

Career Online High School

A Review of the California Public Libraries Initiative



Report to the Legislature
on Enrollment
and Outcomes
December 31, 2015-
December 31, 2018



California
STATE LIBRARY
FOUNDED 1850
PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE. SHAPING OUR FUTURE

June 2019
Greg Lucas, State Librarian

California's Career Online High School program, now offered in 695 of the state's 1,119 public libraries, complements adult education opportunities in the state by providing an online program that can fit into the busy schedules of working and parenting adults. The program offers qualified adults 19 and over the chance to earn an accredited high school diploma along with a career certificate.

Career Online High School has helped 793 California adults complete their dream of a high school diploma (as of January 2, 2019). Of the 1198 active students in the program, more than 200 are due to graduate in spring 2019. Students take an average of 12 months to receive their diploma, and 79 percent of graduates surveyed indicate interest in post-secondary education.

Twenty-eight of California's 58 counties offer Career Online High School, including fifty-one library jurisdictions covering nearly 700 individual libraries.

Six library systems led the way: Los Angeles Public Library, Los Angeles County Library, San Francisco Public Library, Sacramento Public Library, San Bernardino Public Library, and San Diego Public Library. Los Angeles Public Library has the most graduates, with 209, followed by Sacramento Public Library, with 114. The three newest programs, starting in summer 2019, are Azusa City Library, Santa Barbara Public Library System, and Santa Clara City Library.

Local libraries, businesses, and nonprofits have matched the State's investment with over \$2.6 million in support of Career Online High School in their communities.

Tammy's experience

Tammy Marquez always wanted to earn her high school diploma, but worried that reaching her 50s meant it was too late to achieve this educational milestone. Early motherhood caused her to drop out of high school in her teens, but Tammy knew that was no excuse to stop her education, especially since her family had grown by three more boys since then. Once her eldest son reached the age of 20, Tammy was motivated to consider non-traditional options so she could be a better role model for her children.

Several years later when she learned that the Ventura County Library offered Career Online High School to residents 19-years-old and older, Tammy saw it as a way to pick up where she left off. She began in late 2016 and completed her diploma in early 2018.

"My academic coach was amazing," Tammy said. "It was great to have someone who always checked in on me. The extra encouragement was very valuable because I was a single parent operating a full-time daycare while also completing high school courses."

While Career Online High School programs provide students the opportunity to earn a certificate in one of 10 career fields, Ventura County Library's program has taken its career focus one step further. The library has partnered with Ventura Adult & Continuing Education to offer Career Online High School graduates a scholarship that allows them to enroll in advanced career training such as accounting, computer-aided drafting and design, and medical front/back office job preparation at little or no cost. According to administrator Judy Perkins, "Career Online High School's emphasis on preparing students for entry into employment, combined with the additional career training that we're able to offer thanks to Ventura Adult & Continuing Education, has helped all of our six graduates to continue on to advanced education or immediately improve their employment situations."

Tammy earned a certificate in Child Care and Education along with her diploma through Career Online High School. She is now enrolled at Ventura College. She has future plans to obtain her associate's degree so that she can realize her goal of taking care of special needs children, a passion she discovered while raising her son who has Down Syndrome. "What I learned from the program is that it's never too late — even in your 50s — to continue your education. All you need is self-determination and the support of amazing organizations like your local library."



The Challenge

California has more adults without a high school diploma than any other state in the nation. About 4.5 million California residents 25 or older lack a high school diploma. Although about 90% of adults over 25 in the U.S. now have a high school diploma,¹ California's rate of 82.5 percent is among the lowest in the nation.²

Adults without high school diplomas are often excluded from opportunities in the workplace, higher education, and life in general. High school graduates can expect to earn about \$10,000 a year more in annual income than those without a degree.

A Solution

For adults struggling to juggle childcare, multiple jobs, and meeting monthly expenses, a high school diploma may be a deferred dream. But for almost 1,000 Californians over the past three years, public libraries have helped create an alternative path to a high school diploma through Career Online High School.

“

I wanted to finish high school to set a good example to my children. I also wanted to do it for me. This program has given me the tools needed to prepare a resume. It has also made me want to further my education.... Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to get my high school diploma!

– Shannon A., Los Angeles Public Library

“

Every day I take my kids from school, work at my full-time job, keep an eye on my kids when they're home, make my family dinner and do a million other things. I knew that for a program to work, I would need to be able to complete it on my schedule and from wherever I happened to be at the time.

– Saram Routh, Long Beach Public Library

Libraries are key resources for reaching adult learners through adult literacy centers, digital learning classes, free broadband access and computers, and career support. California's public libraries have the reach, flexibility, tools and vision to make a difference in the lives of adults who seek a high school diploma.

Career Online High School is a self-paced, online learning opportunity designed for adults ages 19 and over. The program is free to California adults, who are awarded full scholarships by their libraries after successfully completing prerequisites, an interview, and probationary coursework.

¹ <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2017/educational-attainment-2017.html> viewed 17 April 2019.

² https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml?src=bkmk viewed 17 April 2019.

Available 24/7, Career Online High School allows students to complete their degree on their own schedule. Developed by Smart Horizons Career Online Education and Gale|Cengage Learning, Career Online High School is an accredited high school diploma program that helps learners prepare for career advancement. All students earn a career certificate in one of 10 high-demand, high-growth fields, from Childcare and Home Care Professional to Homeland Security, Commercial Driving, and Retail Customer Service. Career guidance and resources, plus a requirement to create a resume and career portfolio, prepare adults for the workforce.

Career Online High School's easy-to-access online learning environment supports independent learners. All core courses are aligned to national standards, and students have access to academic coaches and support instructors. They may also get support from volunteer tutors and staff at their public libraries. Unlike the GED, students do not have to pay for exams. Students have 18 months to complete the curriculum, and can transfer credits from their high school, GED, and other educational experiences. The typical California learner takes 12 months to complete the program.

“

So many doors were closed to me because I didn't have my diploma. One of my proudest achievements has been getting my diploma. It has made such a difference.

– Karina, San Diego Public Library

Students begin their coursework in a career path that interests them to help build confidence and success. A student works to master only one course of study at a time, avoiding the overload of multiple courses combined with work and family responsibilities.

Fifty-one California public library jurisdictions—nearly 700 libraries—offer Career Online High School to library cardholders. Nearly 800 adults in the state have earned diplomas through their public library via Career Online High School (as of January 2, 2019), and the number of graduates grows each month as enrollees begin to finish their year-long journey.

Program History

Six library jurisdictions independently launched Career Online High School in 2014 and 2015. Inspired by the outcomes, the California Legislature invested \$1 million in a pilot for the library-based program in the 2015-2016 fiscal year. Those funds put 873 scholarships in the hands of public libraries to award to adult learners in their communities.

During the renewal of the program in 2017, the State Library purchased 2,598 scholarships at a discounted rate for a three-year period, totaling 3,471 state-supported scholarships for California adults. With additional funding in the 2018-2019 fiscal year, the State Library was able to obtain 913 additional scholarships, bringing the total to 4,384 state-purchased seats.

State-purchased “scholarships” are matched by local contributions—from businesses, foundations, city and county governments and individual donors—that bring the total available free scholarships to over 8,700.

How to Participate

Libraries have an ongoing opportunity to join Career Online High School. Applications to offer scholarships are accepted each quarter, and participating libraries may apply for additional scholarships up to four times per year. The basic commitment is a one-to-one match in which, for example, a local library accepting three seats from the California State Library commits to paying for three seats themselves.

Libraries launching Career Online High School in their communities first attend four consecutive weeks of online training. Gale|Cengage also maintains an online collection of resources for programs, including public relations and marketing materials, and an active Facebook page where programs can log successes and ask questions. A live best practices and sharing session was held at the 2018 California Library Association meeting in Santa Clara. Career Online High School was also featured at the March 2019 Corporation for Network Initiatives in California conference showcasing applications of high-speed broadband, and will be featured at the American Library Association meeting in June 2019 and ProLiteracy Conference on Adult Education in September 2019.

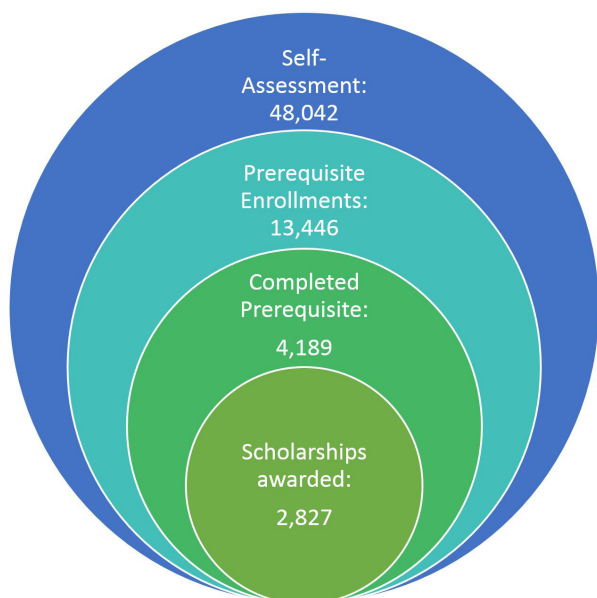
How It Works

The Program:

In order to receive a scholarship for Career Online High School, students must undergo a vetting process with four steps: self-assessment, prerequisite, interview, and scholarship. At each step, students who do not meet the program requirements are directed to other library services that may be a better fit for them.

Below is the breakdown at each step:

*Cumulative for all California libraries with Career Online High School as of March 18, 2019.



Self-Assessments: **48,042**

- Prerequisite: **13,446**
- Passed Prerequisite: **4,189**
- Scholarship Awarded: **2,827**
- **77** percent retention rate (students who were awarded full scholarships after 30 days and who graduated or are on track to graduate).

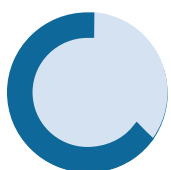
Alumni of Career Online High School in California

Career Online High School measures academic learning gains through a proficiency, competency-based learning model (measuring pre/post assessments in each semester course, mastery of each assignment/chapter, workforce readiness).

As of January 2nd, 2019, California libraries with Career Online High School have produced the following results.

- **793** total graduates to date in California.
- **222** students are likely to graduate in the next three months.
- **1198** currently active in the program
- **12** months on average to complete the program
- **504** graduates expressed interest in post-secondary education during exit interview (out of 636 responses)

The Larger Impact



of California Career Online High School graduates who responded to the exit survey plan to go on to higher education.

Helping just 25 adults earn their diplomas could translate into an \$8.27 million increase in those graduates' earnings, a \$1.82 million increase in local state and federal revenue, and \$7.3 million in taxpayer savings, mostly at the state and local level.³

According to Gale|Cengage's analysis, increasing the high school graduation rate from the 2015 figure of 83.2 percent to a more acceptable 90 percent in California could mean:

 **11,650**
new jobs

 **\$1.4 billion**
in increased
annual earnings

 **\$122 million**
in increased annual
state/local revenue

³ \$8.27 million increase in graduates' earnings: Carnevale, A.P., Rose, S.J., & Cheah, B. 2011. "The College Payoff: Education, Occupations, Lifetime Earnings." The Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workplace.

\$1.82 million increase in local, state, and federal tax revenue: Trostel, P, 2015, It's not just the money: the benefits of college education to individuals and to society, Lumina issue papers, Lumina Foundation, Indianapolis, viewed 17 Oct 2017, <https://www.luminafoundation.org/resources/its-not-just-the-money>.

\$7.3 Million in taxpayer savings: Khatiwada, I., McLaughlin, J., Palma, S., & Sum, A., (2009, October) The Consequences of Dropping Out of High School: Joblessness and Jailing for High School Dropouts and the High Cost for Taxpayers, Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University.

California's Career Online High School initiative makes a difference. As we near 1,000 graduates statewide, the impact of the program on the workforce, higher education and families will continue to grow. Every month over a thousand Californians turn to their libraries to investigate the program; as they become ready, their public libraries stand prepared to welcome them onto the road to a high school diploma. California libraries are a crucial public space to provide and promote adult education, helping families grow stronger, parents model educational goals for their children, and adults prepare for a competitive job market.

“

I always wanted to finish my education and never got a chance. From the part of my country that I came from, women were not always allowed to go to school so I did not get very far.... I gained so much from this program, I cannot even put it into words.... I was having a lot of trouble finding a place nearby to finish my GED, since the local community college closed down their GED program. I finished my diploma so that when my daughter transfers to the local state university she does not have to work as much as she does now. This way, I can get a job and she can drop one of her jobs so she can focus on finishing her education.

– Teresa, Long Beach

“

Ever since I was a little girl one of my biggest dreams and goals had been to graduate from high school. I knew that in order to succeed and go further in life I was definitely going to need it. Unfortunately, while [I was] in high school, my mother's Stage Four breast cancer had spread throughout her entire body... and I took it upon myself to stop attending school to spend my mother's last moments by her side. Other than being one of my mother's last wishes, and my own goal, one of my biggest motivations for completing high school, was and still is my two-year-old son.

– Bridgette, San Diego Public Library

Appendix A

Participating Libraries and Total Scholarships

Library Jurisdictions	Total Scholarships	Scholarships Used	Scholarships Available
Pre-pilot libraries now participating in State project			
Los Angeles Public Library	867	794	73
Los Angeles County Public Library	910	352	558
San Francisco Public Library	135	115	20
Sacramento Public Library	366	322	44
San Bernardino County Public Library	356	216	140
San Diego Public Library	416	143	273
Libraries that joined with State funding			
Alameda County Public Library	30	10	20
Amador County Library	11	1	10
Azusa City Library	6	1	5
Beaumont Library District	23	6	17
Carlsbad City Library	27	17	10
Chula Vista Public Library	21	14	7
Coalinga-Huron Library District	6	2	4
Colusa County Public Library	10	5	5
Contra Costa County Library	18	18	0
Corona Public Library	23	17	6
El Dorado County Library	33	22	11
Fresno County Library	12	7	5
Hayward Public Library	20	14	6
Huntington Beach Public Library	20	13	7
Inglewood Public Library	22	16	6
Kern County Library	6	3	3
Kings County Library	10	8	2
Long Beach Public Library	130	105	25
Marin County Free Library	10	3	7
Mendocino County Library	6	0	6
Napa County Library	17	11	6
Nevada County Library	12	5	7
Newport Beach Public Library	13	10	3
Oakland Public Library	18	17	1
Oceanside Public Library	9	8	1
OC Public Libraries	35	24	11

Library Jurisdictions	Total Scholarships	Scholarships Used	Scholarships Available
Palm Springs Public Library	16	8	8
Porterville Public Library	6	4	2
Redwood City Public Library	22	21	1
Richmond Public Library	67	58	9
Riverside County Library System	6	6	0
San Diego County Library	488	78	410
San Jose Public Library	138	119	19
San Mateo County Library	48	34	14
Santa Barbara Public Library	6	0	6
Santa Clara City Library	6	4	2
Santa Fe Springs City Library	16	10	6
Santa Monica Public Library	19	13	6
Solano County Library	60	30	30
Sonoma County Library	36	15	21
Stockton-San Joaquin County Library	30	23	7
Sunnyvale Public Library	10	6	4
Tulare County Free Library	33	20	13
Tulare Public Library	22	15	7
Ventura County Library	61	42	19
Woodland Public Library	17	6	11
Yolo County Library	20	16	4
All scholarships (local and state purchases)*	4725	2827	1898
California State Program	3516	1414	2102

*some local purchases predate the State Program.

Appendix B

Use Statistics by Library (as of January 2, 2019):

Library Systems	Prerequisite Attempts	Prerequisite Completions	Scholarships Awarded	Scholarships Fully Awarded (Post 30 day)	Alumni	Incomplete
Alameda County	40	19	14	8	2	1
Amador County Library	1	1	1	1	1	0
Azusa City Library	1	1	0	0	0	0
Beaumont Library District	8	6	7	6	2	0
Carlsbad City Library	52	22	22	16	8	0
Chula Vista PL	54	22	14	13	4	2
Coalinga-Huron Library District	14	6	1	1	0	0
Colusa County	13	5	4	4	1	0
Contra Costa County Lib	77	21	19	19	4	5
Corona Public	65	24	23	17	7	3
County of Los Angeles PL	1218	465	378	314	92	34
El Dorado County	48	29	25	22	2	10
Fresno County	87	25	10	7	1	2
Hayward Public	35	17	15	13	2	3
Huntington Beach Public	40	19	17	12	8	0
Inglewood Public	36	13	13	12	2	2
Kern County	23	7	4	4	0	0
Kings County	40	11	10	8	0	4
Long Beach Public	293	129	110	102	39	24
Los Angeles PL	5807	1243	922	738	209	145
Marin County Free Lib	22	4	3	3	0	1
Mendocino County	0	0	0	0	0	0
Napa County	32	15	13	11	1	4
Nevada County	12	4	4	4	1	1
Newport Beach PL	31	12	12	10	4	1
Oakland Public Library	67	23	20	16	7	7
OC Public Libraries	94	35	23	21	5	1
Oceanside PL	19	10	10	7	0	0
Palm Springs Public Library	42	20	15	8	0	0
Porterville PL	13	5	5	4	1	2
Redwood City Public	56	23	25	20	3	11
Richmond Public	215	67	58	50	26	5
Riverside County Library System	37	15	9	6	2	0

Library Systems	Prerequisite Attempts	Prerequisite Completions	Scholarships Awarded	Scholarships Fully Awarded (Post 30 day)	Alumni	Incomplete
Sacramento PL	1117	421	359	308	114	67
San Bernardino	571	212	195	168	39	36
San Diego County	213	80	75	62	17	6
San Diego PL	424	200	157	139	67	25
San Francisco*	503	120	115	111	21	24
San Jose Public	345	142	117	106	47	6
San Mateo County Library	127	40	38	33	8	1
Santa Barbara	0	0	0	0	0	0
Santa Clara City Library	4	3	2	2	0	0
Santa Fe Springs	20	10	9	7	2	0
Santa Monica PL	30	13	15	12	5	1
Solano County Library	111	39	31	30	12	15
Sonoma County	39	20	14	15	4	3
Stockton-San Joaquin County	94	25	27	19	5	3
Sunnyvale Public	29	10	8	6	0	3
Tulare County Free	38	18	20	18	4	1
Tulare Public	43	18	15	13	4	3
Ventura County	111	48	42	36	7	9
Woodland Public	22	6	6	6	1	4
Yolo County	61	18	17	15	4	5
TOTALS	12494	3761	3068	2583	795	480

Appendix C

Units attempted and completed by COHS students:

	Part 1 (Prerequisite)	Part 2	Part 2 (Qualified after 30 Days)
Number of units (sections or 0.5 credit courses) attempted by the pupils	6472	21899	21589
Number of units (sections or 0.5 credit courses) completed by the pupils	1947	19998	19920

Appendix D

Evidence of learning gains

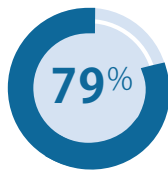
Career Online High School is a mastery-based program, and completion of units indicates successful mastery of program contents for that unit. It does not rely on outside assessments of reading, writing, or mathematics skills.



Number of pupils who earned a diploma
(as of January 2, 2019)

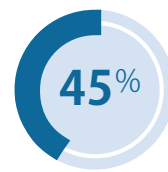


Average time to earn a diploma



Number of graduates enrolled who subsequently enrolled in postsecondary education

Current statistics show 79 percent of students were interested in enrolling in postsecondary education. A survey of graduates completed in February 2018 showed that 110 of 159 respondents, or 69 percent reported they were enrolled in postsecondary education. Gale|Cengage began collecting follow-up data through a six-month post-graduation survey in April 2019.



Information on subsequent employment of graduates and changes in wages for adults who earned Career Online High School diplomas

This information is not reliably determined at graduation, although graduates responding to a survey conducted from August 2017 to February 2018 shows that 72 out of 159 respondents—45 percent—reported increased wages or employment opportunities. Gale|Cengage began collecting data with a six-month post-graduation survey in April 2019.

Appendix E

California Career Online High School Program — Authorizing Legislation

Senate Bill No. 97 (2015)

http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/15-16/bill/sen/sb_0051-0100/sb_97_bill_20150624_chaptered.pdf

Chapter 11 [Approved by Governor June 24, 2015. Filed with Secretary of State June 24, 2015.]

SEC. 83. Item 6120-213-0001 of Section 2.00 of the Budget Act of 2015 is amended to read: 5,820,000 6120-213-0001 — For local assistance, California State Library, California Library Literacy and English Acquisition Services Program, pursuant to Section 18880 of the Education Code.

Schedule: (1) 5312-Library Development Services..... 5,820,000

Provisions: This item includes \$1,000,000 provided on a one-time basis for a pilot of the Career Online High School program.

Assembly Bill No. 97 (2017)

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB97

Chapter 14 [Approved by Governor June 27, 2017. Filed with Secretary of State June 27, 2017.]

6120-218-0001 — For local assistance, California State Library3,000,000

Schedule: (1) 5312-Library Development Services.....3,000,000

Provisions:

1. The funds appropriated in this item shall be used for the Career Online High School program.
2. It is the intent of the Legislature that the State Librarian allocate funds for participation in the Career Online High School program using a method that allows for rigorous evaluation, such as through a randomized controlled trial, of the effectiveness of the program in improving educational attainment, including attainment of postsecondary educational credentials, employment, and wages.
3. (a) On or before May 1, 2018, the California State Library shall report on enrollment and outcomes for participants in the Career Online High School program.
(b) The report shall include, for each library jurisdiction, at least all of the following:
 - (1) The number of pupils enrolled in the program between December 31, 2015, and December 31, 2017, inclusive.
 - (2) The number of units attempted by the pupils.
 - (3) The number of units completed by the pupils.
 - (4) Evidence of learning gains, including in the areas of quantitative reasoning and literacy.

- (5) The number of pupils who earned a diploma.
- (6) The average time for pupils to earn a diploma.
- (7) The number of pupils who earned a diploma and subsequently enrolled in postsecondary educational institutions.
- (8) Information about subsequent employment of pupils who earned a diploma.
- (9) Information about changes in wages for pupils who earned a diploma.

Senate Bill No. 840 (2018)

Chapter 29 [Approved by Governor June 27, 2018. Filed with Secretary of State June 27, 2018.]

An act making appropriations for the support of the government of the State of California and for several public purposes in accordance with the provisions of Section 12 of Article IV of the Constitution of the State of California, relating to the state budget, to take effect immediately, budget bill.

6120-218-0001 —For local assistance, California State Library1,000,000
 Schedule: (1) 5312-Library Development Services1,000,000

Provisions:

- 1. The funds appropriated in this item shall be used for the Career Online High School program.
- 2. On or before May 1, 2019, the California State Library shall report on enrollment and outcomes for participants in the Career Online High School program.