Student Success Network Equity in Action (EIA) Grant Program - 2026 Request for Proposals

🌐 **CSU Student Success Network**

Key Dates & Information

RFP Release Date: February 16, 2026

Proposal Due Date: March 27, 2026

Award Notification: Late April 2026

Award Amounts: Pilot Projects: $10,000 - $20,000

                                    Scaling Projects: $50,000 - $100,000

Project Duration: Pilot Projects: Completion within 24 mos. of funding date

                                    Scaling Projects: Completion within 48 mos. of funding date

Program Description:

The Network's Equity in Action (EIA) Grant Program invests resources back into the system to identify, understand, and disrupt inequities in our system, focusing on opportunities for students to learn, engage, progress, and complete. The intention of the grants is to be accessible to faculty/lecturers, staff, and middle level administrators in the CSU to support innovative thinking, research, and evidence-based practice that leads to institutional change that specifically addresses equity-related challenges. The overall goals of the program are as follows:

- Supporting current efforts at CSU campuses to close equity gaps in student outcomes in cases where the funding can expand or improve such efforts.
- Launching new efforts at CSU campuses to close equity gaps in student outcomes.
- Contributing to a knowledge base of supported equity actions across the CSU and supporting determinations of which efforts are most effective or impactful.
- Learning about challenges in implementing equity actions across the CSU campuses via progress reports and final reports from funded activities.

The Network recognizes that this opportunity comes at a pivotal time for the CSU system and its individual institutions with the recent launch of the CSU Student Success Framework through the Chancellor's Office. As campus leadership teams work to align their student success efforts with the new Framework, this funding opportunity can provide both individual campus flexibility as well as systemwide

opportunities for learning and growth. EIA grants can be particularly impactful for middle leaders across the system, individuals and teams leading student-centered programs, and projects that deserve more support.

Award Levels:

The EIA Grant 2026 Program invites submissions on two funding tracks:

- **Pilot Projects:** awards from $10-20K; smaller scale projects or innovations that would benefit from kick-start funding; funding intended to be spent out 24 months from fund receipt date (ideally within AY26-27)
- **Scaling Projects:** awards from $50-100K; established projects that need additional funding to scale in reach or impact; funding intended to be spent out 48 months from fund receipt date (ideally before the end of AY27-28)

Competitive Priorities (CP):

The Network invites submissions from teams working on equity and student success projects across the system but is especially interested in funding projects related to the following:

CP1: *Cross-Divisional Collaborative Projects* - In many of its activities, the Network highlights the work of middle leaders, for whom collaboration is not just beneficial but necessary. We are particularly interested in projects where multiple middle leaders on a campus work cross-functionally to benefit students. These projects should bridge gaps between traditional divisions on campus, focusing on but not limited to collaboration between Academic and Student Affairs divisions. For example, projects that link classroom activities with student services, projects that connect faculty and student life, and projects that bring together academic support services and social/emotional support services would qualify for this priority area.

CP2: *Multi-Institutional Projects* - The Network is also interested in highlighting any work happening between CSU campuses, including but not limited to regional partnerships for services and student recruitment, campus collaborations on regional issues, and partnerships to take models that are working on one campus and piloting them on others. This priority area also includes projects that are working on partnerships with other educational institutions like local school districts or a campus's local community colleges.

CP3: *Direct Funding to Students* - Finally, we are interested in prioritizing any and all projects that provide direct funding to students, either through student employment or direct payment. This can also include tangible goods such as books.

Proposals that include one or more of our competitive priorities will be given extra consideration in our reviews.

Submission Requirements:

A complete submission for either track will require the following:

- Clear project outline, including goals and objectives, timeline, and institutional commitments. [750 words maximum]
- Statement on how the proposed project aligns with the CSU Student Success Framework, with further detail on its alignment with at least one of the Framework's five strategy areas: Cost of Attendance, Advising and Pathways, Teaching and Learning, Streamlined Experience, and/or Skills and Networks. [500 words maximum]
- Statement on how the proposed project aligns with the Student Success Network's purpose and vision. [500 words maximum]
- Statement on how the proposed project aligns with one or more of the EIA Competitive Priorities. [500 words maximum]
- Statement on sustainability: how will the efforts or outcomes of your project continue to address your goals beyond the grant period? How will you proactively plan for turnover of PIs and personnel? [500 words maximum]
- Evaluation plan. [500 words maximum]
- Budget outline [250 words maximum]
- Letter of support: for Pilot Projects, this letter can be from an appropriate administrator with oversight for the project (e.g., Dean or Associate Vice President); for Scaling Projects, this letter needs to be from a cabinet-level executive for the campus (Provost or Vice President).

Submissions for Scaling Projects will additionally be required to demonstrate the project's impact to date, as this funding is intended for existing projects that seek funding to scale up in reach or impact. This evidence should be added to the project outline section and may extend that section to **3 pages maximum**.

Eligibility:

This opportunity is open to all faculty, staff, and students in the California State University system. Funding may also be used for the benefit of partner educational institutions (e.g., institutions of the California Community College system or local K-12 districts) but must be awarded to a CSU campus. Campuses may send multiple applications but a single project lead can only send a single application. Please note that our goal is to provide funding widely, so we are unlikely to award a single campus more than one grant.

Funding Details:

The Network Equity in Action Grant Program will accept grant proposals with budgets **up to $20,000** for Pilot Projects and **up to $100,000** for Scaling Projects. Teams submitting proposals should strongly consider which funding track is appropriate for its proposal.

Funds awarded for this program are General Operating funds (state funds) originated from the Network's fiscal sponsor, Sacramento State University. Budgets submitted must comply with all general operating fund policies and procedures of the CSU.

These Network grants are issued as a result of an internal competition within the CSU and are not subject to Facilities and Administrative (F&A), or indirect, costs. F&A costs are not allowed as a grant-funded expense in proposals submitted in response to RFPs from programs, such as those originating from the Network, that receive the majority of their support from legislatively appropriated funds. The F&A foregone at the campus/auxiliary's federally negotiated off-campus rate may be shown as a cost match on the proposal. This amount may be used by the auxiliary or enterprise fund as an offset to the university's cost allocation plan, in accordance with EO 753/1000.

Specific restrictions:

- Faculty and staff salary (release time and additional employment) is allowable for Scaling Project proposals but not for Pilot Project proposals.
- Travel expenses are not allowed with either track.
- Gift cards for research incentives are not allowed with either track.

Proposal Submission:

The complete proposal package, including signed cover sheet, must be submitted electronically on the 2026 Network Equity in Action Grant Program proposal submission form. Only Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF file formats will be accepted.

Proposals must adhere to style and length guidelines stated on the proposal submission form. Failure to follow these guidelines may result in proposal rejection during administrative review.

Proposals that are complete and meet eligibility requirements will be evaluated for merit by a review panel composed of Network members within 30 days of receipt. Funding decisions are based on recommendations made by the review panel, available funds, and the Network's strategic priorities. All decisions will be final and not subject to appeal.

Acknowledgement of CSU Policies and Guidelines:

All participants in Network activities are expected to follow the requirements of Title V, Title IX, and California State University (CSU) Executive Orders. Visit Cal State Title IX for more information.

Awarding of Grant Funds:

Grant funds will be transferred via a Cash Posting Order (CPO) in July 2026 unless otherwise agreed upon with the program office. The fiscal officer for the applicant's college or department will be informed of the pending grant. Please note these grant funds are State funds and the PI and PI's campus are responsible for spending the funds within State accounts and regulations.

Post-Award Reporting Requirements:

Successful PIs are required to submit an interim report 9 months after funding is awarded indicating project progress as well as a final report to the Network within 60 days of the project end date, which will include a summary of project's outcomes. PIs for Scaling Projects are also required to submit a mid-cycle report 18 months after funding is awarded. Final reports will need to include a breakdown of financials and report any unused funds, which must be returned to the Network. Unused funds will need to be returned within 60 days of the project end date. Final reports document the need for and help justify continuation of the program. The Network may also contact PIs for longer-term impact reporting and may request permission to use elements of these reports in Network activities (Conference sessions, Academy sessions, etc.) and communication both within the CSU system and to external stake-holders.

Program Contacts:

Submission questions:	studentsuccessnetwork@edinsightscenter.org
Program & RFP questions:	Dr. Adam Petersen, Advisory Board Chair
	Dr. Madeleine Kerrick, Executive Director, EdInsights
	Iqbal Atwal, Professional Learning Director, EdInsights

Student Success Network
in the California State University

Education Insights Center

California State University, Sacramento
Education Insights Center/CSU Student Success Network
6000 J Street, MS 6147
Sacramento, CA 95819
studentsuccessnetwork@edinsightscenter.org
http://csustudentsuccess.net