



# 2023 IMPACT REPORT



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# UNITE-LA

## About Us

Founded as an intermediary in 1998 by the City of Los Angeles, L.A. Community College District and L.A. Unified School District, UNITE-LA's mission is to advance equitable economic mobility and well-being through collaboration that strengthens systems, policy, and high-quality education and career pathways.

## Building on a Strong Foundation

With 2023 marking UNITE-LA's silver anniversary, nearly 300 partners gathered for a 25th Anniversary Symposium to recognize the many individuals and institutions who helped make it all possible, celebrate our collective impact over the last quarter century, and dream boldly about what we can achieve together in the next 25 years.



## Leaning into the Next Quarter Century

With a growing team of talented individuals, and the leadership of a tremendous Board of Directors, UNITE-LA is energized to move incredible partnerships forward that advance a shared vision of Los Angeles having a diverse and inclusive rising workforce experiencing equitable economic mobility and well-being, resulting in a thriving region.

As UNITE-LA leans into the next quarter century, our systems change work is spanning the county with the organization's role as regional convener of the K-16 Collaborative, aimed at streamlining pathways across systems for students of color in health care, computing and engineering.

The organization is growing and diversifying business engagement in equitable cradle-through-career policy priorities, as UNITE-LA deepens its partnerships with 30 business organizations and coalitions to advocate for investments that promote a diverse and inclusive rising workforce.

As UNITE-LA expands its established career pathways in the health care and technology sectors, the organization has now launched the LA Regional Cleantech Career Academy at the height of the clean energy transformation, building pathways for an inclusive workforce in this expanding sector.

UNITE-LA is also doubling down on its commitment to digital equity through the organization's co-convener role with the Los Angeles Digital Equity Action League (LA DEAL) Consortium - a collaborative, community-driven process to assess and tackle broadband gaps.



# 2023 POLICY & STATE BUDGET WINS

Through numerous advocacy trips to Washington, D.C. and Sacramento, as well as opportunities to connect with local elected officials throughout Los Angeles, including the offices of all five County Supervisors, UNITE-LA was able to elevate cradle-through-career priorities, support key investments, and advocate for transformational policies.



## Early Care and Education

UNITE-LA supported California's cradle-through-career investments of \$1.4 billion over two years to supplement reimbursement rates for all subsidized child care providers starting in January 2024. This changes the child care and preschool family fee structure by prohibiting fees for families with income below 75 percent of the state median income (SMI). Families between the 75th and 85th percentile of the SMI will pay no more than 1 percent of their monthly income. This also forgives pre-pandemic family fee debt.

## Higher Education

On Oct. 8, Gov. Newsom signed UNITE-LA co-sponsored Assembly Bill 789 (Berman and Cervantes). Joined by eight other leading advocacy organizations in college affordability and student success, this legislative win comes after a year of working with organizations and institutions across the state to develop a student-centered policy that will enable students who are struggling academically due to numerous factors, often outside of their control, to maintain their financial aid.

AB 789 will help to mitigate barriers for students from underserved communities impacted by structural racism.

### Dual Language Learners (DLL)/English Learners (EL)

UNITE-LA is proud to have supported six DLL/EL bills, five of which were passed and signed by Gov. Newsom. These pieces of legislation will create a more equitable pathway for English learners to earn the State Seal of Biliteracy, will enable data use to identify and support dual language learners in early education, and will help fund both the professional development of bilingual educators and an initiative to create guidance for supporting newcomers.



### DID YOU KNOW?

To support ELs, especially during the early stages of their lives, UNITE-LA partnered with Quality Start Los Angeles (QSLA) to launch the “Two Languages, Twice the Opportunities” media campaign in English, Spanish and Chinese to encourage and support families who speak more than one language at home and to promote the benefits of bilingualism for children and families. This campaign is part of a larger collaborative effort among UNITE-LA, First 5 LA, Early Edge CA, LACOE and The Child Care Alliance Los Angeles to support dual language learners throughout L.A. County.

Together, we distributed 280 posters, 40,000 brochures, along with multilingual instructional letters to 129 child care businesses, 98 libraries and 34 welcome baby/select home visitation sites.



### Opportunity Youth

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 Assembly Concurrent Resolution 16 (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. To learn about the most pressing issues facing OY, as well as their importance to the state's future, see our [case statement](#) and view the [recording](#) of our recent *Education Means Business* Policy Webinar with Assembly Majority Leader Isaac G. Bryan.

### Growing and Diversifying Business Engagement

With business as an important ally for cradle-through-career education and workforce development, UNITE-LA has grown and diversified engagement through 30 partnerships with business organizations and ethnic chambers of commerce across the region and throughout the state. The 2023 impacts of these partnerships include securing the support of 12 business organizations to support this year's state investment on child care reimbursement rates and full funding for the Golden State Pathways Program. Additionally, UNITE-LA is proud to now serve as co-chair of the Executive Committee of the California Stewardship Network, with whom we hosted a Regional Energy Policy Convening and developed education and workforce-focused sessions for the annual California FWD Economic Summit first ever session on child care, early learning and the economy as well as a session highlighting the intended impacts of the L.A. Region K-16 Collaborative and Golden State Pathways program to build stronger, more equitable talent pipelines. [Learn more.](#)





# PROGRAMS

UNITE-LA made remarkable strides in 2023 empowering youth and young adults through a comprehensive suite of college access and STEAM career pathway programming aimed at high-mobility careers in the growing sectors of health care, technology and clean energy.



## STEAM Career Pathways

In 2023, UNITE-LA's workforce programs served a total of 3,566 participants with 8,126 engagements. UNITE-LA facilitated 92 internship placements and six job placements across various sectors, providing participants with invaluable networking and hands-on experience. The partnerships that power UNITE-LA's STEAM Career Pathways include collaborations with 53 employers, such as Accenture, Boeing, Cisco, CVS Health, Kaiser Permanente and Microsoft; 20 workforce partners and government agencies, including the California, L.A. County and L.A. City Workforce Development Boards, L.A. County Office of Education, L.A. County Department of Human Resources and the Small Business Administration; 99 community-based organizations, such as the Asian Youth Center, Boyle Heights Tech Center and Urban Peace Institute; volunteers and industry professionals from companies like Amgen, Blizzard-Activision and JPMorgan Chase; and 31 educational partners, including LAUSD, LACCD and the Los Angeles Regional Consortium of 19 community colleges (LARC); and numerous institutions of higher education, including the CSU and UC systems and USC Viterbi K-12 STEM Center.

## Tech Pathways

UNITE-LA's Tech Pathways Academy, powered by Microsoft, served 31 high school students in 2023, with 26 completing the nine-week program, 24 becoming certified in Microsoft Essentials in Generative AI, 18 becoming certified in Software Development, and eight becoming certified in Product Management. UNITE-LA's Step into Tech program, which connects 18-35-year-old, systems-involved individuals (SIIs) to tech careers, enrolled 47 participants and graduated 40 participants.

“

Through this academy, I learned about different careers in tech that I would have never imagined. The academy helped me learn about [work] opportunities for my future that relate to my interests.

Tech Pathways Academy Participant

“

The guest speakers’ introduction to cybersecurity at their respective companies taught me about the diverse usages of cybersecurity and AI.

Tech Pathways Participant

“

My experience in Step into Tech has been a wonderful opportunity. I learned many things that I can apply to my personal and work life. I loved the one-on-one with the mentors, the resources that were given and how I was taken out of my comfort zone.

Step into Tech Participant



### LA Regional Cleantech Career Academy

The LA Regional Cleantech Career Academy, which provides paid training and employment opportunities for young adults from historically marginalized communities to succeed in California’s clean energy future, served 122 participants (of which 102 graduated). Moreover, the organization’s commitment to real-world application is highlighted through internships and job placement programs.

“

I was greatly impressed by the students’ prior cleantech industry knowledge, enthusiasm and their understanding of the complexity of the industry.

Cleantech Academy Partnering Employer



### Future Forward Forum

UNITE-LA's new Future Forward Forums served 87 individuals in 2023, providing insights into high-demand careers in health care and technology. In health care, the South L.A. Scholars Plus program offered valuable, work-based learning experiences to participants, while My Pathway to Health provided opportunity youth with allied health career opportunities, enrolling 30 participants with 19 participants completing the program in the first year.

“

I created strong friendships with other colleagues that I cherish greatly. Being in scrubs for the first time and shadowing nurses was something very memorable that I will never forget.

South L.A. Scholars Plus Participant

“

My favorite part was the Basic Life Support training and mentorship. I learned so much about allied health careers, and it has allowed me to see my options and what will work best for me.

My Pathway to Health Participant



### L.A. Cash for College

In UNITE-LA's 21st year of leading L.A. Cash for College, the largest financial aid awareness campaign in the region that has successfully assisted with college preparation for more than 300,000 students, who've been associated with \$1.2 billion in state and federal financial aid, the organization hosted more than 150 financial aid completion workshops in partnership with high school counselors, community college administrators and nonprofit agencies across L.A. County and supported 876 participants and partners with regional programming, including two Super Saturdays serving 246 participants; trainings co-hosted by UNITE-LA and LAUSD and facilitated by the California Student Aid Commission that served 547 high school counselors and college access professionals; and five virtual webinars that served 83 participants. UNITE-LA was proud to award 20 students with \$1,500 scholarships in honor of Dr. Alma Salazar and Gary Toeppen.

### Job Skills Workshops and Work-Readiness Certifications

In 2023, to prepare L.A.'s youth for the real world of work, UNITE-LA helped to equip 2,462 youth with employer-recognized competencies, serving 1,354 youth through Job Skills Workshops and WorkforceReady and certifying 1,108 youth as "work ready" through Workforce-Readiness Certifications.

# SYSTEMS CHANGE



UNITE-LA works to transform and align public systems to achieve education and workforce equity in the L.A. region. This year, UNITE-LA's Systems-Change team made measurable progress on efforts to streamline and expand educational and career pathways.

## Community Schools

UNITE-LA is a proud partner and supporter of the Community Schools Initiative. In May, UNITE-LA co-founder and long-time L.A. Compact partner and signer, LAUSD, received a \$30 million California Community Schools Partnership Program investment to sustain and expand the District's Community Schools Initiative (CSI) for another five years. This investment will allow the conversion of 23 additional schools over five years to complement the 55 schools currently in various stages of Community School transformation. [Learn more.](#)

## Leadership Roles

At the state level, two members of the organization were appointed to California Cradle-to-Career (C2C) Advisory Boards. Adam Gottlieb, UNITE-LA's Director of Postsecondary Strategy & Policy, now serves on the Community Engagement Advisory Board, and Dr. Lisa Catanzarite, UNITE-LA's Vice President of Research & Evaluation, now serves on the C2C Data and Tools Advisory Board.

At the local level, UNITE-LA leadership secured appointments on key Los Angeles City 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 WDB Youth Council and UNITE-LA President Alysia Bell was appointed to the WDB five-year strategic planning ad-hoc committee.



### L.A. Region K-16 Collaborative

UNITE-LA is the proud convener of the [L.A. Region K-16 Collaborative](#), aimed at closing postsecondary attainment and workforce gaps for students of color by streamlining pathways into health care, engineering and computer science careers. UNITE-LA made significant progress in 2023 by formalizing five subregional partnerships, allocating \$7.57 million in subgrants to advance high-impact strategies around enhancing dual enrollment, transfer pathways and work-based learning opportunities for students across L.A. County, hosting 12 meetings with subregional partners to implement the approaches outlined in their grant submissions, and holding eight presentations for county and statewide stakeholders to drive partnership and investment. [Learn more.](#)



### K-16 COLLABORATIVE HIGHLIGHTS:

- **5** Subregional Partnerships
- **\$7.57 Million** In Funding
- **12** Subregional Meetings
- **8** Presentations

### Opportunity Youth

Los Angeles faces a growing crisis of youth disconnection, with more than 143,000 opportunity youth lacking critical education and employment pathways necessary to thrive, many who became disconnected because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the course of 12 convenings this year, UNITE-LA collaborated with cross-sector system leaders to develop a new, regional strategic plan for reducing opportunity youth disconnection by 32,000 by 2028. Over the next four years, strategies will be advanced to improve transitions from high school to postsecondary education, increase awareness of and enrollment in career training programs, expand youth apprenticeships and improve access to wrap-around services to meet the holistic needs of opportunity youth. And to learn how UNITE-LA is doing even more work with its partners for OY, [click here!](#)

### Crosswalking Billions In State Investments For College/Career Pathways

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 L.A. 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-through-career, student-success framework. [Learn more about this work!](#)



### Improving Transfer Success

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; and
- Developed a sustainable cross-campus transfer committee to regularly look at process improvements.

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. Yet, while Latinx students earn more ADTs than their white and Asian peers, they transfer and succeed at lower rates.

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.



### The DEAL with Digital Equity

As UNITE-LA doubles down on its commitment to digital equity through the organization's co-convenor role with the Los Angeles Digital Equity Action League (LA DEAL) Consortium, it's leveraging public funding to close persistent digital divides across the county.

In 2023, LA DEAL briefed city leaders on AB 156 state funding grants and federal infrastructure funding, supporting the development of plans to close local broadband gaps and facilitate grant awards for 13 cities, totaling more than \$5.59 million for equity planning. This year, LA DEAL also convened 200 regional 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.

Moving into the new year, LA DEAL will expand efforts and impact by developing a commission that formally unites municipalities in order to share best practices, coordinate infrastructure deployment opportunities, develop joint ventures and build our region's capacity to provide publicly owned broadband service.



# LOCAL ADDRESS, NATIONAL IMPACT

In its 12th year of formal partnership with the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE) Foundation, UNITE-LA continues to leverage its expertise and capacity in education and workforce development with ACCE's powerful network, which represents more than a million companies, employing about 70 million people.

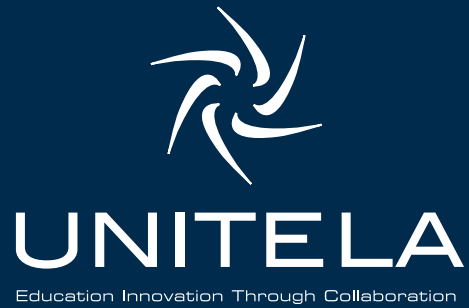
This work continues to be a learning lab where the good work being done in Los Angeles is shared nationally. And here at home, UNITE-LA learns promising practices from across the country that we can adapt and implement.

In 2023, our national partnership advanced systems change work in 11 rural and seven urban communities across 17 states to increase credential attainment through partnerships among institutes of higher education, chambers of commerce and community-based organizations. Impacts include 109 workers of color gaining employment and 1,830 workers of color earning credentials to gain an in-demand job in the urban communities served. Also, the creation of an equitable credential toolkit is aimed at helping additional communities establish similar partnerships to increase degree attainment for students of color.

Additionally, UNITE-LA and the ACCE Foundation partnered with Rework America Alliance to build the capacity of 20 chambers of commerce across the country to understand and promote skills-based practices that lead to a more diverse and inclusive workforce. The national partnership also launched the 2023 Fellowship for Economic Mobility with 18 chamber executives aiming to advance equitable economic mobility in communities across the U.S. [Learn more about it!](#)







If you want to learn more about UNITE-LA, including ways you can volunteer or donate, please [visit our website](#).

If you would like to contact a member of our staff, you can find contact information [here](#).

UNITE-LA is deeply grateful for the time and energy our incredible Board of Directors volunteers. If you would like to read more about UNITE-LA's Board, please [click here](#).

