California's Strong Workforce Program **(SWP)** is an **initiative to expand career technical education (CTE)** programs in California Community Colleges that encourages cross sector collaboration, employer engagement, and regional partnerships.

What is Strong Workforce?

***Strong Workforce Program: More and Better Career Technical Education to Increase Social Mobility and Fuel Regional Economies with Skilled Workers***

To develop more workforce opportunity and lift low-wage workers into living-wage jobs, California took a bold step in 2016 to create one million more middle-skill workers. At the recommendation of the California Community College Board of Governors, the [**Governor and Legislature approved the Strong Workforce Program**](http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs184/1103359495645/archive/1125047868925.html), adding a new annual recurring investment of $248 million to spur career technical education (CTE) in the nation’s largest workforce development system of 113 colleges.

Grouped into seven areas targeting student success, career pathways, workforce data and outcomes, curriculum, CTE faculty, regional coordination and funding, this leading-edge state economic development program is driven by “more and better” CTE. The “more” is increasing the number of students enrolled in programs leading to high-demand, high-wage jobs. The “better” is improving program quality, as evidenced by more students completing or transferring programs, getting employed or improving their earnings.

The Strong Workforce Program focuses on data-driven outcomes rather than activities, along with an emphasis on innovation and risk-taking. In this way, colleges can be more responsive to labor market conditions and student outcomes. [**CTE Data Unlocked**](http://doingwhatmatters.cccco.edu/LaunchBoard/CTEDataUnlocked.aspx), a component of the program, helps colleges use CTE data to strengthen regional workforce plans by furthering local processes like program review, accreditation, and integrated planning.

This new ongoing funding is structured as a [**60 percent Local Share**](http://doingwhatmatters.cccco.edu/portals/6/docs/sw/Strong%20Workforce%20Program%20Funds%20Implementation.pdf) allocation for each community college district and a [**40 percent Regional Share**](http://doingwhatmatters.cccco.edu/portals/6/docs/SW/2016_07%20REAL%20coalition%20briefing%20on%20SWP%20v1a.pdf) determined by a regional consortia of colleges to focus on the state’s seven macro-economic regions. Both the Local and Regional Share require local stakeholders to collaborate, including industry and local workforce development boards. As much as possible, this program builds upon existing regional partnerships formed in conjunction with the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, state Adult Education Block Grant and public school CTE programs. While 2016 was spent planning and preparing for the Strong Workforce Program, 2017 will focus on execution and evaluation.