



Describe Department/Unit

Connection to College Mission

The Financial Aid and Scholarship Office provides resources necessary to decrease financial barriers to higher education. This is accomplished by assisting a diverse population with the process of applying for and receiving aid through federal, state, institutional, and private organizations increasing student access to college. We are devoted to providing quality customer service, efficiency in application processing, and timely delivery of financial aid funds to students. We align with Cerro Coso Community College's (CCCC) commitment to student success by being a vital part of the college's comprehensive student support services. We support eligible students by increasing their ability to afford college and complete their educational goals. The Financial Aid programs are essential for economically disadvantaged students and families to afford college.

Report on Improvements Made and Gaps Identified in the Prior Year

Student Equity

Actions Taken

1. FA 2 U Program Success

The FA 2 U initiative has significantly expanded equitable access to financial aid by bringing services directly to students where they are. By placing staff in central, high-traffic locations such as the Library and the Student Activities Center, we removed barriers for students who may face challenges visiting the Financial Aid Office. This direct engagement helps ensure that all students, including those balancing work, family, or transportation limitations, can receive timely support.

2. Financial Aid Parent Nights

To strengthen family engagement in student success, we introduced Financial Aid Parent Nights, offered both virtually and in person to

increase access. These sessions provided parents with information and resources exclusively focused on financial aid. By creating spaces where families could ask questions and connect with our team, we promoted a shared understanding of financial aid processes. This past year, we hosted:

- **Athletic Student Parent Night:** 2 family members in attendance
- **General Student Parent Night:** 6 family members in attendance

Our goal is to increase awareness, broaden participation, and build stronger family-student-institution partnerships.

3. California Dream Act Application (CADAA) Integration

Recognizing the barriers undocumented students often face, we fully integrated the CADAA into our financial aid processes. This integration ensures that Dreamer students have equitable access to essential financial aid resources, removing systemic gaps and providing a more comprehensive support structure for historically underserved populations.

4. Spanish-Language FAFSA/CADAA Workshops

To meet the needs of our Spanish-speaking students and their families, we offered bilingual FAFSA and CADAA workshops entirely in Spanish. Last year, we offered all workshops in both Spanish and English, creating inclusive spaces for families to ask questions, understand the application process, and gain confidence navigating financial aid systems.

5. Consistent Monthly Campus Visits

To ensure students in outlying service areas are not left behind, we committed to monthly in-person visits to our Bishop and Tehachapi campuses. These visits create consistent, reliable access to financial aid services for students who may otherwise face geographic inequities.

6. Streamlined Application Processing Times

We have continued to improve the timeliness of financial aid application processing. Faster turnaround times mean students receive their aid more quickly, reducing stress, uncertainty, and financial instability. This efficiency ensures equitable access to resources when students need them most.

Gaps Identified

1. Rising Loan Default Risk and Financial Wellness Support

With federal loan repayment resuming, Cerro Coso anticipates an increase in default rates among former students who may face financial hardship. To proactively address this, we partnered with ECMC to provide targeted outreach and support to students at risk of delinquency or default. This collaboration will focus on early intervention, financial literacy, and loan counseling, ensuring students understand repayment options and remain in good standing. This effort aims to reduce debt-related equity gaps, particularly among first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented student borrowers. We will monitor as the numbers on default rates cycle in.

2. Financial Literacy and Money Management Education

An increasing number of students are facing challenges managing their financial aid disbursements responsibly. In previous years, many relied on supplemental support sources such as emergency funding and Basic Needs resources, which are still available but in very limited supply. As a result, some students are now receiving aid up to their full Cost of Attendance, but are exhausting those funds prematurely and returning to request additional assistance before the end of the semester.

To address this gap, the Financial Aid Office will expand its financial wellness education initiatives, emphasizing budgeting, debt awareness, and responsible aid usage. Through interactive workshops, classroom presentations, and online financial literacy resources, all offered in both English and Spanish, students will gain practical skills for managing their aid, planning expenses, and maximizing limited support resources.

These efforts aim to strengthen long-term financial stability and empower students to make informed financial decisions that support their academic goals. By fostering financial confidence and awareness, we anticipate improved retention, persistence, and loan repayment outcomes, particularly among first-generation, low-income, and rural students who are disproportionately impacted by financial insecurity.

3. Decline in FAFSA Submissions

The 24/25 aid year saw a notable decrease in FAFSA applications, largely due to the FAFSA Simplification rollout and the new parent/student signature verification barriers. This decline directly impacts

enrollment and access to financial aid, especially for low-income and first-generation students.

To address this, Financial Aid will:

- Increase application assistance events (in-person and virtual) in both English and Spanish.
- Partner with Outreach and Counseling to provide FAFSA/CADAA completion labs.
- Launch targeted communication campaigns before and during open application periods.
- Simplify internal processes to ensure faster verification and award turnaround times.

These steps will help recover application numbers and ensure equitable access for the 25/26 and 26/27 aid years.

FAFSA Data:

Application	Population	Aid Year				
		2021	2122	2223	2324	2425
FAFSA	All	2108	2894	2555	4580	2344
Application	Gender	Aid Year				
		2021	2122	2223	2324	2425
FAFSA	Female	1484	1766	1680	2398	1619
	Male	601	1106	847	2079	680
Not Reported		23	22	28	103	45

4. Improving Scholarship Access and Participation

The transition to a new online scholarship platform created challenges for both applicants and reviewers. While the first year yielded positive engagement, we identified usability barriers that may have

discouraged some students from completing applications. To address this, the Financial Aid Office has partnered with AwardSpring to streamline processes, improve user navigation, and provide clearer application guidance.

To further close access and awareness gaps, we will host frequent scholarship workshops (both in-person and virtual) from October 2025 through the end of February 2026 for the 26/27 aid year. These workshops will provide step-by-step support for students completing their applications, offer one-on-one assistance, and highlight opportunities for specific student groups such as first-generation, part-time, and rural learners. Assistance with scholarship applications will be available in both English and Spanish to ensure equitable access for all students and their families.

In addition, the Financial Aid Office aims to provide quicker response times for scholarship recipients by refining review and award notification processes. This improvement will help ensure students receive timely confirmation of their awards, allowing them to plan and budget effectively for the upcoming academic year.

The overall goal is to increase participation, streamline communication, and enhance equity in scholarship access, setting a stronger foundation for a smoother and more efficient cycle in the 27/28 aid year.

5. Strengthening Military and Veteran Student Outreach

Cerro Coso is committed to ensuring that veteran and military-affiliated students receive comprehensive financial aid support. To close existing communication and service gaps, Financial Aid will collaborate closely with the Veterans Services Office to streamline processes, enhance information sharing, and ensure that all eligible students receive timely assistance.

A dedicated Financial Aid Technician will be assigned to this population to provide individualized support, from FAFSA/CADAA completion to benefits coordination, improving both satisfaction and success outcomes for our veteran community.

6. Utilizing JBAY Scholarship Funding to Address SAP Gaps

To strengthen Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) compliance and improve student retention, the Financial Aid Office will utilize JBAY scholarship funding to hire a temporary employee dedicated to

supporting SAP-related initiatives between October and December. This position will focus on identifying and addressing SAP process gaps, improving communication with students, and ensuring alignment with SB 789 requirements.

The temporary employee will collect and analyze student data to identify trends and inconsistencies in SAP outcomes, such as incomplete appeals, missing documentation, or misalignment between academic progress and aid eligibility. They will also collaborate closely with Counseling and Admissions & Records to develop a more coordinated, student-centered SAP process that strengthens compliance and promotes equitable student success.

In addition to process improvement, the project will include updating the Financial Aid SAP webpage to make it more user-friendly and accessible, ensuring students can easily find information, appeal forms, and guidance on maintaining eligibility.

This short-term initiative aims to refine SAP procedures, increase efficiency in appeal processing, and enhance proactive communication and education for students regarding academic progress. By strategically utilizing JBAY funding, the Financial Aid Office will build stronger internal capacity, improve transparency, and provide timely, equitable support to help students remain eligible for financial aid and on track to complete their educational goals.

SAPR Code	Fall to Fall Term			
	202270	202370	202470	202570
APPROB	28	50	69	105
APSUSP	3	1		
MAX	343	362	295	182
MAXPRG	233	231	181	93
PROB				1
SAP	448	1169	779	1155

SUSP	259	253	262	151
SUSP90	87	80	68	45
WARN	22	16	36	49
WARNNE	210	453	154	94

7. Staffing Growth and Departmental Capacity Expansion

As Cerro Coso's enrollment continues to grow, the demand for timely and personalized financial aid support has increased dramatically. The department currently manages caseloads across multiple campuses and funding streams, creating strain on staff capacity and response times.

To ensure equitable access and consistent service for all students, the Financial Aid Office must expand staffing levels. Additional Financial Aid Technicians and administrative support will allow the department to:

- Provide faster application processing and follow-up for students.
- Support specialized populations such as veterans, Dreamers, foster youth, and remote learners.
- Increase presence at outreach events across all service areas, particularly in Tehachapi.
- Maintain compliance across 19+ budgets and multiple state/federal programs.

Growing the department's staffing and infrastructure will help sustain the college's momentum toward equity, inclusion, and student success, ensuring the Financial Aid Office remains capable of supporting an expanding and diverse student body.

Outcomes Assessment

Loop-Back Improvements Made

During the 2024–2025 academic year, the Financial Aid Office continued advancing equity, access, and operational efficiency across all service areas. Despite the challenges created by the FAFSA Simplification rollout, Cerro Coso maintained consistent student support through expanded outreach, bilingual assistance, and individualized help with financial aid applications.

FAFSA and CADAA application trends showed fluctuations consistent with state and national trends. FAFSA submissions totaled 2,344 in 2024-2025, reflecting a temporary decline following the federal simplification delays, compared to 4,580 in 2023-2024 and 2,555 in 2022-2023. Despite these system-wide challenges, outreach and completion efforts helped sustain strong engagement among students. In contrast, California Dream Act Application (CADAA) submissions increased from 20 in 2022-2023 to 24 in 2023-2024, and further to 39 in 2024-2025, demonstrating continued growth in awareness and support for undocumented and Dreamer students through targeted workshops and communication campaigns.

Processing efficiency remained a major departmental strength. Through continued use of CampusLogic, the office achieved some of the fastest turnaround times within the district, maintaining same-day file reviews, averaging nine days for corrections, and completing files. These efficiencies resulted in earlier award notifications, improved accuracy, and higher overall student satisfaction with financial aid services.

The department also made significant progress in Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) compliance and student outcomes. Between Fall 2023 (202370) and Fall 2025 (202570), the number of students in good standing (SAP) rebounded sharply from 779 to 1,155, indicating improved academic recovery and proactive communication with at-risk students. Approved appeals also saw a strong increase, rising from 50 to 105 during the same period. This reflects not only better communication and outreach to students facing academic difficulty but also a more efficient internal review process, which allowed the Financial Aid Office to assist students in regaining eligibility more quickly.

In contrast, the number of students in maximum time frame (MAX) and maximum program length (MAXPRG) statuses dropped significantly from 362 and 231 in Fall 2023 to 182 and 93 in Fall 2025, demonstrating earlier intervention. Suspension categories (SUSP) also decreased from 262 to 151, and warning statuses (WARN and WARNNE) declined from 36 and 154 to 49 and 94, respectively. These improvements highlight the effectiveness of early alerts, targeted outreach, and continuous process monitoring.

Equity and outreach efforts further strengthened student engagement and access. Monthly visits to Bishop and Tehachapi campuses ensured in-person support for rural students, while Spanish-language FAFSA and CADAA workshops and Financial Aid Parent Nights, including sessions for athletic families, broadened awareness and encouraged family participation.

Overall, the 2024–2025 outcomes reflect meaningful progress in closing access gaps, enhancing SAP compliance, and improving service delivery. Through innovation, collaboration, and data-driven strategies, the Financial Aid Office continued to uphold Cerro Coso's mission of providing equitable, efficient, and student-centered financial aid services that directly support persistence and academic success.

Schedule of Assessments

Decrease the number of students on warning and suspension from financial aid.

Assessed Last Year

Increase student access to FA office Technicians for assistance Financial Aid/Scholarships.

Assessed Last Year

Students who receive FA services will report satisfaction with the timeliness of response for information.

Not Due to Be Assessed This Year or Last Year

Students who receive FA services will report those services helped them attend college.

Not Due to Be Assessed This Year or Last Year

Outcomes Assessment: Results of Last Year's Assessments

AUO — Decrease the number of students on warning and suspension from financial aid.

Expected Performance Target: None%

Passed

AUO — Increase student access to FA office Technicians for assistance Financial Aid/Scholarships.

Expected Performance Target: None%

Passed

Outcomes Assessment: Missed Targets

Program Review

Name: Financial Aid and Scholarships

Year of Last Program Review

2023

Actions Taken in the Prior Year to Address Strategies

Two-Year Strategy 1 - FAFSA/CADAA Completion Support

The Financial Aid Office successfully expanded targeted support to assist students in completing FAFSA and CADAA applications.

Collaboration with Outreach, Counseling, and Admissions and Records helped identify students indicating financial need and provide proactive assistance. FAFSA completion temporarily declined in 2024-2025 due to federal simplification issues, with 2,344 submissions compared to 4,580 the prior year. However, the office's outreach and bilingual support efforts have already produced a strong rebound, with **3,352 FAFSA applications submitted for 2025-2026 by the fall semester alone**. CADAA submissions also increased from 24 in 2023-2024 to 39 in 2024-2025, reflecting effective outreach to undocumented and mixed-status families.

Two-Year Strategy 3 - Speeding Up Processing of Applications

Processing timelines continued to exceed goals. Through CampusLogic, files were reviewed on the **same day** of submission, with corrections completed in **nine days** and document collection averaging **14 days**. Automated notifications and consistent staff monitoring ensured faster awards, increased accuracy, and improved student satisfaction.

Five-Year Strategy 2 - Decreasing Students on Warning and Suspension

Significant progress was made in reducing students in SAP warning and suspension statuses. From Fall 2023 to Fall 2025, students in suspension (SUSP) dropped from 262 to 151, maximum time frame (MAX) decreased from 362 to 182, and maximum program length (MAXPRG) declined from 231 to 93. Students in good standing (SAP) rose from 779 to 1,155, while approved appeals increased from 50 to 105. These trends confirm that enhanced SAP communication, early outreach, and collaboration with Counseling and Admissions and

Records are successfully helping students maintain eligibility and persistence.

CampusLogic Implementation

This efficiency goal was fully met. CampusLogic continues to support the department's ability to manage and process applications swiftly and accurately. The system's tracking capabilities for appeals, professional judgments, and corrections have allowed for clear monitoring and measurable improvements across all processing areas.

Outreach and Accessibility

Consistent monthly visits to the Bishop and Tehachapi campuses, paired with targeted marketing, increased visibility and attendance. Spanish-language FAFSA/CADAA workshops and Financial Aid Parent Nights successfully strengthened family engagement and access for bilingual and first-generation students.

Strategies Still to be Addressed

Two-Year Strategy 2 - Staff Training and Professional Development

Ongoing progress continues toward having a fully trained and cross-functional financial aid staff. Frequent training sessions, regulatory updates, and department meetings have enhanced staff knowledge, particularly in areas such as FAFSA Simplification, Gainful Employment, SB 789 compliance, and SAP appeals. The **JBAY-funded temporary position** also contributed by identifying process gaps and improving SAP coordination. Continued professional development and cross-campus training will remain a focus through 2025-2026.

Five-Year Strategy 1 - Increase Scholarship Applications

This goal is actively in progress. The department implemented the new **AwardSpring scholarship platform**, increasing efficiency and user accessibility. Workshops are being held regularly through **February 2026** to assist students with application submissions, and bilingual support is available to improve participation among first-generation and Spanish-speaking students. Website updates and simplified navigation will further improve access for the 2026-2027 cycle.

Five-Year Strategy 3 - Hiring of a Scholarship and Professional Judgment Manager and Department Assistant III

This goal remains in progress. The department has demonstrated the need for additional staffing to support scholarship coordination, budget management, and professional judgment reviews across 19 active budgets and multiple programs. The **temporary JBAY employee** supported short-term needs by addressing SAP data gaps, but the department continues to advocate for permanent staffing to sustain outreach, compliance, and timely service delivery.

Last Year's Initiatives

Name: FAFSA completion

Action Plan

1. Conduct comprehensive training sessions for staff to familiarize them with the upcoming FAFSA simplification changes for the 2024-2025 academic year.
2. Following staff training, initiate workshops in February with the primary objective of assisting local high school students in completing their FAFSA applications.
3. Develop a range of workshop options, including both virtual and in-person sessions, catering not only to the IWV campus but also extending services to Tehachapi, Kernville, Bishop, Mammoth, and Edwards Base.
4. Utilize mass email and text notifications through Navigate to reach out to individuals who have not yet completed their financial aid applications.

Lead Measure of Success

1. The number of staff members who have completed comprehensive training sessions on FAFSA simplification changes for the 2024-2025 academic year. This measure indicates the readiness of staff to assist students with updated FAFSA requirements.
2. The number of local high school students who attend the workshops initiated in February for assistance with FAFSA applications. This measure reflects the initial outreach and the level of engagement among the target audience.

3. The number of workshop options developed, both virtual and in-person, and the geographic scope of these workshops, encompassing Tehachapi, Kernville, Bishop, Mammoth, and Edwards Base. This measure gauges the expansion of services and accessibility for students in different locations.

4. The number of email and text notifications sent to individuals who have not completed their financial aid applications through Navigate. This measure assesses the outreach efforts to encourage application completion and serves as an early indicator of responsiveness among the student population.

Lag Measure of Success

Continue to monitor the numbers of applications received monthly. It will help identify those who have not completed so we can send monthly notifications. We can utilize Navigate, COGNOS, Tableau, and individual reports.

Initiative Status

In Progress

Summarize actions taken on this initiative

FAFSA submissions decreased during the 2024-2025 aid year, aligning with statewide and national trends resulting from the rollout of the new FAFSA Simplification process. Cerro Coso processed 2,344 FAFSA applications in 2024-2025, compared to 4,580 in 2023-2024 and 2,555 in 2022-2023. This decline was expected due to ongoing technical delays, parental signature issues, and student confusion surrounding the new application system. However, early indicators for the 2025-2026 aid year show a strong rebound in FAFSA submissions, suggesting that as students and families become more familiar with the new platform, participation rates are steadily recovering.

To address the decline in FAFSA submissions, the Financial Aid Office has implemented multiple targeted outreach and support strategies. We have expanded our FA 2 U initiative to include both virtual and on ground workshops focused on FAFSA completion and troubleshooting common application barriers. In addition, we are delivering intentional and widespread communications across our entire service area including Bishop, Mammoth, and Tehachapi to ensure students

and families are aware of available assistance. Outreach efforts now extend beyond traditional methods with community-based notices such as advertisements in local movie theaters to reach broader audiences and encourage FAFSA participation.

Name: California Dream Act Application (CADAA) increase and more outreach to Undocumented students

Action Plan

The CADAA will follow the FAFSA updates and become available in December.

1. Conduct comprehensive training sessions for staff to familiarize them with the upcoming CADAA simplification changes for the 2024-2025 academic year.
2. Following staff training, initiate workshops in February with the primary objective of assisting local high school students in completing their CADAA.
3. Develop a range of workshop options, including both virtual and in-person sessions, catering not only to the IWV campus but also extending services to Tehachapi, Kernville, Bishop, Mammoth, and Edwards Base.
4. Utilize mass email and text notifications through Navigate to reach out to individuals who have not yet completed their financial aid applications.

Lead Measure of Success

1. The number of staff members who have completed comprehensive training sessions on FAFSA simplification changes for the 2024-2025 academic year. This measure indicates the readiness of staff to assist students with updated FAFSA requirements.
2. The number of local high school students who attend the workshops initiated in February for assistance with FAFSA applications. This measure reflects the initial outreach and the level of engagement among the target audience.
3. The number of workshop options developed, both virtual and in-person, and the geographic scope of these workshops, encompassing Tehachapi, Kernville, Bishop, Mammoth, and Edwards Base. This

measure gauges the expansion of services and accessibility for students in different locations.

4. The number of email and text notifications sent to individuals who have not completed their financial aid applications through Navigate. This measure assesses the outreach efforts to encourage application completion and serves as an early indicator of responsiveness among the student population.

Lag Measure of Success

Continue to monitor the numbers of applications received monthly. It will help identify those who have not completed so we can send monthly notifications. We can utilize Navigate, COGNOS, Tableau, and individual reports.

Initiative Status

In Progress

Summarize actions taken on this initiative

The number of CADAA submissions increased from 24 in 2023-2024 to 39 in 2024-2025, reflecting improved outreach to undocumented and mixed-status students. In addition to growth in overall applications, Financial Aid staff successfully assisted students from mixed-status families who experienced challenges completing the FAFSA, allowing them to complete the CADAA instead to avoid funding delays. This demonstrates a proactive and equity-focused approach to ensuring all eligible students have access to financial aid, regardless of immigration or family status.

Name: Outreach

Action Plan

1. Ongoing Enhancement of Outreach Materials
 - Updating materials for FAFSA simplification changes
 - Revising content for CADAA simplification updates
 - Promoting FAFSA/CADAA completion to access funding sources like CCPG, Cal Grant, Pell Grant, CSEOG, and potential eligibility for Access funding

- Fostering scholarship application completion
- Enhancing resources for student financial wellness

2. Expanding Outreach Efforts to High Schools and Sister Campuses

- Continue liaising with our neighboring high schools and sister campuses to coordinate onsite visits by our staff
- Offer virtual options to accommodate those unable to attend in person

3. Consistent Notification Dissemination

- Maintain a regular schedule for sending notifications about both in-person and virtual workshops

4. Collaborating with Other Programs for In-Person Meetings

- Establish connections with programs that require face-to-face interactions, particularly the Access Programs, to make use of our workshops, with a special focus on scholarship application assistance and student financial wellness resources.

Lead Measure of Success

Monitoring these initiatives involves several steps:

Ongoing Enhancement of Outreach Materials:

1. Updating Materials: Regularly review outreach materials for FAFSA and CADAA, especially when there are changes in regulations or requirements. This should be done annually or as needed.
2. Promoting Completion: Monitor the completion rates of FAFSA and CADAA applications and track the number of students applying for funding sources like CCPG, Cal Grant, Pell Grant, CSEOG, and Access funding.
3. Scholarship Application Completion: Track the number of scholarship applications submitted and awarded.
4. Student Financial Wellness: Gauge the usage and effectiveness of resources related to student financial wellness. Collect feedback from students who have utilized these resources.

Expanding Outreach Efforts to High Schools and Sister Campuses:

1. Onsite Visits: Maintain a calendar of planned visits to high schools and sister campuses. Track the number of visits made and the level of engagement with these institutions.
2. Virtual Options: Monitor the participation in virtual sessions and gather feedback from those who attend virtually.

Consistent Notification Dissemination:

1. Notification Schedule: Maintain records of notification schedules, ensuring that notifications are sent out as planned. Monitor the open rates and responses to notifications.

Collaborating with Other Programs for In-Person Meetings:

1. Establishing Connections: Document the programs and organizations with which you have established partnerships. Monitor the number of collaborative events or meetings with these organizations.
2. Special Focus Areas: For specific areas of focus, like scholarship application assistance and student financial wellness, track the number of students who have utilized these services and their feedback.

For all these initiatives, data collection, regular reporting, and feedback from students and participating institutions are crucial to assess their effectiveness and make necessary improvements. This can include surveys, attendance records, application completion rates, and any other relevant metrics. Adjustments should be made based on the feedback and data to continuously improve these efforts.

Lag Measure of Success

Keep track of attendance, FAFSA/CADAA completion, and scholarship completion utilizing COGNOS, Tableau, and individual workshop rosters.

Initiative Status

In Progress

Summarize actions taken on this initiative

The Financial Aid Office continued monthly outreach to the Bishop and Tehachapi campuses, increasing student engagement and visibility in outlying service areas. Attendance at these sessions improved as a result of coordinated marketing efforts and advance communication through campus channels. These proactive strategies encouraged students to visit their local campus on Financial Aid days to receive direct assistance. The continued presence of staff in these remote locations ensures equitable access to financial aid resources across the entire service area.

Name: Campus Logic

Action Plan

We are in a 2-year contract for the award letter that is scheduled to go live for the spring 2024 semester (2023-2024 aid year).

1. Work with District IT and Ellucian on implementation of the new Award Letter
2. Assign technician to consistently monitor the processing of the award letters
3. Gain sufficient training on the award letter process through Campus Logic
4. Begin running the Award Letters for the Spring24 semester

Lead Measure of Success

Implementing a new Award Letter system can benefit our organization in several ways:

1. Efficient Implementation: Working with District IT and Ellucian ensures a smooth implementation process. This collaboration helps in integrating the new system seamlessly, minimizing disruptions, and enhancing the overall efficiency of your award letter process.
2. Effective Oversight: Assigning a dedicated technician to consistently monitor the processing of award letters ensures that the system runs smoothly and that any issues or delays are addressed promptly. This proactive approach reduces the chances of errors and delays in delivering award letters to students.

3. Enhanced Knowledge: Gaining sufficient training on the award letter process through Campus Logic equips our team with the necessary skills and understanding of the new system. This knowledge empowers our staff to manage the award letter process effectively, from creating templates to handling student inquiries.

4. Timely Distribution: Initiating the award letter process for the Spring 2024 semester allows us to provide financial aid information to students in a timely manner. This ensures that students have clear details about their aid packages, helping them make informed decisions and reducing uncertainty, especially our out of state athletes.

The implementation of a new Award Letter system, alongside dedicated monitoring, adequate training, and timely initiation, contributes to a more efficient and effective financial aid process. This, in turn, can lead to improved student satisfaction, better communication, and increased transparency in the awarding of financial aid.

Lag Measure of Success

To monitor the benefits of implementing a new Award Letter system, you can use various data sources and metrics:

- Track the progress of the implementation project through project management tools or software. Monitor milestones, timelines, and completion rates.
- Measure the reduction in disruptions or downtimes during the implementation phase. Gather data on system availability and performance before and after the transition.
- Use system logs and monitoring tools to track the processing of award letters in real-time. Measure the time it takes to process and deliver each award letter.
- Keep records of issues and delays, along with resolutions and response times. This data helps in identifying recurring problems and assessing the effectiveness of the dedicated technician's role.
- Conduct regular reviews and audits of the award letter process to ensure that it aligns with established service level agreements (SLAs) and targets.

- Collect data on student response times, such as the time taken by students to acknowledge receipt or seek clarifications about their award letters.

- Survey students about their satisfaction with the timeliness and clarity of the award letter distribution process.

By collecting and analyzing data related to these aspects, you can assess the impact of the new Award Letter system on efficiency, oversight, knowledge, and timely distribution. This data-driven approach allows you to make informed decisions and adjustments to continually improve the financial aid process and enhance the overall student experience.

Initiative Status

In Progress

Summarize actions taken on this initiative

Processing timelines continued to exceed expectations, with most files being reviewed on the same day of submission and corrections processed within an average of nine days. Document collection averaged approximately 14 days, significantly faster than statewide averages. This efficiency reflects the department's effective use of technology to enhance service delivery, reduce student stress, and accelerate award timelines.

Name: Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

Action Plan

Elaborating on the steps to be completed to continue showcasing the importance of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) and to ensure student awareness and compliance:

1. Classroom Outreach:- Identify Target Classes: Collaborate with academic departments to identify key courses or classes where SAP is crucial for financial aid eligibility. These could include introductory sessions, freshman seminars, or courses related to financial literacy.

- Arrange Classroom Presentations: Schedule presentations by financial aid staff or experts to enter these classrooms and deliver engaging sessions on the significance of SAP. These presentations

should cover the impact of SAP on financial aid awards, academic progress, and future eligibility.

-Provide Real-life Examples: Share real-life examples and scenarios to illustrate how SAP affects a student's financial aid journey. This can help students understand the practical implications of maintaining SAP.

2. Workshops on Appealing for Financial Aid:- Plan Workshop Sessions: Organize regular workshops dedicated to educating students about the process of appealing for financial aid due to SAP issues. These workshops should provide step-by-step guidance on how to prepare a successful appeal and the necessary documentation.

- Promote Engagement: Encourage active participation and engagement during these workshops. Allow students to ask questions and seek clarification on any concerns related to SAP appeals.

3. SAP Awareness Events:- Create Awareness Campaigns: Organize events and campaigns specifically focused on raising awareness about SAP. These events can include information booths, seminars, or webinars dedicated to explaining the importance of SAP.

- Offer Resources: Provide students with resources, brochures, and handouts that clearly outline the SAP requirements and the steps they should take to maintain satisfactory progress.

- Peer Sharing: Encourage students who have successfully navigated SAP challenges to share their experiences and insights. Peer-led discussions can be relatable and impactful.

By implementing these steps, your institution can effectively showcase the importance of SAP, encourage students to maintain satisfactory academic progress, and equip them with the knowledge and resources they need to succeed. This proactive approach can lead to higher SAP compliance rates and, in turn, enhanced access to financial aid for eligible students.

Lead Measure of Success

It's crucial to monitor and assess the impact of the steps taken to showcase the importance of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) and ensure student awareness and compliance. This data can help

determine the effectiveness of these initiatives and guide any necessary adjustments. Here's how to collect and analyze early observational data:

1. Classroom Outreach:- Data Collection: Begin by tracking the number of classroom presentations conducted, the courses targeted, and the number of students reached during these presentations.

- Feedback: Gather feedback from students who attended these presentations. Use surveys or informal discussions to gauge their understanding of SAP and its significance.

- Academic Progress: Monitor the academic progress of students who attended these presentations, comparing their SAP status with those who did not attend.

2. Workshops on Appealing for Financial Aid and SAP Awareness events:- Attendance: Record the attendance at these workshops and distinguish between students who attended and those who did not.

- Engagement: Measure the level of engagement by noting the number of questions asked, requests for clarification, and overall participation.

- Success Rate: Track the number of successful SAP appeals following these workshops, and compare this to the rate before the workshops were initiated.

3. Overall SAP Compliance:- Regularly review the overall SAP compliance rates before and after implementing these steps. Note any changes in compliance and eligibility for financial aid.

4. Student Feedback:- Gather feedback from students through surveys or focus groups regarding the effectiveness of these initiatives in improving their understanding of SAP and financial aid requirements.

5. Student Success:- Evaluate the academic performance and progress of students who actively engage with the SAP awareness initiatives. Compare this data to students who do not participate.

By collecting this early observational data, we can gauge the impact of these SAP awareness efforts. This data-driven approach allows for informed decision-making and potential adjustments to ensure that

students are well-informed about SAP and financial aid compliance. Over time, continued data collection and analysis will provide insights into the long-term effectiveness of these initiatives.

Lag Measure of Success

Keep track of and monitor all above Lead Measure to produce live data. Utilize COGNOS, Tableau, individual workshop reports, and Navigate.

Initiative Status

In Progress

Summarize actions taken on this initiative

Data trends show meaningful improvement in SAP outcomes over the past two years. The number of students in good standing increased from 779 in Fall 2024 to 1,155 in Fall 2025, while students in suspension and maximum timeframe statuses decreased significantly. Approved appeals rose from 50 to 105, illustrating more effective communication, earlier intervention, and faster processing of student requests. These improvements demonstrate that proactive outreach, improved coordination with Counseling and Admissions and Records, and consistent SAP workshops are helping students maintain eligibility and stay on track toward program completion.

Initiatives for Next Academic Year

Ability to Benefit (ATB) Progress

Is this a multi-year Initiative? Y

Specific Action Steps to be Taken

The Financial Aid Office is continuing to advance the implementation of the Ability to Benefit (ATB) initiative to expand access to federal financial aid for students enrolled in qualifying non-high school diploma programs. The next step in this process is to submit the Program Participation Agreement (PPA), which includes the Eligible Career Pathway Program (ECPP) designation required to participate in ATB at the federal level. Once federal approval is secured, the college will move forward with the state certification process to become part of the California ATB Community of Practice (ATB ComP). This progression will allow Cerro Coso to provide financial aid access to

adult learners pursuing career education pathways, supporting equity goals by helping students without a high school diploma or GED gain the opportunity to start college-level coursework while completing basic education requirements.

Early Observational Data, or "Lead" Measure(s)

The Financial Aid Office generated a list of 128 students who reported not having a high school diploma but completed a FAFSA or CADAA application. This data serves as an early indicator to identify students who may require additional verification or support, allowing timely intervention before aid processing or compliance issues occur.

Do you request help developing these instruments? Y

Institutional Performance Data, or "Lag" Measure(s)

Data will be collected through Banner Financial Aid POPSEL reports and coordinated with Institutional Research to ensure all relevant student data are accurately captured. This will allow us to identify areas of need, measure outcomes, and assess progress toward reducing equity gaps.

Person Responsible

Financial Aid

What unit gap or institutional goal does this address?

It addresses a strategic plan goal or objective;It addresses a gap in student equity;It addresses a gap in outcomes assessment;It addresses a 2- or 5- year program review strategy;Other. Explain below

The Ability to Benefit (ATB) initiative directly supports Cerro Coso's institutional goals by advancing equity, access, and completion for underrepresented student populations. ATB provides an entry point into higher education for students who do not yet have a high school diploma or GED but are enrolled in Eligible Career Pathway Programs (ECPPs). By giving these students access to federal and state financial aid, ATB removes one of the most significant barriers to postsecondary enrollment—financial ineligibility—allowing them to pursue both basic skills and career education simultaneously. This initiative aligns with Cerro Coso's institutional commitment to equity by expanding opportunities for low-income, adult learners, first-

generation students, and individuals in rural service areas who have historically been excluded from financial aid eligibility.

In addition to promoting access, ATB supports student persistence and completion by offering early financial support to students entering college through career education pathways. When students can access aid at the beginning of their studies, they are more likely to remain enrolled, make academic progress, and complete their programs. This aligns with institutional objectives to increase course success rates and completion outcomes, particularly among underprepared and nontraditional students. For many participants, ATB funding provides the financial stability necessary to balance education with work and family responsibilities, which contributes directly to higher retention and reduced stop-out rates.

The ATB initiative also advances workforce and community development goals by strengthening the college's connection to Career Technical Education (CTE) and regional labor market needs. By supporting students pursuing certificates and career pathway programs, ATB helps build a stronger local workforce while promoting economic mobility within the communities Cerro Coso serves. This directly supports the college's mission to prepare students for gainful employment and to provide education that aligns with regional and statewide workforce priorities.

Finally, implementing ATB ensures compliance and alignment with both federal and state educational equity mandates, including participation in the California Ability to Benefit Consortium (ATB ComP) as outlined under SB 554 and SB 789. This positions Cerro Coso as a proactive institution that not only meets regulatory expectations but also leverages new opportunities to serve underserved students. In doing so, the Financial Aid Office strengthens its operational capacity, broadens eligibility for financial assistance, and supports the college's long-term strategic vision for equitable access, student success, and workforce readiness.

Aligning Salaries with Fluctuating Allocations

Is this a multi-year Initiative? Y

Specific Action Steps to be Taken

Reassigning my salary to 100% General Fund will allow categorical funds to be utilized for direct office and student support needs rather than administrative salary coverage. Currently, my position draws partially from categorical funding, which limits our ability to allocate those resources toward essential initiatives such as professional development, staff training, team building opportunities, and departmental travel for conferences.

By moving my salary to General Fund support, categorical funds can instead be redirected to strengthen Financial Aid operations, including staff development, outreach expansion, and potential use toward student support balances or aid needs, ensuring greater impact on student success and overall program effectiveness.

It is also important to note that the categorical allocation we currently have is **not guaranteed**, and future amounts may fluctuate. In addition, with the anticipated changes tied to the **Big Beautiful Bill**, there is the potential for a **decrease in categorical funding**. Transitioning my position to the General Fund will provide much-needed stability and safeguard the Financial Aid Office from future funding reductions, ensuring continuity of operations and consistent service to students.

Early Observational Data, or "Lead" Measure(s)

- Reallocate Categorical Funds**

Track how redirected categorical funds are used each quarter to support student aid, outreach, and staff development instead of salary coverage.

- Staff Development and Training**

Conduct at least two professional development or training events per semester funded by categorical dollars and track participation and impact.

- Student Support Expansion**

Increase outreach events or aid-related student support by at least 10% within the fiscal year, documenting outcomes and student reach.

- Funding Stability Monitoring**

Review categorical funding trends quarterly and prepare

contingency plans to address potential reductions related to the Big Beautiful Bill.

Do you request help developing these instruments?

Institutional Performance Data, or "Lag" Measure(s)

- Improved Funding Utilization**

Demonstrated increase in categorical funds spent directly on student aid, outreach, and staff development rather than salary costs.

- Enhanced Staff Capacity**

Documented growth in staff knowledge, efficiency, and retention resulting from consistent professional development opportunities.

- Increased Student Engagement**

Measurable rise in student participation in financial aid workshops, outreach events, and support programs year over year.

- Operational and Fiscal Stability**

Maintained or improved service levels and program outcomes despite fluctuations or reductions in categorical funding allocations.

Person Responsible

What unit gap or institutional goal does this address?

It addresses a strategic plan goal or objective, It addresses a gap in outcomes assessment, It addresses a 2- or 5- year program review strategy

Requested Resources

#59 Facilities: Expansion

Is this a one-time request or an on-going request? One-Time

Amount Requested \$500,000.00

Is this request supported in your initiatives or elsewhere? No

Description/Explanation

The Financial Aid Department requires expansion to adequately meet the growing demands of our student population and to enhance the quality of service we provide. As financial aid processes become increasingly complex and student caseloads continue to rise, the need for additional space has become essential. An expanded area would allow staff to meet with students on a one-on-one basis in a private and confidential setting, ensuring compliance with FERPA and protecting sensitive financial information. It would also create an environment that minimizes distractions from surrounding departmental noise, allowing students to focus fully on understanding their financial aid options and requirements. This expansion is critical to improving accessibility, maintaining confidentiality, and supporting a more student-centered experience that fosters trust and success.

Supporting Facts/Data

The Financial Aid Department requires expansion to meet the growing needs of Cerro Coso's increasing student population and to enhance the quality and privacy of services provided. According to the KCCD Fall 2025 Enrollment Update (as of September 29, 2025), Cerro Coso's **current enrollments rose from 10,641 to 12,766**, reflecting a **20% increase**, while **unique headcount grew from 5,067 to 6,602 students**, a **30.3% rise** from Fall 2024. This surge in enrollment directly increases the volume of financial aid applications, verifications, loan requests, and student consultations that must be managed.

Impact on the Department/Unit

The 20% increase in Cerro Coso's enrollment—from 10,641 to 12,766 students—has a direct and substantial impact on Financial Aid operations. Each new student potentially requires financial aid guidance, application processing, verification, or follow-up, significantly increasing the department's workload without a matching increase in space or staffing.

Impact on Operational Efficiency

The 20% enrollment increase at Cerro Coso—from 10,641 to 12,766 students—has placed a significant strain on Financial Aid operations. With a higher student volume and no proportional expansion of space or staffing, staff productivity and processing efficiency have been

affected. Limited office capacity forces staff to share spaces not designed for confidential financial aid discussions, resulting in frequent interruptions and slower turnaround times for student files, verifications, and appeals. The lack of designated private areas also restricts the number of concurrent appointments that can be conducted, creating backlogs and extended wait times for students. Expanding the Financial Aid area would improve workflow efficiency by enabling simultaneous confidential consultations, reducing environmental distractions, and allowing for better allocation of staff resources. These changes would directly enhance processing speed, accuracy, and service quality—ensuring students receive timely financial aid support aligned with the college's growth and persistence goals.

#60 Marketing: Marketing

Is this a one-time request or an on-going request? Ongoing

Amount Requested \$5,000

Is this request supported in your initiatives or elsewhere?

None

SAP, FAFSA/CADAA completion, Scholarship awareness and completion,

Description/Explanation

Creating Multilingual Outreach Materials: The initiative to create outreach materials in multiple languages serves as a response to the diverse linguistic needs within our student population, with a particular focus on Spanish speakers and other non-English-speaking communities. By diversifying our outreach materials, we aim to break language barriers and ensure that vital information about financial aid and academic progress is accessible to all students. This effort aligns with our commitment to inclusivity and equity, facilitating clear communication and understanding of complex concepts, ultimately improving student engagement and success.

Maintaining Outreach Momentum for Satisfactory Academic Progress: Upholding the momentum in the distribution of outreach materials designed to educate students on Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is pivotal in ensuring continued student success and compliance with academic requirements. These materials play a crucial role in conveying the

importance of SAP, the potential consequences of falling short, and the available support resources. Consistent distribution and engagement efforts help students remain informed, make informed academic decisions, and take appropriate actions to meet SAP standards. This ongoing commitment to SAP education is integral to student retention and achieving the institution's academic goals. Outreach materials for advertisement and mailers: Support is needed for purchasing outreach materials and advertisements to promote key events, including Financial Aid Awareness Month, the launch of scholarships, the annual release of the new FAFSA application, and initiatives aimed at increasing financial aid awareness. These efforts are crucial for ensuring that students are informed and engaged with the available financial aid opportunities.

Supporting Facts/Data

The Financial Aid Office's demonstrated success with Spanish-language FAFSA/CADAA workshops, bilingual Parent Nights, and financial literacy sessions clearly shows the impact of multilingual outreach on equitable access and student engagement. Data trends reflect increased CADAA submissions (from 24 in 2023-2024 to 39 in 2024-2025) and improved SAP outcomes across all categories, underscoring the effectiveness of clear, accessible communication. Continued investment in multilingual outreach materials and SAP education resources directly supports these proven initiatives by expanding language access, improving student understanding of academic and financial requirements, and ensuring consistent communication across all campuses and student populations. These materials are essential for maintaining compliance, promoting retention, and advancing Cerro Coso's institutional equity goals.

Impact on the Department/Unit

The Financial Aid Office plays a critical role in advancing Cerro Coso Community College's mission of access, equity, and student success. By removing financial barriers and providing direct support, the department significantly influences enrollment, retention, and completion outcomes across all campuses.

During the 2024-2025 year, the office processed more than 2,300 FAFSA and 39 CADAA applications, with early indicators for 2025-2026 showing a strong rebound of over 3,300 applications. These

efforts demonstrate the department's commitment to serving students despite national FAFSA Simplification challenges.

Financial Aid initiatives such as FA 2 U events, bilingual workshops, and Parent Nights increased awareness and access for first-generation, low-income, and bilingual families. Regular monthly visits to Bishop and Tehachapi ensured equitable service for students in rural areas.

Improved coordination with Counseling and Admissions and Records led to better Satisfactory Academic Progress outcomes. Students in good standing rose from 779 to 1,155, and suspension statuses dropped from 262 to 151, showing meaningful gains in academic persistence.

The department's leadership in programs such as Ability to Benefit and the partnership with ECMC further expands financial access and supports responsible borrowing and repayment. Through these efforts, Financial Aid continues to be a key contributor to equity, student achievement, and long-term financial stability for Cerro Coso students.

Impact on Operational Efficiency

The Financial Aid Office has improved operational efficiency through faster processing times, streamlined workflows, and enhanced use of technology. With CampusLogic, most student files are reviewed the same day, corrections are completed within nine days, and documents are collected in about 14 days. These improvements reduce delays, increase accuracy, and ensure students receive aid quickly. Consistent staff training, cross-campus coordination, and clear communication have also strengthened productivity and maintained high service quality despite growing caseloads.

Faculty Position Requests

No requests found.

Classified Position Requests

Financial Aid Technician

Locations

EKC Tehachapi

Justification

The addition of a fifth financial aid technician is not just beneficial; it is essential to sustaining our operations and ensuring students continue to receive timely, accurate, and equitable financial aid support. Our current team of four technicians manages an unsustainable workload, each handling more than 500 student contacts per semester through calls, emails, campus visits, community events, document processing, and virtual support. Despite the efficiencies gained through CampusLogic, the volume and complexity of financial aid processing still require extensive staff time to ensure compliance and accuracy.

Without additional staffing, we risk slower response times, delayed aid disbursement, and missed opportunities to connect students with the resources they need to stay enrolled. This gap is already visible in our Pell Grant payout data, where many potentially eligible students are not receiving aid, not because of processing delays but because our staff do not have the capacity to conduct the additional outreach required to reach them. A fifth technician would allow us to close this gap by increasing proactive student contact, improving follow-up, and ensuring more students complete their aid process successfully.

The need is especially urgent in Tehachapi, where financial aid demand has grown with the new campus building. Currently, no permanent technician is stationed there, forcing existing staff to travel long distances, sometimes up to four hours each way, to provide in-person support. This arrangement is neither sustainable nor equitable for staff or students. A dedicated technician in Tehachapi would ensure consistent, in-person assistance, reduce staff burnout, and eliminate delays caused by remote coordination.

In short, the current staffing level is no longer sufficient to meet student needs or institutional goals. Adding a fifth technician is critical to maintaining compliance, improving Pell disbursement rates,

expanding outreach in underserved areas, and supporting student success and retention across all Cerro Coso campuses. Financial aid is often the deciding factor for whether a student enrolls or continues their education, and our staffing must reflect that reality.

Salary Grade

42.5

Number of Months per Year

12

Number of Hours per Week

40

Salary Amount

100,766.43

Financial Aid AUP Budget Request Worksheet for FY27

Fund	Org Description	Account Description	Program Description	Activity	Location	2025	2025	2026	2027	Notes	Increase?	If requesting increase of %5 or more			
						Adopted Budget	Actual Expenses	Adopted Budget	Request			In planning document	Data?	Relevance?	Operational Efficiency?
GU001	Financial Aid	Non-Inst Students	Matriculation & Student Assessment	CI		\$ -	\$ 61.20	\$ -	\$ -		no				
GU001	Financial Aid	Non-Inst Supplies & Materials	Financial Aid Administration	CI		\$ 1,500.00	\$ 195.31	\$ 350.00	\$ 350.00		no				
GU001	Financial Aid	Outreach Materials	Financial Aid Administration	CI		\$ 1,000.00	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00		no				
GU001	Financial Aid	Employee Travel	Financial Aid Administration	CI		\$ 3,000.00	\$ (281.30)	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 5,000.00						
GU001	Financial Aid	Employee Travel DO	Financial Aid Administration	CB		\$ -	\$ 250.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,000.00		Yes				
GU001	Financial Aid	Employee Travel DO	Financial Aid Administration	CM		\$ -	\$ 59.49	\$ 1,600.00	\$ 1,000.00		no				
GU001	Financial Aid	Employee Travel DO	Financial Aid Administration	CT		\$ -	\$ 124.94	\$ 450.00	\$ 450.00		no				
GU001	Financial Aid	(Local) Online Training/Webinar	Financial Aid Administration	CI				\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00		no				
GU001	Financial Aid	Food/Meetings	Financial Aid Administration	CI		\$ 1,000.00	\$ 114.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00		no				
GU001	Financial Aid	Refreshments/Meetings	Financial Aid Administration	CM		\$ -	\$ 41.75	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00		no				
GU001	Financial Aid	Refreshments/Meetings	Financial Aid Administration	CT		\$ -	\$ 54.18	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00		no				
GU001	Financial Aid	Refreshments/Meetings	Financial Aid Administration	CB		\$ -	\$ 41.75	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00		no				
GU001	Financial Aid	Refreshments/Meetings	Financial Aid Administration	CI		\$ -	\$ 70.36	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00		no				
GU001	Financial Aid	Institutional Dues/Memberships	Financial Aid Administration	CI		\$ 1,676.00	\$ 2,184.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00		no				
GU001	Financial Aid	Software Licensing/Maintenance Svcs	Financial Aid Administration	CI		\$ -	\$ 115.00	\$ -	\$ -		no				

cornerstone of our commitment to staying updated with the latest developments and best practices in the field of financial aid. These events offer a valuable platform for networking, knowledge sharing, and exposure to innovative solutions. By attending conferences, our team gains insights into emerging trends, regulations, and technologies, equipping us to make informed decisions that enhance the delivery of financial aid services to our students. It also provides opportunities to share our experiences and contribute to the collective wisdom of our industry. Professional development is critical to maintaining compliance, efficiency, and service quality within Financial Aid. Staff training on FAFSA Simplification, SB 789, Gainful Employment, and SAP processes has already led to measurable improvements in accuracy and turnaround times. Continued attendance at conferences and NASFAA trainings will ensure staff remain current on evolving regulations, strengthen cross-campus

Professional development strengthens staff expertise, improves accuracy in financial aid processing, and enhances overall service quality. By staying current with regulations and best practices, the department maintains compliance, increases operational efficiency, and provides consistent, high-quality support to students across all campuses.

Professional development has improved operational efficiency by enhancing staff skills, ensuring accurate application processing, and maintaining compliance with evolving regulations. Training through NASFAA resources and conferences equips staff to resolve issues quickly, use systems effectively, and sustain fast turnaround times for student aid. This continued learning strengthens overall workflow, consistency, and productivity across all campuses.