

Riverside County Office of Education - 2017 GIA Innovation Award Application

Organizational Background

Capacity & commitments of the lead agency and other partners to implement the proposed plan

The Riverside County Office of Education (RCOE) has a long history of working collaboratively and supporting our 23 districts through network activities. Through continuing this work, and with the development of the Riverside County Education Collaborative (RCEC), RCOE is uniquely positioned to build our districts' capacity to lead change at a local level, build awareness of pressing challenges, identify solutions, and to scale up innovative and effective practices to dramatically impact student achievement across our region and state.

As the lead entity, RCOE has made a strong commitment to this work by creating a College and Career Readiness (CCR) unit which consists of an Executive Director, a Director, and a Coordinator of counseling services. Additional support comes from eight Temporary Management Specialists who are experts at their site in addressing and improving state and national college and career indicators. This level of staffing confirms the commitment RCOE has to ensure all students are college and career ready as well as improve post-secondary enrollment and persistency in Riverside County. The RCOE CCR unit's commitment and goals are congruent with both California's Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) academic achievement priority and the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) emphasis on preparing college and career ready students. The College and Career Readiness State priority makes each district responsible to measure and report on CCR objectives. RCOE is leading the way for CCR in the state since no other County Office of Education is currently doing this work. RCOE is leading this vital work by building the capacity to help ensure our districts and students are successful.

Partnership background & commitments with other educational institutions and partners

RCEC membership consists of representatives from the Riverside County Office of Education (RCOE), University of California Riverside (UCR), Mt. San Jacinto Community College District (MSJC), Moreno Valley College (MVC), Moreno Valley Unified School District (MVUSD), Murrieta Valley Unified School District (MVUSD), Perris Union High School District (PUHSD), Temecula Valley Unified School District (TVUSD), Val Verde Unified School District (VVUSD), AVID Center, and College Board.

At the center of this network, includes a strong partnership between local area school districts and RCOE with participating LEA members. Each partner has created and committed both school site and district level teams to focus on the college and career readiness initiatives. Districts level of commitment includes monthly meetings, participation in extended professional development, and participation in all RCEC focused initiatives (ex: College Signing Day). New partnerships are already emerging with other County Offices emulating the work of RCEC. These include Shasta County Office of Education, San Diego County Office of Education, and Santa Cruz County Office of Education. As these partnerships become stronger and we solidify our commitments, it is anticipated that the work of the RCEC will evolve and may be influenced by additional membership and partnerships.

As the collaborative facilitator and county office, RCOE has the opportunity to work alongside 23 school districts to assist in the development of their LCAP accountability plans and to advise them on equitable and necessary allocation of resources to support CCR impact. Successful practices are identified through regular analysis of countywide data available through existing data sharing agreements with all 23 districts. A number of strategic partnerships have been built with external agencies such as Michelle Obama's Reach Higher initiatives through the Civic Nation Foundation, National Student Clearinghouse, the California Student Aid Commission, the College Board, and CalPass Plus, which allow for an immense amount of data sharing between partners, and enables the leadership group to drive active learning in relation to the strategies identified and implemented by LEAs.

Proposed Activities

A review of the current state of College and Career Readiness in our county, the data illuminate that students remain unprepared for college and the workforce. A recent Lumina Foundation report states that of the 25 largest urban areas in the nation, Riverside/San Bernardino Counties have the lowest

percentage (27.2%) of adult residents with post-secondary degrees. Additionally, only 2.7% of students entering post-secondary are not in need of remediation.

Description of proposed activities to improve student outcomes

In order to achieve this mission, it is critical that we continue to improve educational opportunities for all students. Each of the previously mentioned collaborative goals is focused on inspiring access and success for all K-12 students in Riverside County. Our theory of action to increase college access remains focused on the following strategies and steps:

- College Going Culture – beginning in middle school an encouraging college-going culture will be implemented by increasing college awareness, increasing parent involvement in their student’s education, implementing specialized programs for students in need of additional support, and increasing access to college level coursework. These strategies will help to decrease remediation rates.
- Curriculum Integration – integrating college applications and other college and career readiness activities into high school curriculum will increase the number of students enrolling in college.
- Counselor Professional Development – providing necessary systemic support and Professional Development for school counselors and other staff to assist students will increase FAFSA completion rates and college entrance rates.
- Student Tracking – leveraging existing systems will allow students to be tracked from K-12 thru post-secondary, by increasing support and student communication, to ensure they enter the first year of post-secondary education.

RCOE has a long history of working collaboratively and supporting our districts through network activities. Through continuing this work and with the development of the RCEC, the RCOE is uniquely positioned to build our districts capacity to lead change at a local level, to build awareness of pressing challenges, identify solutions, and to scale up innovative and effective practices to dramatically impact student achievement.

RCEC leadership and members have made the underlying commitment to embrace and engage in continuous learning. Through stakeholder feedback, continued review of data, and identification of evidence based practices, the leadership will be able to respond effectively to emerging challenges and issues and make decisions to modify work appropriately.

Goals

The RCEC selected to focus its quantifiable commitments (goals) on efforts to increase the number of students who are graduating from high school on track to succeed in college. RCEC members have co-developed the following four goals geared to increase post-secondary access and attainment in our community over the next two years:

1. Increase the percentage of FAFSA completions from 64% to 85%.
2. Increase the percentage of students applying to three or more colleges to 60%.
3. Increase the percentage of students enrolling in post-secondary education from 52% to 65%
4. Increase the number of students who are college ready from 2.6% to 20%.

Plan builds on proven practices in the field

Experience has reinforced the importance of implementation science strategies when attempting to achieve large-scale change within districts. When we focus on the right “drivers” and ensure adequate systems of support and clear and consistent messaging, we can ensure promising practices are implemented with a higher degree of fidelity. District personnel are powerful change agents if empowered to be leaders and supported appropriately. Communication needs to be consistent amongst all layers of leadership in an organization, and active participation by collaborative members is critically important to the success of the initiative. Although leadership is important and necessary to ensure the vision remains consistent, our network will reinforce the importance of leading from the middle and the value of knowledge and experience from practitioners in the classroom.

RCEC progress and growth in our data metrics have resulted in a proven practice. Our countywide Race to Submit competition is challenging high schools in Riverside County to increase their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and CA Dream Act (undocumented students) submission rates to help students discover the financial aid available to them. These efforts have led to 15,150 applications submitted in 2014 to 20,132 applications submitted in 2016, a 25% increase. The California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) has recognized these efforts and on February 23, 2017, voted to expand this competition statewide in 2018. IN 2016, of the 13,204 CA Dream Act applications submitted on time, 579 applications were Riverside County students.

Districts celebrate October as the College Kickoff month, focusing on K-12 college and career readiness. College Kickoff month is connected to the RCOE's pledge—that all students in Riverside County will graduate from high school well prepared for college and the workforce. Events take place during the school day and include college application workshops, PSAT testing, financial aid application workshops, financial literacy activities, and college exploration. During the 2016 College Kickoff month, 15,528 seniors and a total of 63,803 9th-12th grade students participated throughout Riverside County.

Our Race to Rigor initiative is challenging high schools in Riverside County to increase students' access and success in rigorous coursework including UC/CSU A-G, Advanced Placement (AP), Dual Enrollment, and International Baccalaureate (IB) to ensure preparation and academic success in college. As a result of our efforts, students of Riverside County have increased college enrollment in the fall immediately following graduation from 15,026 students in the class of 2013 to 16,550 in the class of 2016. (National Clearinghouse Student Tracker)

Our Riverside County School Counselor Network provides opportunities to collaborate and share best practices to create a high-performing culture and promoting college and career readiness. Our goal is for Riverside County students to be successful in completing a rigorous course of study in pursuit of a seamless transition to postsecondary education. Over 500 school counselors from Riverside County attend each network convening.

Riverside County College Signing Day has partnered with the Better Make Room team to promote and celebrate all graduating seniors and their post-secondary plans. In May 2017, 44 College Signing Days were held across Riverside County High Schools celebrating over 15,000 class of 2017 graduates, committing to their college or university of choice.

RCEC has created a website (www.rcec.us) dedicated to their initiatives and to share best practices that can be accessed by anyone in the country. These resources include a FAFSA completion process map which can be downloaded and modified free of charge.

Plan will close educational achievement gaps among students of different demographics

Riverside is a diverse county and all services focus on closing the achievement gap of students of different ethnic backgrounds and genders. Various types of services are provided to help ensure all students are provided the most relevant resources and services possible to help ensure their success.

The four goals collectively identified by the collaborative and the associated theory of action described, rests on the following evidence based principles that provide focus to RCEC's work:

- Although completion gaps cannot be closed by financial aid alone, research shows that aid can and does increase enrollment, persistence, and completion. (The Institute for College Access & Success, 2013)
- Despite the commitment and ability of school counselors – and support from administrators for their work- there are inequities in incentives, professional development, workload, and accountability. (National Office of School Counselors, 2013)
- The probability of enrollment increases significantly when student apply to 3-4 colleges.
- Low income students who enroll in a college that matches their academic achievement, graduate at higher rates and complete their degrees in less time than students who don't attend an academically matched college. (Caroline Hoxby & Sarah Turner Research, College Board, 2014)
- Every year in the United States, nearly 60% of first-year college students discover that despite being fully eligible to attend college they are not ready for post-secondary studies. (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2014)

Riverside County has increased the county graduation rate from 85.2% (2014) to 89.2% (2016). Riverside County also has the largest A-G course completion rate increase in our state when compared to eleven other large counties that serve 10,000 or more students. The county A-G completion rate has gone from 39.9% for class of 2015 to 44.3% for class of 2016. Even though Riverside County has seen significant gains in both A-G and graduation rates, African American and Foster Youth students are not achieving at the same rate as their peers. We have researched further data and discovered that our African American students are awarded financial aid including a Cal Grant; however, they are less likely to enroll at a post-secondary institution in the fall semester after high school graduation.

RCEC will continue to focus on providing support and services for all students but an intentional initiative has been planned beginning this 2017-2018 for African American/Black communities. We will be partnering with three to five local churches with predominately African American/Black parishioners to launch College Kickoff Super Sundays. These Super Sundays will be a partnership between RCEC members, Church Pastors, and community members. From college application support to financial literacy lessons for parents, these events will ignite a community approach to support Riverside County African American/Black students to and through college.

Evaluating approach to impact students including the data collection and indicators

To achieve the stated goals, the RCEC leadership and LEA members have collectively agreed to implement the following commitments:

A. Complete FAFSA/Race to Submit

Training will be provided to over 700 educators on the financial aid process

School counselors will be trained to:

- assist students with FAFSA completion and associated tracking mechanisms
- implement new technologies and move away from an obsolete manual California Student Aid Commission GPA upload process and move to a new comprehensive electronic batch upload process to ensure all students GPAs are submitted for Cal Grant Award consideration
- address college and financial aid awareness at the middle school level to increase student and parent engagement

B. Complete Two or More College Applications/College Kickoff

- LEAs will offer on-site college application workshops
- LEAs will embed this component as a part of senior-year course curriculum
- LEAs implement senior exit surveys to track progress post-graduation
- University partners have committed to provide post-secondary success data to collaborative members and LEAs to help measure program impact

C. Enroll in College/ Race to Rigor

- LEAs will utilize the National Student Clearinghouse Student Tracker to monitor enrollment and retention rates in post-secondary settings
- LEAs will work with community colleges to assist with assessments, applications, and enrollment
- School counselors will connect with high school graduates during the summer prior to their start of college
- University partners will assist LEAs with high rates of students in need of remediation
- Post-secondary partners will work together to expand existing articulation agreements to ensure seamless transition between 2 and 4 year institutions

D. Enter College Ready for College-Level Work/ Race to Ready

- LEAs will commit to promote a college-going culture beginning in middle school
- LEAs will provide A-G interventions
- LEAs will ensure all sophomores take the PSAT, will provide students increased access to college-level course work including dual enrollment, AP, and IB coursework and will provide specialized programs that promote college readiness in underrepresented students
- LEAs will conduct annual audits at all high schools so graduating seniors meet the minimum requirements to attend a four year university

- LEAs and post-secondary partners commit to collaborate on the alignment of curriculum between high schools, community colleges, and four-year universities to improve seamless transition and mitigate the need for remediation

Data to be collected

The creation of a clear set of goals facilitated the development of a shared system by which the group will measure success. College completion metrics and baseline data will be collected in the following areas: (1) number/percent of students completing a bachelor’s degree within 6 years of high school graduation; (2) number/percent of students completing associates degree within 3 years of high school graduation; and (3) number/percent of students completing other postsecondary credential within 3 years of high school graduation. Common-community level indicators have been identified, agreed upon and include: (1) the number/percent of students filing a FAFSA; (2) number/percent of students applying to two or more colleges; (3) number/percent of students enrolling in college; (4) number/percent of students not in need of remediation; and (5) number/percent of students “on track for college success.” Additionally RCOE in partnership with participating LEA’s have created a College and Career Readiness Dashboard that will serve as the baseline measure to the goals identified and will assist the RCEC track progress, and adjust the interventions/strategies selected in order to continually build upon and improve our joint efforts. The dashboard will ensure that efforts are aligned across all participating LEA members.

Ways the project leadership will share outcomes and lessons learned with others in the region.

The RCEC regularly scheduled monthly meetings will allow us to share progress made towards the four identified goals and the established collaborative focus area. Monthly updates from leadership members and participating institutions in the form of presentations will assist in identifying new strategies that will accelerate the pace of learning, reinforce goal attainment, and assist in development of potential and new partnerships. Web tools and electronic dashboards serve as a technology based platform to document, share and disseminate the progress of the initiative and the impact it has made on the identified CCR network metrics. These new insights or lessons learned will serve as a continuous learning process and will facilitate communications and the dissemination of best practices and resources to key decision makers and implementers within districts. This information will be used to further scale the initiative to serve other schools and school districts within our county and beyond.

We will continue to work with an external graphic designer to support our branding services for RCEC. An independent website has been established separate from that of the RCOE to house dashboards, related CCR research, best practices, and related information. Dashboard and other publicly available data will be provided in real time, usable formats to empower districts and other RCEC partners to embrace data driven decision-making and adjust practices within their localities to support the countywide College and Career Readiness Initiative and related goals.

Project Management and Timeline

Key Staffing to Lead Implementation

RCOE has a diverse team of expert practitioners ready to support and mentor districts, build effective partnerships on behalf of the collaborative, serve as a leader and voice in issues related to College and Career Readiness, and to provide a strong and consistent message to all stakeholders.

RCOE has established a College and Career Readiness unit with an Executive Director that has been working and supporting RCEC since its’s inception. Two additional positions which include a College and Career Director and College and Career Coordinator will be added in the next few weeks. These three positions will support the focus and work of this GIA award which includes all RCEC meetings as well as site and district level support.

Catalina Cifuentes is the Executive Director of the CCR unit and her experience includes teaching, school counseling, ACT State Council Chair elect, and currently serves as a Commissioner for the CA Student Aid Commission. Mrs. Cifuentes has eighteen years’ experience in education and holds a Bachelor’s Degree in English and a Master’s degree in School Counseling. She is also a former secondary Language Arts teacher and has extensive experience working with English Learner programs. As a lead counselor at Santiago High School, Catalina worked with the counseling team to design a

successful guidance program which led to Riverside County as well as California Department of Education recognitions for exemplary counseling practices. She was selected in November 2014 as a speaker for the College Opportunity White House Convening- Strengthening School Counseling and College Advising.

The Director and Coordinator positions are in the final stages of the hiring process and we anticipate their start date will be no later than October 1, 2017. The CCR Director and Coordinator will oversee the planning, development, implementation, facilitation, assessment, and continuous improvement with district and county educational leaders and leadership teams, aimed at increasing student access to post-secondary education and employment opportunities. They will promote the county’s pledge that all student’s will graduate from high school well prepared for college and the workforce by leveraging relationships within the local and national communities to ensure all students, have the opportunity and preparation to attend college and function effectively in the work place. The college and career/school counselor coordinator will facilitate school counseling curriculum development; analyzes achievement data at the county, district and site levels; promote the participation of stakeholders such as families, community agencies, state, national organizations and institutions of higher learning; and guides necessary changes to achieve excellence and equity for all students.

Timeline- All activities will occur both years

	Event/Initiative	Description of Activities
Fall	College Kickoff	County wide college and career readiness focus which includes college application and FAFSA/Dream Act completion.
	RCEC Monthly Meetings	Collaborative planning meeting that focus on updated College and Career data improvements and introduce the middle school focus.
	Race to Submit FAFSA/Dream Act initiative	County wide financial aid planning and application submissions as well as support programs for students and parents (ex. Cash for College).
	UCR AP Readiness Program (APR)	The AP Readiness Program provides supplemental instructional support to current and potential AP students in STEM courses such as biology, chemistry, environmental science, physics, calculus, statistics, computer science principles, English Language and English Literature. Students receive up to 32 hours of course-specific instructional support, information, and test preparation.
	School Counselor Leadership Network	The purpose of the Riverside County School Counselor Network is to provide opportunities to collaborate and share best practices to create a high performing culture, promoting college and career readiness.
	Race to Rigor Focus	Ongoing planning and intentional support for students to ensure graduation and A-G completion.
	Race to Ready Focus	Ongoing Higher Education partnerships and planning including: <u>UC Riverside</u> : Providing a program that actively participates with prospective students, staying connected with high school counselors, and providing on-going support to help enrolled students transition and thrive as UCR Highlanders <u>Mt. San Jacinto College</u> : Purposely partnered with our local K-12 districts to establish a comprehensive college and career readiness model that will incorporate four key elements that work in tandem with one another: 1-Early College Transition Counseling, 2-Strategies to Reduce the Need for Remediation, 3-Increasing College Access via Dual Enrollment Courses, and 4-The Transitional Program <u>Moreno Valley College</u> : Partnered with our K-12 districts, through the RCOE, to establish a comprehensive college and career readiness model that focuses on: 1-Increasing College Access via Middle College High School Program, 2-Strategies to Reduce the Need for Remediation, and 3-Effective Transitional Programs for First Time College Students

	Event/Initiative	Description of Activities
Spring	RCEC Monthly Meetings	Collaborative planning meeting that focus on updated College and Career data improvements and introduce the middle school focus.
	College Signing Day	A county wide recognition program honoring graduating seniors and their post-secondary plans.
	UCR AP Readiness Program	The Advanced Placement Readiness Program (APR) provides supplemental instructional support to current and potential AP students in STEM courses such as biology, chemistry, environmental science, physics, calculus, statistics, computer science principles, English Language and English Literature. Students receive up to 32 hours of course-specific instructional support, information and test preparation.
	School Counselor Leadership Network	The purpose of the Riverside County School Counselor Network is to provide opportunities to collaborate and share best practices to create a high performing culture, promoting college and career readiness.
	Race to Rigor Focus	Ongoing monthly planning and intentional support for students to ensure graduation and A-G completion.
	Race to Ready Focus	Ongoing Higher Education partnerships and planning including: <u>UC Riverside</u> : Providing a program that actively participates with prospective students, staying connected with high school counselors, and providing on-going support to help enrolled students transition and thrive as UCR Highlanders <u>Mt. San Jacinto College</u> : Purposely partnered with our local K-12 districts to establish a comprehensive college and career readiness model that will incorporate four key elements that work in tandem with one another: 1-Early College Transition Counseling, 2-Strategies to Reduce the Need for Remediation, 3-Increasing College Access via Dual Enrollment Courses, and 4-The Transitional Program <u>Moreno Valley College</u> : Partnered with our K-12 districts, through the RCOE, to establish a comprehensive college and career readiness model that focuses on: 1-Increasing College Access via Middle College High School Program, 2-Strategies to Reduce the Need for Remediation, and 3-Effective Transitional Programs for First Time College Students

Project Budget Narrative

The proposed budget has been thoughtfully developed based on the activities required to achieve the RCEC four identified goals:

1. Increase the percentage of FAFSA completions from 64% to 85%.
2. Increase the percentage of students applying to three or more colleges to 60%.
3. Increase the percentage of students enrolling in post-secondary education from 52% to 65%.
4. Increase the number of students who are college ready from 2.6% to 20%.

We are requesting a \$150,000 award to be used over the course of two years to help build capacity of our districts and expand the college and career readiness activities in the Riverside region. The following budget will help support the program goals and ensure Riverside students are College and Career ready.

RCOE GIA Budget			
Sub-Awards	Year 1	Year 2	Total GIA Funding
<i>Districts</i>			
Moreno Valley USD	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 20,000
Murrieta USD	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 20,000
Perris Union High District	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 20,000
Temecula Valley USD	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 20,000
Val Verde USD	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 20,000

<i>University Partners</i>			
Moreno Valley Community College	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000	\$ 16,000
Mt. San Jacinto Community College	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000	\$ 16,000
University of California, Riverside	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000	\$ 16,000
Riverside County Office of Education	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 2,000
Total Amount per year	\$ 75,000	\$ 75,000	\$ 150,000

RCOE will serve as the lead agency and will provide award implementation, oversight, and compliance monitoring. In order to be the most effective, have the largest impact on our region, and to build capacity of our districts, the majority of GIA funding will be used to support College and Career Ready activities at our five districts and three University partners. Small sub-awards for each partnering district and higher education institution will be budgeted to offset costs for travel to and from meetings, to assist with time involved in data collection, monitoring and reporting for RCEC activities, and to assist with implementation supports to be defined at the local LEA level. The subcontracts to the identified partners are intended to support LEAs and postsecondary partners in meeting the RCEC collectively identified four goals over the course of the two year project period as well as offset the costs incurred to participate in RCEC meetings, professional development, and other convenings. Each partner identified will be required to develop and submit a budget to RCOE that outlines how funds will be used to support participation in RCEC activities and how activities are intended to achieve the four goals.

Partnership will meet the 50% match requirement

RCOE staffing, professional development, materials, office and meeting space, technology, and travel will be used to exceed the 50% required match. In July 2017, RCOE created the new College and Career Readiness unit and allocated close to a million dollars in budget to do this work and beyond. Staffing will be supported through county office budget and will include activities directly attributable to the implementation of specific RCEC convenings and coordination of regional PD events. In order to facilitate the spread of information beyond county lines, we are embracing the use of technology to make information available over a large geographic area and to allow for the retrieval of data and information related to the initiative in “real time.”

How GIA award funding will be leveraged

Since RCOE has an entire CCR unit to support the work, the large majority of GIA funds will be used to support and build district capacity of the local districts, professional development, and materials to be able to have the greatest impact in our region. GIA funding will ensure the proposed activities and practices are implemented and supported in our local districts and collaborative. RCOE staffing and oversight through matching funds will ensure effective program implementation and management. Additionally, funds will be leveraged to help secure other funding to help expand our scope and reach.

Sustainability of partnerships and work at the end of the GIA Innovation Award

The RCOE and RCEC collaborative partners are all committed to furthering the work identified in this application. The support of the GIA would allow for the acceleration of the pace of the work identified and would mitigate the barriers experienced by LEAs to attend network activities and regularly participate in the RCEC College Readiness Initiative. At this time, contracts for services are already in place with a number of participating districts. Services to be provided by RCOE include transcript analysis, coaching, principal coaching, district data coaching, common core workshops and grading practices.

RCOE has recently collaborated with the University of California Riverside to develop a proposal in response to the Institute of Educational Sciences, Partnerships and Collaborations Focused on Problems of Practice or Policy which would add a research component to the RCEC Collaborative work.

Throughout the two year GIA funding additional funding will be secured through grants, foundations, and corporate support to be able to ensure the work of GIA continues and expands beyond the two year funding period.