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LEAD California’s Community Engagement Student Fellowship (CESF) program is a 4-month initiative specifically designed to support student leaders advancing service, service-learning and community engagement at LEAD California member campuses throughout the state.

Upon successfully completing a term of service of at least 35-50 hours, students receive a $500 scholarship from LEAD California. Students are engaged in providing direct service to the community or supporting a service-learning program, or both. Students are involved in addressing every major issue confronting California and beyond – from access to and success in higher education to economic development, health disparities to homelessness and poverty.
The Community Engagement Student Fellowship (CESF) connects college students with their communities through community-campus partnerships that address pressing social needs. While working to improve the lives of others, these students awaken to the root causes of complex societal problems and to their own ability to work toward solutions — both now and into the future.

LEAD California, a statewide coalition of higher education leaders, established the CESF program in 2013 as part of its mission to educate students for civic and social responsibility. Since that time, LEAD California has deployed more than 266 CESF Fellows on campus and in the community.

### THE ASSESSMENT TOOL

LEAD California surveys all students who participate in the CESF program. A recent survey report compiled all qualitative and quantitative results from CESF Fellows who served from 2013 to 2022 (n=266). The survey analysis was conducted by Christine M. Cress, PhD, professor of Educational Leadership, Policy, and Service-Learning at Portland State University.

- **266 STUDENT FELLOWS**
- **10 PROGRAM YEARS**
- **19 COHORTS**
- **13,300 HOURS SERVED**
- **$398,335 IN SERVICE**


"This experience will stay with me for the rest of my life. The opportunity for me to learn outside of the classroom and apply these skills beyond is a gift I will treasure forever!"
I learned that each individual has a story that is worth listening to... common values and experiences can bind us despite our differences.

Each individual has the power and creativity to cultivate skills and practices which promote being the change we want to see in the world.

ENGAGING STUDENTS IN LIFE-CHANGING WORK

The Fellowship supports college students in conducting service and service-learning work in programs organized through LEAD California member campuses across the state. CESF Fellows provide both hands-on service through community agencies and infrastructure support through their campuses.

As part of its ongoing assessment, LEAD California surveys all CESF Fellows on completion of their term. Survey results compiled from the 266 Fellows who served from 2013 through spring 2022 show an astonishing impact: students report a huge leap not only in skills and knowledge but also in their desire to apply those skills in their communities.

FOSTERING A COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY

Remarkably, CESF Fellows serve for an average of 61 hours, well above the minimum required hours. A third of all Fellows served for 51-100 hours, and 10% for 100 hours or more.

These results indicate a deep commitment to the work as well as a remarkable return on the $500 per-student investment. In total, CESF Fellows have worked for thousands of hours in communities throughout California, providing enormous social and economic value.

"I learned that each individual has a story that is worth listening to... common values and experiences can bind us despite our differences."

"Each individual has the power and creativity to cultivate skills and practices which promote being the change we want to see in the world."
A NEW GENERATION OF COMMITED LEADERS

The Fellowship is designed to foster student leaders in community engagement throughout California. CESF Fellows have demonstrated their leadership abilities by providing thousands of hours of service, facilitating projects, coordinating activities, mentoring others, and creating new programs. These opportunities help students realize their potential as leaders while spurring a deeper commitment to working toward social change.

PERCENTAGE OF ALL CESF FELLOWS WHO SAY THE PROGRAM HAS...

99%
helped them improve their leadership skills

99%
strengthened their commitment to future engagement

100%
taught them how to use their knowledge to create positive change

99%
are now more aware of their own strengths and skills
ENGAGING COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS

One critical aspect of the program is developing students’ ability and desire to apply their talents in working toward positive community change. Fully 100% of CESF Fellows agree that because of the program, “I increased my understanding of how to use my own knowledge and skills to improve the community.” Nearly all of these already dedicated students say they are now even more committed to future engagement.

CULTIVATING LEADERSHIP

Students report overwhelmingly that the skills and confidence they develop through CESF have positioned them for future leadership. Many also highlight the ability to bring diverse groups of people together to achieve results.

"I now understand what it takes to plan events and engage with the community. With this knowledge I am now ready to start other projects and initiatives in the community"
DEMONSTRATED BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS

In addition to helping Fellows gain the knowledge and drive to improve their world, CESF offers a range of benefits for the students, campuses, and communities the program engages.

These findings reinforce the value of community engagement in helping students clarify their academic and career goals and, by extension, improving retention and graduation rates.

"The Fellowship has given me motivation to persevere through my nursing program."

"This experience pushed me on my career goal of working in policy and finding ways to make reform."

"I feel much more confident in my technological and communication abilities."
This semester I realized that college doesn’t just mean classes and tests, but involves all sorts of learning opportunities. In fact, my work this semester has completely changed my mind and now I am fully motivated to continue through college.

INCREASING OPPORTUNITY THROUGH EDUCATION

A major program outcome is that students recognize the importance of their own education in building the future. The vast majority of CESF Fellows said community engagement increased their understanding of the personal and community value of completing their college degree. This was particularly true among the two-thirds of Fellows who identified as students of color.

DEVELOPING REAL-WORLD SKILLS AND THE CONFIDENCE TO USE THEM

CESF Fellows note that they not only develop communication and other skills but also apply them with more assurance. Nearly all said the program made them more aware of their own strengths and skills. Females (91%) and students of color (92%) were most likely to strongly agree that they now better understand their personal and professional capacities.

Students specifically called out the kinds of real-world abilities that communities and employers need, including team-building, communication, and technology skills.

85% of all CESF Fellows strongly agree that the program has increased their understanding of the value of completing a college degree.

"The training I received gave me skills that will help me throughout life, [including] public speaking, time management, and cultural sensitivity."
California’s colleges and universities also reap benefits from the Fellowship program. The infrastructure support provided by CESF Fellows boosts the capacity of campuses and communities to partner in ways that benefit all. In doing so, these Fellows help campuses fulfill their education and civic missions.

Student Fellows also report that they now more fully understand the role of colleges and universities as agents of positive change. The Fellowship is thus creating education champions who serve as advocates for campus engagement efforts.

"This experience has taught me the importance of advocacy as well as how to work within diverse communities and the importance of building relationships and community."

"I learned just how much my campus contributes to the community."

"They came open hearted and ready to work and they got us further to our goal. We were happy to see them."

Sacramento State University Community Partner
STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

CESF Fellows team with a wide variety of community organizations to create or enhance vital programs. Most work with nonprofits or K–12 schools; others serve in government agencies or health care facilities. In addition to direct service, Fellows provide infrastructure support through their campus service and service-learning centers.

Student Fellows work on a range of issues that support community vitality, including education, health care, poverty, hunger, homelessness, senior care, youth mentoring, and domestic violence. They also address broad societal concerns such as social justice, cultural awareness, immigration, and environmental sustainability.

WORKING WITH THEIR CAMPUSES + COMMUNITIES, CESF FELLOWS HAVE:

...helped disabled veterans regain a sense of independence through scuba certification.

...tutored the children of Syrian refugees to help them acclimate to a new life.

...mentored youths to help them leave gangs or escape human traffickers.

...helped the homeless access resources to secure permanent housing.

...provided physical therapy for seniors and patients with dementia.

...created communitywide recycling and sustainability programs.

ISSUE AREAS ADDRESSED (2013-2022)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue Area</th>
<th>CESF Fellows who worked in each issue area</th>
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<tr>
<td>Non-profit w/o Faith-based Affiliation</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education / Literacy</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-12 School or College</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare / Wellness</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Identity</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Justice</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabilities</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food / Nutrition / Hunger</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-Income Assistance</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerable Youth</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homelessness</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Issues</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
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Here are profiles of just a few CESF Fellows working throughout California to address social and community issues.

**RICHARD GAVINO**
*Stanbridge University*

Richard Gavino, a physical therapist assistant student at Stanbridge University, worked with Alzheimer’s patients to help them build physical skills. He says the project taught him how to establish a rapport with patients and solidified his commitment to helping those with dementia.

**UMA NICOLE**
*Loyola Marymount*

Uma Nicole, a master’s student in bioethics at Loyola Marymount, worked with the campus Office for Sustainability and Center for Service and Action, as well as several community partners, to reduce food waste and implement a grassroots composting program.

**SAYURI TAKAGAWA**
*UC Berkeley*

Sayuri Takagawa of UC Berkeley worked to fight human trafficking through both direct service and advocacy. In addition to instructing girls affected by or at risk for sexual exploitation, she founded a campus group to raise awareness of the conditions that can lead to human trafficking.

**MARTIN MIJARES + RYAN ECKFORD**
*San Jose State University*

Martin Mijares and Ryan Eckford of San Jose State University wanted to alleviate homelessness in San Jose. After studying the causes of housing issues, they started a campus group to help homeless students gain access to resources and to provide them with supplies.

**ALEJANDRA MORALES + JANETTE RAMIREZ**
*CSU Dominguez Hills*

Alejandra Morales and Janette Ramirez of CSU Dominguez Hills worked with Native American communities to provide resources for diabetes prevention and mismanagement. They created written materials, presented workshops, and developed tools for tracking calories and physical activity.

“If I dedicate the time and effort to my set of ideals, I am capable of making the world a better place.... I have learned that I can bring about change by giving everyone the tools to do their fair share of the process known as democracy.”
Since its founding in 1988, LEAD California (formerly known as California Campus Compact) has worked to build the collective commitment and capacity of colleges, universities and communities throughout California to advance civic and community engagement for a healthy, just and democratic society. Through innovative programs and initiatives, grant funding, training and technical assistance, professional development and powerful research studies and publications, LEAD California each year invests in and champions more than 500,000 students, faculty members, administrators and community members involved in diverse and ground-breaking activities that support and expand civic and community engagement throughout California.

As the only coalition that brings together the diverse collection of California colleges and universities together around a common commitment to higher education’s civic purposes, LEAD California is a powerful ally in making the case for civic engagement, public service and student involvement in campus-community partnerships – and for sustaining the momentum for higher education’s public service role in California.
OUR MISSION

LEAD California builds the collective commitment and capacity of colleges, universities and communities to advance civic and community engagement for a healthy, just and democratic society.

"I would like to thank those who have put this program together for giving me a chance to go through a journey of seeing human and communal transformation. I found that the greatest leaps of character happen when you act positively on behalf of others rather than just yourself. It is through this experience that my dreams have been reaffirmed and that I have been bounded to the truth that: anything is possible."