



CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

PRESS RELEASE

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California Community Colleges Announces Pathway to Self-Employment Pilot to Kickoff California's Small Business Month

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – In conjunction with California Small Business Month in May, the California Community Colleges today announced a new program designed to pathway students into the small business world of freelancers, independent contractors and entrepreneurs enabled through online platforms – workers who comprise the “gig economy.”

While there's no official definition for “gig economy,” the ecosystem is built around short-term, discrete jobs or “gigs” performed by people who operate independently. A study by Edleman Berland reports that 34 percent of the American workforce – or 53 million people – are working as freelancers who “have engaged in supplemental, temporary, or project-based work in the past 12 months and are adding \$715 billion annually to the economy through their freelance work.”

“In the digital world, people can provide their services at any time and from anywhere – and they do,” said [Van Ton-Quinlivan](#), California Community Colleges' vice chancellor of workforce and economic development. “We want to help students ‘be their own boss’ by equipping them with solid tools, information and mentorship necessary to capitalize on this rise in alternative work options.”

Ton-Quinlivan announced the new program as part of the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) press conference today as part of California Small Business Month, which celebrates entrepreneurs nationwide for their contributions to the economy. Twenty colleges from across the state will be selected to offer the pilot program.

The new pilot career pathway program, “Self-Employment Pathways in the Gig Economy,” scheduled to launch in the spring of 2018, will offer a three-course curriculum. The small business management course focuses on fundamentals to prepare students to become business owners with topics such as the entrepreneurial mindset, selecting a legal structure, complying with licensing requirements, taxation, permits, insurance, human resources, intellectual property and financing. A course covering self-employment options in the gig economy will provide details about offering services through online platforms and products. The program includes a work-study course in which students earn credit for working in their own business under the guidance of a faculty mentor or advisor.

Students targeted for the program include youth, minorities, veterans and older workers in transition. The program is the wellspring of the [Doing What MATTERS for Jobs and the Economy](#) (DWM), a framework of the Workforce and Economic Development Division of the California Community Colleges. The Small Business Sector of DWM collaborates with industry and education to improve and expand business and entrepreneurial curriculum.

Charles Eason, a statewide small business sector navigator for the California Community Colleges said, “By 2020, projections show that the number of people participating in the gig economy will grow to over 40 percent of the workforce. Since being a freelancer or independent contractor technically means you are in business, we want to make sure our students have both the technical skills and the business skills they need to succeed.”

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The California Community Colleges is the largest system of higher education in the nation composed of 72 districts and 113 colleges serving 2.1 million students per year. Community colleges supply workforce training, basic skills education and prepare students for transfer to four-year institutions. The Chancellor’s Office provides leadership, advocacy and support under the direction of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges. For more information about the community colleges, please visit <http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/>.