



# Allocating Resources to Enhance Equitable Student Outcomes at Alamo Colleges District

*Strengthening Analysis, Refining Budgeting Processes, and Centering Students*

The Alamo Colleges District (ACD) is a network of five community colleges serving the Greater San Antonio metropolitan area. District institutions have a combined enrollment of approximately 72,000 students, who take advantage of the district's 350 degree and certificate programs. Annually, over 10,000 degrees are awarded by district colleges. Across the district, 81% of students enrolled attend part-time, 67% are of Hispanic descent, and 60% are women. Seventy percent of students who attend Alamo receive financial aid.

## Continuous Improvement of Budgeting Processes

Alamo Colleges District's budget process has been structured to allocate resources based on overall student data targets, purposefully funding targeted strategies to benefit all students. ACD's commitment to funding programs that demonstrate performance excellence and strong student outcomes has resulted in national recognition and strong outcomes for students. The district has always sought to increase the success of all students, particularly students from low-income households and historically marginalized students.

ACD's chief business officer (CBO) was interested in leveraging the Budget Equity Blueprint, a tool designed to help institutions critically examine how budget practices may contribute to existing, persisting inequalities built into the budgeting process. To pilot this tool, the CBO used the Budget Equity Blueprint to apply an equity lens to the budget allocation process for funding of the districtwide Case Management Advising Program.



## Improvement Project

Assessing Impact and Expanding Awareness of Student Outcomes to Support Resource Allocation Decision-Making



## Toolkit Used

Budget Equity Blueprint



## Results

- Alamo Colleges District used the Budget Equity Blueprint to apply an equity lens to its strategic budget process. Applying an equity lens led to a shift in resources to prioritize support for the Case Management Advising Program, a districtwide initiative that offers customized support to meet the needs of students.
- District-level financial leaders reviewed the planning and budgeting processes to ensure a more substantial, data-informed alignment with ACD's Aspen and Achieving the Dream initiatives. This work advanced budget allocation processes, strengthening the focus on student outcomes for segments of students that have been historically underserved or marginalized.



**“This project helped us take an award-winning initiative to the next level and helped us to better understand how to allocate funding to serve all of our students while closing equity gaps so they can all thrive.”**

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**Dr. Diane Snyder,**

*Former Vice Chancellor of Finance and Administration*

## Leveraging the Tool

Alamo Colleges District’s CBO used the questions and rubric provided in the Budget Equity Blueprint to critically examine budget practices. By responding to the questions with curiosity and gathering perceptions from others, the CBO recognized the potential of an equity-informed approach to resource allocation to improve student outcomes significantly. This potential was particularly evident when considering funding for student-facing initiatives like the Case Management Advising Program, known as AlamoADVISE. After applying the tool, the CBO elected to use disaggregated data to strategically allocate funds specific to advising touch points and activities, with the goal of building capacity for more equitable student outcomes. This shift in allocation practices was supported by an understanding that funding may need to differ across services provided to segments of ACD’s student population.

## Early Wins

Alamo Colleges District had early wins leveraging the Budget Equity Blueprint. Institutional leaders discussed proposed revisions to the funding allocation formula and the application of disaggregated data to inform allocation percentages with the AlamoADVISE taskforce. It was decided collectively to allocate an additional \$2M to fund a new advising approach, employing targeted strategies for sub-sets of students in which the highest-skilled certified advisors would serve. The funding supported a re-distribution of duties, freeing up designated advisors to work primarily with students who could benefit from extra support, thereby fostering a more supportive and inclusive learning environment.

ACD started collecting data through an equity-gap closure lens as a second funding cycle began. This approach sought to determine if these new targeted strategies made any difference in closing gaps. ACD will continue its assessment through another cycle of improvements, providing recommendations for consideration in the next fiscal year’s budget funding cycle.

## Sustaining Momentum

Not only does ACD expect to continue to utilize data to strategically prioritize the most impactful strategies to fund in the Case Management Advising Program, but as data is collected, the district expects to explore the use of disaggregated data to inform allocations of other funds that may improve equitable outcomes for students.