

San Diego
Community College
District

**Learning-Aligned
Employment
Program
(LAEP)**

Districtwide
Implementation
Handbook

Last update: **October 2023**

SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT LEARNING-ALIGNED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM HANDBOOK

Purpose

This districtwide handbook provides agreed upon, districtwide commitments and guidance for the implementation and management of the Learning-Aligned Employment Program (LAEP) across San Diego City College, Mesa College, and Miramar College.

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Background and Funding

The Learning-Aligned Employment Program (LAEP) is a state work-study program established in the 2021-22 State Budget. This 10-year program offers eligible students at public colleges and universities the opportunity to earn money to help cover their educational costs while gaining education-aligned, career-related employment. LAEP includes stipulations regarding eligibility and prioritization including an emphasis on specific priority populations and is managed by The California Student Aid Commission (CSAC).

The San Diego Community College District's three credit Colleges, San Diego City College, Mesa College, and Miramar College signed and submitted the 10-year Institution Participation Agreement to administer the program.

Institution Participation Agreement – Points of Contact

	City College	Mesa College	Miramar College
Financial Aid Director	Wendy Wang (prior Susana Kennemer)	Gilda Maldonado	Vincent Ngo
Career Services /Workforce Development Lead	Sasha Knox	Alexander Berry	Claudia Estrada-Howell
LAEP Coordinator	Lilibeth Rodriguez	Lilibeth Rodriguez	Vincent Ngo

Funding

LAEP funds are based on their proportion of Pell Grant recipients and were provided in full. Total funding was awarded in year one.

	Student Funds	Administrative Cost Allowance (5% max)	Total
City College	\$2,536,613.00	\$133,506.00	\$2,670,119.00
Mesa College	\$2,450,276	\$128,962	\$2,579,238.00
Miramar College	\$1,496,995	\$78,790	\$1,575,785.00

Administrative Cost Allowance

Administrative Cost Allowance (ACA) is limited to 5%. Institutions may use up to 5% of funds for costs related to administering the program. Costs may include, but are not limited to outreach and marketing, hiring a NANCE to assist in program administration,

reporting to WebGrants, program reconciliation, and troubleshooting and campus support.

During year one of LAEP implementation, Colleges were given the opportunity to centralize administration of the LAEP program through District Educational Services and to pool their ACA funding to support a districtwide role.

As of May 2023, San Diego City College and Mesa College agreed to do so. Miramar College chose not to do so. ACA funds are accessible for by CTE, Financial Aid and District.

SDCCD Fund Allocation Usage

District Finance Department has created this chart to ensure funds are being used correctly.

	LAEP (fund 1554)	5% ACA (fund 1555)
Usage of funds	*Offers eligible students the opportunity to earn money (on and off-campus)	*Program supports (such as personnel, operating expenses...)
Coverage of fringe benefits	*No	*Yes
Local plans/processes for covering Fringe benefits	*City and Miramar: For on campus placements, total cost of fringe benefits will be the responsibility of the department where the student has been placed. For off campus placements fringe benefits is the responsibility the off-campus employer. Mesa: pending for final decision (as of September 2023)	N/A

Districtwide LAEP Workgroup

Coordination and support for LAEP implementation and management is tied to the Districtwide LAEP Workgroup.

Type: Organizational (role based)

Purpose: To support districtwide collaboration, across colleges and department areas (business services, HR, etc.), for aligned implementation and management of LAEP.

Convened by: Educational Services Division, Student Services Department

Lead: Lilibeth Rodriguez, Business Systems Analyst

Representation: Representation includes both district and college roles and functions including: District business services, student services, and HR, College LAEP implementation teams including financial aid, career services, and work-based learning.

Reports to: Vice Presidents of Student Services; Vice Chancellor of Educational Services. Updates provided to the Chancellor's Cabinet.

Meeting frequency: ad hoc;

Meeting agendas and materials are available on the [workgroup resource page](#).

The Why Behind Districtwide Efforts

There are three main reasons for ensuring districtwide alignment and support for LAEP implementation:

1. Student recruitment and retention
 - State and national surveys indicate that one of the leading reasons students attend college is for employment or work purposes/goals. Students are looking to our colleges to find meaningful paid work opportunities.
 - Paid internships are a critical need for students. Regularly students have to choose between supporting their families – paying rent, etc. – and continuing their education. Paid internships can help minimize or even remove this choice and help students earn money while pursuing a degree and, ideally, earn money in a position that is meaningfully tied to their career.
 - LAEP provides a mechanism to fund meaningful placements.
 - Mechanisms that can help community colleges compete with private institutions that guarantee internships for all students are vital for recruitment and retention efforts.
2. Employer Engagement
 - LAEP comes not only with strict student eligibility requirements, but also with employer eligibility requirements. The employer facing components of LAEP makes this program both an internal student support resource and an external employer engagement mechanism.
3. A Good Excuse - LAEP provides each college and the District with an excellent opportunity to explore how to strengthen internal infrastructure for supporting all students with paid internship opportunities. Local and districtwide internship placement infrastructure is needed to meet the basic career services needs of our students.

Student Eligibility

To be eligible to participate in LAEP the student must meet the following criteria:

- Underrepresented background
- Enrolled at least Half Time (6 Units)

- California Resident/AB540
- Maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)
- Demonstrate Financial Need
- Eligibility to work in the United States

Underrepresented Background

First Generation*	Low Income	Current or Former Foster Youth*	Homeless or At Risk of Homelessness*	Students with Disabilities
Displaced Workers	Students with Dependent Children	Formerly Incarcerated	Undocumented/AB540	Veterans

*Prioritization is given to the green highlighted student groups, as well as students majoring in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) disciplines.

Student Placements

Student may be placed on-campus or off-campus. Placement processes, requirements, and employer reimbursement are based on employer type. Employers must be eligible for LAEP. See Employer Eligibility section for details.

Student Summer Placements

Institutions may allow students to participate in LAEP over the summer. The student must continue to meet eligibility requirements for the aid year, summer term is our trailer. The student must also remain enrolled half time (6 units) during the summer term.

Student On Campus Placements

Student may be placed on-campus as Research Assistants. See Student Compensation – On Campus section for details. Non-Academic Non-Classified Employee (NANCE) are short-term hourly employees. They are not eligible to work more than 8 hours a day, 19 hours a week, or 1,000 hours a fiscal year (July 1 through June 30).

Student Agreement

All colleges have agreed to incorporate student agreements for all placements funded through LAEP. See agreement section for details.

Student Compensation

Student’s compensation should be at a comparable rate to that paid for comparable positions within the employing organizations.

On Campus

All on campus placed students will be on barded as a Non-Academic Non-Classified Employee (NANCE) under one of the following classification:

Effective January 1, 2023 - 5.41% increase and \$16.30 minimum wage*	
Classification Title	2023 Pay Rate
Research Assistant I	\$20.37
Research Assistant II	\$24.43
Research Assistant III	\$27.14

**Subject to change*

Off Campus

Employers must pay the student a comparable rate to that of comparable positions within their organization

Determining Student Eligibility

Campus Financial Aid offices will determine student eligibility and maximum award amount or maximum hours of LAEP work for the term, similar to Federal Work Study.

- LAEP does not have a tolerance for over awarding. In these cases, over awarded funds will have to be paid back by the student or the campuses general funds.
- If the student is placed on campus for the full year, there is a weekly limit up to 19 hours max. If they will only be placed for 1 or 2 terms, the student should not go over 1,000 hours.

Queries

District Educational Services created queries to identify Fed ISIR students that may be eligible. These queries are available for all colleges to use locally. Use of these queries is optional.

- Projected Eligibility Query: (use before census)
 - There is a projected query that shows students that are eligible prior to the beginning of the term. It validates:
 - FA Unmet Need
 - Projected Enrollment
 - California Resident or AB540
 - Citizenship Status (eligibility to work)
 - SAP Status

- Program Plan information
 - Parents Highest Grade (verify first generation)
 - Foster youth (self-reported or verified)
 - Homeless or At Risk (self-reported or verified)
 - College 2 Career [(C2C) potential students with disabilities]
- This can be used to do outreach to possible eligible students.
- Actual Eligibility Query: (use after census)
 - Same as above, except it is actual enrollment. Best used after census.

Access: To receive a query, contact [Lilibeth Rodriguez](#).

In progress – As of Fall 2023, District Educational Services is working to add veterans, formerly incarcerated, and student with dependent children to the query. Additionally, Educational services is also working to create the above queries for Cal ISIR students.

Losing Eligibility

Student can lose eligibility while being placed in a LAEP position, if:

- The student underrepresented background no longer applies the institution can reevaluate if any of the other statuses are applicable.
- The student may no longer be meeting SAP from one term to the next.
- If the institution finds the student is no longer eligible. The institution should alert the employer within a reasonable amount of time.

Employer Eligibility

The institution shall develop partnerships with employers willing to contribute resources toward a percentage share of student compensation to be paid by the employer and by the program.

Employer Types

The following employer types are eligible to employ LAEP students:

- Nonprofit and for-profit employers – Nonsectarian, nonpolitical organizations capable of providing full-time employment after graduation or connection to another employer able to provide full-time employment after graduation.
- Public colleges – Research centers and institutions operated by public postsecondary educational institutions, if their learning-aligned employment opportunities provide participating students with direct opportunities to participate in the research that is undertaken by the respective research centers and institutions.
- Public schools - Public schools operated by school districts, county superintendents of schools, the Department of the Youth Authority, or the Department of Education

Employer Requirements

Employers must agree to:

- Signing an Employer Agreement (see agreement section)
- Placing students only in an educationally beneficial position that relates to the student's area of study, career objective, or the exploration of career objectives
- Paying the student, a comparable rate to that of comparable positions within their organization
- Ensuring the position does not displace workers currently employed by the organization

Employer Reimbursement of Wages

LAEP funds may provide reimbursement to employers for the wages of the students placed through the LAEP program.

Reimbursement is based on employer type:

- If the direct employer is the University of California, the California State University, the California Community Colleges, or one of its respective campuses, the program may provide up to **100%** percent of the student's compensation. [CEC 69962(a)(1)(B)]
- For learning-aligned employment positions with public educational institutions or nonprofit corporations, LAEP may provide up to **90%** percent of the student's compensation. [CEC 69962(a)(1)(A)]
- For learning-aligned employment positions with for-profit employers, the program may provide up to **50%** percent of the student's compensation. [CEC 69962(a)(2)]

Definition of Research

LAEP guidance allows for each college or district to define "Research." City, Mesa, and Miramar Colleges have agreed to the following definition:

Partnership work with faculty, staff, and industry that provides exposure for the student with a commitment to excellence, strengthening and creating tangible impacts on community and student success.

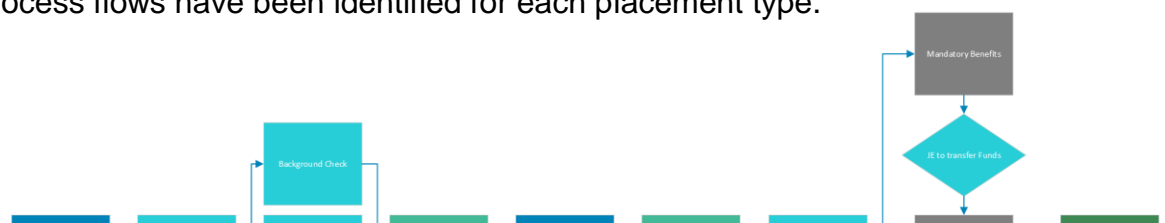
Working with Employers / Recruiting Employers

Each college is responsible for engaging employers and working with employers throughout all LAEP processes.

Colleges will leverage their Employer Relations Liaisons (ERLs) to work directly with employers for off-campus placements.

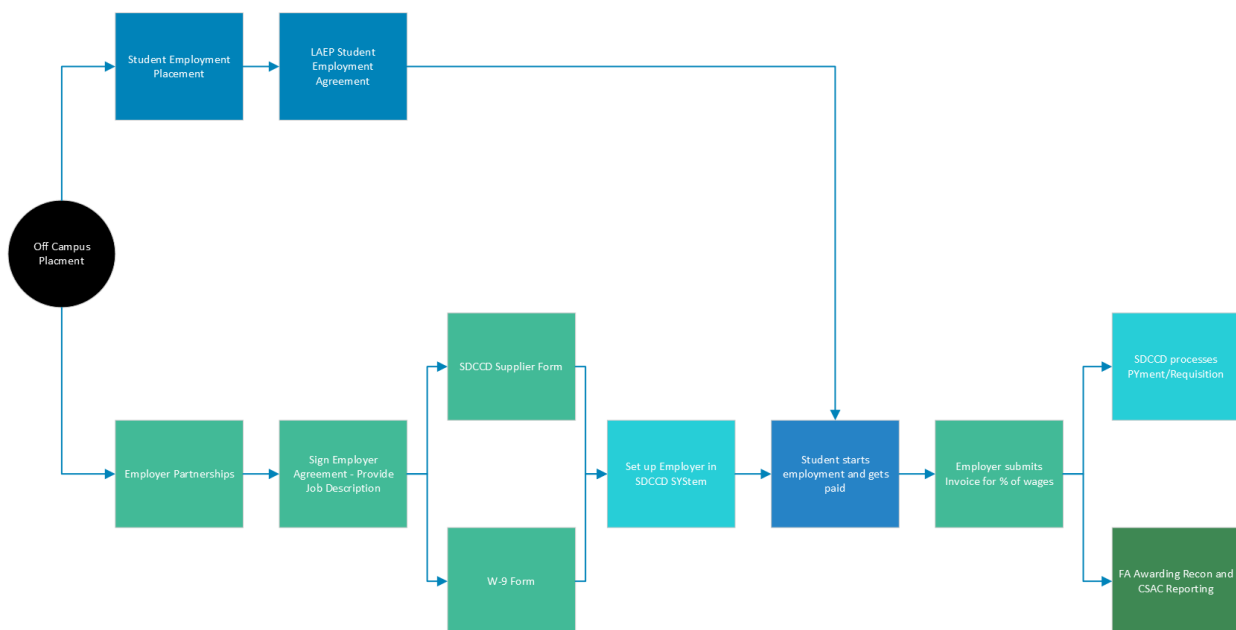
Process Flow

Districtwide process flows have been identified for each placement type.



On Campus [link to pdf version](#)

Off-campus [link to pdf version](#)



Agreements

Employer agreements are a required component of LAEP. Student agreements are not required by LAEP but City, Mesa, and Miramar have agreed to utilize them.

The following sections provide access to districtwide templates for both student and employer agreements. Template provided may be used by the campuses and edited as needed to meet college-specific or program-specific needs.

The agreements have to articulate the responsibilities of the participating parties (employers and students) and the purpose of the career aligned position provided to the students.

Confidentiality

All student data shall be considered confidential, and any release of information shall comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”). LAEP Employer and its employees shall be considered a “school official” with “legitimate educational interests”. College education records, as defined by [BP 5040 – Student Records, Directory Information and Privacy](#) and as defined under FERPA and its implementing regulations, of any student participating in the LAEP, to the extent those records are necessary for the student’s participation in the LAEP.

Company and its employees agree to abide by the limitations and requirements imposed on school officials, only use the education records for the purposes related to the student’s participation in the MIP, and not share such data with or disclose it to any third party except as required by law, or authorized in writing by the District.

Student Agreement:

[This link provides access to the most current districtwide template for a student agreement.](#)

College may choose to customize this template or adjust their local context if needed.

Employer Agreements

On Campus Placements

Employer agreements for on campus placements are not required by LAEP but it is recommended to have a “light” version of the employer agreement to ensure faculty and staff are aware of the requirements of the position as well as the expectations of “supervisors.”

[This link provides access to the most up-to-date districtwide template/version:](#)

College may choose to customize this template or adjust their local context if needed.

Example customized version – San Diego Mesa College’s On Campus Employer Agreement



City College LAEP
Employer Agreement

Off-campus Placements

[This link provides access to the most up-to-date districtwide template/version:](#)

College may choose to customize this template or adjust their local context if needed.

Example customized version – San Diego Mesa College’s MIP Employer Agreement for LAEP



MIP Employer
Agreement (LAEP) - 5

Invoicing

Invoicing is required for all off-campus placements.

Off-campus Employer Invoices:

If campuses are collaborating with off-campus employers to provide LAEP positions to a student, local LAEP coordinators must work with their LAEP teams are recommended to work with their local campuses Business Services Office.

In general, in order for an off-campus employer to be reimbursed they must be submit the following documents:

- [SDCCD Supplier Intake Form](#)
- [Employer Form W-9](#)
- [ACH Direct Deposit Form](#) (Optional – If they want to be paid by Direct Deposit. Needs to be mailed in or submitted in person)
- Signed Employer Agreement (LAEP requirement) – see agreement section
- Job Description for the role the student will be filling (LAEP requirement)

Additional local, college-specific requirements may apply.

With these forms, submitted and reviewed, Colleges local business services Office is able to create a Blanket Purchase Order (PO) for the estimated amount the employer is

expected to invoice the SDCCD. This process ensures the PO is available as invoices come in.

When the employer begins submitting invoices for reimbursement, they will need to submit:

1. Invoice (ensure the PO number is listed)
2. Total hours student worked (timesheet)
3. Total wages paid
4. Proof (paystubs)

These submitted invoice and documents must be reviewed and approved/signed by the college’s authorized approver. All submitted invoices to be paid must have the off-campus employer corresponding PO number. The college will send the approved invoices to APinvoice@sdccd.edu for processing by Accounts Payable (AP) staff.

All AP invoices are net 30, meaning the SDCCD has 30 business days from the receipt of the invoice to pay.

If the partnering employer needs to be reimbursed in less than 30 days, the College who placed the student with that employer will work with their local business services office to identify the ability to prioritize the request and process the request faster.

Financial Aid Award Posting

On Campus Placements - Item Types

For on campus placements the following item types will be utilized. They do not have a GL attached to them, are not disburseable, and are not refundable.

	Item Type	Descr
On Campus Employers	911200000350	Learning-Aligned Empl Prg-City
	911200000350	Learning-Aligned Empl Prg-Mesa
	911200000350	Learning-Aligned Empl Prg-Mira

Off-campus Placement – Item Types

For off-campus placements, CSAC stated: “For awarding and packaging purposes, you should use the student’s net LAEP earnings, which is the **total** wages received excluding taxes and any other deductions.”

In order to comply, Colleges will utilize the following 12 additional item types (2 per campus) – one to post wages paid by the employer and the other to post wages refunded to the employer from LAEP funds. These item types do not have a GL attached to them, are not disburseable, and are not refundable.

	Item Type	Descr
Non-Profit Employers	911200000360	LEAP 10% Employee Paid-City
	911200000360	LEAP 10% Employee Paid-Mesa
	911200000360	LEAP 10% Employee Paid-Mira
	911200000361	LEAP 90% Employee Reimbursed-City
	911200000361	LEAP 90% Employee Reimbursed-Mesa
	911200000361	LEAP 90% Employee Reimbursed-Mira

	Item Type	Descr
For-Profit Employers	911200000355	LEAP 50% Employee Paid-City
	911200000355	LEAP 50% Employee Paid-Mesa
	911200000355	LEAP 50% Employee Paid-Mira
	911200000356	LEAP 50% Employee Reimbursed-City
	911200000356	LEAP 50% Employee Reimbursed-Mesa
	911200000356	LEAP 50% Employee Reimbursed-Mira

Campus Financial Aid offices will determine student eligibility and maximum award amount or maximum hours of LAEP work for the term, similar to Federal Work Study. LAEP does not have a tolerance for over awarding. In these cases, over awarded funds will have to be paid back by the student or the campuses general funds.

If the student is placed on campus for the full year, there is a weekly limit up to 19 hours max. If they will only be placed for 1 or 2 terms, the student should not go over 1,000 hours.

Reporting, Reconciling, and Auditing

Reporting

All Student Data and ACA spending for the 2022-23 academic year (and each subsequent year) must be reconciled and reported in WebGrants no later than September 30th.

As of spring 2023, District Student Services is responsible for reporting for City and Mesa College. Miramar College has chosen to manage their required reporting locally. See uses of ACA funding on page 4 for details.

Reconciling

- CSAC
 - The institution is required to reconcile annually and report to CSAC the total LAEP fund expenditures (student compensation and administrative allowance) by September 30.
 - Any interest earned on LAEP funds should be applied to LAEP student wages or returned to CSAC.
 - After June 30, 2031 no LAEP payments can be processed and any unused funds including remaining interest earned is to be returned to CSAC by September 30, 2031.
- Financial Aid and HR (On Campus Placements)
 - HR is providing Financial Aid reports on a monthly basis with the amounts paid to the students.
 - These amounts are also posted as disbursed aid on the FA Award page.
- Financial Aid and Finance
 - *As of May 2023, District Educational Services is working to finalize tools to be used to reconcile between Financial Aid and Finance.*

Auditing

CSAC is currently working on clarification regarding auditing.

As of May 2023, CSAC stated that there would be leniency the first year.

Documentation

For each student placed in a LAEP position, the institution must maintain required documentation. Colleges should retain, at minimum, the following documentation for audit purposes:

- Need Analysis
- Financial Aid Awards
- Underrepresented background verification
- Employer Agreements
- Student Agreements
- Time Sheets
- Record of Payments
- LAEP Position
 - Job Description
 - Relation to Student's Area of Study
 - Capability of Connecting to Full-time Employment (Employer Agreement)

Advocacy

SDCCD has created an advocacy document regarding some of the hurdles encountered throughout the first-year implementation of LAEP. Current advocacy efforts have been endorsed by the districtwide workgroup, approved by the Chancellor's Cabinet and shared regionally.

- [Current advocacy document is available here.](#)

As of October 2023, regional endorsement is underway as well as statewide support.

Resources and Reference Materials

CSAC Resources

The LAEP website www.csac.ca.gov/laep

- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
- Flyers and slide decks
- Employer Agreement template
- Recorded past webinars

[CSAC Statewide LAEP Handbook](#). Includes:

- Program Administration
- Student and Employer Eligibility
- Fiscal Management and Payments

CSAC Statewide Workgroup

If you want to join, email laep@csac.ca.gov

SDCCD Resources

The [SDCCD LAEP Website](#)

- Advocacy Document
- Placement Flow Charts
- Agreement Templates
- Past Meeting Materials