COLLEGE FUTURES

October 27, 2026
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Sara Sandhu
Director of Strategic Communications
media@collegefutures.org

Where Are California's Paths to Better Careers? New Dashboard Helps Regions Find Them

College Futures Foundation and Burning Glass Institute help colleges and employers address hiring shortages and connect more Californians to better pay and opportunities to advance

OAKLAND, Calif. (Oct. 27, 2026) – Where are employers struggling to hire? Which industries offer careers where people have a chance to get ahead? And how can colleges help connect the two?

College Futures Foundation and the Burning Glass Institute today launched *CA Regional Opportunity Insights*, an interactive dashboard that helps education, business and workforce leaders answer those questions for their regions.

The free, publicly available dashboard brings together information about local job demand, wages, career advancement and education programs. Colleges can use it to identify programs to expand and strengthen connections with employers. Businesses can explore which programs prepare workers for needed roles and where partnerships could help address hiring shortages, all searchable by regions throughout the state.

"Every learner pursuing an education is putting time, money and hope into an education because they want a better future," said **Eloy Ortiz Oakley, president and CEO of College Futures Foundation**. "This tool helps regions recognize the talent in their own backyards and connect people with the education and training to fill jobs employers are struggling to fill. That's how we turn local talent into greater opportunity for families and a stronger economy for everyone."

Oakley added that the dashboard provides a practical next step toward realizing California's economic opportunity outlined in the Golden Ticket research, which found that expanding educational achievement for all demographic groups across California could generate an additional $4.4 trillion in net economic gains over 50 years. It helps regional leaders identify where education can improve people's earning power while strengthening local economies.

COLLEGE FUTURES

Regional Economies

California's regions have different economies and different workforce needs. The dashboard helps leaders look beyond the number of available jobs to understand what those jobs pay, whether workers advance and which education programs prepare people to enter high-mobility careers. Searchable fields run across 20 industries in each region.

In Fresno, for example, the tool identifies four of 18 occupational groups that combine strong employer demand with opportunities for workers to move up, led by the health care industry. The findings can help colleges and employers explore where additional training capacity could address shortages and prepare more residents for careers with strong prospects.

Further north in the Sacramento-Roseville-Folsom region, four of 17 industries combine strong projected job growth with opportunities for workers to advance, led by utilities. Health care and social assistance, the region's largest employer, also show strong projected growth, but workers face a slower climb. These findings can help colleges and employers identify both where to expand training and where to strengthen routes into higher-paying roles.

"The new CA Regional Opportunity Insights tool can help CEOs make strategic decisions, and it can also support faculty conversations about programs and long-term student outcomes," said **Dr. Kristin Clark-Profeta**, **chancellor-emeritus of West Hills Community College District and consultant with the Central Valley Higher Education Consortium.** "It gives us a way to examine what happens to learners after they leave an institution and how those outcomes relate to upward mobility.

"This information can help inform curriculum and program changes based on outcomes and ROI. It also provides practical use cases for institutions to start small and build their understanding over time," Clark-Profeta added.

The new dashboard also contains industry vignettes based on analyses of health care, education and technology by region, examining how people move from education into work and what happens next. The vignettes explore which routes lead to better earnings and advancement, as well as the barriers that keep some learners from reaching those opportunities.

The health care analysis illustrates the stakes. In some rural and inland California counties, more than 40% of job postings are in health care. Hospitals, clinics and other care providers are major sources of stable employment in communities with fewer large industries. But the training available falls short. While preparing more residents for those jobs could help people build lasting careers and address shortages that make it harder for their neighbors to get care, limited program seats, faculty and clinical placements can stand in the way. The analysis gives colleges and employers a basis for discussing where expanded training and stronger partnerships could help.

COLLEGE FUTURES

"Every regional economic growth strategy needs an education and training strategy," **said Matt Sigelman, President of the Burning Glass Institute**. "CA Regional Opportunity Insights translates projections of economic growth into a clearer picture of the talent needed to fuel that growth. It positions California's colleges at the nexus of economic development and talent development, giving institutions and their regional partners the intelligence to target investments in education and training programs that will power their regional economies—and create pathways for more Californians into high-value careers with real opportunities for advancement."

The dashboard and accompanying analyses are available at https://collegefutures.org/ca-regional-opportunity-insights/.

Contact:
media@collegefutures.org

# # #

About College Futures Foundation

At College Futures Foundation, we believe in the power of postsecondary opportunity. We believe that securing the postsecondary success of students facing the most formidable barriers will ensure that all of us can thrive—our communities, our economy, and our state. We believe that the equitable education system of the future, one that enables every learner to achieve their dreams and participate in an inclusive and robust economy, will be realized if we are focused, determined, and active in our leadership and partnership.

About the Burning Glass Institute

The Burning Glass Institute is an independent, nonprofit research organization focused on expanding economic mobility through education and work. It uses data on careers, skills and labor market trends to help educators, employers and policymakers understand what helps people secure meaningful work, increase their earnings and advance in their careers.