



# PRESS RELEASE

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## **4CD Awarded Federal Grant to Boost Courses Using No-Cost Open Educational Resources**

MARTINEZ, CA – Contra Costa Community College District (4CD) has been selected to receive a \$1 million federal community project funding grant to develop no-cost course materials through Open Educational Resources (OER). Thanks to the leadership support of both Congressman Mark DeSaulnier and Senator Alex Padilla, 4CD will be able to offer more courses without expensive textbook costs while increasing student access and success, resulting in equitable outcomes.

“We know that the cost of textbooks and other classroom materials are often higher than enrollment fees in our California community college system,” said Interim Chancellor Mojdeh Mehdizadeh. “By making these OER materials available in the public domain at no-cost, we are reducing the financial barrier of obtaining an affordable higher education for our students and learners across the globe.”

4CD focused efforts to develop OER courses beginning 2018 through small infusions of funding from state and federal grants, and it is estimated these courses are saving students over \$1,500,000 a year in textbook costs. With this more robust grant, the District could easily more than double the savings for 4CD students, and students all over the world will benefit if their courses use these OER materials once they are publicly available.

“Our faculty understands that many of our students face financial barriers to college success, which disproportionately impacts marginalized groups,” said 4CD Philosophy Professor, Ed Haven. “So not only is the development of OER materials saving our students money, it also provides equitable access to success.”

The plan is to develop certificate and degree programs that only use OER materials. 4CD has also been involved in other statewide collaborations such as the California Virtual Campus – Online Education Initiative, a collaborative amongst California Community Colleges which will ensure more students are able to complete their educational goals by increasing both access to and success in high-quality online courses. In 2018, 4CD also participated in The LibreText Project, an open textbook pilot led by the University of California, Davis, to decrease the burden of textbook costs on college students while increasing the availability, usage and educational value of open textbooks that are freely available to better serve all students.

“As a Los Medanos College (LMC) student who has taken several courses that offered OER materials, I appreciate the idea that I can get an excellent education and not have to choose between groceries and books,” said LMC Associated Student President Jeffrey Bui. “I feel the faculty really understand the importance of creating course material in a way that is more engaging for students, which contributes to a better and more meaningful educational experience.”

Federal funding for this and other community project funding was approved when lawmakers approved, and the President signed, the \$1.7 trillion federal omnibus bill in December 2022.

Open educational resources are materials for teaching or learning that are either in the public domain or have been released under a license that allows them to be freely used, changed, or shared with others. OER may include everything from a single video or lesson plan to a complete online course or curriculum and also include the software platforms needed to create, change, and share the materials.

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*The Contra Costa Community College District (4CD) is one of the largest multi-college community college districts in California. The 4CD serves a population of 1,019,640 people, and its boundaries encompass all but 48 of the 734-square-mile land area of Contra Costa County. 4CD is home to Contra Costa College in San Pablo, Diablo Valley College in Pleasant Hill, Los Medanos College in Pittsburg, as well as educational centers in Brentwood and San Ramon. The District headquarters is located in downtown Martinez. For more information visit [www.4cd.edu](http://www.4cd.edu).*

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