



April 1, 2022

The Honorable Senator Steven Bradford
California State Senate – 35th District
State Capitol, Suite 7210
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Assemblymember Mike A. Gipson
California State Assembly – District 64
State Capitol P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0064

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KEITH CURRY, Ed.D.
President/CEO

Re: Compton College Student Housing Proposal

Dear Senator Steven Bradford and Assemblymember Mike Gipson,

As you are aware, Compton College has a 95-year history of offering an outstanding and accessible college education to our community. Providing a comprehensive academic program ensures students have their basic needs covered, so they are free to pursue their education without worrying about their next meal or wondering where they will sleep each night. Research consistently shows the negative impact housing and food insecurity has on student success.

Multiple measures have been introduced at Compton College to offer students access to nutritious food, including mobile food pantry visits, grocery giveaways, and the Tartar Pantry, which opened in 2017. In response to COVID-19, we initiated a program where current students registered to receive free meals delivered to their homes each week. And in 2021, Compton College signed a [data-sharing agreement](#) with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services related to CalFresh food assistance.

Housing also continues to be a barrier to education for many students. In Los Angeles County, the number of people experiencing homelessness was last counted in 2020 at over 64,000, a 13% increase from 2019, and has increased steadily due to COVID-19. The numbers are an estimate of people experiencing homelessness on any given night, and advocates believe that the numbers are a lot higher.

In response to the effects of COVID-19, we brought housing assistance to campus with programs such as the Shallow Subsidy Housing Assistance Program. This partnership with the [Coalition for Responsible Community Development](#) provides housing grants to prevent homelessness among students.

We are looking to build student housing on campus, a project we've been pursuing for several years. The Compton Community College District Board of Trustees approved [Resolution No. 03-13-2018A "Support for Student Residential Housing"](#) in March 2018, and our Residential Housing Study was completed and shared statewide. We were encouraged when

the California State Legislature passed [Senate Bill 169 - Postsecondary education trailer bill](#). We had hoped to secure one of the one-time grants created by the bill for the construction of student housing. Ultimately, the Compton College proposal was not included on the list of funded projects by the Department of Finance. In fact, **not one community college from Los Angeles County** was awarded the construction grants for 2021-2022.

Compton College advocates for a robust investment in affordable student housing across the California Community Colleges, including the Compton College housing project. Specifically, we are seeking the following investments:

- **Award Construction Grants for 2021-22.** We support the allocation of 2021-2022 Higher Education Student Housing Grants to the four proposed projects:
 - College of the Siskiyous
 - Fresno City College
 - Imperial Valley College/San Diego State
 - Sierra College
 - Ventura College

- **Award Construction Grants to All Eligible Projects with a New Investment.** Provide a new \$320 million one-time non-Proposition 98 General Fund investment to fund affordable student housing construction grants for all eligible projects for community college students to address student affordability and the needs of housing insecure student populations. Specifically, this additional investment would allow the following eligible projects to move forward immediately:
 - Compton College
 - Bakersfield College
 - College of the Canyons
 - Cosumnes River College
 - Lake Tahoe Community College District
 - Napa Valley College
 - Santa Rosa Junior College

- **Provide Planning Grants to All Eligible Projects.** We strongly support an approach that provides all 75 planning grant applicants with resources to begin the critical work of analyzing the feasibility and development of affordable student housing projects in their communities.

- **Invest in an Affordable Student Housing Program for California Community Colleges.** Provide an investment of \$25 million ongoing, non-proposition 98, to develop an affordable student housing program for California Community Colleges. The program would provide the capacity to establish clear standards at each California Community College campus for affordable student housing, integration of student housing data into the existing Capital Outlay program and FUSION, resources for systemwide technical assistance and professional development, expansion of holistic student supports, and enable adherence with legal requirements (i.e., Clery Act Reporting, Title IX, among others).

The Compton College Student Housing Proposal would be funded with the new investment. The need is too great in our area to stop advocating for this project. According to a 2020 UCLA study, nearly one in five of Los Angeles County's community college students experience homelessness. Compton College outpaces these numbers and currently has 63% of students experiencing housing insecurity. These numbers, coupled with the number of low-income students attending Compton College, are so great that we expect our proposed Student Housing facility to be occupied 100% by eligible low-income students.

Our future campus housing uses a prefabricated modular design and includes a series of unit types designed to support a variety of living situations. Prefabricated modular construction is recommended to speed up the process, limit disruption on campus, and create a model, or a kit of parts, that can be replicated at other California Community Colleges. With assistance from the Foundation for California Community Colleges, this project can generate a statewide contract with piggyback language for preliminary Division of the State Approved prefabricated models.

Funding this project will address a pressing need of Compton College students and have a tremendously positive impact on community college students throughout the state. We consider campus housing critical to student success, offering a way for Compton College students to focus on education and career goals in a safe environment that cultivates their well-being. Additionally, campus housing will allow the college to better support targeted impacted groups like foster youth, veterans, and formerly incarcerated students. All of them report high percentages of basic needs insecurities.

For the above reasons, Compton College and Compton Community College District respectfully request your **support** for additional investment in affordable student housing across the California Community Colleges, including the Compton College housing project. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact me at kcurry@compton.edu or at (310) 900-1600 ext. 2000.

Sincerely,



Keith Curry
President/CEO
Compton College

cc: Compton Community College District Board of Trustees
Honorable Nancy Skinner, Chair, Joint Legislative Budget Committee, Senate Budget, and Fiscal Review Committee
Honorable Anthony Portantino, Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
Honorable John Laird, Chair, Senate Budget, and Fiscal Review Subcommittee No. 1
Honorable Phil Ting, Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
Honorable Chris Holden, Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Honorable Kevin McCarty, Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 2
Honorable Jim Nielsen, Vice Chair, Senate Budget, and Fiscal Review Committee
Honorable Vince Fong, Vice-Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
Gabriel Petek, Legislative Analyst (3)

Joe Stephenshaw, Staff Director, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
Kirk Feely, Fiscal Director, Senate Republican Fiscal Office
Christopher W. Woods, Senate President pro Tempore's Office (2)
Christian Griffith, Chief Consultant, Assembly Budget Committee
Joseph Shinstock, Fiscal Director, Assembly Republican Caucus, Office of Policy and
Budget
Paul Dress, Caucus Co-Chief of Staff, Assembly Republican Leader's Office
Luigi Luciano, Legislative Director, Assembly Republican Leader's Office
Jason Sisney, Assembly Speaker's Office (2)
Mark McKenzie, Staff Director, Senate Appropriations Committee
Jay Dickenson, Chief Consultant, Assembly Appropriations Committee