

Item 8

(Action Item)

Consideration of proposed fiscal year 2023-24 California Student Opportunity and Access Program (Cal-SOAP) consortia allocations

SUMMARY:

This item provides the proposed fiscal year 2023-24 funding allocations for the 16 California Student Opportunity and Access Program (Cal-SOAP) consortia.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Commission approve the proposed fiscal year 2023-24 funding allocations. Staff also recommends delegating to the Executive Director flexibility to reallocate fiscal year 2023-2024 funds equitably if a project cannot utilize all its allocated funds or if the final 2023-2024 Budget Act allocates amends the total proposed appropriation.

BACKGROUND:

The California State Legislature established Cal-SOAP in 1978. The program consists of regional consortia whose aim is to increase postsecondary education opportunities for students who are: 1) from low-income families, 2) first-generation college students, 3) from schools or regions with low college eligibility and/or low college-going rates, and 4) unhoused youth. Each project is governed by a board consisting of representatives from local secondary school districts, community colleges, universities, community agencies, and may include career technical schools. The governing boards of each Cal-SOAP project determine the services and college access needs of its local schools and communities. The overarching goal of the program is to build robust partnerships between K-12 schools with institutions of higher education, and other partners to provide services to increase the college, career, and financial support and college preparation skills of eligible disadvantaged elementary, secondary, and community college students.

In 2021, Senate Bill (SB) 737 (Limón) was enacted to modernize the program to serve the needs of today's students. SB 737 refocused the program goals and objectives to align with statewide goals of advancing financial aid literacy and education. Cal-SOAP will continue to be a critical financial aid outreach program that will provide support to Local Educational Agencies in meeting state goals of financial aid application completion. Cal-SOAP projects also will serve as a community resource to their partners and as financial aid experts. SB 737 also supports uniform data collection and outcome reporting through the Lacai data platform. Staff continues to work on the

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implementation of SB 737 and changes to the Cal-SOAP grant proposal, contract, and procedures manual to align with legislation.

ANALYSIS:

2023-24 fiscal year funding recommendations: The consortia will prepare and submit their annual 2023-24 grant proposal with the understanding that any changes to the proposed allocations will require their proposals to be revised.

Staff recommends entering into grant agreements with 16 of the consortia in Table 1, for one-year, Fiscal Year 2023-24, subject to final appropriations contained in the annual State Budget. The recommended funding levels are consistent with the current year’s funding allocations.

**Table 1 - CAL-SOAP FISCAL YEAR 2023-24
PROPOSED BUDGET ALLOCATION**

Consortium	2022-23 Allocation
Central Coast	\$425,713.96
Central Valley	\$399,954.66
East Bay/Solano	\$1,021,194.30
Long Beach	\$430,659.04
Los Angeles	\$713,944.70
Merced	\$406,754.88
North Coast	\$425,708.08
Sacramento	\$640,925.88
San Diego/Imperial	\$1,024,314.62
San Francisco	\$379,748.04
San Jose	\$519,970.36
Santa Barbara	\$514,272.64
South County Gilroy	\$615,889.10
South San Joaquin	\$426,949.74
San Bernardino	\$980,000.00
Riverside	\$1,372,000.00
Total	\$10,298,000.00

Projects occasionally encounter developments such as changes in project staff, program plans, and partner activities, that may cause funds to be left unused. Additionally, contract extensions and the availability of multiple-year contract funds have created some administrative challenges for both Commission and project staff. Funds that are unused by Cal-SOAP projects revert to the State General Fund. To reduce the amount of unexpended funds, Commission staff have proposed that the funding distribution mechanism be transitioned to a grant and expenditure report-based model, as reflected in the 2023-24 Request for Grant Proposals, in place of the current invoicing model. Information provided by projects to the Commission through quarterly expenditure reports will enable Commission staff to identify which projects

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may have unused balances in the final fiscal quarter that might be available to support Cal-SOAP activities in other regions.

Staff recommends delegating to the Executive Director the authority to redirect funds and amend project agreements so that appropriated funding can be fully expended.

RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S):

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