



Los Angeles Area
Chamber of Commerce

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CONTACT: Nikky Canter (310) 226-3037
nikky_canter@lax.bm.com

LA AREA CHAMBER OPENS DOORS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Mayor Hahn's "Cash for College" campaign and convention breaks down barriers to college for LA students and families

The Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce joined Los Angeles Mayor Jim Hahn and community leaders today to kick off the 3rd Annual *Cash for College* (formerly Free Cash for College) "College and Career Convention" at the LA Convention Center.

The two-day college and career fair, free and open to the public, is designed to expand access to higher education for students and their families throughout the region and will include in-depth financial aid presentations in multiple languages and college and career exhibitors. The event runs from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 6 to 9 p.m. on Wednesday and Thursday, November 3-4. Evening sessions will offer the inside scoop in financial aid in Spanish, Armenian, Chinese, Russian and Korean, including financial aid options for immigrant students.

"Increasing learning and literacy in Los Angeles is one of my top priorities," said Mayor Hahn. "In today's economy, someone with a college degree will earn, on average, a million dollars more over a lifetime than someone with no college experience. This project helps equip our students today with the skills they need to succeed, and builds a stronger LA workforce of tomorrow."

California Cash for College, a project of the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC), has partnered this year with Mayor Hahn's LA Free Cash for College Project, to expand the reach of LA Cash for College to more communities in and around Los Angeles and help increase the education levels of this growing population. The project is operated by the Chamber.

"The California Student Aid Commission commends Mayor Hahn, the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce and its education arm, UNITE-LA, for engaging a broad collaboration among city government, business, labor, education, and community-based organizations to serve LA's underserved students pursuing education beyond high school," said David Roth, Chair of

CSAC. "I hope other regions in the state will emulate the standout efforts in Los Angeles to expand student access to higher education."

The award-winning public education and community service project has expanded financial aid awareness for more than 22,000 students and families in the past two years, through a College and Career Convention held every November and financial aid workshops held every January.

"Ask most business leaders what the most important asset in their companies is, and they will say it is their employees, their people," said Rusty Hammer, President & CEO of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce. "The L.A. Cash for College Project is about building the Los Angeles workforce that will in turn build our great companies of the 21st century."

School enrollment counts show more than half of California's high school seniors attend school in Los Angeles and surrounding counties. However, Los Angeles has the highest proportion of undereducated adults of any major metropolitan area in the U.S. One in ten adults in Los Angeles lacks a sixth-grade education and one in four lacks a high-school diploma. Large education gaps extend into the third generation of immigrants in Los Angeles, and 72% of LAUSD students are Latino. A 2002 study by the Tomas Rivera Policy Institute showed that among Latino families, nearly all parents want their children to go to college, but less than half believed their children actually would go to college—largely because they overestimated the cost, did not know about the financial aid available to them and did not know how to access that aid.

"Money for college isn't just available to the lucky few--it's out there for everyone. And Cash for College will show students how to get it," said Los Angeles City Councilmember Eric Garcetti, Chair of the Housing, Community and Economic Development Committee. "Education is key to giving young people an equal shot at the American Dream."

Initiated in 2002 by Mayor Hahn, the L.A. Cash for College Project is based at the LA Area Chamber and is a partnership of the City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles Unified School District, LA City Workforce Investment Board, and UNITE-LA. For more information about LA Cash for College and statewide efforts, please visit www.lacashforcollege.org and www.californiacashforcollege.org.