

TO: Chief Executive Officers
Chief Instructional Officers
Chief Student Services Officers
Chief Business Officers
Academic Senate Presidents
Transfer Center Directors

FROM: James E. Todd, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs

RE: Strengthening Transfer Center Planning: Guidance and Requirements

Purpose

In response to the [Transfer Audit for California's Systems of Public Higher Education \(2023-123\)](#) and [Recommendation 18](#), this memorandum provides guidance to community college districts on the requirements for transfer centers as outlined in Title 5, California Code of Regulations, Section [51027](#): Transfer Centers: Minimum Program Standards.

This guidance is intended to support districts and colleges in strengthening transfer center planning and implementation, ensuring alignment with regulatory requirements, and improving equitable transfer outcomes.

Background

The state transfer audit reaffirms the importance of transfer centers as a central hub for transfer guidance, academic planning, outreach, and coordination with university partners. It also highlights ongoing challenges, including low transfer rates, persistent equity gaps, and insufficient staffing capacity to adequately support transfer-intending students.

[Recommendation 18](#) specifically calls for ensuring that community colleges have sufficient staffing capacity to support transfer-intending students and provide essential transfer services.

Title 5, Section [51027](#) requires each community college district governing board to recognize transfer as a primary mission and adopt a comprehensive transfer center plan. These plans must identify target student populations and establish measurable goals for increasing transfer applications to baccalaureate-granting institutions. These goals must include specific targets for increasing transfer applications among underrepresented students.

At a minimum, transfer center plans must include the following core components:

- **Required Services:** Targeted outreach; academic planning; articulation and transfer admission agreements; coordinated transfer counseling; student progress monitoring; referrals to support services; assistance with transfer applications; engagement opportunities with four-year institutions; and access to transfer resources.
- **Facilities:** A designated, visible, and accessible campus location with adequate space to support transfer center activities.
- **Staffing:** Sufficient staffing, including clerical support and coordination and leading of transfer center activities.
- **Advisory Committee:** A representative advisory committee of campus stakeholders—and, when feasible, representatives from four-year institutions—to support planning, implementation, and continuous improvement.
- **Evaluation and Reporting:** Ongoing institutional research and evaluation to assess effectiveness and progress toward established goals.

Colleges should refer directly to Title 5, Section [51027](#) for complete regulatory requirements.

Guidance

Transfer Center Plans and Implementation of Required Services and Activities

In alignment with Title 5 requirements and audit recommendations, the Chancellor's Office encourages districts to establish a regular process for reviewing and updating transfer center plans. Colleges are encouraged to engage key campus and external partners—including transfer center directors, counselors, support specialists, articulation officers, institutional research teams, and university partners—to collaboratively develop and maintain a comprehensive plan that meets Title 5 requirements.

Colleges may consider aligning transfer center goals with the goals and strategies developed in Section 10 of their college's [2025-28 Student Equity Plan](#) (SEP), which focuses on improving transfer outcomes, eliminating disproportional impact, and fully closing equity gaps.

Advisory committees play an important role and are encouraged to meet regularly to assess transfer center effectiveness, review data, and inform continuous improvement of transfer services and strategies outlined in the transfer plan. They can also engage in meaningful dialogue on strengthening a collegewide transfer culture and enhancing collaboration across departments, as well as with high school and university partners, to reduce barriers and improve transfer success.

Staffing and Resources

The transfer audit underscores the importance of institutional investment in transfer efforts and highlights insufficient transfer center staffing as an ongoing concern.

While staffing levels and funding are determined locally, colleges should annually evaluate whether existing resources are sufficient to:

- Deliver all required services
- Support equitable outcomes for diverse student populations
- Sustain core transfer center functions

At a minimum, Section [51027](#) identifies the need for both clerical support and assigned college staff for transfer center coordination. Colleges are encouraged to consider workload, student demand, and equity goals when assessing staffing needs.

Required Transfer Center Reporting

Title 5, Section [51027](#) requires each community college to submit an annual report on the status of transfer center implementation, achievement of goals, and expenditures. The Transfer Center Annual Report is released each year in July and closes in December. It is typically assigned to the transfer center director at each college and submitted via the [Transfer and Articulation Reporting portal](#).

Data collected through this annual process is published each spring on the [Chancellor's Office transfer website](#) and is used to assess compliance with Title 5, Section [51027](#) requirements. Beginning in the 2026-27 academic year, following the annual review of transfer center reports, the Chancellor's Office will identify colleges that may not be meeting regulatory requirements and work with them to better understand any staffing or capacity challenges. Colleges may be asked to clarify how they are providing required transfer services with existing staffing levels and, when appropriate, share a plan to address identified staffing needs. The Chancellor's Office will then collaborate with colleges to strengthen areas where additional support is needed and provide technical assistance, resources, and guidance to support implementation of transfer center requirements.

Additionally, the annual [Vision-Aligned Reporting](#) (VAR) process requires colleges to report on transfer center activities, associated costs, and narratives addressing transfer-related challenges and best practices. Colleges must also collect and submit student-level transfer center activity data through the Management Information Systems (MIS) within 30 days after each term. This data is automatically populated in the VAR tool and connects program activities to student outcomes.

Together, student-level and program-level VAR data can provide colleges and the Chancellor's Office with valuable insights into transfer center operations, barriers, student impacts, and effective strategies for closing equity gaps in transfer. For additional guidance and information, visit the [VAR Information for Colleges Google Drive](#).

Resources

While transfer centers play a central role in providing transfer services and information, achieving equitable transfer outcomes requires coordinated efforts across the entire college, as supporting students through the transfer process is a shared, campus-wide responsibility.

To support efforts to develop and strengthen transfer centers, colleges and districts may refer to the following resources:

- [Student Education Plans and Equitable Transfer Guidance Memo ESS 25-61](#) (PDF)
- [Associate Degrees for Transfer \(ADT\): Response to State Transfer Audit Recommendation 13 and Ongoing ADT Rationale Review Process Memo ESS 26-13](#) (PDF)
- [Promising Practices in Support of Transfer Students Memo ESS 24-45](#) (PDF)
- [Transfer Recommended Guidelines](#) (PDF)
- [Vision-Aligned Reporting website](#)
- [Student Support Block Grant Allocations and Guidance](#)

Contacts

For additional guidance on any of the information within this memo, please contact Transfer@CCCCO.edu. Thank you for your continued commitment to student success and equitable outcomes across our system.

cc: Sonya Christian, Chancellor
Rowena Tomaneng, Deputy Chancellor
Chris Ferguson, Executive Vice Chancellor of Finance and Strategic Initiatives