

### LAO Info (From 2023 [Background](#))

**Historically, Campus Housing Facilities Have Been Self-Supporting.** In contrast to state-supported academic facilities, all three of the higher education segments operate self-supporting facilities. These types of facilities generate their own fee revenue, which is intended to cover the capital and operating costs of those facilities. All three public higher education segments have self-supporting parking structures, certain athletic venues, and student unions. In addition, both CSU and UC have longstanding student housing programs, with all of their campuses offering some level of student housing. By comparison, most community colleges do not have student housing programs.

**Self-Supporting Campus Housing Projects Are Reviewed by Governing Boards.** To get a self-supported student housing project approved, a CSU or UC campus develops a proposal and submits it for board approval at the system level. That is, a CSU campus submits a new student housing project proposal to the CSU Chancellor's Office for subsequent approval by the CSU Board of Trustees. A UC campus submits its housing proposals to the UC Office of the President for approval by the UC Board of Regents. By comparison, a community college submits its proposal to its local governing board, with no approval required by the systemwide Board of Governors.

**To Be Approved, Student Housing Projects Must Be Financially Viable.** Personnel at the campus level as well as at the universities' central offices review each project for several factors, including its financial viability. Financial viability has two key components. First, housing projects must show that revenue generated from student housing charges will be sufficient over time to support debt service, operations, and facility maintenance. Second, the student housing charge needs to be sufficiently low to attract students and ideally achieve 100 percent building occupancy. Some housing projects find achieving financial viability difficult, as the housing charge needed to cover associated costs could be higher than students and their families want to pay. In these cases, central offices can work with campuses to redesign their housing projects to lower associated costs, and, in turn, lower the housing charges.

**Campus Housing Projects Typically Are Debt Financed.** Similar to large academic projects for which the state uses debt-financing to spread the costs over many years, campuses typically debt-finance their self-supporting projects, including their student housing projects. At the universities, CSU and UC may sell university bonds. Community colleges may sell local general obligation bonds or lease revenue bonds. Campuses across all three segments also may engage in public-private partnerships. Though public-private partnerships can be structured in various ways, in some cases, the private partner is responsible for debt-financing the housing project. In all of these cases, debt service is retired over time using revenue raised from student housing charges.

### LAO Info (From [2024 Update](#))

**State Involvement in Student Housing Issues Has Grown in Recent Years.** For many decades, the state's primary strategy for promoting college affordability was to keep student tuition charges low, while providing grants that covered tuition charges for low-income students.

- **Over the last decade, however, students have been calling greater attention to their nontuition costs, including their housing costs.** The growing amount of information and advocacy around student housing insecurity has prompted the state to create new higher education programs.
- **Some of these programs focus directly on student housing insecurity and homelessness. As the segments are implementing these types of programs for the first time,** much of their initial efforts have centered around hiring the staff and building the capacity to implement them.
- **Beyond California, some other states also have been exploring ways to address student housing insecurity.** Most of these efforts are relatively recent too, with little information compiled nationally about their program designs and effectiveness.

**UC:** Across the ten campuses, UC currently enrolls a total headcount of approximately 296,000 students. The San Francisco campus is the smallest (enrolling approximately 3,000 students), whereas the Los Angeles campus is the largest (enrolling approximately 47,000 students). **Among the three public higher education segments, UC has the largest share of students living on campus, with its residence halls housing nearly 40 percent of all undergraduates.**

Relative to the other segments, UC is more likely to provide housing assistance using on-campus resources. For example, nearly all UC campuses employ their own case managers who support housing insecure students and use their own residence halls for emergency housing

**CSU:** The CSU system has 23 campuses, consisting of 22 campuses offering a broad array of academic programs for undergraduate and graduate students, plus one campus that offers a specialized set of maritime-related programs. CSU currently enrolls a total headcount of approximately 455,000 students. Of the CSU campuses, 7 enroll fewer than 10,000 students, 5 enroll between 10,000 and 20,000 students, and 11 enroll more than 20,000 students. Although variation exists among CSU campuses, many CSU campuses have a majority of their students commuting to campus. **In fall 2022, the number of on-campus beds at CSU equated to 13 percent of all students systemwide, with the share ranging from 4 percent at the Fresno campus to 49 percent at the Sonoma campus.** The Maritime campus, which is designed to be residential, had enough beds for all of its students.

**CCC:** The CCC system consists of 116 community colleges. Of these colleges, 115 offer a broad array of lower division academic programs and career technical education programs. Each of these colleges is locally governed by one of 72 community college districts. The one remaining college is a fully online statewide college governed at the state level. CCC currently enrolls a total annual headcount of approximately 1.9 million students (now 2.2). **Of the colleges, 27 enroll fewer than 10,000 students, 47 enroll between 10,000 and 20,000 students, and 42 enroll more than 20,000 students.** Nearly all community college students are commuters. **Only 13 community colleges currently offer on-campus housing, with most of these located in rural areas that are more difficult to access (due to geography and weather) than other campuses. These 13 colleges combined have about 2,700 beds.**

### Basic Numbers ([CA Competes White Paper](#))

- Housing expenses constitute a substantial portion of students' cost of attendance, with figures reaching **43 percent UC, 57 percent for CSU, and 68 percent for CCC students.**
- Students who struggle to afford and secure housing—particularly student parents, who have greater housing costs—have poorer grades and experience delayed graduation and workforce entry. Unaddressed, this problem will worsen, **as rents continue to outpace growth in wages in 97 percent of California campus metropolitan areas.**
- **Between 2018 and 2022, off-campus housing costs increased by more than 30 percent,** exacerbating the financial burden on students.
- **One in five CCC students, 1 in 10 CSU students, and 1 in 20 UC students face homelessness.** CCC and CSU students are more likely to face homelessness than the general California population (where 1 in 12 face homelessness).
- The risk of homelessness is disproportionately higher among certain student demographics, **including women, Black and Latinx individuals, those over 24 years old, student parents, and students from low-income backgrounds.**
- **Combined, UC and CSU systems report over 30,000 students wait-listed,** and the majority of community colleges face demand that is greater than what can be provided by available housing.
- **Although all UCs and CSUs, and 10 percent (as of 2024) of community colleges, offer campus housing, it often comes at unaffordable rates or overlooks the needs of students with dependents or partners.** The existing housing infrastructure falls short of meeting the needs of current and prospective students.
- **State Recently Created Student Housing Assistance Programs. In 2019-20, the state created rapid rehousing programs at the UC, CSU, and CCC to assist students experiencing housing insecurity or homelessness.**
- **In addition, the state created basic needs programs at UC in 2019-20 and at CSU and CCC in 2021-22 primarily to provide students with housing and food assistance.**
- **In 2023-24, the state is providing a total of \$31 million ongoing General Fund for rapid rehousing programs and \$85 million ongoing General Fund for basic needs programs across the segments. State law requires each segment to report annually on these programs, with specific reporting requirements varying by segment and program.**

## Recent Legislation

- **Gov. Gavin Newsom has signed three student housing-related bills.**
- **AB 648 (Zbur)** clarifies that community colleges can build student housing on land they own or lease within a half-mile radius of campuses, no matter local zoning.
- **AB 357 (Alvarez)** aims to ease aspects of building on college campuses in coastal areas.
- **AB 893 (Fong)**, looks to spur private residential development around public colleges and universities.

## CCC Housing Projects (From [2025 Report](#))

- **12** Affordable Student Housing projects approved in the 2022-23 California Budget are referred to as Round One projects.
- The **seven** state-approved projects in the 2023-24 California Budget are called Round Two. This report contains information about California Community Colleges' housing projects and the intersegmental projects implemented with University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) campuses.
- Among the projects, 10 reported no change in bed count, while five increased the number of beds designated for income-qualifying students. Three colleges reduced their bed count as their planning and budgeting processes evolved. The total number of beds designated for income-qualifying students across all projects is **4,765** beds.
- **Colleges:** Bakersfield College, College of the Canyons, College of the Siskiyous, Compton College, Cosumnes River College, Fresno City College, **Imperial Valley College/CSU San Diego**, Lake Tahoe Community College, Napa Valley College, Sierra College, Ventura College, **Cabrillo College/UC Santa Cruz**, Cerritos College, College of San Mateo, College of the Redwoods, **Merced College/ UC Merced**, **Riverside City College/UC Riverside**, San Diego City College.

## 2024-111 California State Auditor [Report](#)

### Background

- Research indicates that students who live in campus housing have better outcomes than students who live off campus. Nevertheless, **campuses are only able to accommodate a proportion of their student population in campus housing**, and not every student seeks campus housing.

- In response to high construction and land costs for campus housing and to facilitate access to higher education, the State **established the Higher Education Student Housing Grant Program (Grant Program) to provide affordable, low-cost housing options for students enrolled at the three systems.**

### Key Findings

- Despite the State's efforts to promote an increase in student housing, the **three systems have not assumed a strategic leadership role in planning for housing across their respective campuses.**
- The **system offices do not direct or conduct any centralized planning efforts to increase the availability of student housing**, relying instead on their individual campuses to conduct such planning.
- The **system offices** compile and submit to the Legislature annual capital outlay plans that are informed by their respective campuses and **do not specify how proposed housing projects would contribute to accommodating the needs of students.**
- **None of the system offices has fully assessed the unmet demand for campus housing across their respective systems**, relying instead on incomplete measures, such as housing waitlists that may understate that demand.
- Progress on **some CCC projects** has **stalled because of significant changes that were made to the funding structure** of the Grant Program.
- **Grant Program projects also may not remain affordable** after construction because of insufficient monitoring requirements.

### Key Recommendations

- If it determines that California's public higher education systems should assume stronger oversight of their respective campuses in planning campus housing, the **Legislature should declare in state law its intent that the system offices should assume that role in planning campus housing**, and it should **identify the appropriate responsibilities for systemwide oversight** to ensure that students' housing needs are met.
- The Legislature should also **require the system offices to each develop and implement a process to biennially assess the unmet demand for campus housing across their respective campuses.**
- The **system offices should each establish a policy and process to ensure that beds or rents remain affordable for the life of each campus housing project using Grant Program funding.**
- To ensure that prospective students and their families have access to accurate and reliable information, the **three systems should establish procedures to regularly monitor their**

**respective campuses' websites to provide information about the cost to attend college and about available housing assistance programs.**