

## **Long Beach City College Phoenix Scholars Project Abstract**

Long Beach City College (LBCC) is one of the largest colleges in the California Community College System, serving 34,464 students in 2020-21. Of these students, 58% were economically disadvantaged and received some form of need-based financial aid. The College is a minority-majority serving institution with Latinx-identifying students representing 53% of the student population. LBCC holds two federal minority-serving institution designations and is both a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) and an Asian American/Native American/Pacific Islander Serving Institution (AANAPISI).

The Phoenix Scholars Program will support current and former gang-involved youth (16 to 24 years old) with a clear, inclusive, and supportive college pathway leading to workforce opportunities. The Phoenix Scholars Program is designed to provide an ecosystem of college-based and local community-based support services, programs, and resources that will increase the likelihood of success for this vulnerable population. The provision of services, programs, and resources will be grounded in an understanding of the social, academic, and personal experiences and (mis)treatment of gang-associated youth in the K-12 education systems.

The Phoenix Scholars long-term project goals are to 1) create a positive, inclusive, and identity-safe campus climate; 2) increase by number of project participants earning credentials; 3) increase number of project participants active in paid internships/ work experiences; and 4) decrease gang-involvement and engagement in behaviors that can lead to juvenile or adult justice system. Related project activities have been designed to lend towards institutionalization of high impact practices.

This proposal addresses the solicitation's Competitive Preference Priority of creating a positive, inclusive, and identity-safe climate in three ways. The first way is by fostering a sense of belonging and inclusion for participants through the development of intentional onboard and orientation, professional development for Long Beach City College constituents, needs assessments that will inform program implementation, community building activities and social gatherings, and structured mentoring relationships.

The second way this climate will be created is by basing implementation and program activities on evidence-based practices that will advance student success for students that are gang-involved. The Phoenix Scholars program is designed around a logic model structured to provide long-term outcomes that will impact participants academic, professional, and personal achievements. This model incorporates evidence-based research and practices to support current and former gang-involved individuals.

The third way LBCC will create this climate is by providing high-quality professional development opportunities that will reduce bias. This professional development will be provided by Dr. Adrian Huerta, a national expert on gang-involved populations and college access and equity, and by Centro CHA, a local community organization with strong community ties, decades of experience, and whose gang intervention programs have served as models for those of the City of Long Beach and other municipalities.