



SPRING NEWSLETTER

2024-2025

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OUR MISSION

The Santa Cruz County Career and Adult Learning Services (CALS) provides students with the opportunity to acquire academic, career, and technical skills and to prepare for life-long learning and success in the changing workplace.

Latest News

CALS Completes a Successful WASC Visit



The [Western Association of Schools and Colleges](#) (WASC) accreditation team spent three insightful days with our [CALS Career Technical Education \(CTE\)](#) and [Career Advancement Charter \(CAC\) program](#), observing and participating in the day-to-day experiences of both instructors and students. The visiting team learned about the impact of all CALS programs through meetings with administration, staff, and students, and shared lunch with our local partners who contribute to the success of our students. This lunch also celebrated the individual journeys of several CAC and CTE adult students, who shared how the CALS programs have personally impacted their lives. To showcase our students in action, the high school Culinary Arts class, led by Chef McKinzie Lothrop, prepared an outstanding dinner for the visiting team, which included COE staff and community members. Students shared their contributions to the menu and had the opportunity to talk about their experiences in the course.

The WASC visit provided the entire CALS team with an opportunity to reflect on our many achievements over the past several years and identify areas for growth so we can continue to improve our programs as industries evolve. Through this comprehensive visit, the CALS department gained a deeper appreciation for the commitment, innovation, and passion that drive our programs and empower students to build brighter futures.

Latest News

CALS Celebration

Our CALS team recently took a meaningful pause from our busy schedules to celebrate one another with a special department lunch, thoughtfully catered by our very own CTE culinary students under the leadership of Chef Vrinda Quintero. The event provided both a delicious meal and a heartfelt reminder of the importance of gratitude and connection. Taking time to come together in this way allowed us to reflect on the incredible passion and commitment each team member brings to their work every day. It was a moment to appreciate the strength of our collaboration and the shared purpose that drives us to support our students and one another.



CTE Student Showcase Interviews



CALS is excited to announce the launch of our new Student Showcase Pilot. This program allows CTE students to celebrate the culmination of their work by presenting their digital professional portfolios to industry experts within their CTE Pathway. During the event, industry professionals conducted mock interviews with our CTE students, providing valuable practice and helping them build essential career skills for future employment. Students shared samples of their work, outlined their future education and career goals, and reflected on how their coursework has prepared them for the next steps in their career journey. We are deeply grateful to all of the community volunteers who participated, and we look forward to expanding these Showcase Interviews to all of our CTE classes in the 2025–26 school year!

CALS and Tech+ Building Engineering



The CALS team is excited about our new collaboration with Tech+ that will promote Design, Engineering & Robotics across curricula at various sites throughout the county.

[WaveMakers](#), in partnership with the Golden State Pathways Program, is dedicated to expanding industry-aligned CTE pathways to meet the growing demand for skilled professionals in engineering, robotics, and technology-related fields. This initiative is designed to provide students with hands-on, real-world learning experiences that prepare them for in college, careers, and life.

Key program elements include:

- New & Expanded CTE Courses in engineering, robotics, and mechatronics
- Dual Enrollment & Articulated Credit with community colleges
- Work-Based Learning Opportunities, including internships, mentorships, and industry partnerships
- Equity & Access Initiatives to increase participation among underrepresented students
- Makerspace Development to enhance hands-on, project-based learning across subjects

We are excited about this new collaboration and are looking forward to sharing progress throughout the next school year.

Latest News

CALS CTE Teacher featured in Good Times Santa Cruz



We are proud to share that Chef Andrea Mollenauer, a CALS CTE instructor and chair of [Cabrillo College's Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management \(CAHM\) program](#), was featured in the recent edition of [Good Times Magazine](#). The article celebrates how Chef Andrea's curriculum explores different global cuisines, delving into the culinary tools and techniques of various regions throughout the world. Over her many years here at the COE, Chef Andrea has helped establish one of the most popular CTE pathways at the COE that continues to grow. Her leadership at both Cabrillo College and the Santa Cruz COE has influenced culinary career paths for students throughout the county.

CTE Programs



CTE Courses

CTE courses are an important option for high school students looking to discover potential careers within a wide range of career sectors. The COE's high-quality CTE courses provide students the opportunity to gain high school and college credit while meeting the UC A-G requirements.

With the 2025-2026 school year schedule process for classes beginning now, please share the following resources with your students about the wide range of opportunities the Santa Cruz COE has to offer within CTE. All courses are UC A-G approved and provide students the opportunity to earn college credit through our partnership with Cabrillo College.

Please visit the following websites for more information

- [Culinary Arts Career Pathway](#)
- [ICT Career Pathways](#)
- [Fire Technology](#)

Registration in all courses is limited, so encourage students to sign up right away using the registration link below. Our CALS team works with all counselors throughout the county to ensure courses will be added to student schedules.



[STUDENT REGISTRATION](#)



Adult Education Program

Our Medical, Dental, and BTPA programs are off to a strong start with an amazing group of motivated students ready to take on the challenge of their new career endeavor.

Dental Assisting Program

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The Dental Assisting program is in its second semester! Apprentices are continuing to build their skills through on-the-job training at their assigned clinics, complemented by classroom instruction every other Monday at SCCOE. At the same time, students in the traditional pathway have transitioned into their 240-hour externships, gaining real-world experience at local dental offices. Both groups are making great strides and are on track to graduate in late May 2025.

Applications for the 2025-2026 Dental Assisting program cohort are open now!

[LEARN MORE](#)

Adult Education Program

Medical Assisting Program



Medical Assisting students started the second semester in January with the clinical portion of the program. They learned hands-on clinical skills and were certified in Venipuncture, Phlebotomy, and First Aid/CPR. Students completed practicum hours with each other, instructors, and volunteers. Students have been in local medical clinics to complete their 180 externship hours. With 5 weeks to go until the end of the year, students are working very hard to complete their hours before they graduate at the end of May.



Applications for the 2025–2026 Medical Assisting program are open now! The application will close May 29th.

[LEARN MORE](#)



Adult Education Program

Building Trades Pre-Apprenticeship

The [BTPA program](#) continues to thrive with two additional cohorts this fall. Students who completed these cohorts received certification in MC3, OSHA 10, First Aid/CPR and are job-ready and employable. This 10-week, no-cost program is an intensive hands-on program designed to prepare adult students for entry into a fulfilling career with great potential for growth.

In partnership with Rountree, the CALS BTPA cohort is proud to have graduated 4 students at the end of March. Upon completion and release, these graduated students received a \$300 stipend and work boots to support their success in the trades industry. The CALS team also provides individual consultation that includes being referred to local agencies to seek employment.



The community program, located at the Santa Cruz COE, graduated 12 students in April. Students toured multiple employment industries, [Santa Cruz Waste Water Treatment Center](#), [Joby Aviation](#) in Marina, and the [Tri-County Union](#) campus in Castroville. These tours exposed students to multiple employment opportunities in the trades industry. After graduating, students begin their application process to local unions and companies.

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Adult Education Program

Wildland Fire Academy

The CALS team is excited about the growth of our [Wildland Fire Academy](#). Working in partnership with [CAL FIRE](#) and [California Conservation Corps](#), students complete training needed for an entry-level firefighter position.



This collaboration has successfully provided students with practical, real-world firefighting experience in a structured learning environment.

In March, six students completed the rigorous program. Throughout their training, these individuals benefited from expert instruction that focused on developing the practical skills needed in the field.

Graduates mastered firefighting competencies including building effective fire lines, properly deploying fire shelters, safely handling equipment, performing mop up and patrol duties, and strengthening their teamwork and communication abilities. These foundational skills have prepared them for the demands of professional firefighting careers.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Sueños Program



The [Sueños Program](#) supports teenagers and young adults (ages 16 to 24) to develop workplace skills that will prepare them to enter and thrive in an increasingly competitive labor market. Sueños is a Santa Cruz COE program in partnership with the Workforce Development Board of Santa Cruz County.

Bright Futures Ahead: Sueños Youth Empowered Through Skill-Building Workshops



We're excited to share that Sueños participants have been actively engaging in a variety of workshops designed to empower and prepare them for successful futures. From financial literacy and entrepreneurship to career development, these sessions are equipping youth with the essential tools they need to navigate adulthood and achieve their goals.

Each workshop offers practical knowledge, like budgeting basics and starting a business, to resume building and interview skills. The best part is participants receive a financial incentive for their attendance and commitment, making this a win-win opportunity for growth and motivation.

These workshops are more than just educational, they're laying the foundation for confident, capable, and career-ready young adults.

Sueños Program

From Opportunity to Achievement: Maritza's Story



Maritza joined our program with a clear goal in mind: to build a strong foundation for her future. Through her participation, she completed a paid work experience at the Digital NEST that not only strengthened her professional skills but also boosted her confidence in pursuing higher education. Today, she is a proud student at Cabrillo College, where she is on track to graduate on May 30, 2025. Maritza will be earning three Associate degrees: Liberal Arts & Sciences, Business Administration, and Economics. Her dedication and hard work are truly inspiring. After graduating, Maritza plans to continue her academic journey at San Jose State University, where she will pursue a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration with a concentration in International Business. We are incredibly proud of her achievements and excited to see all the great things she will accomplish in the future!



Accepting Applications:

Sueños currently has space for eligible youth to join the program. If you know an interested youth or young adult between the ages of 16-24, please encourage them to apply using the link below.

[Sueños Pre-Screening Application](#)

Career Advancement Charter



The Career Advancement Charter (CAC) is an Independent Study program for adult learners to earn their high school diploma while gaining academic and technical skills that will lead to college and career readiness.

CAC Foundations Success Class:



CAC Foundations Success Class is designed to help and encourage students to succeed in their high school diploma program. This course gives students the opportunity to learn new skills or strengthen the ones they already have. A main focus is teaching students how to effectively use Google Suite tools, including Google Docs, Google Forms, and Google Spreadsheets, which are essential for completing school assignments and staying organized. Students also practice their writing skills by working on assignments such as an autobiographical essay, which helps them reflect on their experiences and express themselves more clearly.

The class also introduces students to the Cyber High learning platform, where they are assigned a subject to study independently from home, helping them get comfortable with online learning. Beyond academics, the course supports students in developing social skills and building self-confidence, especially when speaking in front of others. Overall, the CAC Foundations Success Class is a great starting point for new CAC students, helping them feel more prepared, supported, and confident as they begin their independent study journey.

Career Advancement Charter



CAC Orientation for New Students:



In an effort to better serve our students, the CAC has implemented a new student orientation, registration and enrollment process. New students attend an in-person orientation session designed to inform them of all the services and community partnerships the CAC offers. CAC South County Orientations take place on a bi-monthly basis at our Sequoia Schools site. Orientation is designed to help students be successful from day 1 and beyond.

During the orientation, students complete registration and assessment activities. Following orientation, students engage in the CAC Foundations Success Program that spans five weeks. The Foundations Success Program is designed to help students learn essential skills that will support their transition into our Independent Study high school diploma program.



Evening Child Care (ECC): In an effort to support our adult learner parents, we offer childcare services four days a week at our South County school site. Our childcare center operates Monday through Thursday from 3pm to 7pm on a weekly basis. Our staff engages with children in a variety of learning and enrichment activities.



Career Advancement Charter



Sequoia Schools Community Evening



CAC ESL Class: We are excited to continue to offer English as a Second Language (ESL) classes to CAC students and community members. ESL classes are offered every **Tuesday and Wednesday from 5:15pm to 7:00pm** at Sequoia Schools. The advanced-level class takes place every Wednesday, and the beginning-level class every Tuesday. Upon enrollment, students take an evaluation for placement into their appropriate level.

Adult Learning Enrichment Opportunities: All students enrolled in the CAC have the opportunity to participate in a variety of evening courses, ranging from culinary arts, to hands-on math tutoring, to ESL support classes. CAC students also have the option to pursue Dual Enrollment or non-credit career education classes at Cabrillo College. Additionally, we are pleased to share that we continue to offer work-readiness and job skills certification opportunities to our students through Certiport.

CAC Community Events: Our team recently hosted Know Your Rights Trainings in South County, providing valuable information and resources to adult students and their families. We are excited to offer the same opportunity in North County in the coming weeks. In addition, South County adult students and their families participated in a vibrant Family Resource Fair in partnership with Second Harvest Food Bank. Nearly 50 families attended the event and were able to take home bags of fresh food and essential items.

Career Advancement Charter



Sequoia Schools Community Evening



Plazas Comunitarias: CAC is proud to partner with the [Watsonville Public Library](#), INEA (Instituto Nacional para la Educación de los Adultos) and the [Mexican Consulate](#) to offer free basic skills education classes in Spanish, known as Plaza Comunitaria. The Plaza Comunitaria classes aim to help adult learners that have immigrated from a Spanish-speaking country finish or begin their elementary or secondary education in Spanish. In addition, interested students develop the skills necessary to pass high school equivalency exams (GED) in Spanish or to enroll in the CAC as a high school student to earn a high school diploma. Please share this information with your students and their families and any other community partners/agencies/businesses that may benefit from this resource. Classes are offered at Sequoia Schools 229 Green Valley Rd. Freedom and at the Watsonville Public Library. For more information call 831-768-3410.

PSC North & South County: The CAC program partners with the Probation and Corrections of Santa Cruz County to support those taking steps to fulfill their high school education. The Probation Success Center or PSC are places where high school teachers offer math, computer literacy, and English classes along with 1-1 tutoring for students to prepare for high school equivalency exams. Students can choose either path for achievement and receive credits towards their high school diploma as they study. The Independent Study program is an integral part since most clients are also using the PSC for other resources such as job search, counseling, parenting courses and more.

[LEARN MORE](#)



Bay Area Community College Consortium

The **BACCC** comprises 28 colleges and their framework is to facilitate, collaborate, plan, manage, communicate, and inform their local education agencies (LEA's) about career education programs. It creates career pathways through collaborations with the K12 and Adult Education Consortia partners to prepare students for high-demand, livable wages.



Dual Enrollment Process is now Simpler!

3 Steps

1. Only Apply ONCE to Cabrillo
2. Dual Enrollment eForm & new K-12 Consent Form will now be required ONCE during the student's K-12 enrollment
3. Register for Classes **after** their eForm has been approved

Summer & Fall Registration Dates:

- Priority Date **May 20th**
- Non-Priority Date **May 27th**
- Students who applied after Mar 26th can register starting **May 28th**

Summer & Fall Schedule of Classes will be posted **Apr 7th**



25-26 CTE LDI *Applications NOW Open* Leadership Development Institute

Deadline to Apply:

16 May 2025

The Leadership Development Institute (LDI) is a competitive, yearlong program supporting aspiring and current CTE leaders in California through six multi-day sessions and 30 expert-led modules. [Info Flyer](#)



The **Central Coast K-16 Collaborative** brings together K-12 schools, 2-year institutions, 4-year institutions, and industry partners to tackle long-standing educational and economic inequities across Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Benito, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura Counties. The Collaborative is a collective impact initiative focused on creating a future where historically marginalized students achieve their educational and career goals, securing high-wage, impactful careers that foster upward mobility.

For more information about **CALS**, please visit our [website](#).