

2023 SYSTEMS CHANGE IMPACT REPORT

IN 2023, WE CELEBRATED 25 YEARS OF UNITE-LA AND 15 YEARS OF THE L.A. COMPACT.

UNITE-LA works to transform and align public systems to achieve education and workforce equity in the L.A. region.

We engage cross-sector, cross-segmental partners in L.A. County to improve our collective understanding of the complex drivers of inequities in education and economic mobility outcomes; generate, implement, and iterate joint solutions; and use data for collective learning and continuous improvement. Partners convened by UNITE-LA share best practices to improve the capacity of systems and deliver impactful programs, advocating for changes such as increasing or realigning resources, and increasing alignment and articulation across education and career pathways.

This year, UNITE-LA's Systems-Change team made measurable progress on efforts to streamline and expand educational and career pathways, highlighted in our annual impact report.

IMPACT SNAPSHOT

\$30 M

In funding awarded to support 55 LAUSD Community Schools through the 2023-24 academic school year.

\$5.6 M

Awarded in Local Agency Technical Assistance grants from the California Public Utilities Commission to 13 cities in LA County for digital equity planning efforts, a key objective of regional LA DEAL technical assistance programming.

\$18.1 M

Awarded to develop the LA Region K-16 Collaborative, convened by UNITE-LA.

AT A GLANCE

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2023 ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS



25 YEARS
of impact

During UNITE-LA's 25th anniversary celebration, we recognized our three founding entities with awards. The City of Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) and the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) were acknowledged for their pivotal role in founding UNITE-LA in 1998, and continued partnership throughout our 25 years, including as signatories to the L.A. Compact since 2008. Without these three institutions, UNITE-LA and its partners would not be able to make such significant strides in improving education and opportunities for students across the region. The event, held at L.A. Trade-Technical College, brought together leaders, educators, students and community members to commemorate the enduring legacy of UNITE-LA's initiatives.

Celebrating the 15th anniversary of the L.A. Compact, we were also proud to premiere a video capturing the collaborative's impact and systems change wins to date.



Accepting Founders Award (from left to right): LACCD Board of Trustees President, David Vela; LAUSD Superintendent, Alberto Carvalho; Los Angeles Youth Development Department Managing Director, Lisa Salazar.

L.A. REGION K-16 COLLABORATIVE



The L.A. Region K-16 Collaborative is closing postsecondary attainment and workforce gaps for BIPOC students by streamlining pathways into health care, engineering and computer science careers. The K-16 Collaborative is forming new and leveraging existing initiatives and relationships across L.A. County, uniting higher education segments and institutions, K-12 districts and schools, employers and business organizations, local government, and community partners to amplify our collective impact on equitable degree attainment in Los Angeles County. The Collaborative is actively working to improve enrollment, retention, and completion rates in aligned career fields, while enhancing connectivity between educational segments, introducing affordability reforms, and strengthening articulated pathways for students.

KEY GOALS INCLUDE

Goal 1

Increasing college enrollment, degree completion, and the percentage of students employed in their field of study, while eliminating racial disparities.

Goal 2

Enhancing and expanding dual enrollment, articulated transfer, and work-based learning opportunities to strengthen K-12, community college, and college/university matriculation.

Goal 3

Developing and supporting regional and sub-regional collaboration to strengthen problem-solving capacity.

IMPACT SNAPSHOT

5

Subregional partnerships, accelerating pathways across K-12, community colleges, CSUs, UCs and local employers.

\$7.6 M

In funding awarded to subregional partnerships out of a total \$18.1 million opportunity.

80+

Hours spent supporting subregional proposal planning and submission.

8

Presentations delivered for county and statewide stakeholders to drive partnership and investment.

Key to the mission of the L.A. Region K-16 Collaborative, five distinct subregional partnerships are working toward goals and initiatives that support students across the county. Subregions were developed to represent trends and existing pathways in student enrollment and articulation, while respecting local community partnerships between education institutions and employers. Keeping these priorities in mind, subregions have worked together to develop funded proposals that strengthen cross-sector collaboration for student and community success.

CURRENT SUBREGIONAL INITIATIVES

- Aligning new California Ethnic Studies curriculum with STEM fields to support advisor/faculty professional development in outreach and responsiveness to underrepresented minority students entering computer science fields.
- Providing faculty stipends to create maps of stackable credentials and transfer opportunities across majors.
- Re-developing dual enrollment computer science courses (in coding and computer engineering) to count as transferable introductory courses at both community college and CSU campuses.
- Specifically articulating pathway to a BSN program directly from K-12 or through community colleges, prioritizing early access to CSU campus resources, transfer credit, and early proctorship for work-based component.
- Recruiting local businesses to develop work-based learning opportunities like job shadows, internships, and post-graduation jobs that align to skills built through curriculum.



SUPPORTING DUAL ENROLLMENT IN L.A. COUNTY



Since the introduction of the grant program in 2021, UNITE-LA has been coordinating with regional partners to prepare K-12 districts and schools in applying for and earning funds, and successfully implementing strategies to advance dual enrollment in the region.

IMPACT SNAPSHOT

\$16 M

In funding awarded to 160 schools in Los Angeles County to expand or revise dual enrollment using the College and Career Access Pathway or to develop an early- or middle-college high school strategy.

80

Education leaders and practitioners across the K-16 spectrum attended the Los Angeles County Dual Enrollment convening in March 2023, led by the Greater LA Foundation in partnership with UNITE-LA's K-16 Collaborative convening team, and in collaboration with the Los Angeles County Office of Education, California College Guidance Initiative, and Career Ladders Project.

RESULTS

UNITE-LA is supporting schools and districts that earned funding across the county with developing stronger community college relationships, utilizing the L.A. Compact and K-16 Collaborative frameworks. Partnerships are expected to yield better access to student driven data that will guide the development or revitalization of dual enrollment programs for students interested in economically sustainable careers while lessening time to completion and total degree cost.

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS GRANT AND EXPANSION



In May, Los Angeles Unified, a long-time L.A. Compact partner and signer, received a \$30 million California Community Schools Partnership Program (CCSPP) investment to sustain and expand the District's Community Schools Initiative for another five years.

Community schools mobilize meaningful resources and transform teaching and learning by lifting up the cultural, linguistic, and personal assets, and addressing the holistic needs of students, families, and local school communities. Community schools act as hubs, building and leveraging diverse partnerships to improve school climate, culture, and overall student outcomes, such as attendance, academic achievement, and high school graduation rates.

During the 2022-2023 academic year, there were 32 schools in various stages of community school's implementation under the district's Community Schools Initiative. Awarded CCSPP funds provided continued

community schools' implementation support for existing cohorts, and allowed expansion to 23 new schools in the 2023-2024 academic year for 55 schools total.

CCSPP funds will provide community schools with access to new resources, including two new wellness centers, two high school work-based learning coordinators, and college-readiness programs. It will also provide community school teams with more collaborative planning time and leadership training to better support the students in their schools.



COMMUNITY SCHOOLS STEERING COMMITTEE



Since 2019, UNITE-LA has convened the LAUSD Community School Steering Committee (CSSC), alongside LAUSD's Community Schools Initiative (CSI) department and UTLA.

In September 2023, 16 new members kicked off one-year terms, with representatives from the City of Los Angeles Parks & Recreation, LACOE, UTLA, LAUSD's Black Student Achievement Program, LAUSD's Office of Student Health & Human Services, school site principals, community school coordinators, and community organizations.

The CSSC plays four key roles, as outlined in the newly approved bylaws in November 2023, an effort facilitated by UNITE-LA:

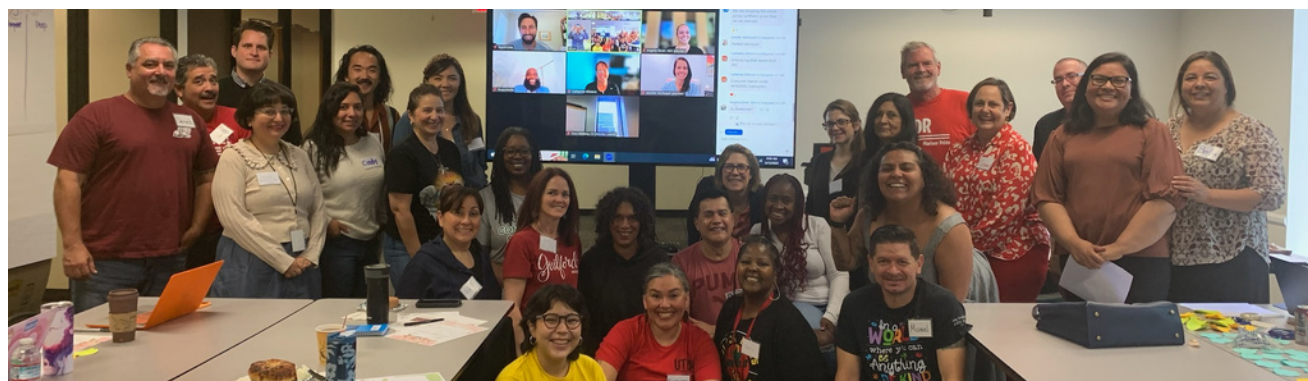
Ensuring adequate resources that build shared understanding to sustain and support the growth of the initiative.

Overseeing the outreach, recruitment, application process, and selection of new community schools.

Sharing successes and learnings from the initiative at the local, state, and national level to raise awareness and advocacy.

Supporting continuous learning and improvement for the implementation of the initiative.

In fall 2023, the CSSC proactively outreached to and recruited schools to apply for the fifth cohort of community schools within LAUSD's CSI. UNITE-LA has led the thought partnership and co-creation of the Cohort Five application and evaluation rubrics. In December 2023, the CSSC designated eight new LAUSD schools for Cohort Five, placing us closer to the CSI expansion goal of 70 schools by 2025. These schools will be included in LAUSD's CSI application for CCSPF funding in spring 2024.



Major disparities in broadband access across Los Angeles disproportionately limit marginalized communities' economic mobility. Historically, internet service was contingent on private sector investment, focused heavily in middle and high-income areas. As a result, low-income communities experienced widening disinvestment and digital redlining.

However, new public funding delivered through the **LA DEAL partnership** is closing persistent digital divides. Co-convened by UNITE-LA and LA County Economic Development Corporation, the partnership educated city leaders about AB 156 state funding grants and federal infrastructure funding, supporting the development of plans to close local broadband gaps. In 2022, LA DEAL facilitated grant awards for 13 cities, totaling over \$5.59 million for equity planning.

In May, LA DEAL convened 200 Los Angeles area community, government, public, and private stakeholders to provide input on the state's digital equity plan, developed in response to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's Infrastructure Investment

and Jobs Act Broadband Equity Access and Deployment funding program.

LA DEAL is ensuring that municipalities understand public-private partnership strategies, know about grant programs, and receive technical assistance to close digital divides. Already, six communities have applied for Federal Funding Account grants to develop their own affordable, reliable broadband networks that will benefit low-income residents. LA DEAL is expanding efforts in 2024 by formally uniting municipalities that own their networks or are interested in owning their networks to share best practices, coordinate infrastructure deployment opportunities, develop joint ventures, and build our region's capacity to provide publicly-owned broadband service.



TRANSFER STUDENT RESOURCE EXPANSION



The L.A. Compact is pursuing widespread adoption of effective transfer practices across institutions to increase student retention and successful transfer rates, especially for BIPOC students. UNITE-LA research shows Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) earners are twice as likely as non-ADT earners to transfer and persist in the CSU system. While Latinx students earn more ADTs than their white and Asian peers, Latinx transfer and succeed at lower rates.

In 2023, staff at California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH), a primarily BIPOC institution, participated in an L.A. Compact-led design-thinking process focused on improving the transfer student experience. CSUDH staff and administrators analyzed relevant data, interviewed students, and reviewed internal campus processes. As a result, CSUDH's Academic Affairs and Student Affairs teams:

- Initiated a process to expand the university's academic and social support services for historically underrepresented student groups
- Hired a full-time transfer specialist to serve students directly and support campus personnel engaged in the transfer process
- Integrated transfer center resources, like the Transfer Hub, into the admissions process
- Developed a sustainable cross-campus transfer committee to regularly look at process improvements.

CSUDH Leadership has joined L.A. Compact staff in promoting the process and outcomes to other CSU campuses in the region, which has yielded commitments from two additional campuses to engage in work to improve the transfer process for their students in 2024.



INFLUENCING LOCAL WORKFORCE STRATEGY



UNITE-LA Leaders Appointed to LA City Workforce Development Board Committees

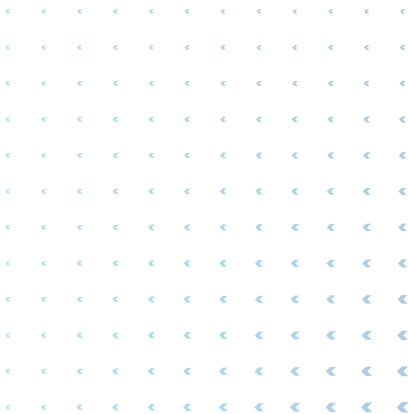
Ongoing advocacy is critical to advancing equitable workforce policy that benefits underserved communities within Los Angeles’s high-growth career sectors. To expand influence in local decision-making, UNITE-LA leadership actively petitioned for appointments on key Workforce Development Board (WDB) committees to champion priorities aligned to the organization’s mission.



Carrie Lemmon, Vice President of Systems Change Strategy, was appointed to the Los Angeles City WDB Youth Council, which supports the continual improvement, expansion, and increased impact of the Los Angeles Economic & Workforce Development Department’s programs for young people ages 14-24.



Alysia Bell, UNITE-LA President, was appointed to the WDB Five-Year Strategic Plan Ad Hoc Committee. The Committee is contributing to efforts to formulate a blueprint of strategies, policies, and goals for the delivery of workforce development services for years to come. The committee is part of L.A. City’s Workforce Development System, developed to respond to evolving struggles like inequality, incarceration, and homelessness, as well as emerging trends in the labor market of gig work, automation, and offshoring.



L.A. PERFORMANCE PARTNERSHIP PILOT



Los Angeles
Performance
Partnership
Pilot



Los Angeles faces a growing crisis of youth disconnection.

19%

Single-year surge in disconnection rates due to the COVID-19 pandemic

143,000

Opportunity youth lack critical education and employment pathways

Data exposes the need for an urgent, coordinated rapid response across education, workforce development, and youth support systems. Over the course of 12 convenings this year, UNITE-LA collaborated with cross-sector system leaders, including L.A. City Economic & Workforce Development Department, L.A. City Youth Development Department, L.A. County Department of Economic Opportunity, L.A. Community College District, L.A. Unified, and L.A. County Department of Mental Health to develop a new regional strategic plan for reducing opportunity youth disconnection.

IMPACT SNAPSHOT

The L.A. Performance Partnership Pilot (LAP3) aims to reduce Los Angeles opportunity youth disconnection by 32,000 by 2028 through these aligned, youth-centered efforts:

- 1** Increase youth connection or re-connection to education
- 2** Increase youth connection to workforce training programs and career-related education pathways
- 3** Increase opportunity youth connection to employment
- 4** Improve access to wrap-around services to meet the holistic needs of opportunity youth.



CAREER SUCCESS FOR L.A. COUNTY FOSTER YOUTH

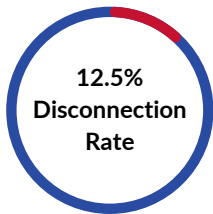


In 2019, the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) launched an automated referral system to support child welfare workers with referring foster youth to public workforce services, following advocacy efforts by the Opportunity Youth Collaborative (OYC) Foster Youth at Work Campaign. However, after two years of implementation, foster youth referrals remained low.

To identify challenges in the enrollment completion continuum and develop improvements to the referral system, LA-OYC, co-convened by UNITE-LA and the Alliance for Children's rights, commissioned a case study to understand youth's experiences being referred to and accessing workforce programming. While the case study will be officially published in 2024, UNITE-LA advanced the recommendations this year via learning calls with Foster Youth liaisons at two dozen workforce centers. We also worked with DEO to update guidance to workforce centers on the use of text messaging with youth and engaging supportive adults to complete a referral.



STATE-LEVEL ADVOCACY



In 2021, California identified over 570,000 young individuals aged 16-24 were neither in school nor employed. This crisis demanded urgent attention, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, which exacerbated disconnection rates and unraveled years of progress on the issue.

Assembly Concurrent Resolution 16 (2023)

California currently lacks a coordinated plan for serving opportunity youth (OY), resulting in a patchwork system with extremely variable approaches to serving these young people across the state. UNITE-LA supported the passage of ACR 16 in 2023, which calls on the state to develop a coordinated plan to improve career pathways for OY and reduce persistent economic inequities. In 2024, UNITE-LA will advance the implementation of ACR 16 by working closely with partners like the California Opportunity Youth Network (COYN), New Ways to Work, and CA Edge Coalition to engage the California Workforce Development Board and the Governor's office. By doing this, UNITE-LA aims to embed OY strategies into California's workforce and career education plans.

Assembly Bill 789 (2023)

This year, Governor Newsom signed UNITE-LA co-sponsored Assembly Bill 789 (Berman and Cervantes). This bill will enable students who are struggling academically due to numerous factors, often outside of their control, to maintain their financial aid and stay enrolled in higher education. This policy shift comes with strategic and inclusive changes to Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) requirements at postsecondary institutions across the state, simplifying those requirements and making them more equitable for students.



STATE INVESTMENTS CROSSWALK LAUNCH



California made unprecedented investments in college and career pathways and the whole child approach in 2021-23 state budgets, including \$128 billion for K-12 and community colleges. However, budget increases for long-underfunded education and youth development priorities were delivered with little state guidance to regions on aligning funds to achieve the greatest cross-system impact.

In response, the LA Compact team developed a [funding crosswalk](#), which outlines 17 state investments to reduce equity and opportunity gaps. The crosswalk is intended to be utilized by partners in K-12 and higher education who seek to capitalize on state and local funding that advances a cradle-to-career student-success framework.

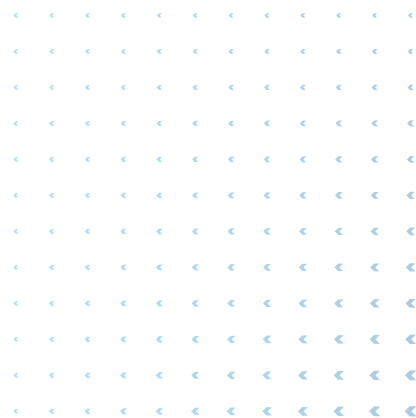
Highlighted investments include:

- The California Regional K-16 Education Collaboratives Grant Program
- Golden State Pathways
- Dual Enrollment Investments
- Community Schools
- Learning Aligned Employment

The L.A. Compact team spent the year presenting the tool in numerous contexts to stakeholders across the region and state,

such as grant-making foundations, education institutions, the LA Regional Consortium of Community Colleges, and high school and postsecondary counselors engaging in pathway planning.

To further broaden the Crosswalk's implementation and influence in the educational and funding sectors, UNITE-LA also shared the guide with influential organizations across the state, which used the tool in their own work and shared broadly among their networks. Organizations, such as Career Ladders Project and the Linked Learning Alliance, featured the crosswalk in their work attempting to support colleges and school districts across the state in promoting coherence among these funding opportunities.



ADVISING CALIFORNIA'S CRADLE-TO-CAREER DATA SYSTEM



UNITE-LA Leaders Appointed to California Cradle-to-Career (C2C) Advisory Boards

Gaps in California's data on cradle-to-career outcomes led to the development of the state's Cradle to Career Data System (C2C) initiative, a statewide data system providing tools to help students reach their goals and delivering information on education and workforce outcomes. The system's development has integrated a diverse set of perspectives to help transform individual ideas into innovative, creative accomplishments for students, families, and educators statewide. As such, C2C maintains two advisory boards to support further development of the initiative and ensure its effectiveness as an equity tool through input on the key performance metrics and user interfaces.



Adam Gottlieb, Director of Postsecondary Strategy & Policy

Gottlieb serves on the Community Engagement Advisory Board, which is responsible for examining the strength of feedback loops with data users, supporting evidence-based decision making, analytical capacity, and equitable access to information. The board will create learning and engagement opportunities across the state and advise on best use of the C2C system.



Dr. Lisa Catanzarite, Vice President of Research & Evaluation

Catanzarite serves on the C2C Data and Tools Advisory Board, which is responsible for ensuring that the data elements, dashboards, query tools, and datasets provide actionable information for practitioners, students, families, adult learners, workers, CBOs, researchers, and advocacy organizations.

UNITE-LA looks forward to the launch of the Data Dashboard in 2024, which will provide our region with critical information to identify trends in education and workforce, and help the public better understand and address student and community level success.

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS ENGAGED IN KEY 2023 INITIATIVES



**L.A. region
K-16 collaborative**



THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS

Alliance for Children's Rights
Annenberg Foundation
California Community Foundation
California Office of Public School Construction
California Polytechnic University, Pomona
California State University, Northridge Foundation
College Futures Foundation
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Los Angeles Community College District
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Pritzker Foster Care Initiative
Ralph M. Parsons Foundation
Stuart Foundation
United Way of Greater Los Angeles
University of California, Los Angeles Government & Community Relations
University of Southern California



Systems-Change is *shifting the conditions that hold inequitable outcomes in place.*

OUR SYSTEMS TEAM

Alysia Bell | President

Carrie Lemmon | Vice President, Systems Change Strategy

Amy Cortina | Senior Vice President, Strategic Partnerships

Lisa Catanzarite, PhD | Vice President, Research & Evaluation

Adam Gottlieb | Director, Postsecondary Strategy & Policy

Amber Chatman | Director, Workforce Systems & Policy

Jenny Vu | Director, Education Systems Strategy

Edgar Castillo | Senior Manager, Workforce Development Systems & Policy

Matthew Moor | Manager, Postsecondary Systems

Flavio Guzman Magaña | Senior Manager, L.A. Region K-16 Collaborative

Madison Palmer | Manager, Equity Initiatives

Dominique Rougeau | L.A. Compact Coordinator

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www.UNITELA.com

www.losangelesk16.org

www.lacompact.org