



## Career Advancement Academies

Funded by the Governor's Career Technical Education Initiative as enacted by SB70 (Scott), the Career Advancement Academies (CAAs) are community college programs designed to establish pipelines to college and high wage careers for underprepared and underemployed youth and adults (18 – 30 yrs).

Career Advancement Academies have been established in 3 regions of California, including the East Bay, Central Valley and Los Angeles. Investing \$5 million in each region over 3 years, the CAAs now include 26 community colleges in 11 community college districts, and address career pathways in key industry sectors.

These structured programs address the considerable gap between the academic and technical skills needed by employers and the preparation levels of many Californians. They provide students the skills and support they need to move to the next rung of the educational and career ladder. Career Advancement Academies:

- Integrate work readiness, career guidance, contextualized basic skills and technical training to **accelerate** progress;
- Support cohorts of students in “**learning communities**” where they take linked classes together;
- Use **partnerships** to leverage resources across community colleges, K12/adult schools/ROCPs, workforce boards, social service and community organizations, as well as the private sector, to recruit, support, prepare and place participants—maximizing efficiency, impact and reach;
- Work with **employers** and labor to target careers most in demand in the region – and ensure skills and competencies taught are relevant and what employers need;
- Have **established pipeline programs in key industry sectors**, including healthcare; human services and early childhood education; utilities, energy and green jobs; logistics and transportation; and construction/building trades;
- Include strong partnerships with **philanthropy** to support the work, track participants, evaluate the programs, and document and share effective practices.<sup>1</sup>

While the Career Advancement Academies are new, early results are encouraging—and excitement is high. Articles featuring the new programs have appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*, *Fresno Bee* and *Contra Costa Times*.<sup>2</sup> The initiative has created a living laboratory of relevant, connected and effective programs that integrate academic and career technical education and move students more quickly toward their educational and employment goals.<sup>3</sup>

In times of economic turmoil, programs like these are key to addressing the ongoing needs of California employers for a skilled and competitive workforce – and to mobilizing the vibrant energy and talents of California's multicultural and multilingual population.

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<sup>1</sup> The Career Ladders Project for California Community Colleges provides strategic and technical assistance to the overall initiative. This work is funded by several California foundations.

<sup>2</sup> Career Advancement Academy programs have been featured in the *Contra Costa Times*, 3/25/08; *Los Angeles Times*, 4/21/08; and the *Fresno Bee*, 9/29/08. For links to all these articles go to: <http://www.careerladdersproject.org>

<sup>3</sup> To hear what CAA students say, go to: <http://www.careerladdersproject.org/videoa/index.html>