

Intentional Integration: Cross-Sector Efforts Chart a Collective Path to Career Readiness and Success

The [Los Angeles County 2nd District California Community Colleges Career Ready Pilot \(LA2CCC\)](#) has been making strides since its launch in 2022. Bringing together senior leaders from Compton College, El Camino College, West Los Angeles College, Los Angeles Southwest College, Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell’s Office, Los Angeles County, and California Competes, this collaborative initiative aims to improve career opportunities and outcomes for the residents in Los Angeles County’s 2nd District.

As the project continues into its second year, the partners are starting to see the impacts of their dedication. Before we close 2023, we want to highlight several efforts from the year that showcase the power of cross-partner collaboration.

EMPLOYER CONVENING: NURTURING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN COLLEGES AND EMPLOYERS



Photo: Su Jin Jez (California Competes), Jose Anaya (El Camino College), Brenda Thames (El Camino College), Keith Curry (Compton College), Caroline Torosis (LA County Supervisor Holly Mitchell’s Office)

Led by Compton College and held at El Camino College, this event sought to help foster a deeper understanding of how colleges and employers can partner to expand apprenticeship programs within the region. LA2CCC partners Presidents Keith Curry (Compton College) and Brenda Thames (El Camino College), along with Caroline Torosis from LA County Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell’s Office and Su Jin Jez from California Competes provided insightful introductions

from their respective work and the ongoing pilot efforts. Isidro Villanueva (LA County Department of Economic Opportunity) shed light on county-sponsored work-based learning programs that connect students to good jobs, such as initiatives like the [Hire LAX program](#), affiliated with LA Southwest, and [Careers for a Cause](#), which enrolls students at both Compton and LA Southwest. Both programs pay participants a stipend, a critical factor for many students who must work while enrolled to support themselves and their families. Jose Anaya (El Camino College) moderated a panel on apprenticeships featuring business and industry representatives. This event helped foster important dialogue and relationship-building opportunities among college staff, K-12 district staff, community partners, and employers.

BUILDING SOLUTIONS: COLLEGE AND STATE LEADERS ENGAGE IN IMPORTANT DISCOURSE TO TACKLE CHALLENGES



Photo: Back row: James Limbaugh (West LA College), Steven Koblik (California Competes [CC] Board), Brenda Thames (El Camino College), Julia Lopez (CC Board), Kyle Lee (LA County Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell), Ray Cruz (LA County), Keith Curry (Compton College), Carl Cohn (CC Board); Front row: Su Jin Jez (California Competes), Elizabeth Hill (CC Board), Libby Schaaf (CC Board), Jack Scott (CC Board), Jessica Ku Kim (LA County)

During the October 2023 California Competes Board meeting, LA2CCC partners engaged in a panel discussion to share their insights and changes in their practices from their ongoing [cross-sector efforts](#). The candid exchange underscored the leaders' shared priorities, goals, and challenges. This interaction extended beyond the panelists to involve current and former education and civic leaders, fostering an environment conducive to fresh ideas and new connections.

CLIMATE CAREERS CONFERENCE: EXPLORING THE FUTURE OF THE GREEN AND BLUE WORKFORCE





Photo: Su Jin Jez (California Competes) moderates a panel featuring Luke Meyer (LA/OC Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research), Kristina Meza (LA County Department of Economic Opportunity), and Bach Tsan (California Energy Commission)

West Los Angeles College held a statewide [Climate Careers Conference](#), organized by the college's California Center for Climate Education. One of the panels, moderated by California Competes's CEO Su Jin Jez, explored trends, regulations, and opportunities in the evolution of the green and blue workforce within the environmental and sustainability sectors. Participants heard from industry and workforce development representatives from the LA County Department of Economic Opportunity, the Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research, and the California Energy Commission. The conference, part of a three-day "Climate Action Palooza," focused on activism, environmental justice, and workforce development for future green-collar (environmental sector) jobs. Over 700 participants attended the event, including students, researchers, policymakers, practitioners, nonprofit leaders, and educators from across the state.

CONTINUING TO FUEL THE MOMENTUM FOR ADVANCING CAREER READINESS

Seizing on the success of their endeavors, the LA2CCC partners have set up infrastructure to regularly meet and engage in discussions, share challenges, formulate solutions, and plan a coordinated strategy. Through this process, they have identified their future collaborative efforts, which focus on growing their understanding of successful practices in career readiness, creating a partner-wide list of community college programs tied to careers, and developing a cross-partner strategy for pathways to economic mobility for residents of LA County's 2nd district.

The partners' work over the past 18 months demonstrate how, with aligned goals and a shared vision, county government and community colleges can effectively collaborate to promote economic opportunity and workforce development within their local communities. As LA2CCC partners continue to build bridges and break down silos, this regional career readiness pilot exemplifies the power of collaborative efforts in strengthening pathways to prosperity for its residents and can serve as a blueprint for future efforts across the state.



As we move into the new year, California Competes will focus on not just supporting but amplifying this momentum and expanding career readiness efforts beyond the LA County 2nd district region and into new regions in California (including planning for future efforts in the [Bay Area!](#)). Anticipate further updates in 2024 as we continue to drive key decision-makers towards advancing career readiness and fostering economic empowerment across the state!

