

Solutions for Adult Schools: SB 554

This resource is part of the [Building Pathways to AB 540](#) resource series that discusses opportunities available for different educational institutions to build pathways for individuals who do not yet meet the eligibility for AB 540.

This section provides an overview of the opportunities that high school programs within an adult school can provide, especially for older undocumented students who want to continue their education. It includes an overview of [Senate Bill 554 \(SB 554\)](#), resources developed by specific campuses, and a growing list of schools that accelerated access to educational attainment and attendance requirements for AB 540.

Overview

Many older undocumented students begin their journey to economic mobility and higher education through Adult School classes. High school diploma or equivalency programs within Adult Schools (or noncredit programs) offer options to older or returning students to obtain a high school diploma or GED, improve their economic mobility, and pursue further education goals. Many students want to obtain their GED or high school diploma as quickly as possible. However, undocumented students need to be aware of the opportunities available to them if they complete the attendance requirements for AB 540 at the same time. For more detailed information about AB 540, check out our [Quick Guide to AB 540](#).

What is SB 554?

California [Senate Bill 554](#) is a law enacted in 2019 that expands dual enrollment to include students attending a noncredit or adult education high school diploma or equivalency program. Students who qualify for SB 554 are able to enroll as a special part-time admit and may enroll in up to and including 11 units per semester, or the equivalent thereof, at the community college. The bill would credit or reimburse the community college through the apportionment process for the students' attendance at the college, as specified.

Who is eligible?

Based on SB 554, a student can qualify if they meet the following criteria:

- They do not already possess a high school diploma.
- They are pursuing a high school diploma or high school equivalent certificate at an adult school or community college noncredit program.
- They enroll up to and including 11 units per semester at a California community college.

Benefits of SB 554

Students who are able to take credit courses at a California Community College while obtaining their high school diploma or its equivalent can:

- Meet the degree requirements for AB 540.
- Achieve their attendance requirements for AB 540 in an accelerated fashion.
- Provide them with greater exposure to the opportunities and resources available on a college campus.

- Ensure a smoother transition from secondary education to college.

California Community Colleges that have implemented SB 554

Immigrants Rising is conducting research to expand our understanding of the number of noncredit or adult education high school diploma or equivalency programs and community colleges that have implemented SB 554. As of February 2024, we are aware of a small number of schools that have implemented SB 554.

[This list](#) was developed through a short survey sent to all California Community Colleges in the spring of 2023. We aim to expand the number of campuses where adult students can access credit courses for free at a California Community College through SB 554. We also understand that cross-campus learning is ideal for replicating promising practices across the system.

We encourage you to connect with noncredit or adult education high school diploma or equivalency programs—and community colleges—to determine the viability of implementing SB 554. **If your campus has successfully implemented SB 554, please help us ensure this list is accurate by completing [a short survey](#).**

Additional Resources

CCC Office of the Chancellor:

- [CCCCO Memo ESS 20-300-004](#): Senate Bill 554 Public Schools: Adult School Students - Advanced Scholastic and Vocational Training Program

Campus specific resources:

- [Mt. Sac Student Pathways: Adult Education Special Admit](#)
- [Mt. Sac Flowchart: Adult Education Special Admit](#)
- [City College of San Francisco: Noncredit to Credit](#)

What's Next?

We hope this resource has provided you with the important information to begin a conversation about SB 554, including its benefits to your students, campus, and community. Use our [Solutions for CCCs: Education Code 76140](#) or [Solutions for Noncredit Programs: Roadmap from Noncredit to Credit Programs](#) to build more pathways for college-ready students to fulfill their educational goals.

The [Building Pathways to AB 540](#) resource series was co-created by Nancy Jodaitis and Gladys Puente Valentine, who collaborated on the research, writing, and envisioning. Gladys served as a community researcher with Immigrants Rising and formally was the Undocumented Student Coordinator at Sierra College. The layout and design is by Grace Yeo, with copyediting support from Keziah Aurin.

We'd like to thank Bronwyn Moreno, formally of Hartnell College, whose initial research kickstarted our efforts; Hilda Rivera, formally of North Orange Continuing Education, who elevated pathways from noncredit to credit programs; and the powerful team supporting undocumented students at San Mateo Community College District. We'd also like to thank all the innovative changemakers across the state who are actively building pathways toward AB 540 at CA Community Colleges, Adult Schools, and Noncredit programs.

Immigrants Rising helps you make decisions based on your potential, not your perceived limits. Visit our website so you can see what's possible: immigrantsrising.org. For inquiries regarding this resource, please contact Nancy Jodaitis, Director of Higher Education at nancy@immigrantsrising.org. Published 3/2024.