



CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

PRESS RELEASE

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California Community Colleges Are in Lockstep with President Obama's Support Plan for Student-Veterans

Chancellor Brice W. Harris pleased that vast majority of colleges have joined national initiative

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Ninety-three of California community colleges are implementing President Obama's "8 Keys to Success" plan to help student-veterans on campus, and more colleges are signing on each day, California Community Colleges Chancellor Brice W. Harris announced today.

The "8 Keys to Success" highlight specific ways that colleges and universities can support veterans as they pursue their education and employment goals. It aims to aid veterans in their effort to afford and complete their college degrees and certificates in preparation for jobs in high-growth sectors of the economy.

President Obama introduced the "8 Keys to Success" this month at the Disabled American Veterans National Convention in Orlando, and California community colleges began joining the initiative immediately. The nation's largest system of higher education has been leading the way for years in the national efforts to train and educate returning veterans and service members.

"The response from our community colleges has been astounding but not unexpected because we already place great emphasis on supporting those who served in uniform," Harris said. "From our Veterans Resource Centers that take great care of our student veterans to our workforce development infrastructure, the California Community Colleges continue to foster the personal and educational growth of our returning veterans. We're proud to help our student-vets and we're proud to strongly support President Obama's new initiative."

The keys to success encourage institutions of higher education to support veterans with access to the courses and resources they need to ensure that they graduate and get good jobs.

The "8 Keys to Success" include the following:

1. Create a culture of trust and connectedness across the campus community to promote well-being and success for Veterans.

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2. Ensure consistent and sustained support from campus leadership.
3. Implement an early alert system to ensure all veterans receive academic, career, and financial advice before challenges become overwhelming.
4. Coordinate and centralize campus efforts for all veterans, together with the creation of a designated space (even if limited in size).
5. Collaborate with local communities and organizations, including government agencies, to align and coordinate various services for Veterans.
6. Utilize a uniform set of data tools to collect and track information on Veterans, including demographics, retention and degree completion.
7. Provide comprehensive professional development for faculty and staff on issues and challenges unique to Veterans.
8. Develop systems that ensure sustainability of effective practices for Veterans.

The Obama administration's "8 Keys to Success" build on its work to provide veterans and military families with a high-quality, affordable education. In April 2012, President Obama signed an executive order establishing the Principles of Excellence (POE), which provide protections for our nation's military, veterans, and their families, including making sure veterans have the information they need to succeed in higher education.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill has also played a large role in helping returning service members attend college. The Veterans Administration has issued approximately \$30 billion in Post 9/11 GI-Bill benefit payments since its inception in August 2009, and helped nearly 1 million service members, veterans, and their families pursue their education.

"This commitment made by colleges and universities will help veterans better transition from the battlefield to the campus, find a good job and strengthen our economy," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "Given a chance, veterans will succeed because they are disciplined, self-starters accustomed to working hard."

Nearly 40 percent of all California veterans receiving GI educational benefits attend a California community college for workforce training, to earn an associate degree or to work toward transferring to a four-year university.

To see the list of the 93 California community colleges that have joined the effort, go to <http://www.ed.gov/veterans-and-military-families/8-keys-success-sites>.

The [California Community Colleges](#) is the largest system of higher education in the nation. It is composed of 72 districts and 112 colleges serving 2.4 million students per year. Community colleges supply workforce training, basic skills courses in English and math, and prepare students for transfer to four-year colleges and universities. The Chancellor's Office provides leadership, advocacy and support under the direction of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges.