

**MONDAY MORNING GROUP OF WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY  
ANNUAL ADVOCACY TRIP – WASHINGTON, DC  
APRIL 9 – 11, 2024**

**FUNDING TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION  
IN SOUTHWEST RIVERSIDE COUNTY**

**ISSUE:** Southwest Riverside County, one of California’s fastest-growing regions, must expand access to higher education to address the nursing shortage as the county’s population is projected to increase by 20% in 25 years. Nearly 650,000 people in Riverside County live in an area designated as a Health Professional Shortage Area.

**ACTION:** The Mt. San Jacinto Community College District (MSJC) urges Congress to support \$10,500,000 in funding for California State University San Marcos (CSUSM) to expand its presence in the region, address the nursing shortage, and ensure access to a qualified local workforce.

Funding from the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Economic Development Initiative account will allow CSUSM to expand higher education in Southwest Riverside County and provide the programs needed to help close the regional and statewide shortage of trained nurses. This funding solution allows CSUSM to modify spaces quickly and cost-effectively at the state-of-the-art Temecula Valley Campus, avoiding the exhaustive and costly process to build or purchase a new campus. The location is beyond shovel ready; it is shell ready.

CSUSM is facing the end of its lease at a second location. Through its long-standing partnership with MSJC, CSUSM can quickly deliver the nursing programs students need and create a seamless transfer for MSJC students to attend CSUSM.

**BACKGROUND:** Southwest Riverside County needs more well-trained registered nurses to help secure the economic viability of its 530,000 residents and communities. With support from the City of Temecula, MSJC, and CSUSM partnered to prepare students for high-demand careers like nursing. Those efforts are being outstripped by the rapid population growth in the fastest-growing region of the state.

The region experienced rapid growth over the past decade, continued to grow during the pandemic, and is expected to experience significant growth in the next decade. This growth will occur at both ends of the spectrum, with increasing numbers of young families and retirees. According to the California Department of Finance, Riverside County is projected to have 3 million residents by 2048, a 20% increase from 2022. In July 2022, the California Health Care Foundation reported that 647,897 people in Riverside County live in an area categorized as a Health Professional Shortage Area.

California continues to suffer a critical shortage of registered nurses. A recent report by the University of California San Francisco, based on the 2022 Survey of Registered Nurses, indicates: many registered nurses (RNs) plan to retire or quit within the next two years; many experienced RNs left the profession in the past four years; and there has been a decrease in enrollments and completions in RN education programs. This gap is expected to persist at least until 2029. The lack of access to a public four-year degree granting institution needs to be addressed to meet the healthcare needs of the region. Through this expansion, CSUSM is seeking to make education in healthcare more accessible to the community with the intention of addressing the shortfall of registered nurses.

Expansion of CSUSM will increase the overall economy. Sixty-nine percent of the region’s residents are employed outside the region, resulting in significant loss of time due to extensive commutes, not to mention the costs associated with accessing employment that pays a good wage. This region, the state, and the nation must be competitive in this information-based economy and as experienced workers retire. If the state raised college attainment to 60 percent by 2030, it would generate \$133 billion in additional federal and state revenue.

**Sources**

Lumina Foundation <https://www.luminafoundation.org/our-work/stronger-nation/>  
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