

State of California

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

Awards for Innovation in Higher Education ([link](#))

California's 2016-17 budget includes \$25 million for the Awards for Innovation in Higher Education. The program will recognize innovations at California's colleges—and, potentially, with other partners—that are expected to reduce the time it takes students to complete degrees and credentials, reduce the total cost of attendance for students, or do both. The legislation specifically highlights the state's interest in efforts to:

- Redesign curriculum and instruction, such as the implementation of three-year bachelor's degrees.
- Allow students to make progress toward completion of degrees and credentials based on their demonstration of knowledge and competencies, including skills acquired through military training, prior learning, and prior experiences.
- Create programs that make college more affordable by making financial aid and other supports and services more accessible, including by increasing the number of students who apply for these programs, or by reducing the costs of books and supplies.

The Committee on Awards for Innovation in Higher Education will make awards for the most promising innovations. The committee consists of the following members: the state's Director of Finance, who serves as the committee's chairperson; four members selected by the Governor; an appointee of the state Senate Committee on Rules; and an appointee of the Speaker of the state Assembly.

When making awards, the committee will consider a variety of innovations, but, consistent with the statute, will give preference to innovations that:

- Improve the outcomes for students from groups that are historically underrepresented in higher education, such as low-income students, first-generation college students, students from underrepresented minority groups, students who are current or former foster youth, students with disabilities, and students who are veterans.
- Use technology in ways that are not common in higher education.

The application for an award must be facilitated by a California community college. If the application is selected for an award, the committee will distribute funds to that college, with the expectation that any further allocations be managed locally.

Committee Members

Michael Cohen, Chair
Lande Ajose

Samuel Bersola
Audrey Dow

Cecilia Estolano
Mitchell Stevens

More Information: [2016 Statute](#); [2014-15 Round of Awards](#)

Program information, including notices of meetings of the selection committee and distribution of the application for awards, will be sent using an email mailing list. You can sign up for this list at the link: [Awards for Innovation in Higher Education Mailing List](#). Please email innovationawards@dof.ca.gov with any questions or comments regarding the program.