushering in a recession which could significantly impact schooling and employment in California for years to come

Swelling Unemployment and Budget Shortfall

From March to the end of July, California experienced a dramatic increase in unemployment, paying **50 billion in unemployment benefits** and processing **8.7 million claims.** The state faces a **$54.3 billion dollar shortfall** and plunging revenues.

71% of California college students have reported losing some or all of their income due to COVID-19.

State Funding Cuts for Higher Education

K12	Governor Newsom's state budget **preserves spending for K12 schools** for the next year with some additional CARES act funding for districts to address learning loss. This budget includes **$12.9 billion in deferrals**: school districts can spend more than they'll be funded for and will receive payment in FY 2021-22. About half of these deferrals would be mitigated by potential federal coronavirus funding.
Higher Ed	**State funding for UC is cut by $471.6 million** and **CSU faces a $498.1 million cut,** while **funding is preserved for community colleges.** If federal coronavirus funding materializes, these UC and CSU cuts could be avoided.
	Higher education leaders in the UC and CSU systems suggest that existing inequities in funding across UC and CSU are exacerbated by the pandemic. Colleges also face financial losses outside of state funding including student housing, parking and bookstore revenue **and new expenses** to support virtual learning and on-campus safety for students and employees. For example, UC Riverside is predicting a $45-50 million loss to their bottom line for this school year (in addition to state funding cuts), and CSU San Bernardino is predicting a $25 million loss.

Students' basic needs were a major challenge before COVID-19 and their concern about these needs has significantly grown

LINE 1
BEFORE COVID-19

■ A LOT   ■ A LITTLE   ■ NOT AT ALL

LINE 2
AFTER COVID-19

■ A LOT   ■ A LITTLE   ■ NOT AT ALL

Concern About:

- PAYING FOR HOUSING AND FOOD — before COVID-19 / after COVID-19
- PAYING FOR TRANSPORTATION — before COVID-19 / after COVID-19
- PAYING FOR TECH/INTERNET — before COVID-19 / after COVID-19
- PAYING FOR HEALTHCARE — before COVID-19 / after COVID-19
- CARING FOR FAMILY MEMBERS — before COVID-19 / after COVID-19
- PERSONAL HEALTH/WELL-BEING — before COVID-19 / after COVID-19

Percentage of college students (0, 20%, 40%, 60%, 80%, 100%)

The number of students reporting "a lot" of concern about paying for housing and food, paying for tech/internet, caring for family members, and personal health/well-being has **more than tripled** since the pandemic.

Many students who before were not at all concerned about their basic needs are now finding themselves concerned.

Image: California Student Aid Commission (2020)

COVID-19 has challenged higher education institutions and students in California to think differently about the college experience (1 of 2)

Compared to the rest of the U.S., California stands out with 82% of colleges planning an online or hybrid approach as opposed to in-person this fall.

California Colleges' Approach to Fall 2020 Learning

Category	California	Rest of U.S.
Considering a range of scenarios	1	3
Planning for In-Person	16	55
Planning for Online	62	6
Proposing a Hybrid Model	20	36
Waiting to Decide	1	1

■ California ■ Rest of U.S.
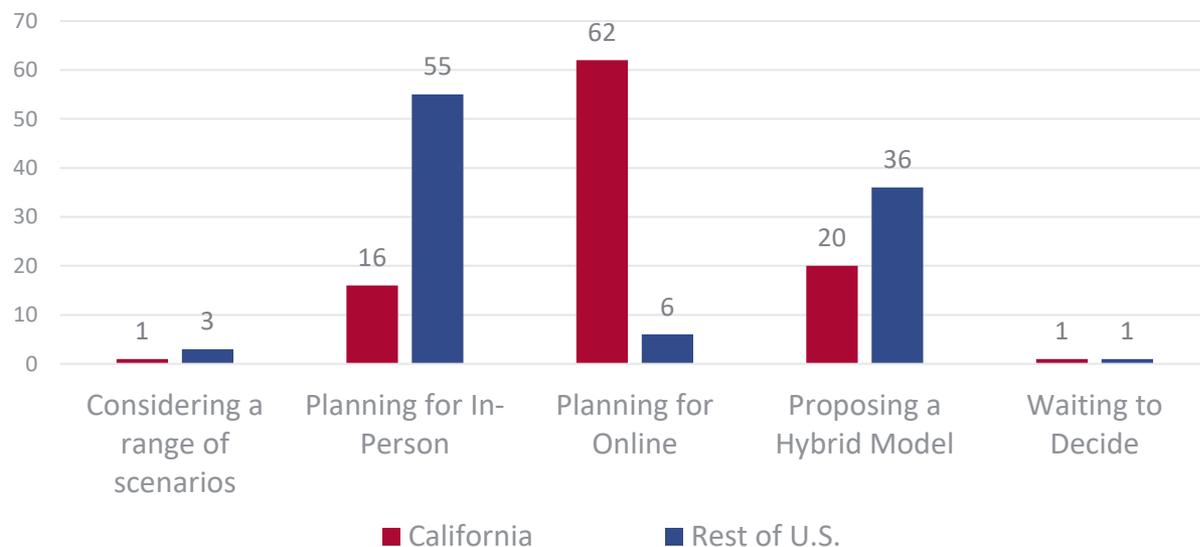
With online learning comes new challenges and opportunities, for example…

- Ensuring students have internet **connectivity**
- **Supporting faculty and staff** on and off campus
- **Synchronous** and **asynchronous** classes
- Providing **select on-campus housing** for a smaller number of high-need students
- Determining a small percentage of courses that necessitate some **in-person learning**
- Providing **mental health services** and other social services to students who are not on campus

COVID-19 has challenged higher education institutions and students in California to think differently about the college experience (2 of 2)

Most college-bound California high school graduates are concerned about online classes, their finances, and staying close to home. While most still plan to go to college, some students are changing which type of institution they plan to enroll in.

8 in 10 college-bound high school graduates are concerned about taking online classes.

7 in 10 are concerned about their personal and family financial situations.

1/3 of high school graduates express concern about attending a college far from home. This is evidenced in real shifts in enrollment below, with many students changing their plans from UC or CSU (~6% cumulative decrease) to CCC (~6% increase).

COVID-19 Changes in College-Bound High School Graduates' Enrollment Plans

Category	After-COVID	Pre-Covid
Vocational/Technical	0.9	1
Don't plan to go to college	0.7	0.2
Don't know yet	8	4.6
Outside CA	6.9	10
Private in CA	5.4	6.9
UC	20.5	23
CSU	26.1	29.2
CCC	31.6	25.2
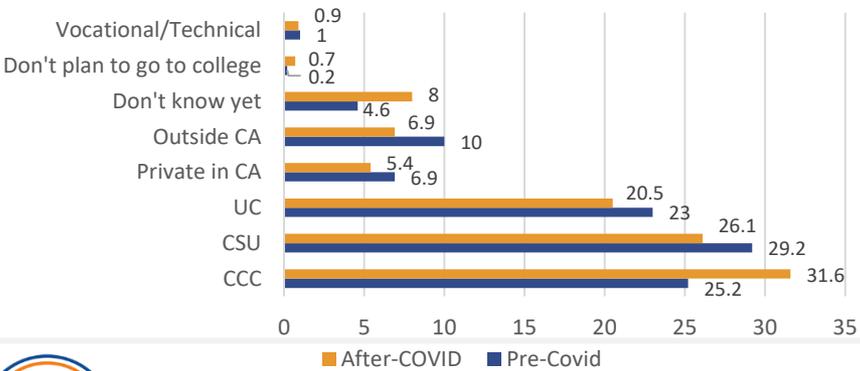
The vast majority of current California college students report concern about online classes and finances, but still plan to continue attending college this fall. *Where* they attend may change.

CA college students report **drastically higher levels of stress and concern since COVID-19**, including concern for caring for family members, taking full class loads, and personal health/well-being, as well as the costs of tuition and fees, housing, food, transportation, tech/Internet and healthcare.

9 in 10 CA college students report concern about the shift to **online classes**.

8 in 10 CA college students have **changed some aspect of their college plans or are still uncertain**. Since COVID-19 there has been a five-fold increase in the rate of uncertainty about *where* students will continue their studies in the fall.

Despite concerns and uncertainty, **only 2.4% of current college students report that they will *not* attend college** in the fall.

4 | Regional Data

To identify the opportunities for California's postsecondary system to recover with equity, it is important to look not just at the state but also to understand diverse regional conditions and experiences

Region	Counties
Bay Area	Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, Sonoma
San Joaquin Valley	Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Tulare
Los Angeles	Los Angeles
Inland Empire	Riverside, San Bernardino
Imperial Valley	Imperial

The Bay Area has the highest proportion White and Asian populations, the highest educational attainment and lowest unemployment of the 5 regions

BAY AREA

Distribution of Bay Area Population By Race/Ethnicity

Legend:
- Two or more races — 4%
- Asian/Pacific Islander — 25%
- American Indian and Alaska Native
- African American — 6%
- White — 40%
- Hispanic or Latino (of any race) — 24%

Note: In our research and equity frameworks we generally prefer the terms **"Latinx" and "Black,"** but some data sources still use the terms "Hispanic," "Latino," and "African American." We keep the original term from the original data source in order to maintain fidelity to the data, for example, in the graph above.

Percentage of Bay Area High School Students Meeting A-G Eligibility Requirements
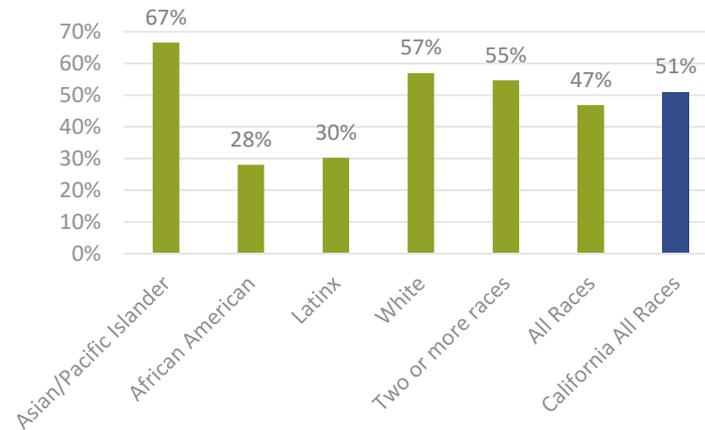
- Asian/Pacific Islander — 67%
- African American — 28%
- Latinx — 30%
- White — 57%
- Two or more races — 55%
- All Races — 47%
- California All Races — 51%

Bay Area Population Aged 25 and Older by Highest Level of Education Attained

	Bay Area	California
Less than HS Diploma	10%	16%
HS Diploma or Equivalent	16%	21%
Some College, No Degree	17%	21%
Associate's Degree	7%	8%
Bachelor's Degree	28%	21%
Graduate Degree	21%	13%
High School Diploma or Higher	90%	84%
Associate's Degree or Higher	56%	42%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	49%	34%
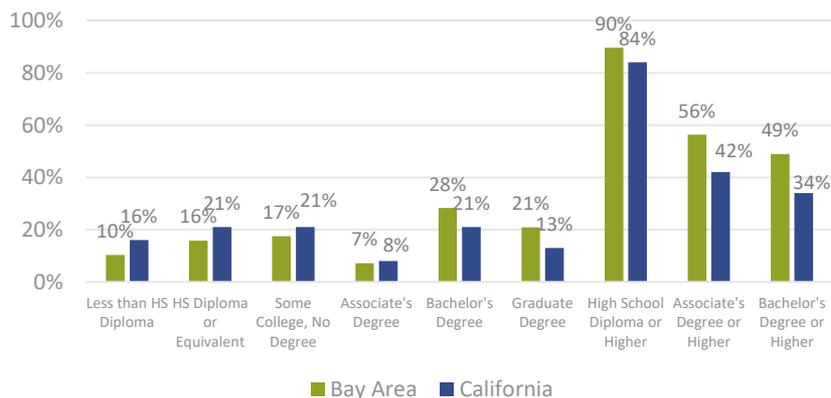
12% unemployment

California: 15% unemployment

Black, Latinx and older students attend community colleges at higher rates than other students in the Bay Area

Distribution of Undergraduates at Bay Area Institutions by Race/Ethnicity and Type of Institution

	Private For-profit	Private Non-profit	Community Colleges	CSU	UC
Asian Pacific Islander	3%	4%	68%	14%	10%
American Indian or Alaska Native	13%	10%	66%	9%	3%
African American	7%	5%	74%	11%	3%
Latinx	4%	4%	72%	14%	6%
White	4%	7%	70%	10%	9%
Two or more races	4%	7%	67%	13%	9%
Race/ethnicity unknown	22%	6%	51%	15%	6%
Nonresident alien	8%	13%	41%	20%	19%
Total	5%	6%	68%	13%	8%

Distribution of Undergraduates at Bay Area Institutions by Age

	Age 24 and Younger	Age 25 and Older
Private For-profit	50%	50%
Private Non-profit	92%	8%
Community Colleges	60%	40%
CSU	81%	19%
UC	94%	6%
All Bay Area Institutions	70%	30%
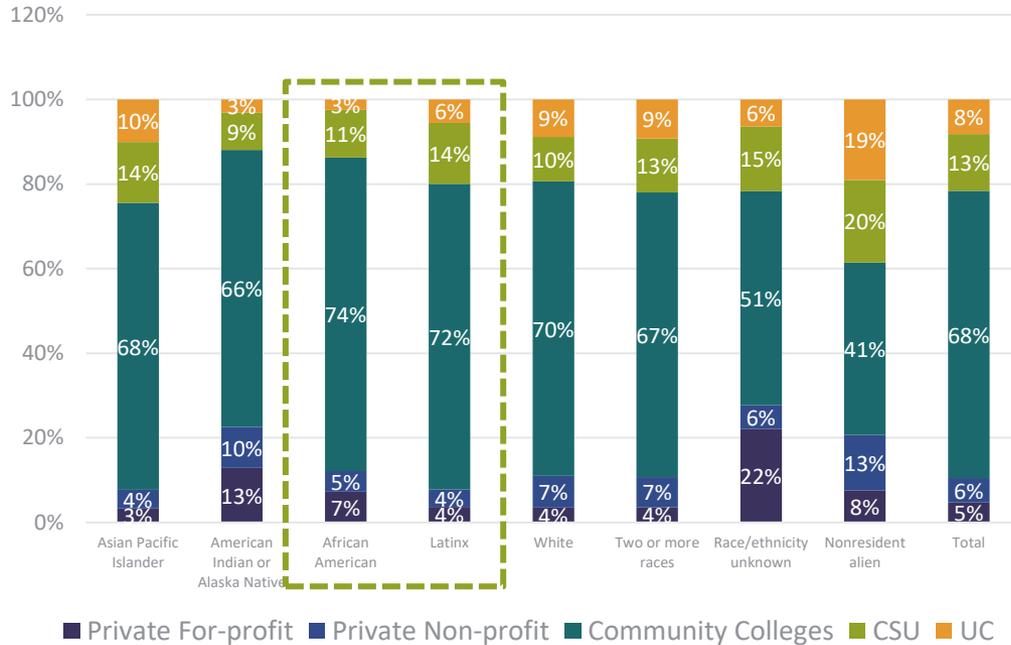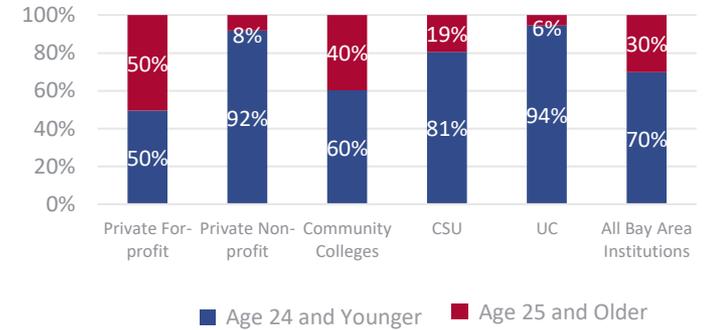
Distribution of Bay Area undergraduates by Institution Type and Age

	Private For-profit	Private Non-profit	Community Colleges	CSU	UC
Age 24 and Younger	2%	7%	52%	22%	17%
Age 25 and Older	4%	1%	80%	12%	2%
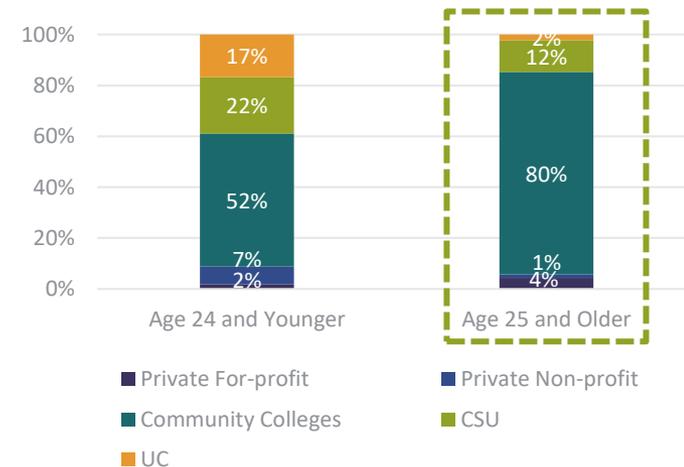
10 Fastest Growing Occupations in the Bay Area

Occupation	Education Required	% Change
Solar Photovoltaic Installers	High school diploma or equivalent	119%
Taxi Drivers and Chauffeurs	No formal educational credential	55%
Software Developers, Applications	Bachelor's degree	43%
Nurse Practitioners	Master's degree	37%
Couriers and Messengers	High school diploma or equivalent	36%
Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	Associate's degree	35%
Home Health Aides	High school diploma or equivalent	33%
Information Security Analysts	Bachelor's degree	33%
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	Bachelor's degree	33%
Personal Care Aides	High school diploma or equivalent	33%

Note: Regional information is based on Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs). As a result, it may undercount occupations from rural sections of the regions that are not part of an MSA. Occupations were excluded if the base year employment did not exceed 1,500.

Conversations in the Bay Area revealed support for streamlined approaches to addressing working adult students' needs

1. Students focus on basic needs during the pandemic—less attention to distance learning

2. Housing affordability and study environments affect student success

3. Distance learning is not meeting students' needs. Nontraditional students need flexibility to manage multiple priorities, including learning.

4. Lack of internet connection to low income housing—even though broadband is more widely available in the region—is a barrier to online learning

5. Higher education leaders see an increase in students' demand for mental health during the pandemic

6. Most stakeholders want real-time student data reporting systems—students vanish in a decentralized model

7. System bureaucracies frustrate stakeholders, constraining institutional supports and student access to higher education

8. Colleges and universities need speed and agility to keep pace with workforce demands

9. Workforce stakeholders think the region's reliance on technology-driven industries will disproportionately impact Black and Latinx workers

COVID-19 is exacerbating existing student inequities—food insecurity, access to affordable housing, technology and mental health services

BAY AREA

Lack of basic needs

COVID has caused students to focus on securing their most basic needs; unemployment and financial constraints make them choose between work and school

> "The final thing is to recognize **you can't learn if you can't eat.** Right now we're seeing this phenomenon where **students are dropping out of their education because they need to work to support their families.** Providing affordable housing and food that a student needs to live is also a way to increase retention."
>
> **Local Civic Leader**

> "Students aren't going to be able to participate and be productive learners until those basic needs are met**-schools have to help with that. My concern is **our students are continuing to fall through the cracks** and COVID is creating even bigger cracks now."
>
> **Nonprofit Leader**

> "**More students are reaching out asking for assistance for local benefits—CalFresh, unemployment,** etc. The student population I'm most concerned about is **Latinx, African American, Southeast Asian** students because they are more impacted."
>
> **Nonprofit Leader**

Available affordable housing and study environments

Students face living conditions that are not conducive to online learning – housing insecurity marked by lack of affordable units, little or no quiet space to study and limited childcare

> "We heard from students: **'Unless you can take care of my children, I can't do any more as a student.'** A lot of our students who are first generation, low-income parents are needing to prioritize their kids."
>
> **Nonprofit Leader**

> "The study environment is different. **Many students don't have the ability to be in a room and study on their own.** I think the learning environments are going to be challenges that impact lower income people of course."
>
> **Higher Education Leader**

> "**It would be good if housing prices could moderate.** Lowest income people had the greatest gains in the last few years on a percentage basis, not real dollar. **Cost of living, on the other hand, those percentages were just about wiped out.**"
>
> **Economic Development Partner**

Students are unsatisfied with the quality of distance education and need additional support to succeed—internet access inequities exacerbate online learning challenges

BAY AREA

Shifting value proposition

Students feel online learning expectations are misaligned to their current realties—nontraditional students need more empathy and support to succeed

> "Classes are only offered at certain times and your children are in school 8-3:30. I have a high schooler plus younger children who need to have an adult sitting next to them doing schooling online. We thought we'd have asynchronous learning and recorded lectures. What about parents and students who are in school during the day?"
>
> **Student**

> "Teachers say they understand and that we're going through a lot, but it's like, no you don't, because every time I ask for an extension you treat me like I'm asking for an arm. There is just no empathy."
>
> **Student**

> "The professors are adding extra assignments, so we asked how is this being communicated? What about student parents dealing with responsibilities like taking care of parents, siblings, and children? They had no response to that."
>
> **Student**

Digital divide

A lack of access to the internet, technology, and tools that support distance learning continue to have a negative impact on student success

> "The state can provide learning hubs where students can access internet in safe place. Institutions need more encouragement or standardization for our most vulnerable students."
>
> **Local Civic Leader**

> "How do we use this moment where we have never had bigger motivation to get people connected and learn the skills of connectivity? It's one thing to drop a computer at their doorstep, but we also have to teach them how to use it."
>
> **Local Civic Leader**

> "COVID made more visible the lack of equity around access and digital technology. Online space is an incredible way to increase opportunity for students and may grow equity gaps if we don't invest in the infrastructure to get people access."
>
> **Economic Development Partner**

Institutions face higher demand for students' access to mental health services. Data systems remain challenging for tracking students through the education pipeline.

BAY AREA

Increased need for mental health

Higher education leaders report students requiring more mental health support and services than ever before

> "Coming out of this situation, there will be a lot of challenges students face. We should be prepared to address that issue on campus and in the community. **There will be an appropriate demand for mental health services that will be beyond the level we've seen before.**"
>
> **Economic Development Partner**

> **"We asked students what they needed, and the number one item was mental health.** We hired mental health student ambassadors to spread the word that help was available. Several students contacted us that they were suicidal, and **they didn't have a safe, confidential space to talk about it from their home."**
>
> **Economic Development Partner**

> "Mental health needs, emotional transition needs—people are showing up and doing their best at work, but I see people taxed in a way they haven't been before."
>
> **Nonprofit Leader**

Need for statewide data reporting system

System stakeholders want better student data systems—lagging transfer data, stringent privacy laws, lack of comprehensive data sharing agreements between K12 and postsecondary institutions are impeding intersegmental coherence

> "I've worked in all different regions. **It was almost agreed upon that you put in on a flash drive and hand it to someone versus the data being available electronically."**
>
> **Nonprofit Leader**

> **"It takes a while for the transfer data to catch up.** If we're not doing an articulation, then we must wait until at least a year, if not two years before we can get data. This year we were reporting for a cohort that completed three to four years ago. **The lag time is a little rough."**
>
> **Nonprofit Leader**

> **"There's a real need for the postsecondary systems to get better about sharing data.** Some systems are fragmented, but the state needs to figure out how to get the data to play together. If any state can figure that out, it should be California, but we're behind other states."
>
> **Higher Education Leader**

System stakeholders identify obstacles impeding intersegmental coherence and creating equity barriers (1 of 2)

BAY AREA

Bureaucratic challenges

Lengthy, complex processes discourage students from applying for financial aid. Higher education leaders feel constrained by emergency funding regulations.

> **"California could simplify the process for receiving the Cal Grant.** The state doesn't have a separate form, but many California students will get pinged to add information through the verification process."
>
> **Local Civic Leader**

> "I know the state is struggling for money, but **can you find efficiencies in reducing the bureaucratic burden of administering these programs and find efficiencies through distance learning opportunities?** I know that in other parts of the state—not in urban centers—that would be game changing."
>
> **K12 Leader**

> "I would **look at all of the tasks students have to do to apply for, get accepted into, and secure the funding to pay tuition and living expenses.** How we can reduce the number of steps and hours that this student took to just get into school?"
>
> **Local Civic Leader**

Higher education agility

Economic development partners express worries about the lengthy process for implementing changes within the postsecondary education system and bottlenecks that delay equity for vulnerable students

> "A pain point for a long time—**community colleges can't adapt fast enough.** It's time for postsecondary to get clear on what it's good at and what it's not good at. Community colleges chase the elusive credential program that will meet employer needs, but **by the time it gets set up it's too late."**
>
> **Economic Development Partner**

> "Programming in public community colleges isn't connected to the employment community. **We have to stand up degree programs or certificate programs faster in a way that shifts needs.** Business moves fast, but government doesn't move fast."
>
> **Economic Development Partner**

BAY AREA

Regional industry recovery and timeline

Some stakeholders believe the loss of manufacturing jobs, the pandemic's impact on minority-owned small businesses, and the region's dependence on technology-based work will have a significant impact on long-term recovery efforts—disproportionately impacting Black and Latinx workers

> "We're wondering about the **Bay Area's economic reliance on the technology sector** and how interwoven our economy is with globalization. We see all these workers working remotely for up to a year. How many people will come back?"

Economic Development Partner

> "We're also looking at the strength of small businesses and how critical they are. how crushed they've been through COVID, **particularly those led by people of color.** Those businesses are **more likely to hire other people of color than corporate companies.**"

Economic Development Partner

The San Joaquin Valley is majority Latinx, has nearly half the BA attainment rate of the Bay Area and nearly 3x times the unemployment rate (the highest unemployment of the 5 regions)

Distribution of San Joaquin Valley Population by Race/Ethnicity
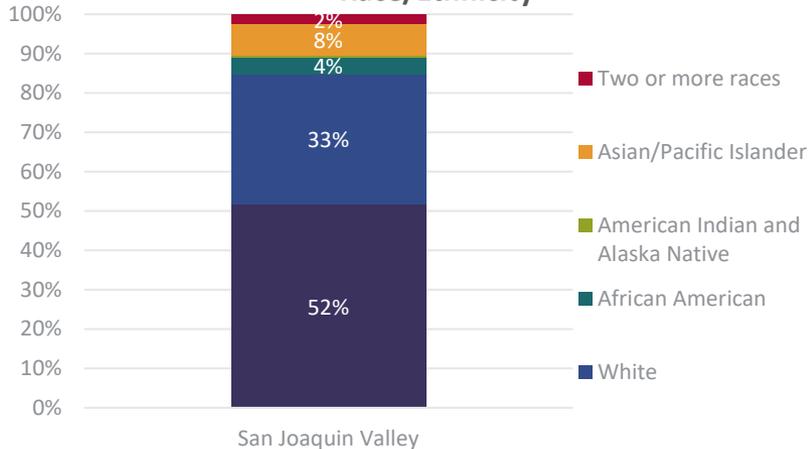
- Two or more races: 2%
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 8%
- American Indian and Alaska Native: 4%
- African American
- White: 33%
- 52%

San Joaquin Valley

Note: In our research and equity frameworks we generally prefer the terms **"Latinx" and "Black,"** but some data sources still use the terms "Hispanic," "Latino," and "African American." We keep the original term from the original data source in order to maintain fidelity to the data, for example, in the graph above.

Percentage of San Joaquin Valley High School Students Meeting A-G Eligibility Requirements
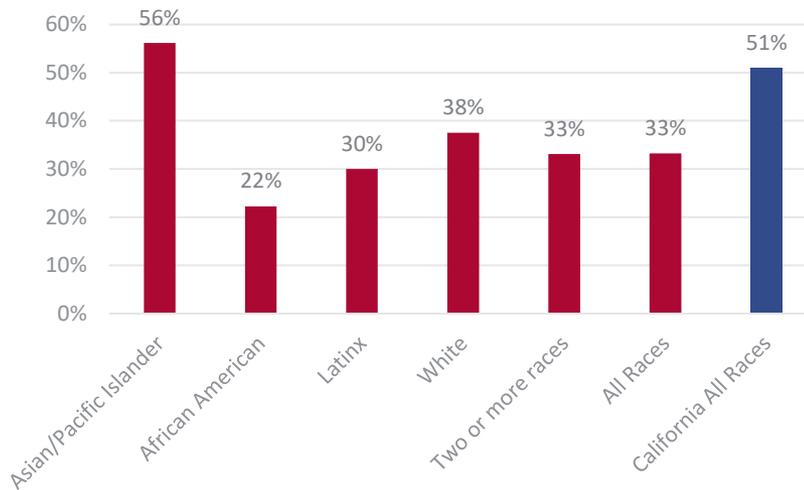
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 56%
- African American: 22%
- Latinx: 30%
- White: 38%
- Two or more races: 33%
- All Races: 33%
- California All Races: 51%

San Joaquin Valley Population Aged 25 and Older by Highest Level of Education Attained

	San Joaquin Valley	California
Less than HS Diploma	24%	16%
HS Diploma or Equivalent	27%	21%
Some College, No Degree	23%	21%
Associate's Degree	9%	8%
Bachelor's Degree	12%	21%
Graduate Degree	6%	13%
High School Diploma or Higher	76%	84%
Associate's Degree or Higher	27%	42%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	18%	34%
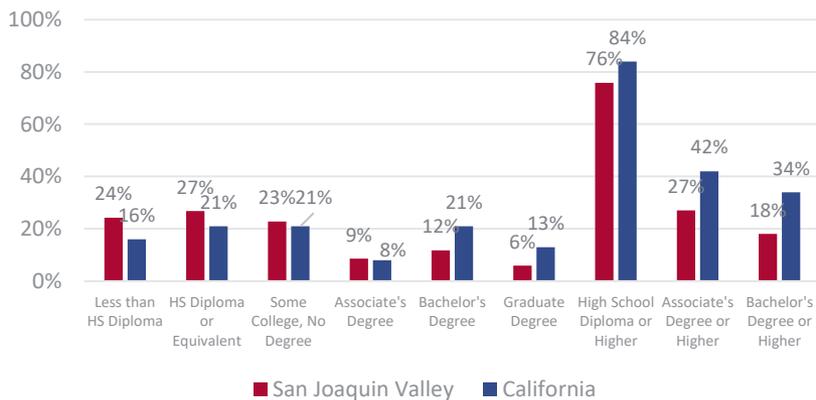
29% unemployment

California: 15% unemployment

Students in the San Joaquin Valley attend community college at a much higher rate than other regions

Distribution of Undergraduates at San Joaquin Valley Institutions by Race/Ethnicity and Type of Institution
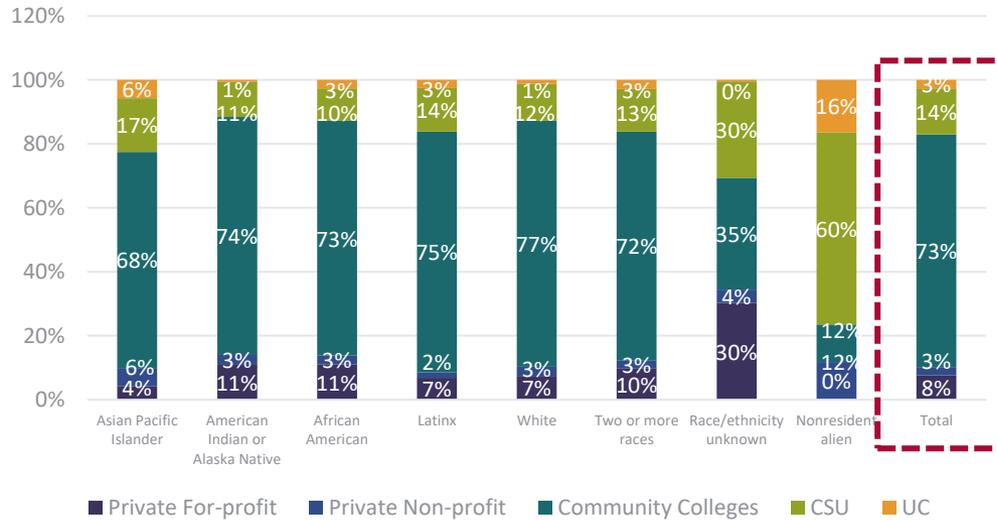
Legend: Private For-profit ■ Private Non-profit ■ Community Colleges ■ CSU ■ UC

Distribution of Undergraduates at San Joaquin Valley Institutions by Age

Legend: ■ Age 24 and Younger ■ Age 25 and Older
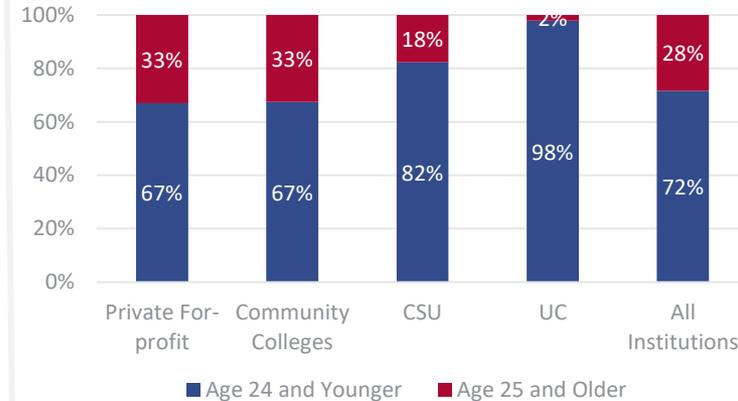
Note: There were no private non-profit respondents in the San Joaquin Valley.

10 Fastest Growing Occupations in the San Joaquin Valley

Occupation	Education Required	% Change
Personal Care Aides	High school diploma or equivalent	43%
Medical Assistants	Postsecondary non-degree award	33%
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	Bachelor's degree	27%
Cement Masons and Concrete Finishers	No formal educational credential	26%
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	No formal educational credential	25%
Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	Postsecondary non-degree award	25%
Medical and Health Services Managers	Bachelor's degree	24%
First-Line Supervisors of Helpers, Laborers, and Material Movers, Hand	High school diploma or equivalent	24%
Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	High school diploma or equivalent	24%
Painters, Construction and Maintenance	No formal educational credential	24%

Distribution of Undergraduates at San Joaquin Valley Institutions by Age and Type of Institution

Legend: ■ Private For-profit ■ Private Non-profit ■ Community Colleges ■ CSU ■ UC
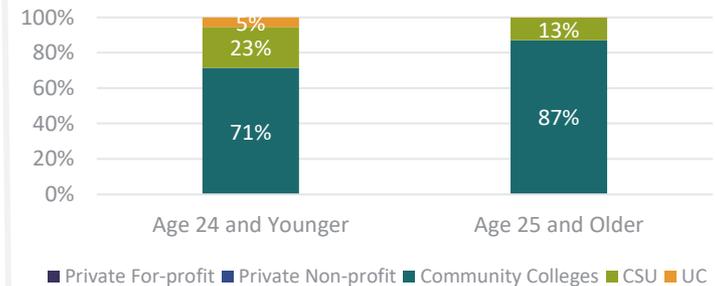
Source(s): U.S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Full-Year Enrollment Survey 2018; U.S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Fall Enrollment Survey; CA Employment Development Department

Note: Regional information is based on Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs). As a result, it may undercount occupations from rural sections of the regions that are not part of an MSA. Occupations were excluded if the base year employment did not exceed 1,500.

52

Conversations in the San Joaquin Valley underscore the power of collaboration and opportunities to improve the student experience

1. Students want more engagement in their distance learning experience

2. Food insecurity, poverty and unemployment distract students from education

3. The digital divide is not isolated to access in rural regions— infrastructure availability and capacity play a key role in connectivity

4. Students are falling through system cracks, increasing the need for centralized data reporting

5. Shrinking budgets and strict spending regulations limit institutional efforts aimed at promoting equity

6. Staffing issues and complicated enrollment processes stifle dual enrollment—adding more obstacles to early college access

7. Economic development leaders fear regional industries may not fully recover, disproportionately impacting Black and Latinx students

8. A mechanical revolution of the farming industry looms, stakeholders fear workforce impacts

The pandemic's impact demands that San Joaquin Valley students focus on meeting basic needs, leaving little time and attention for distance learning

SAN JOAQUIN

Meeting basic needs

Students are focused on securing basic needs during the pandemic. Poverty, increased unemployment, food insecurity and housing insecurity distract their attention from online learning.

> "We have a large group of parents working in the fields and aren't able to support their kids at home to get onto the computer. Many feel that there isn't choice not to work if you are sick, deep turmoil in our families of poverty, and their focus is not on distance learning, but on survival."
>
> **K12 Leader**

> "You've seen the data on homelessness and students, that's an issue. I have a lot of kids that sleep in cars and couch surf. There is simply an affordable housing inventory issue throughout the state, and particularly in the Valley."
>
> **K12 Leader**

> "Fresno is the most impoverished major urban in CA. Families of 4 make $25k or less. That poverty is universal across the county."
>
> **Higher Education Leader**

Distance learning value proposition

The transition to online learning is increasing time to degree completion, adding costs for home internet service, and decreasing flexibility. Students are concerned about the value and quality of the learning experience—and feel they are teaching themselves.

> "For me, it has extended my education. COVID has extended my education plans, because it's a lot more challenging for me to read and comprehend than it is for me to sit in a classroom. I planned on next semester being done and transferring but it looks like I'm going to be at least an entire extra year because I've had to reduce my class load. I dropped from 4 classes to 1 class."
>
> **Student**

> "My family had to upgrade our wi-fi plan to be faster because so many people were on it. So, we had to buy a new plan."
>
> **Student**

> "Professors need to be more flexible. Students have raised concerns they are having to help their school-aged children with school, so it's hard for them to do both. There are times when the student can't be in class or be on camera because their child's school is in session."
>
> **Student**

SAN JOAQUIN

Digital divide	**Broadband is simply nonexistent in some areas, leaving students and stakeholders with limited or no access to online learning, even when the device challenge is solved**	" **"We've known for ten years that the connectivity issue is a real barrier to learning.** Suddenly—with pandemic—our educators are saying, we must do something. The message isn't new. We turned our heads, and it wasn't a priority."** **P16 Partner**	" "We did our very best in trying to get devices, but **connectivity is a problem.** There are places in the state of California where there is no high-speed Internet. Doesn't matter if you give them a hotspot and a laptop – **there's nothing to connect to**." **Higher Education Leader**	" **"We talk about the digital divide in different ways.** Some of this has to do with companies who are willing to put wi-fi in communities. Verizon and **state leaders need to clear the pathway to provide high speed, reliable Internet access throughout the state."** **P16 Partner**
Data system challenges	**Most system stakeholders feel that existing data systems are impractical and do not support efficient student tracking**	" "Push so that **data is readily available and accessible in a statewide data system.** California can learn from states that have already been working on this for a long time. **An inability to provide data about students gets in the way of them progressing in a major way."** **P16 Partner**	" **"We need a collaborative database to track our students from K-20, and advise adult learners,** so they don't get redirected at different entry points. We want to keep them going in a forward motion. The state has been working on this, but we need to have them come together." **P16 Partner**	" "We are doing a K-16 collaboration where we have a **data sharing agreement** with our K12 and postsecondary partners to get information into our CBOs. It's clunky, but we're **working on a universal student number. That's a pilot and we want to see about taking to the next level."** **Higher Education Leader**

SAN JOAQUIN

Budget cuts and inflexible funding models	Cuts to operational budgets and stringent regulations on use of state and federal funds currently stifle efforts to add equity into higher education. Leaders and administrators express deep frustration at the disconnect.	"**Collective bargaining agreements are done separately from state department of finance, and the funding source and the agreements are not aligned. That's a disconnect.** There should be some role by the department of finance in that whole process." **Higher Education Leader**	"In the CSU, the **money is distributed by FTE**. If you have more than 40,000 FTE students, you're given it at pro rata share, it's not fair. Two of the 23 colleges are not Hispanic Serving Institutions and they are the largest and get the most money. So, **if you have more underserved students, it can cost more to serve those students.**" **Higher Education Leader**	"Look at **funding for dual enrollment, so high schools and colleges are both getting credit** for the student attending for apportionment." **P16 Partner**
Dual enrollment	There is serious tension between the demand for dual enrollment courses, the limited number of teachers who meet the Master's degree criteria to teach the courses, and an overly complex enrollment system. The result: fewer students enroll or participate.	"There has to be an easier process to dual enrollment and to enroll in class. **It is extraordinarily difficult** to get the basic answers. Counselors are booked for weeks and weeks. The portal system alone is complicated. **It's remarkable how much willpower it takes to enroll** even if you're not an English-learner." **Nonprofit Leader**	"Make it easier for high school teachers to teach introductory class at junior college without a Master's degree. **That requirement is a barrier.** If you have a union contract that says you can't have teachers teach for dual credit and require that you change that, or your funding gets cut." **K12 Leader**	"**Dual enrollment is a big priority for P16.** There is a statewide requirement that teachers must have a Master's degree to teach a dual enrollment course—**a barrier to expanding these opportunities**." **K12 Leader**

San Joaquin Valley system stakeholders highlight regional barriers, needs, and opportunities central to overall recovery efforts (3 of 3)

SAN JOAQUIN

|			
Regional industry, economic impact	**The pandemic is impacting industries supporting the regional economy—agriculture and hospitality—disproportionately affecting Black and Latinx students**	"We expected that agriculture was going to be a resilient part of the economy because crops keep growing and need to get picked. **We have seen a reduction in the size of the labor pool.** There has been some drop in migration of labor. Some people are going home to care for family back in Mexico—**it takes just small shifts in behavior to have a large impact on our workforce."** **Economic Development Partner**	"We have business surge employment opportunities—parts of the economy that need more workers **have trouble finding those workers** because of spatial limitations, and the structure **of increased federal unemployment at $600 per week made it difficult for businesses to figure out how to access workers."** **Economic Development Partner**
Agricultural automation changing workforce needs	**Economic development stakeholders' share concerns about an inevitable transition to mechanized farming in the region, eliminating low-wage farming jobs across the region, and impacting regional economic recovery**	"There has been talk for years that we'll have **large scale automation and reduction in workforce size in agriculture,** but it hasn't happened yet. There will be more large-scale automation and potential loss of jobs." **Economic Development Partner**	"There is **a role for community colleges to play** in that to differentiate labor and train the workforce. The same revolution happened in manufacturing. The **opportunity for professionalization of the farmworker labor force** is really an **opportunity for some folks to move their way up the economic ladder** by taking skillsets they have and refining them." **Economic Development Partner**

LOS ANGELES

Distribution of Los Angeles Population by Race/Ethnicity
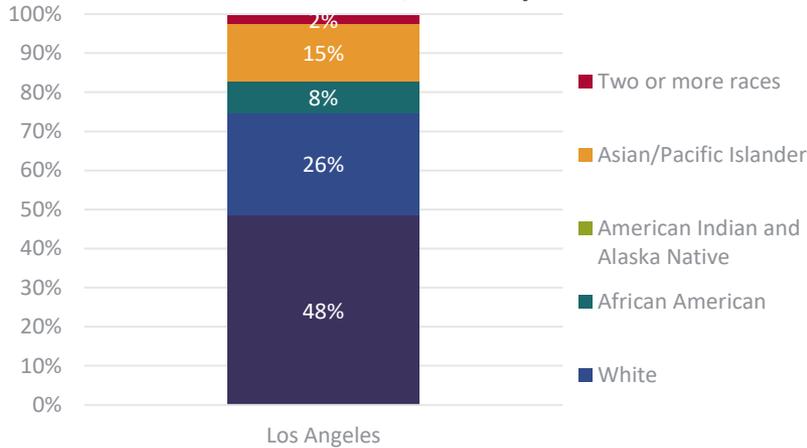
- Two or more races
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- American Indian and Alaska Native
- African American
- White

Los Angeles

Note: In our research and equity frameworks we generally prefer the terms **"Latinx" and "Black,"** but some data sources still use the terms "Hispanic," "Latino," and "African American." We keep the original term from the original data source in order to maintain fidelity to the data, for example, in the graph above.

Percentage of Los Angeles High School Students Meeting A-G Eligibility Requirements
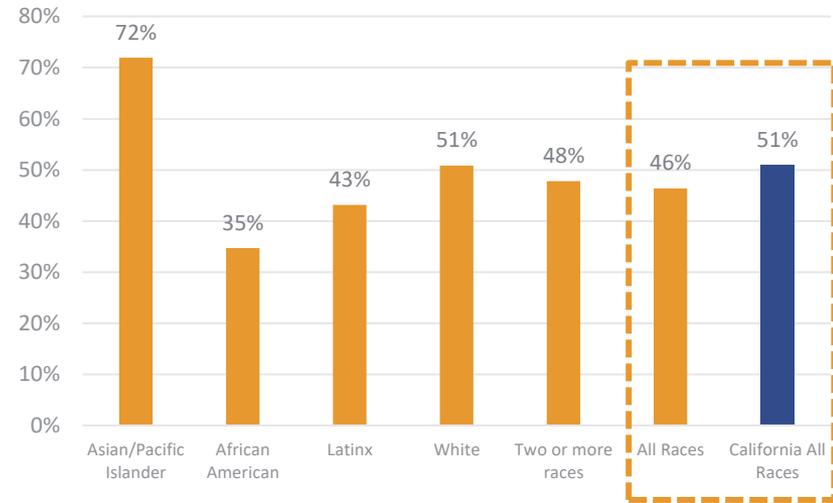
Asian/Pacific Islander 72%, African American 35%, Latinx 43%, White 51%, Two or more races 48%, All Races 46%, California All Races 51%

Los Angeles Population Aged 25 and Older by Highest Level of Education Attained

Less than HS Diploma: 21% / 16%; HS Diploma or Equivalent: 21% / 21%; Some College, No Degree: 19% / 21%; Associate's Degree: 7% / 8%; Bachelor's Degree: 21% / 21%; Graduate Degree: 11% / 13%; High School Diploma or Higher: 79% / 84%; Associate's Degree or Higher: 39% / 42%; Bachelor's Degree or Higher: 32% / 34%

■ Los Angeles ■ California
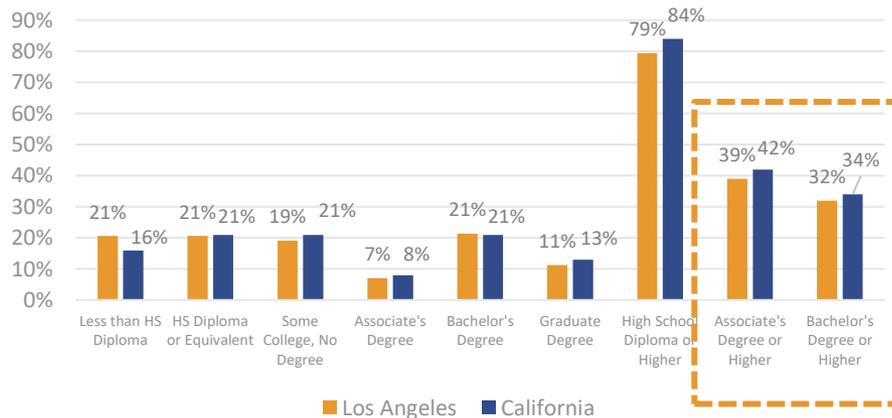
19% unemployment

California: 15% unemployment

Health occupations make up the majority of the 10 fastest growing occupations in Los Angeles, and the vast majority of these jobs require postsecondary education

Distribution of Undergraduates at Los Angeles Institutions by Race/Ethnicity and Type of Institution
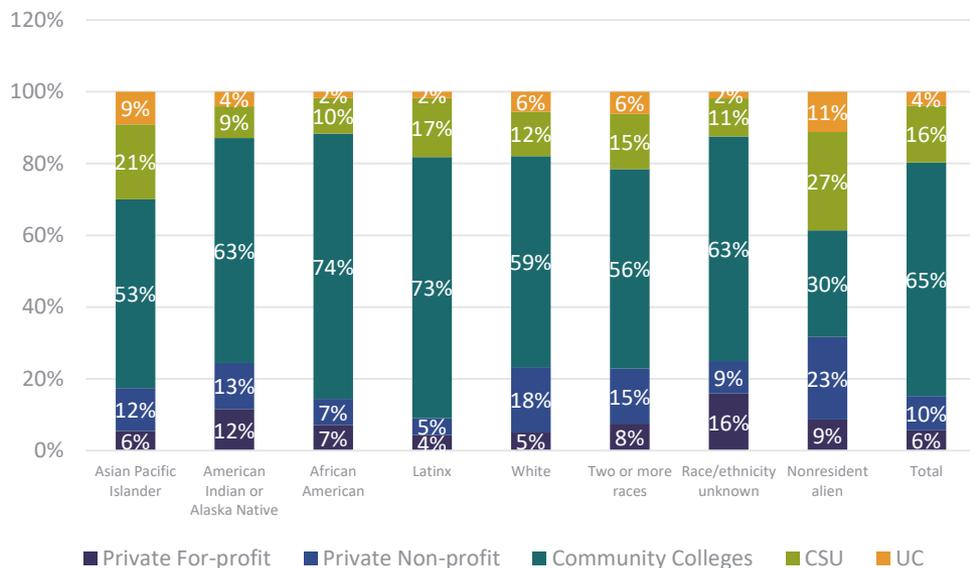
Legend: ■ Private For-profit ■ Private Non-profit ■ Community Colleges ■ CSU ■ UC

Distribution of Undergraduates at Los Angeles Institutions by Age

Legend: ■ Age 24 and Younger ■ Age 25 and Older
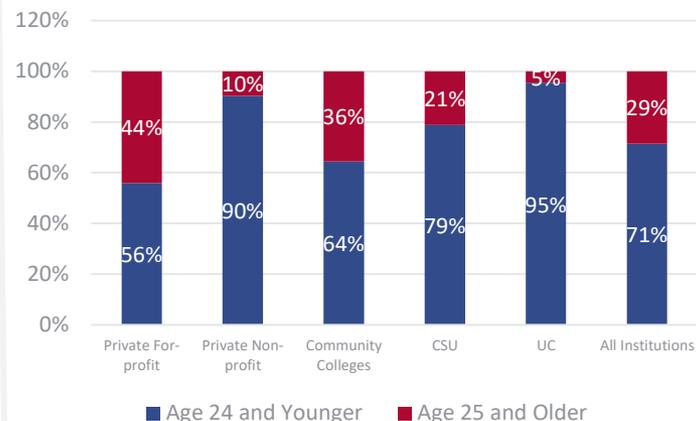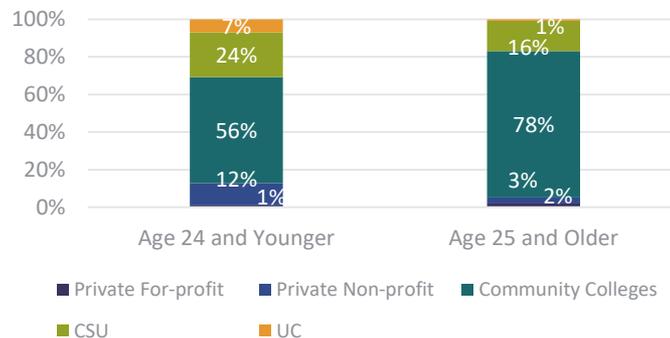
10 Fastest Growing Occupations in Los Angeles

Occupation	Education Required	% Change
Home Health Aides	High school diploma or equivalent	41%
Personal Care Aides	High school diploma or equivalent	40%
Physician Assistants	Master's degree	37%
Nurse Practitioners	Master's degree	35%
Software Developers, Applications	Bachelor's degree	34%
Massage Therapists	Postsecondary non-degree award	30%
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	No formal educational credential	30%
Medical and Health Services Managers	Bachelor's degree	28%
Operations Research Analysts	Bachelor's degree	28%
Respiratory Therapists	Associate's degree	28%

Distribution of undergraduates at Los Angeles Institutions by Age and Type of Institution

Legend: ■ Private For-profit ■ Private Non-profit ■ Community Colleges ■ CSU ■ UC

Note: Regional information is based on Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs). As a result, it may undercount occupations from rural sections of the regions that are not part of an MSA. Occupations were excluded if the base year employment did not exceed 1,500.

Conversations in Los Angeles highlighted regional stakeholders' need for partnerships and unified decision-making

1. COVID-19 exacerbated existing insecurities for students—food, employment, and housing—diminishing access to basic tools needed for online learning

2. Students need more flexibility in online learning to balance competing priorities—school, family, work

3. Over-enrollment, budget cuts, and funding models that do not prioritize marginalized students contribute to equity gaps in higher education

4. Stakeholders believe expanding partnerships are essential to providing college access and training for the workforce in a post-COVID economy

5. Unified leadership and decision-making is a critical factor missing in regional approaches to postsecondary student success

6. Education partners are implementing innovative practices in response to the pandemic; leaders support implementing more fresh ideas

7. Most stakeholders believe committing to equity is a moral imperative—the system is not serving student groups with the greatest needs

Pandemic effects are impacting students resulting in a greater demand for basic needs and flexibility in online learning

LOS ANGELES

Lack of basic needs

COVID-19 reduced students' access to their most basic needs, food, housing, employment, transportation, mental health services, and adequate study space

> "Students experiencing poverty are faced with choosing between going to school or working to support family and take care of siblings—parents didn't have luxury to work from home. Many are essential workers, putting responsibility on older children to take care of siblings or work."
>
> **K12 Leader**

> "The issues of basic needs, like the food pantry has sky-rocketed. Our students don't live in an area where they can get 5G at the drop of a hat. They have to deal with the logistics of living in a home where they don't have quiet study spaces."
>
> **Higher Education Leader**

> "COVID-19 has led Los Angeles Community Colleges' students to face health, social and economic insecurities all at once. The pandemic has exacerbated disparities in terms of food security, homeless, emergency aid, technology and broadband."
>
> **Higher Education Leader**

A shift in the value proposition for adult and nontraditional students

Students need more support in online learning. Current expectations do not match the reality of their existing needs—working and parenting compete with engaging in the learning process

> "Sometimes there are professors who are not flexible when it comes to taking class over Zoom. One time, I didn't want to be on video because I wasn't looking good and didn't feel comfortable on video. He counted off for my attendance off—he wasn't flexible."
>
> **Student**

> "Professors think since we're at home that they can compound the work together, and for me that's not true because I am taking multiple classes and still need time to study for all my classes."
>
> **Student**

> "Being online is a new responsibility because students have to educate themselves. Lots of teachers don't understand online education and didn't sign up for this."
>
> **Student**

System stakeholders want funding models that focus on underserved students, citing partnerships to broaden college access and improve equity

LOS ANGELES

Budget and Funding cuts

Existing funding policies are prioritized in a way that disadvantages student populations with the highest needs

> "**Local formulas don't address funding for African American students if they're not poor.** Districts get additional funding for English learners, foster youth and children living in poverty, but **there are many students who do not fall into those buckets that the education system is not meeting.**"
>
> **K12 Leader**

> "**Invest more in low-income students.** I know there have been conversations about Pell Grant modernization. I understand this was a tough budget year, but that conversation needs to restart post-COVID, to **ensure we're getting dollars to students with the greatest needs.**"
>
> **Nonprofit Leader**

> "We are all **teaching more students than we are funded for.** We have funded enrollment targets allocated through the system and we are overwhelmed by thousands of students. **If we accommodate demand, we're enrolled way beyond our funding level.**"
>
> **Higher Education Leader**

Coherent partnerships and collaboration

Stakeholders desire additional pathways from community colleges to the CSUs, creating incentives for employers in the region to hire students and displaced workers, and better coordination among system segments

> "The digital divide was exacerbated for our kids because we learned that LAUSD gave all their students a Chromebook, but they planned to take it away after graduation. **We negotiated for a month to get the kids to keep the devices. That is an example of the systems work we do, getting the systems to work together to serve kids better.**"
>
> **Higher Education Leader**

> "**We collaborate with other campuses in the CSU all the time.** Sometimes faculty are interested in the same research topic. We collaborate with CSUs in LA and we have a formalized arrangement called the CSU5. I told the Chancellor at UCLA that we have faculty doing some type of collaborative research with every single UC in the state, not just UCLA. **On a large scale, that would be a system issue to address.**"
>
> **Nonprofit Leader**

Some stakeholders express the need for systemwide leadership to advance innovative student success initiatives

LOS ANGELES

Need for systemwide leadership

System partners need a unified leadership approach to develop long-term solutions to challenges like closing the digital divide, addressing students' food insecurity, and attaining financial investments from policymakers, to make the system more equitable

> "There's no overseer at the state level. **Folks have called for a Chancellor to oversee the education system, K12 and postsecondary.** If you had somebody like that who could see across systems, then **they can think across systems and bring leaders together to react collectively."**
>
> **Local Civic Leader**

> "We can't tell districts what to do. **We're trying to get them to do everything collectively** because if something breaks, the rest will be affected. **We tried to get everybody on board but in a crisis, it's very hard."**
>
> **Local Civic Leader**

> "At the state policy level, you had to rely on institutions to make decisions, but **they weren't coordinating, and no one was forcing them to coordinate.** They kept looking to others to make the decisions for them, but they were hearing that it was local, it was local."
>
> **Local Civic Leader**

Student success innovations

Leaders across the system are using new approaches to student success during the pandemic. Some stakeholders want to retain the positive changes.

> "When we put the call out to small businesses in our area, we had no idea how many small businesses would sign up–30 small businesses around the valley signed up. That kind of thinking gives our students hands-on experience that they can put that on their resumes. **Employers need to know that pipeline to the future workforce,** they have to hang in there with us and help us help them."
>
> **Higher Education Leader**

> "We did just get our student success group together. **The 10 most important things to work on together in the compact are: college math success; addressing holistic basic needs; equity and anti-racism; transfers from community colleges to four- years; regional enrollment management; recovering post-COVID transition learning loss; onboarding the class of 2021; supporting completers to be successful in this economy; retention; and advising."**
>
> **Nonprofit Leader**

Achieving systemwide equity requires action across multiple areas, community engagement plays a critical role in recovery efforts

LOS ANGELES

Equity

Stakeholders are committed to elevating equity by expanding access to technology, promoting diversity, and engaging underserved communities

"

"There must be a commitment to equity—distribution of resources to address decades of disinvestment—**to bring justice to how this pandemic has disproportionately impacted communities of color.** Systems need to commit to equity in real ways. **System leaders have to be willing to admit there is a real problem** and that they need help and be willing to listen to those most impacted by these issues—families and students."

Local Civic Leader

"

"Community engagement involves building trust with communities of color. We want to hear voices, what they need. We need to listen to what communities are telling us are challenges--**empowering, building trust, and acknowledging that we have systems that haven't worked."**

K12 Leader

The Inland Empire is similar to the Los Angeles region in demographics, but trails the state average in both educational attainment and A-G completion


Distribution of Inland Empire Population By Race/Ethnicity
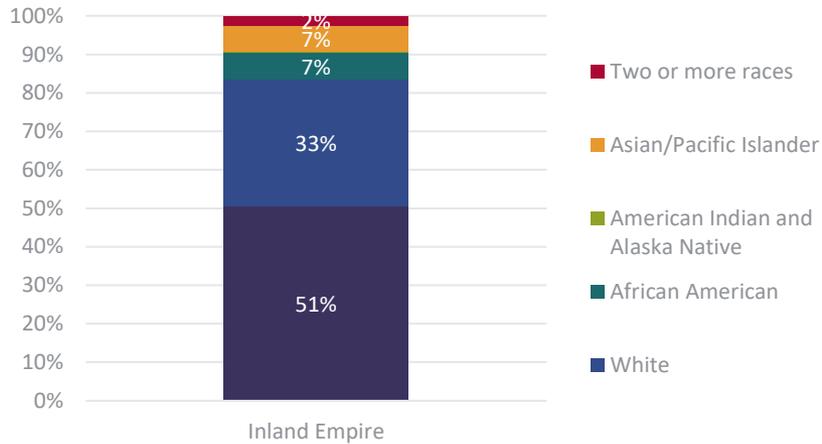
- Two or more races: 2%
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 7%
- African American: 7%
- White: 33%
- (bottom): 51%

Legend: Two or more races, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian and Alaska Native, African American, White

Note: In our research and equity frameworks we generally prefer the terms "Latinx" and "Black," but some data sources still use the terms "Hispanic," "Latino," and "African American." We keep the original term from the original data source in order to maintain fidelity to the data, for example, in the graph above.

Percentage of Inland Empire High School Students Meeting A-G Eligibility Requirements
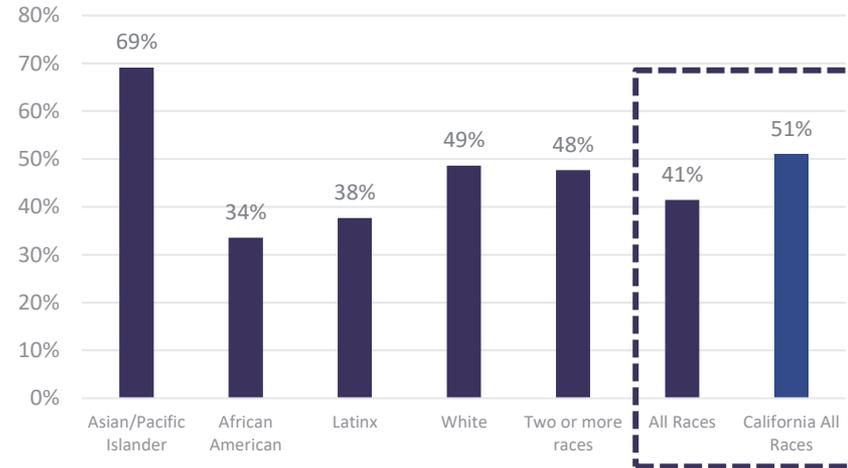
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 69%
- African American: 34%
- Latinx: 38%
- White: 49%
- Two or more races: 48%
- All Races: 41%
- California All Races: 51%

Inland Empire Population Aged 25 and Older by Highest Level of Education Attained

- Less than HS Diploma: 18% / 16%
- HS Diploma or Equivalent: 28% / 21%
- Some College, No Degree: 24% / 21%
- Associate's Degree: 8% / 8%
- Bachelor's Degree: 14% / 21%
- Graduate Degree: 8% / 13%
- High School Diploma or Higher: 82% / 84%
- Associate's Degree or Higher: 30% / 42%
- Bachelor's Degree or Higher: 22% / 34%

Inland Empire / California
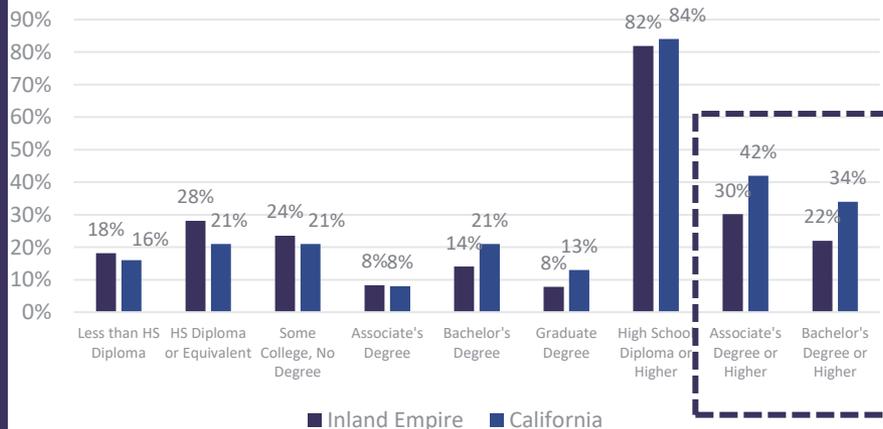
14% unemployment

California: 15% unemployment

INLAND EMPIRE

65

Only two of the Inland Empire's fastest growing occupations require postsecondary education, indicating that the faster-growing jobs in the region may not all offer sustainable wages and career growth

Distribution of Undergraduates at Inland Empire Institutions by Race/Ethnicity and Type of Institution
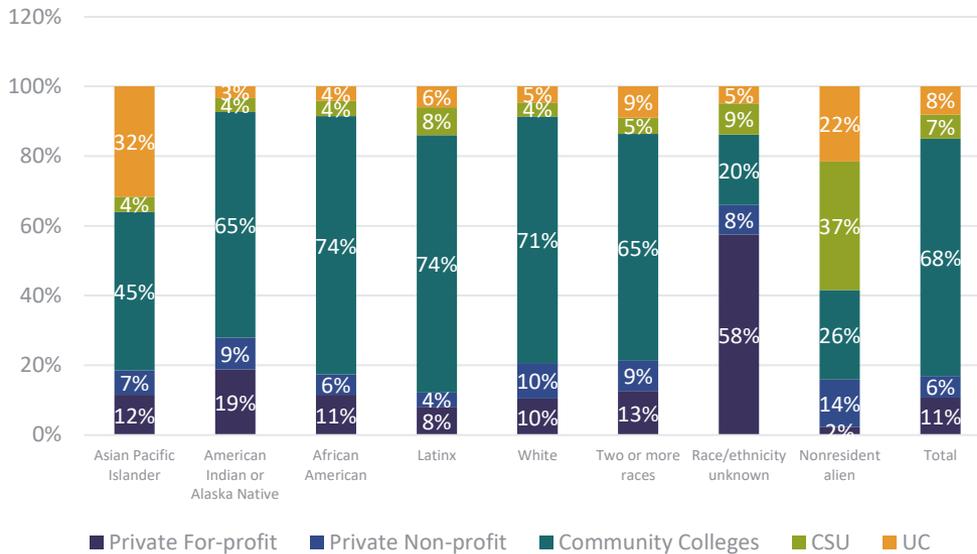
Legend: Private For-profit | Private Non-profit | Community Colleges | CSU | UC

Distribution of Undergraduates at Inland Empire Institutions by Age

Legend: Age 24 and Younger | Age 25 and Older
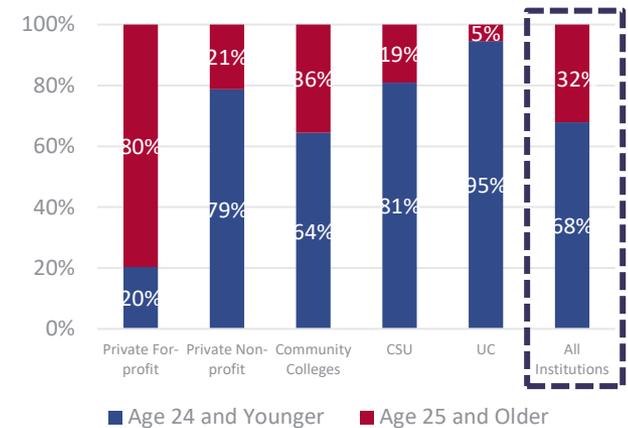
10 Fastest Growing Occupations in the Inland Empire

Occupation	Education Required	% Change
Food Processing Workers, All Other	No formal educational credential	77%
Machine Feeders and Offbearers	No formal educational credential	47%
Home Health Aides	High school diploma or equivalent	43%
First-Line Supervisors of Helpers, Laborers, and Material Movers, Hand	High school diploma or equivalent	42%
Personal Care Aides	High school diploma or equivalent	40%
Software Developers, Applications	Bachelor's degree	37%
Roofers	No formal educational credential	37%
Structural Iron and Steel Workers	High school diploma or equivalent	36%
Brickmasons and Blockmasons	High school diploma or equivalent	36%
Nurse Practitioners	Master's degree	36%

Distribution of Undergraduates at Inland Empire Institutions by Age and Type of Institution

Legend: Private For-profit | Private Non-profit | Community Colleges | CSU | UC

Note: Regional information is based on Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs). As a result, it may undercount occupations from rural sections of the regions that are not part of an MSA. Occupations were excluded if the base year employment did not exceed 1,500.

Conversations in the Inland Empire elevated the following key themes regarding stakeholder needs and equity

1. Education remains a priority for students, but the value proposition of a postsecondary education is shifting

2. Limited funding and capacity restrain equitable approaches to policy and practice for system stakeholders

3. Displaced workers require innovative training to endure uncertain economic conditions

4. The role of higher education institutions is evolving; leaders exploring strategies to better address students' basic needs

5. An inflexible postsecondary education system impedes intersegmental collaboration

6. The COVID-19 impact has exacerbated the digital divide

7. Higher education institutions' transition to online learning has left students feeling less supported

8. Without a centralized student data reporting systems, education partners face barriers tracking students

Source(s): Education First Interviews (2020)

INLAND EMPIRE

Shifting value proposition	Students are skeptical of the value proposition of higher education given the high cost and current quality of online learning; this is having an impact on students' choice of institution and enrollment decisions this year, and could also impact persistence and retention going forward	" "I never considered taking off a semester, but I know someone who did. She wasn't retaining the material and didn't want to pay the money to not retain information. So, she didn't drop out but is taking a leave. Another person said she **would take classes that are not important to her major**. She is taking gen ed courses now instead of the more important classes for her major**. I did the same thing; taking gen ed and electives**." **Student**	" "Deciding where I wanted to go was harder because I was thinking about **what would be easier: to attend a school where I have to stay there or make it easier for my parents by staying home and going to school nearby**. I decided to go to La Sierra because I liked their responses regarding benefits to me. I had other options, I wanted to attend UC Santa Barbara. **It was difficult because it was more expensive**." **Student**
Limited funding and capacity	Funding inequity and budget cuts exacerbate current challenges; tight margins and limited capacity challenge the ability to redesign the postsecondary system to be focused on equity	" "I have kids at Cal States who don't have award letters yet. They started school and don't have money. Those **systematic barriers that are happening disproportionately affect low-income kids.** They tried to tell kids how to get access to an EBT card because they aren't enrolled and don't have access to the pantry. **There has to be an increase in student support staff**." **Non-profit Leader**	" **"The system isn't equitably funded.** The community colleges are the champions of equity, yet victims of inequity. You can't provide holistic services with resources that are just not there. When we look at Cal Grant, how our students are funded, **our students don't get access to Cal Grant because we have lower tuition."** **Higher Education Leader**

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Displaced workers	**A lack of short-term, flexible credentialing programs linked to existing and emerging jobs limits opportunities for displaced workers to retrain and recover**	"We have adults at home who could be upskilling right now, but don't have technology or access to do that. How can we support the upskilling needs of adults and the instruction for the kids? There is a huge population that needs resources. **All our displaced workers should have a connection that helps them prepare for more than a minimum wage job after this.** This needs to be at the forefront. **I don't want to train people to go back to minimum wage jobs."** **Workforce Partner**	"We need work-based learning that can **get folks into jobs that doesn't make them compromise.** How do you structure that in a way that allows them to play all the roles they have to play in life? **You can do the dual generation approach in Inland Empire."** **Workforce Partner**
Institutional role	**Higher education is challenged by evolving institutional roles, including advancing social justice and equity reforms**	"I don't know if public higher education has really **grappled with the expectation that the public higher education institutions are to be social service agencies.** We need partnership with county social services and other organizations that can connect our students. Because we have responded to give students what we thought they needed, it continues to build higher and higher expectations of us. So we have to come to grips with: Are we going to be mental health agencies? Are we going to be homeless shelters? **Are we going to be all the kinds of things that are real needs for our students?"** **Higher Education Leader**	"The school has gotten a lot of bad attention for how they have responded to racial justice issues. They took a long time to address George Floyd, a week or longer. There was **controversy, and students who were unhappy with how administration has dealt with racial issues."** **Student**

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Policy and intersegmental collaboration	K12, higher education and workforce stakeholders believe they don't have the flexibility to meet student needs for access and convenience that could make students' experiences more streamlined, relevant and affordable (e.g., transfers, microcredentials, work-based learning, etc.)	"The transfer—ADT—is an example of a program from the state that was supposed to strengthen the transfer process, but **it's a mystery to most students; even those that qualified.**" **P16 Partner**	**"We need a much more dynamic work-based learning and experiential learning piece to our community college system**. It's the missing pin to the experience we provide our students. Simple changes—most work experience are capped at 16 units, so they do that as a very small part of their elective experience." **Higher Education Leader**	"Someone creates a bank of classes that are vetted and A-G approved. Students could take them on their own and it wouldn't take away from their district. Sometimes, districts don't want students to do that because **it would mess up their funding**." **K12 Leader**
Digital divide	The digital divide—access to and cost of both devices and internet connectivity—has been fully exposed and exacerbated by COVID-19	"I was looking on my school's website and they were trying to provide Wi-Fi with companies. But **it can get pricey and now my mom has an internet bill**. If we could do something about that, that would be incredible. There's **a lot of underprivileged families that can't afford Wi-Fi** or internet connection. It's important right now. How can we expect students to do well when their **Wi-Fi is cutting off, they're missing lectures, they're getting kicked out of Zoom meetings**. It's important. **Student**	"I think with my school, **they're trying to provide devices they can loan out, or having Wi-Fi connections to let students park in the parking lot** and get the Wi-Fi connection. It's a huge requirement to do online school and **a lot of people can't afford it**. I hate for that the be the reason for them to stop their education. Internet is critical and important." **Student**	

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Transition to online

The transition to a fully online school experience created challenges, including barriers to engaging and enrolling, difficulties learning online, and a lack of connection and support

> "When you are in person, you get to know people better. I would go talk to my teachers, **tell them where I am struggling,** and I would stay after school to get tutoring and help. But **I don't know how that will be virtually.** I hope if I need help from a teacher, they will have time to work with me personally."
>
> **Student**

> "With professors there's a lot of lapse in **knowledge about how to guide students with virtual learning**—with misinformation from professors **because they're not used to virtual classes**. It's new to them. Not only do they struggle, but as students **we struggle even more**. So, when they don't know what's going on, it affects us. If we could get teachers **more training**, they could guide us to success, and it would benefit everyone."
>
> **Student**

Data systems

Tracking and supporting students throughout the postsecondary system remains challenging for some system partners due to limited student data reporting access and availability

> "**Data is another barrier.** We need a data system to track students who apply to community colleges seamlessly. FAFSA data that can flow easily throughout system. **A data system needs to be a priority.**"
>
> **P16 Partner**

> "**We need to look at data infrastructure.** While we have commitments to programs "A, B and C", we need to know who benefited and who didn't. When people give presentations about our great graduation rate, I want to hear about the students who are in the 10% who aren't achieving."
>
> **Higher Education Leader**

> "Before COVID 25% of our adults had some college and no degree. Lots of folks had to withdraw from school in spring. **We tried to track them but are not sure how many will re-enroll in fall.** We will need additional support."
>
> **P16 Partner**

IMPERIAL VALLEY

Distribution of Imperial Valley Population By Race/Ethnicity
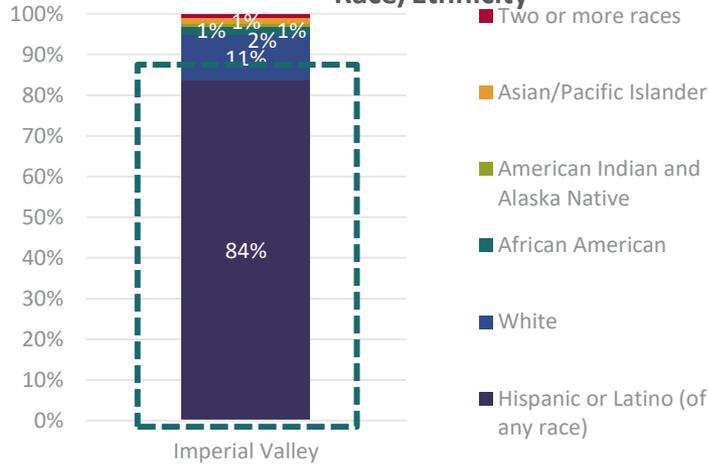
Imperial Valley:
- Hispanic or Latino (of any race): 84%
- 1%
- 1%
- 1%
- 2%
- 1%
- 1%

Legend:
- Two or more races
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- American Indian and Alaska Native
- African American
- White
- Hispanic or Latino (of any race)

Note: In our research and equity frameworks we generally prefer the terms **"Latinx" and "Black,"** but some data sources still use the terms "Hispanic," "Latino," and "African American." We keep the original term from the original data source in order to maintain fidelity to the data, for example, in the graph above.

Percentage of Imperial Valley High School Students Meeting A-G Eligibility Requirements
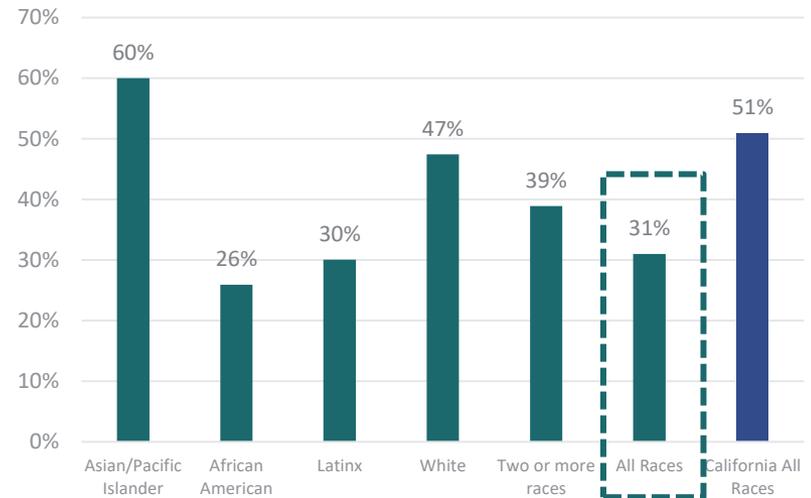
Category	Percentage
Asian/Pacific Islander	60%
African American	26%
Latinx	30%
White	47%
Two or more races	39%
All Races	31%
California All Races	51%

Imperial Valley Population Aged 25 and Older by Highest Level of Education Attained

Category	Imperial Valley	California
Less than HS Diploma	30%	16%
HS Diploma or Equivalent	26%	21%
Some College, No Degree	24%	21%
Associate's Degree	6%	8%
Bachelor's Degree	10%	21%
Graduate Degree	5%	13%
High School Diploma or Higher	70%	84%
Associate's Degree or Higher	21%	42%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	15%	34%

Legend: ■ Imperial Valley ■ California
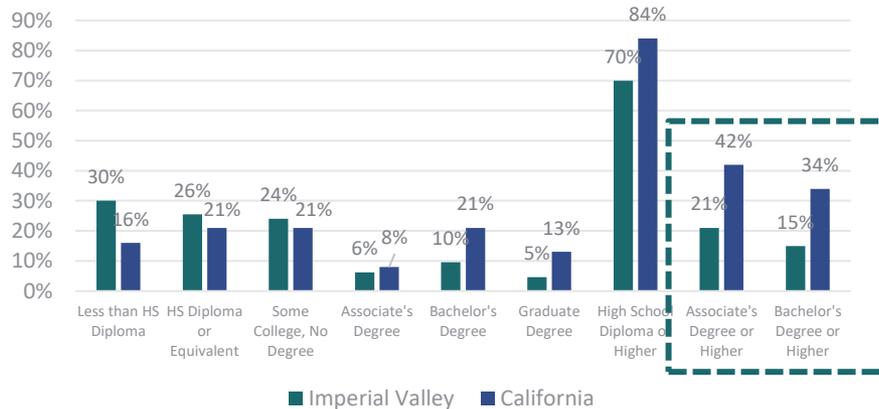
27% **unemployment**

California: 15% unemployment

The majority of undergraduates attending the Imperial Valley's only public institution of higher education are over the age of 25, more than double the percentage in other regions

Distribution of Undergraduates at Imperial Valley Institutions by Age
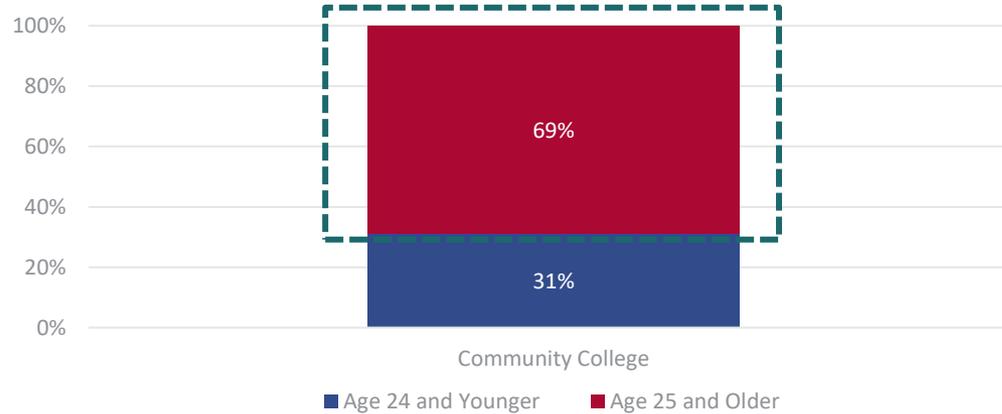
Note: The Imperial Valley only has 1 community college (data shown here) and 1 private non-profit adult education program (for which data were not available)

■ Age 24 and Younger   ■ Age 25 and Older

10 Fastest Growing Occupations in the Imperial Valley

Occupation	Education Required	% Change
Security Guards	High school diploma or equivalent	49%
Personal Care Aides	High school diploma or equivalent	38%
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	No formal educational credential	28%
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	Postsecondary non-degree award	21%
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	No formal educational credential	20%
Social and Human Service Assistants	High school diploma or equivalent	17%
Waiters and Waitresses	No formal educational credential	17%
Registered Nurses	Bachelor's degree	17%
General and Operations Managers	Bachelor's degree	16%
Retail Salespersons	No formal educational credential	15%

Note: Regional information is based on Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs). As a result, it may undercount occupations from rural sections of the regions that are not part of an MSA. Occupations were excluded if the base year employment did not exceed 500.

Conversations in the Imperial Valley highlighted regional stakeholders' commitment to equity and diversity

1. Stakeholders believe all levels of the system need to prioritize and commit to racial and social justice

2. Even though institutions are working to provide additional support, the crisis of solving for basic needs—food, housing, childcare and more—is greater; this coupled with their online learning experience creates a challenging enrollment

3. Due to fear of contracting and/or transmitting the virus to family members, students avoid in person work, lose wages and jobs

4. The digital divide is deep and even more pronounced in rural areas. Some students have little to no opportunity for connectivity, losing the ability to participate in online learning.

5. Because of low quality and lack of faculty engagement, students don't see the value of distance learning

6. Strong partnerships between education and workforce stakeholders are central to student support initiatives across the region

7. Funding strategies in higher education do not prioritize Black, Latinx nor adult students—innovative strategies require a focus on equity

8. Leaders fear the combination of the pandemic and flu season will worsen the long-term community health impact

Pandemic effects are deeply impacting students' ability to secure basic needs and succeed in online learning— with internet access, food insecurity, and safety concerns topping the list (1 of 2)

IMPERIAL VALLEY

Meeting basic needs

Students rely more on colleges and universities for basic needs to successfully participate in online learning

> "For students, **they admit very publicly that they're experiencing depression because of what we're living through.** We have virtual support for staff, virtual tutoring but not enough."
>
> **Higher Education Leader**

> "Based on student survey, **the major need is food,** followed by school supplies, and thirdly technology."
>
> **Higher Education Leader**

> **"We have continued to provide food and have served both students and families.** We collaborate with food banks to serve families. That need has been increased."
>
> **Higher Education Leader**

Health risks and financial loss

Students and community leaders fear viral community spread, resulting in deep financial and human impacts

> **"My grandpa passed away from the virus.** It took a big toll on my family. **I did think about not going back this semester."**
>
> **Student**

> "My mom is a teacher. **She has an underlying condition which makes her risk and so do I. I lost my job because I couldn't put us at risk."**
>
> **Student**

> "I wanted to make sure my team is ready to go, that their family was well and that they were economically well because **I can't send sick people to help sick people.** We are really striving to be COVID free."
>
> **Local Civic Leader**

Pandemic effects are deeply impacting students' ability to secure basic needs and succeed in online learning— with internet access, food insecurity, and safety concerns topping the list (2 of 2)

IMPERIAL VALLEY

Digital divide

Limited internet access and intermittent outages are prominent in the region, suggesting the need for broadband infrastructure investments

> **"Access to internet and other resource is an issue for students,** especially for those living across the border. **They need access to public, free wi-fi."**
>
> **P16 Partner**

> "What also worries me is for **students who are bi-national that live across the border.** Now that they are remote, I don't know if they have the same access to resources. **I don't know if these students are going to have the same experiences in the virtual environment."**
>
> **P16 Partner**

> "We've been experiencing outages lately. **The internet gets unstable at 2:30 PM every day,** and school isn't even in session yet. What's going to happen next week when school starts?"
>
> **Higher Education Leader**

Less engagement with online learning

Students feel online learning is less engaging and not comparable to traditional learning. This value proposition does not justify the costs from their perspective.

> "Some instructors are doing a good job having Zoom sessions that make it feel like you're in class and **other instructors are leaving you to do it alone. Why am I paying for this?** No student interaction or feedback."
>
> **Student**

> "The instructors should be expected to perform at their best level like they expect the students to do. **We need to get what we're paying for!"**
>
> **Student**

> **"You have to pay to do your homework!** It doesn't make sense when we already have Canvas. **I dropped a class because it charged an extra $119 dollars for the companion site to access the online homework."**
>
> **Student**

Partnerships, funding innovations, and commitments to social justice and equity remain crucial for recovery efforts, despite stakeholders' concerns about long-term effects of the pandemic (1 of 2)

IMPERIAL VALLEY

Partnerships and collaborations

System stakeholders want more collaboration but desire a unified approach, especially between education and workforce partners

> "We partnered with Microsoft to get people access to information. **Microsoft provided a chat robot tool that can be translated into any language.** Through artificial intelligence, we could load hundreds of pages of information about our programs."
>
> **Workforce Partner**

> "When a crises hits, policy makers want to spend energy on a new grant program or new branding efforts over here. I'm all for centralizing the message, but **the public workforce system is connected. We're full of partners doing the work already.**"
>
> **Workforce Partner**

> "We want to **build more coalitions to foster going to college in Imperial County.** We will have to do more outreach to districts and college counselors, and maybe extend our outreach to 8th and 9th grade, so **we can start that pipeline or pathway earlier.**"
>
> **Higher Education Leader**

Funding innovations

Funding systems must change to advance equity and foster innovation—general approaches are ineffective

> "**The whole CSU system took a 10% cut on our budget because of the economic crisis resulting from COVID** in California. The areas that tend to get cut are oftentimes are not viewed as mission critical but are very important for student success. **A major issue is making sure we keep the support services.**"
>
> **Higher Education Leader**

> "Historically, **we've been under resourced by SDSU and CSU,** which has made it difficult to provide the flexible response to demand for programs and services in the Valley. **We had high hopes for equity and support for our black students before the pandemic.** This pandemic has put breaks on that."
>
> **Higher Education Leader**

> "**The CSU lost a billion dollars in the last recession** and we haven't even gotten to where we were prior to the last great recession, even before COVID. So, **now with this budget cut we have to do more with less in a more complex environment.**"
>
> **Higher Education Leader**

Partnerships, funding innovations, and commitments to social justice and equity remain crucial for recovery efforts, despite stakeholders' concerns about long-term effects of the pandemic (2 of 2)

IMPERIAL VALLEY

Lasting effects of COVID-19

Leaders fear the coming flu season may exacerbate the impacts of COVID-19 in their communities, a significant factor limiting recovery efforts

> "**We are anxious about the long-term outlook** of how we come out of this. We are underserved, and we've had a lot of risk factors present for COVID, and we don't have a lot of health supports. **We're afraid we don't come out of it, and it may become endemic to us.**"
>
> **P16 Partner**

> "We're still navigating unchartered waters right now because **we have the flu season coming in, and we still we haven't eradicated COVID.** We're going to live that in roughly another month or so."
>
> **Regional Civic Leader**

Equity and social justice

Postsecondary education recovery calls for a commitment to social justice and equity. Stakeholders agree that the system must address the region's diverse culture and rich heritage.

> "**Assimilation to white values is not going to be effective, nor should it be the plan to create equity for students of color.** People are afraid to touch the master plan because it's all about resources and power."
>
> **Higher Education Leader**

> "**In rural areas, I do feel that that we don't have equal access.** It's also important to note that, it's not just as simple as saying now we making all these courses online available."
>
> **Regional Civic Leader**

> "At end of day we all deserve respect, quality education, access to opportunities even as we are different. **We want to see a commitment to social justice.**"
>
> **Higher Education Leader**

Thank you!
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