



WE Will! Collaborative Takes Center Stage at Press Conference with Governor Newsom

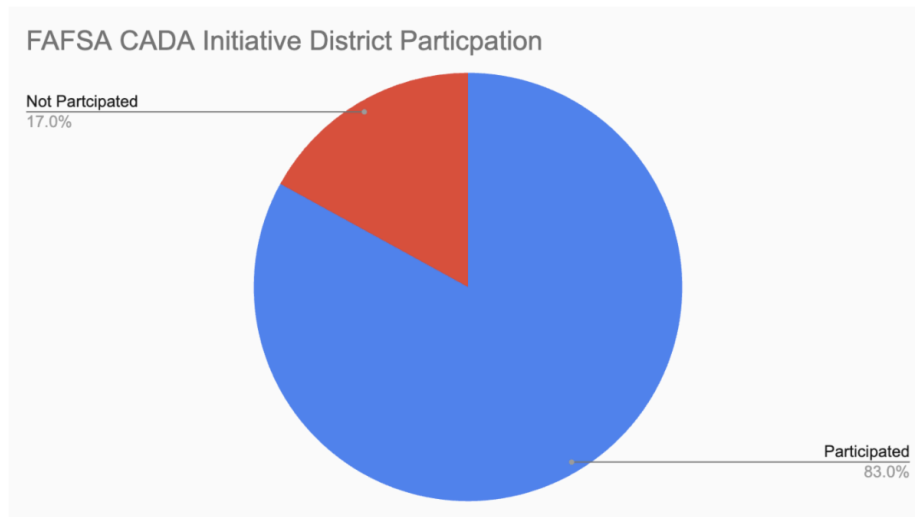
On April 2, 2026, McKenna Salazar, Executive Director of the WE Will! K16 Collaborative, attended a press conference with Governor Gavin Newsom at Modesto Junior College. During the event, Salazar highlighted the initiative's ongoing efforts, which support the region's four Recovery with Equity pillars, while Governor Newsom praised the collaborative's positive impact on the region.

[Read More](#)

FAFSA/CADDA Application Initiative

The WE Will! Facilitation and Design Team successfully launched the FAFSA/CADDA Application Initiative, with 15 of 18 partner districts participating. A total of 1,063 Amazon e-gift cards were distributed to students who met the March 3rd deadline. Students were also entered into a drawing for the chance to win an iPad or laptop, with tech devices awarded by County Offices of Education. District leaders noted that students were "excited" and "grateful" for the additional opportunity. Impressively, 83.3% of partner districts reported the initiative helped influence students' decisions to pursue post-

secondary education. Thank you to all the districts who supported in this effort to increase the FAFSA/CADAA application submission and completion efforts.





State Site Visit

The feedback we received was overwhelmingly positive. Representatives from the Foundation for California Community Colleges (FCCC) and the Department of General Services (DGS) shared that they were especially impressed by the team's passion, our collaborative work across all three counties, and the strength of our partnerships and relationships. They also highlighted our alignment with the North Valley Thrive strategy and the innovative tools developed by the UC Merced Center for Educational Partnerships for application and data management.

FCCC and DGS noted that we have all the right puzzle pieces in place—and now, our focus should be on bringing them more intentionally and cohesively together.

- Dr. Orquidea Largo
- Erick Serrato
- Jannette McAuley
- Becky Cook
- Chrissie Fusso
- Doris
- Michael Canless
- Ana Yok
- Paul Lanning
- Daniel Lepe
- Elisa Anders
- McKenna Salazar
- Diana Hernandez

Partner Project Spotlight

Project 149: Early Education Workforce Pipeline Project *Merced County Office of Education*

During this period, the Merced College Education and Allied Health Career Support Project successfully facilitated paid internships for 19 participants at local Early Learning sites, enabling



them to gain hands-on experience that enhanced their academic learning. In addition, the program provided professional development sessions on key Early Childhood Development topics, such as CPR/First Aid, CLASS, and Infant and Toddler Care. Each intern was matched with a mentor at their respective site, offering valuable guidance throughout the experience.

Upon completing their coursework and internships, students collaborated with the program coordinator to explore permanent employment opportunities with the Merced County Office of Education's Early Education division, as well as other organizations. In total, 30 English-speaking and 17 Spanish-speaking students completed 12 units through UC Merced Extension. Of these, 12 students finished internships, and 8 secured substitute positions with Merced County Office of Education Head Start classrooms.

This project has made significant strides in advancing college preparation and early credit opportunities, effectively reducing financial barriers by offering 12 Early Education units at no cost. Noteworthy accomplishments include the development of four industry-aligned courses, the creation of a comprehensive student roadmap, and the successful onboarding of interns as substitutes, helping address staffing shortages in the local community.

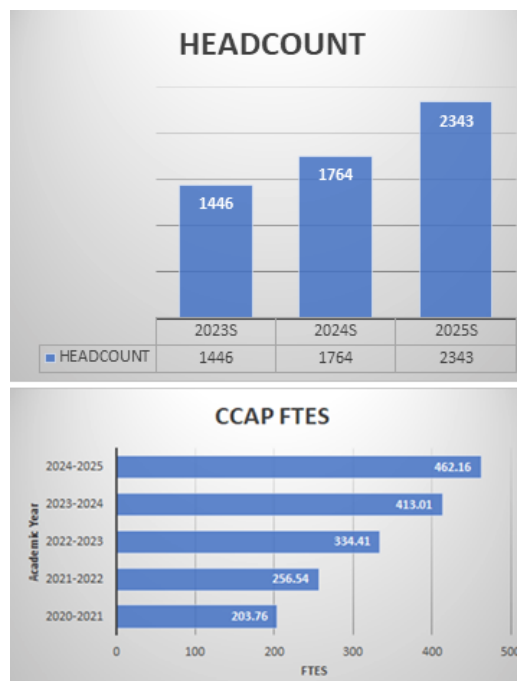
Project 97: Merced College Pathways Counseling Program ***Merced College***

Merced College's Pathway Counseling Program is a collaborative initiative that began in partnership with the Merced Union High School District (MUHSD) to support high school students participating in Dual Enrollment through the College and Career Access Pathways (CCAP) program. Thanks to the *We Will* Grant, the program has expanded to include all comprehensive public high schools within the Merced College service area.

A key feature of the program is the innovative staffing model: Pathway Counselors serve as both high school counselors and adjunct college counselors on their respective high school campuses. This dual role allows them to access both K-12 and college student information systems (SIS), enabling more comprehensive and effective academic advising. Counselors are uniquely positioned to help students understand how college coursework aligns with high school graduation requirements and postsecondary goals.

Pathway Counselors guide students through the Dual Enrollment process—from course selection to enrollment—while providing continuous academic support throughout their college-level studies as K-12 students. This hands-on, personalized approach has led to a significant increase in student participation and success. For Spring 2025, Merced College enrolled over 2,300 unduplicated high school students in CCAP courses, representing an increase of more than 575 students compared to Spring 2024.

This model demonstrates the power of collaboration and strategic counselor placement in expanding equitable access to higher education opportunities for high school students.



Project 66: Careers in Education: Pathways through Child Development to Advanced Credentials and Degrees ***Waterford Unified School District***

Waterford Unified School District is excited to have closed out our first year of our associate teacher permit program through our Re-Imagined Child Development CTE Pathway. This program started as an elective option for our comprehensive students many years ago and through hard work has evolved into a full CTE Pathway leading to certification with the California Teaching Commission for students for their Child Development Associate Teacher Permit which allows completers to enter into the workforce directly from high school into child development centers. It also sets students up for a shortened pathway towards further educational credentials via the completion of college credits while in high school. Students completed 12 units in Junior College credits and the 150 practicum hours needed for their CTC applications. We were thrilled this year to start with nine students in August and ended this May with seven students who completed all the requirements. For our small town of Waterford this a great first start as we are always looking for ways to “Grow Our Own” as part of the Waterford Way.

In addition, we worked extensively with Stanislaus County Occupational Olympics and CSU Stanislaus this year to be able to develop and support a child development competition as part of the overall Occupational Olympics. This year as part of that, we had two students enter the Children’s Literature Competition and they won for the State and will be proceeding to Nationals in June in Florida. Congratulations to Raniah Smith (author) and Serenity Dalton (illustrator) for their accomplishments with their children’s book *Cloud Talks*. It’s a story about a little girl nicknamed Cloud who has a stutter and overcomes her fear of talking to others. We wish the best in their educational endeavors in the years to come.



2025/2026 Calendar



**Save the
Dates
2025/2026**

**Executive Steering Council
10:00 am - 12:00 pm**

September 25, 2025
November 20, 2025
January 22, 2026
March 19, 2026
May 14, 2026

**Impact Network
9:00 am - 10:00 am**

September 18, 2025
November 13, 2025
January 15, 2026
March 12, 2026
May 7, 2026

Professional Learning Opportunities

CCGI Community of Practice
Industry Sector Summit - Stanislaus
Transformative Counseling
Industry Sector Summit - Merced
Industry Sector Summit - San Joaquin
Sub Award Outcomes Gathering
Work Based Learning Summit
CCGI Community of Practice
PBL Workshops

September 11, 2025
October 8-9, 2025
November 7, 2025
November 4-5, 2025
December 3-4, 2025
January 27, 2026
February 3, 2026
February 24, 2026
June 15-17, 2026

www.wewill-k16.org

Upcoming Reporting Reminders

MONTHLY EXPENDITURE REPORT



To ensure that there are no delays in future sub award expenditure reviews or future sub award payout, please be sure to include the following supporting:

- General Ledger
- Backup Expenditure Documents that align with reporting expense
- Time and Effort (if applicable)
- Required to use the Microsoft Excel template found in the Partner Repository folder.

For additional monthly expenditure reporting support please contact us:

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Contract and Grant Administration

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Diana Hernandez

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[Click Here to access the templates:](#) Fiscal Reporting Templates

QUARTERLY NARRATIVE REPORT



The upcoming Narrative Report for reporting period **April 1, 2025- June 30, 2025** **is due on July 31, 2025.**

Please log in to the [Reporting Tool](#) to access to complete your report.

If you have any questions please contact
Diana Hernandez
dianahernandez@ucmerced.edu.

Did you enjoy this email?



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