

# COACHELLA VALLEY REGIONAL PLAN FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS



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## Executive Summary

The Coachella Valley Regional Plan for College and Career Readiness was completed in November 2012. This 5-year plan outlines how business and education will collaborate to create regional college and career readiness strategies, assign responsibilities for key components and develop an agreed upon sustainability plan for pipeline efforts.

# Coachella Valley Regional Plan for College and Career Readiness

CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERS COLLABORATING FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

## EARLY STRATEGY AND EMERGING STRUCTURE

In 2005, the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership (CVEP) in collaboration with The James Irvine Foundation and Riverside County Economic Development Agency/Workforce Investment Board (WIB), launched the *Career Pathways Initiative* as a strategy to raise the intellectual capital and workforce capacity of the region by aligning the community's education, workforce and economic development efforts.

Today, more than 400 program partners, including the region's three K-12 school districts, the county office of education, the community college and two university campuses have come together to support development of a system of career pathways programs to feed a pipeline of engaged students who emerge well-prepared for success in both college and career.

This pathways program has evolved into a comprehensive pipeline strategy, *CVEP Workforce Excellence*, which works backward from employer demand, facilitating industry/education/agency collaboration through industry councils organized by industry cluster. CVEP convenes councils for three clusters identified by regional leaders as holding great economic promise for the Coachella Valley and our students:

- Healthcare & Life Sciences
- Arts, Media & Entertainment
- Advanced Technologies (Energy/Clean Tech)

In 2009, CVEP partnered with the College Access Foundation of California, to launch *Pathways to Success*, a regional structure which links multiple scholarship giving organizations and student support systems in the Coachella Valley for the benefit of valley youth. The program is now fully integrated into the comprehensive CVEP Workforce Excellence pipeline strategy, linking business, education, regional economic development and a variety of local non-profits under the unifying goal of improving college going rates and college success for our under-served youth. To date, more than \$7 million has been awarded to 1,400 local students through the Pathways to Success regional scholarship network.

In total, CVEP's Workforce Excellence initiatives address the region's need for: 1) a top quality workforce to serve a growing population in high wage industries, 2) decreased high school dropout rates, 3) increased college readiness, enrollment and completion rates, 4) increased opportunity for students from disadvantaged backgrounds to pursue college and careers, and 5) qualified local students to fill the workforce pipeline.

Workforce Excellence provides programs and services to over 4,500 students per year, including an average of 430 scholarship recipients, high school and middle school career academy students, area high school seniors, College of the Desert and CSU students locally. In addition, our scholarship work is directed at parents of students and we estimate that we reached over 2,500 parents last year through workshops, advertising and commercials.

## GOING FURTHER

In 2006, the Ford Motor Company Fund designated the Coachella Valley as one of three, national best-practice Next Generation Learning (NGL) communities. Today 19 communities are part of this network.

Ford's NGL mission is to help communities transform local systems to assure that all students graduate prepared for college, career and life. A key strategic component of Next Generation Learning is development of a master plan. The master plan is similar to a strategic business plan, which guides the development or growth of a successful career academy network in a community. Community leaders work together to develop a vision/mission statement, strategies for meeting the vision, action steps, measurable outcomes, lead person or team responsible, timelines and yearly goals.

The process of creating the master plan assures a culture of shared accountability in which community stakeholders participate in collecting and reviewing data to measure progress, work collaboratively to build a climate of trust that welcomes the perspectives of all stakeholders, and maintains a commitment to continuous learning and improvement.

The Coachella Valley Regional Plan for College and Career Readiness (our master plan) was written between March and September 2012 with input from 75 local stakeholders. In fall 2012, the boards of education for Palm Springs Unified, Desert Sands Unified and Coachella Valley Unified school districts, and College of the Desert passed resolutions supporting the implementation of the plan for the coming five years.

Grounded in research from the Ford Motor Company Fund and the Ford Next Generation Learning national network, this five-year plan is structured around the three strands of Next Generation Learning:

- Transforming Teaching and Learning
- Transforming Secondary Schools
- Sustaining Change through Business and Civic Leadership

In addition, the Coachella Valley is creating and piloting a fourth strand, which is focused on **College and Career Readiness**.

CVEP's Board of Directors, through the Workforce Excellence Oversight Committee, monitors plan implementation progress on a monthly basis, and will convene for an annual in-depth review and assessment of the plan to chart progress and update progress targets. Further, the WE Oversight Committee has established an Education Engagement Sub-Committee with leadership representation from all three K-12 district districts, the county office of education and the community college, which meets monthly to advance implementation of the plan at the district level.

Currently, there are 15 California Partnership Academies in Coachella Valley High Schools, serving roughly 2,500 of the region's 20,000 high school students.

### **Coachella Valley's Vision:**

The vision for the Coachella Valley Regional Plan for College and Career Readiness is that all students will graduate high school prepared for college, career and life.

The plan identifies a 5-year goal of enrolling a minimum of 30% of students in career or interest-themed academy, pathway or similar programs, and details specific strategies to strengthen and grow regional career academy and work-based learning delivery structures to assure high-quality, rigorous and relevant academic experiences for these students using the Linked Learning approach.

The plan also describes specific strategies to advance college and career readiness for all students, including development of personal graduation plans, strengthening counselor collaboration opportunities, improving the high school graduation rate, boosting A-G course completion, building a locally funded endowment for the scholarship program and designing outreach strategies for parents and students beginning as early as middle school.

**Coachella Valley's Preliminary 5-Year Targets Include:**

- 30% (minimum) of students will be enrolled in career- or interest-themed academy/pathway
- 80% (minimum) of students will have a personalized graduation plan to guide their college and career readiness
- 10% increase in the region's high school graduation rate
- Increase region's FAFSA completion rate to 85%
- 10% increase in the region's college-going rate
- 60% (minimum) of high schools will implement flexible scheduling, extended learning opportunities or other credit structures to provide additional support for college and career preparation
- Increase Cal-Grant award "uptakes" by 10% annually.
- Districts will identify leading college and career ready indicators at all levels and regularly monitor student progress via data dashboard, transcript evaluation or other tool
- CVEP and partners will establish an endowed scholarship structure generating \$1M annually
- Business and civic leaders will advocate for legislative changes that support CTE program development