



TO: Chief Executive Officers
Chief Business Officers
Chief Instructional Officers
Chief Student Services Officers
Academic Senate for the California Community Colleges

FROM: Rebecca Ruan-O'Shaughnessy
Vice Chancellor, Educational Services and Support

RE: Zero Textbook Cost Program – Additional Updates and Acceleration Grants

Background

The 2021 Budget Act appropriated \$115 million in one-time funding to the California Community Colleges for the Zero-Textbook-Cost Degree Grant (ZTC) program. The program intends to develop and implement ZTC degrees and prioritize Open Educational Resources (OER) as a strategy to “reduce the overall cost of education for students and decrease the time it takes students to complete degree programs offered by community colleges.” The legislation requires that the Chancellor’s Office ensure grants result in the greatest number of degrees to benefit the greatest number of students while avoiding duplication of degrees or OER materials. The legislation also identifies additional specific requirements relating to program prioritization, sustainability, content adaptability, location for content curation, implementation approach, implementation period, and reporting of required data.

In July 2022, the Chancellor’s Office disseminated guidance memorandum [ESS 22-100-005 Zero Textbook Cost Program](#), which provided an overview of the Legislature’s appropriation of \$115 million to the California Community Colleges in the 2021 Budget Act in one-time funding for the Zero-Textbook-Cost Degree Grant (ZTC) Program. In February of 2023, the Chancellor’s Office shared another program update memo [ESS 23-04 Zero Textbook Cost Program - Updates](#). This memo provides additional program updates, including details related to the upcoming ZTC Acceleration Grants (formerly called Phase 2), and key program deliverables and deadlines.

ZTC Planning and Implementation Grants

Every college received a \$20,000 Planning Grant (formally called Phase 1) in July 2022 and a \$180,000 Implementation Grant (formally called Phase 3) in March 2023. Please pay particular attention to the Reporting Chart in Table 2 below regarding updated reporting dates and deadlines for the ZTC Planning and ZTC Implementation Grants.

ZTC Acceleration Grants and ZTC Acceleration Program Plan

The Chancellor’s Office will distribute the balance of program development funding, totaling \$88.55 million, in the form of ZTC Acceleration Grants. The ZTC Acceleration Grant phase provides funding of up to \$200K for each degree developed and implemented. The Chancellor’s Office released the ZTC Acceleration Grant Program Plan (“Program Plan”) on August 15, 2023, in NOVA. All colleges interested in developing and implementing ZTC programs by Fall 2026 are strongly encouraged to apply for the Acceleration Grant by submitting their program plan by September 15, 2023. The Chancellor’s Office recognizes that there are limiting factors locally (e.g., shared governance process) that may make the one-month turnaround time to submit a final Program Plan challenging for some colleges; therefore, the Chancellor’s Office has built in flexibility for submitting the Program Plan. The Chancellor’s Office will determine the awardees and award amounts based on the evaluation of the submitted Program Plans, statutory requirements, and funding availability beginning September 22, 2023. Awardees will receive ZTC Acceleration grants funds via the apportionment process. Please see the table below for the key Acceleration Grant funding timelines.

Table 1: ZTC Acceleration Grant funding and timing:

Acceleration Program Plan Release	August 15, 2023
Acceleration Program Plan Submission	September 15, 2023
Award Selection and Awardee Notification begins	September 22, 2023
Grant Allocation through apportionment begins	October 2023

The Chancellor’s Office is committed to support all colleges that are interested in developing and implementing ZTC program pathways by Fall 2026 to apply for and receive necessary program investment. Please log in to NOVA for details and attend one of the upcoming ZTC Acceleration

Grant Program Plan information sessions. The Chancellor’s Office will host information sessions to support colleges’ submission of the ZTC Acceleration Program Plans. The next sessions are on August 22, 29, September 5 and 12 from 12:00 – 1:00pm (use [link](#) to join).

Table 2: Program Reporting Summary Chart

2023	2024	2025	2026
Planning Grant (formerly known as Phase 1) – \$20K			
Expenditure Report – NOVA - 6/30/23			
Implementation Grant (formerly known as Phase 3) - \$180K*			
Program Plan – NOVA 10/31/23	Progress & Expenditure Report NOVA 12/31/24	Progress & Expenditure Report NOVA 12/31/25	Final Report & Final Expenditure Report 12/31/26
Acceleration Grant (formerly known as Phase 2) – Up to \$200K per pathway			
Intent to Apply & Program Plan - NOVA 9/15/23	Progress & Expenditure Report NOVA 12/31/24	Progress & Expenditure Report NOVA 12/31/25	Final Report & Final Expenditure Report 12/31/26
<u>XB-12 Data Element</u>**			
Summer, Fall, & Winter/Spring Terms	Summer, Fall, & Winter/Spring Terms	Summer, Fall, & Winter/Spring Terms	Summer, Fall, & Winter/Spring Terms

* For Implementation Grant, the Program Plan and the annual reports specified here encompass all reporting requirements for this grant superseding any previous reporting and completion requirements.

** XB-12 data is due three times per year, 30 days after each term ends.

Program Reporting

The ZTC program will result in over 550 ZTC degree/certificate pathways developed and/or implemented by Fall 2026 to reduce the cost of education and shorten completion time for our students in support of the Vision 2030 framework. The Chancellor’s Office is required to submit a legislative report by June 30, 2027, which includes the number of degrees developed and implemented; number of OER developed and curated; estimated annual savings to students; number of students who completed a ZTC program and accessed OER; and recommendations to

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increase, expand, or improve the offering of degrees and the use of OER. Therefore, the Chancellor's Office strongly encourages all colleges to implement plans to capture and report programmatic data as early as possible. The technical assistance provider will provide guidance to assist colleges to plan for this data collection. Additional background information on the ZTC Degree Grant Program can be found in [Education Code Sections 78050-78052](#).

Program Planning and Implementation Support

The Chancellor's Office is committed to prioritize support to ensure the implementation of the ZTC Grant Program with fidelity and at scale. The Chancellor's Office will deliver various forms of technical assistance, including office hours, community of practice, professional development courses, coaching, and a help desk to assist in such topics as finding relevant OER and understanding open licensing. To ensure that our support meets the diverse needs of the colleges, please submit the [Readiness Assessment](#) if your college did not have a chance to do so in June 2023. The Chancellor's Office will also invite colleges to participate in different forms of technical assistance depending on the level of support that they need. The follow supports are and/or will be made available:

- A. NOVA Access - [NOVA video](#) tutorials are available online. For a new login or access to NOVA, please visit <https://nova.cccco.edu/request-access>.
- B. Ongoing ZTC Drop-in Office Hours – Ongoing ZTC drop-in office hours occur on the last Friday of the month from 9:00-10:00 am. The next scheduled office hours are August 25, September 29, and October 27. To join, use this [link](#).
- C. Acceleration Grant Program Plan Information Sessions – Acceleration Program Plan Information Sessions will be offered on August 15, 22, 29, September 5 and 12 from 12:00 – 1:00pm; to join use this [link](#).
- D. ZTC Professional Development Courses – In Summer 2023, the first professional development courses were offered in support of ZTC program development and implementation. Additional facilitated professional development courses will be offered asynchronously throughout the year. These courses are offered free of charge through the [@One professional development platform](#). Contact ztctap@canyons.edu for questions regarding these courses.
 - Making the Case for ZTC: Pathways to Equity

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- Building a Team: Training OER Support Staff
- Teaching with OER and Open Pedagogy for Equity

E. Additional ZTC Resources

a. ZTC Program related Statutes and Regulations

i. [Education Code Section 78050 – 78052](#) – Zero-Textbook-Cost Degree Grant Program

ii. [Education Code Section 66406.9](#) – Highlighting courses with free textbooks

iii. [Education Code Section 66408](#) – Digital Open-Source Library

iv. [California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Section 59404](#) – District Policies and Regulations for Instructional Materials.

b. [Academic Senate for the California Community Colleges Open Educational Resources Initiative](#)

– expands the availability and adoption of high-quality open educational resources. They provide informational webinars and events, links to OER resources, and a team of local OER Liaisons who advocate for awareness, adoption, and support.

c. [Community College Consortium for Open Education Resources](#) – promotes the awareness and adoption of open educational policies, practices, and resources. They provide resources, support, and opportunities for collaboration for learning, planning, and implementing successful open educational programs.

d. [Cool4Ed](#) – is an OER repository service by the California State University Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching (MERLOT) program.

e. [Open for Antiracism Program](#) is a 4-week facilitated course on making content and classroom practices antiracist.

f. [Libretexts](#) is an online textbook platform open to students, faculty, and scholars.

g. [OpenStax](#) is a repository of textbooks available to instructors and students.

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For questions regarding this memo or the ZTC program, contact ztc@cccco.edu.

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