



California Community Colleges

California Community Colleges Chancellors Office

Report to the Seismic Safety Commission

2024

To: California Seismic Safety Commission

Dear Members of the Seismic Safety Commission,

On behalf of the California Community Colleges Chancellors Office (Chancellor's Office), this is the Annual Report as required by Assembly Bill 100 (AB 100). This report is an overview of the previous and current efforts by the Chancellor's Office in regards to earthquake risk reduction within the community college system.

The Chancellor's Office oversees the State Capital Outlay program which is the foundation for helping California community colleges ensure that students, faculty, and staff have a campus that is safe and secure to learn and teach on. The program involves other State agencies such as the Division of State Architects that does the review of the facilities plans to ensure the structural integrity of each building, according to Field Act.

In the past, the Chancellor's Office with the help of the Department of General Services, Real Estate Division did perform a seismic safety survey of the community college system. Since then, there hasn't been any other need for a survey as those older facilities in need have been modernized or demolished. With the State Capital Outlay program, the community college system has the ability to correct any facilities with seismic safety issues as it arises.

Sincerely,

Dr. Sonya Christian
Chancellor
California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office

Introduction

The California Community Colleges is the largest postsecondary educational system in the United States, serving nearly 2 million students annually. California Community Colleges students represent 20% of the nation's community college students and more than 70% of California's public postsecondary undergraduate students.

The California Community Colleges consists of 73 community college districts encompassing 116 colleges, 79 approved off-campus centers and 24 separately reported district offices. The system's assets include more than 25,000 acres of land, 6,000 buildings and 87 million gross square feet, which includes approximately 56 million assignable square feet of space. In addition, the system has many off-campus outreach centers at various locations.

The Chancellor's Office and the Facilities Planning Unit assists and supports the districts in matters related to infrastructure and capital outlay. The capital outlay program is dedicated to acquiring, maintaining, building, repairing or upgrading fixed assets such as land, facilities, machinery and the like. Assistance and support is provided to the districts for the construction new buildings, remodeling current buildings, and centers.

State Capital Outlay Program

In 2021, the California Community Colleges Board of Governors had updated both priority-criteria and -funding categories scoring system to assist community college districts with local capital planning efforts so that their project proposals reflect the state's priorities. The Board of Governors' priority-criteria metrics primarily evaluate how a capital outlay project proposal meets the campus's instructional need, its use of space, and the condition of its existing facilities.

Community college districts have the responsibility to maintain, modernize, and expand the facilities at their institutions on behalf of the students they serve. To accomplish these objectives, community college districts are authorized to seek local and state financing for their facilities. In addition to local efforts, the state's capital outlay program provides voter-approved statewide general obligation bonds through grants to fund capital outlay projects on community college campuses. These grants are developed pursuant to the annual state capital outlay grant application process and approved by the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges.

The Chancellor's Office facilities planning and utilization unit administers the state capital outlay grant application process for the community college system on behalf of the Board of Governors. Districts must plan these projects using their educational plan which ties to their

facilities plan. The district's facilities plan evaluates existing land, infrastructure, facilities and systems in relationship to the colleges' purposes, plans, and needs, specifying the capital outlay projects necessary to meet these needs.

These projects fall into three categories:

1. Category A - Life and Safety
2. Category M – Modernization
 - Modernization of instructional and institutional support space
3. Category G – Growth.
 - Growth of instructional and institutional support space

Projects in Category A are the state's highest priority projects because they address life and safety issues. Category A projects are ranked according to the number of people threatened or affected by the condition of a facility or site. Category A projects are divided even further, they are the following:

Category A1 – Health and Safety

- Mitigate critical health and life safety issues that are of imminent danger or health and life safety issues citable by a governing agency

Category A3 – Seismic Retrofit

- Seismically retrofit structures subject to structural failure during a seismic event. The intent of this category is to seismically retrofit structures subject to the likely probability of collapse during a seismic event of greater than 6.0.

Category A4 - Infrastructure

- Repair or replace the immediate failing infrastructure within a structure or system

As for Category A3 – Seismic Retrofit projects, they are projects that are structures subject to structural failure during a seismic event of greater than 6.0. These projects are of the highest priority of the state capital outlay program. These projects are limited to General Obligation (GO) bond funds. Districts can also fund these projects using their local general or bond funds as well.

Field Act

The Field Act (California Education Code Section 17280) mandates seismic safety standards for K-12 public schools and community colleges. These standards were approved as a result of the 6.3 earthquake that hit Long Beach and surrounding areas in 1933. The earthquake destroyed 70 schools with hundreds of other buildings damaged.

Assemblyman Don Field saw the destruction and drafted a bill with State Architect George McDougall. This bill would place the State Architect and the Division of State Architects (DSA) in charge of building safe schools. With the passage of Assembly Bill 2342 in a unanimous vote, the resulting law has been known as the Field Act.

The Field Act has stricter structural code requirements and architect drawings undergo a strict process of review. All community college facility projects must go through this review process at the Division of State Architects. The structural design work must be completed by licensed structural engineers rather than civil engineers. The structural plan review is also completed by structural engineers. The approved projects have continuous on-site inspection by a DSA approved project inspector and must undergo observation from project architect and engineers. At the end of construction, a report must be filed by the project architect, engineers, inspectors, testing labs, and the contractor to ensure the safety of the building.

Seismic Study

The 1996 Budget Act appropriated \$900,000 from Proposition 203 for the California Community Colleges to perform seismic risk assessments for buildings on community college campuses. This seismic survey of the California community colleges' facilities was required by the Legislature to prioritize buildings for funding. The Legislature wanted to have information to assess the risk posed by each building based on a uniform procedure and risk assessment system applied to all buildings.

The Department of General Services (DGS) Real Estate Division, in consultation with the Seismic Review Board and its Professional Advisory Committee, developed a system that was used to evaluate the risk for all state buildings. The survey aimed to assess earthquake risks and safety measures within our region. The survey covered various aspects, including building structures, infrastructure, and emergency response systems. The survey criteria included the following:

- Building size
- Age
- Type of construction
- Function
- Occupancy

Data collection involved collaboration with experts and stakeholders. The findings are crucial for enhancing our preparedness and resilience. Approximately 4,100 community college buildings were evaluated to determine their susceptibility to earthquakes. Approximately 80 buildings were identified in this survey as potentially having a high-risk level and most in need of some form of structural seismic retrofit. More than half of the projects identified in the report were addressed in the 1997-98 budget with special repair funds from the Scheduled Maintenance

and Special Repairs Program. Projects over \$400,000 went through the state capital outlay program or from the Office of Emergency Services (OES) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

Some buildings were already identified to be replaced or renovated. Several buildings were already vacated and plans for construction or acquisition of new facilities. Buildings that were unacceptable, occupants relocated to other facilities.

Conclusion

The Chancellor's Office does not oversee the seismic safety of the system through continuous surveys as there is a lack of funding for it. Instead, the agency is reliant on the community college districts to submit projects proposals that state that facilities need seismic safety retrofits or new facilities to replace seismically unsafe facilities. These facilities and others are funded through the General Obligation (GO) bonds that are approved by the voters.

These projects go through the State Capital Outlay program, which uses the GO bond funds to help fund new facilities and modernize current facilities. As projects are funded by the State, the Division of State Architects reviews all project submissions and ensures that fire, life, and safety and Field Act compliancy are met. DSA also have a 50% rule where the cost of a reconstruction, alteration, or addition of an existing building exceeds 50 percent of its replacement value, projects are required to meet seismic safety standards. This further ensures that safety standards are met.

It is the districts responsibility to maintain, modernize, and expand as necessary their facilities and infrastructure. This State Capital Outlay program has helped the community college system throughout the years and will continue to do so for the future.