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Igniting the Minds of Extraordinary Young People

by Asante-Ra



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California's Great Exchange



In exchange for 450 hours of service, California College Corps participants, called Fellows, earn \$10,000 – offering a meaningful leg up on educational expenses and debt reduction. (source: californiavolunteers.ca.gov).

For far too many Californians, particularly students of color from families earning low incomes, higher education is elusive. While students of color face a variety of systemic barriers to education, they face one common obstacle: tuition costs and student debt.

The State of California is making an effort to address this reality. Launched in 2022-23, College Corps is a statewide, paid service program that connects college students – including Dreamers – to employment opportunities in the priority

areas of K-12 education, climate action, and food insecurity. In exchange for 450 hours of service, College Corps participants, called Fellows, earn \$10,000 – offering a meaningful leg up on educational expenses and debt reduction. The state aims to reach 10,000 students through this program within its first four years, creating a generation of 'civic-minded leaders' to help build a more equitable California that works for everyone. For these students, their families, and

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Apply Now: California College Corps Is Offering Students Much More Than \$10,000 Stipends



Governor Newsom poses with the first class of College Corps Fellows during their swearing-in ceremony on October 7, 2022. Credit: californiavolunteers.ca.gov

Edward Henderson California Black Media

Last year, Gov. Gavin Newsom announced the state's #CaliforniansForAll College Corps program which has so far provided \$10,000 grants to some 6,500 low-income college students as a stipend in exchange for their community service work.

Nearly a year after the paid-service program was first announced, the Governor's office is hailing its impact on communities and the lives

of the students who participate in it.

"The program has proven to be a transformative experience for both students and the organizations where they work," said Sandy Close, director of Ethnic Media Services, who recently moderated a press briefing to inform the public about the program's contribution and some of the challenges it has faced.

The event, co-hosted by California Black Media, featured stakeholders representing all aspects of the program talking about their experiences.



Josh Fryday serves as California's Chief Service Officer within the Office of Governor Gavin Newsom to lead service, volunteer, and civic engagement efforts throughout California.

"I feel like I've gone from being a student who once desperately needed a safe space to learn to being the trusted adult who can provide students with a natural learning environment where they each have a deep sense of belonging, knowing they are seen, heard, supported and valued," said Emilio Ruiz, a 24-year-old student pursuing his teaching certification.

Ruiz shared his experiences as a College Corps fellow, mentioning how his upbringing as a child of divorced parents -- constantly moving, experiencing financial distress, and witnessing domestic abuse -- spurred his desire for a safe space to learn and grow.

College Corps, Ruiz says, gave him an opportunity to receive his education without the added stress of taking on financial aid debt. Moreover, he gained practical experience while doing service-oriented work in his community.

College Corps is a state initiative that addresses "societal challenges" by creating a generation of civic-minded leaders from low-income families. Its programs focus on challenges facing California like climate resilience and economic inequality.

According to the Governor's office, Black and Latino students have the highest rates of student

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Prince James Story | Staff

The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors approved a contract with Axon Technologies to provide their sheriff's department with body worn cameras during its board meeting on February 28.

The approval was a long time coming. San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department participated in a pilot program of body worn cameras back in 2018. However, some technical issues were brought up, like the logistics of providing deputies with equipment to cover a 21,000 square-mile patrol area and other

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We appreciate the support of the Board of Supervisors and their partnership to ensure deputies have the best possible tools available to them...Body-worn camera technology is an invaluable tool and one the Sheriff's Department has sought to implement for several years.

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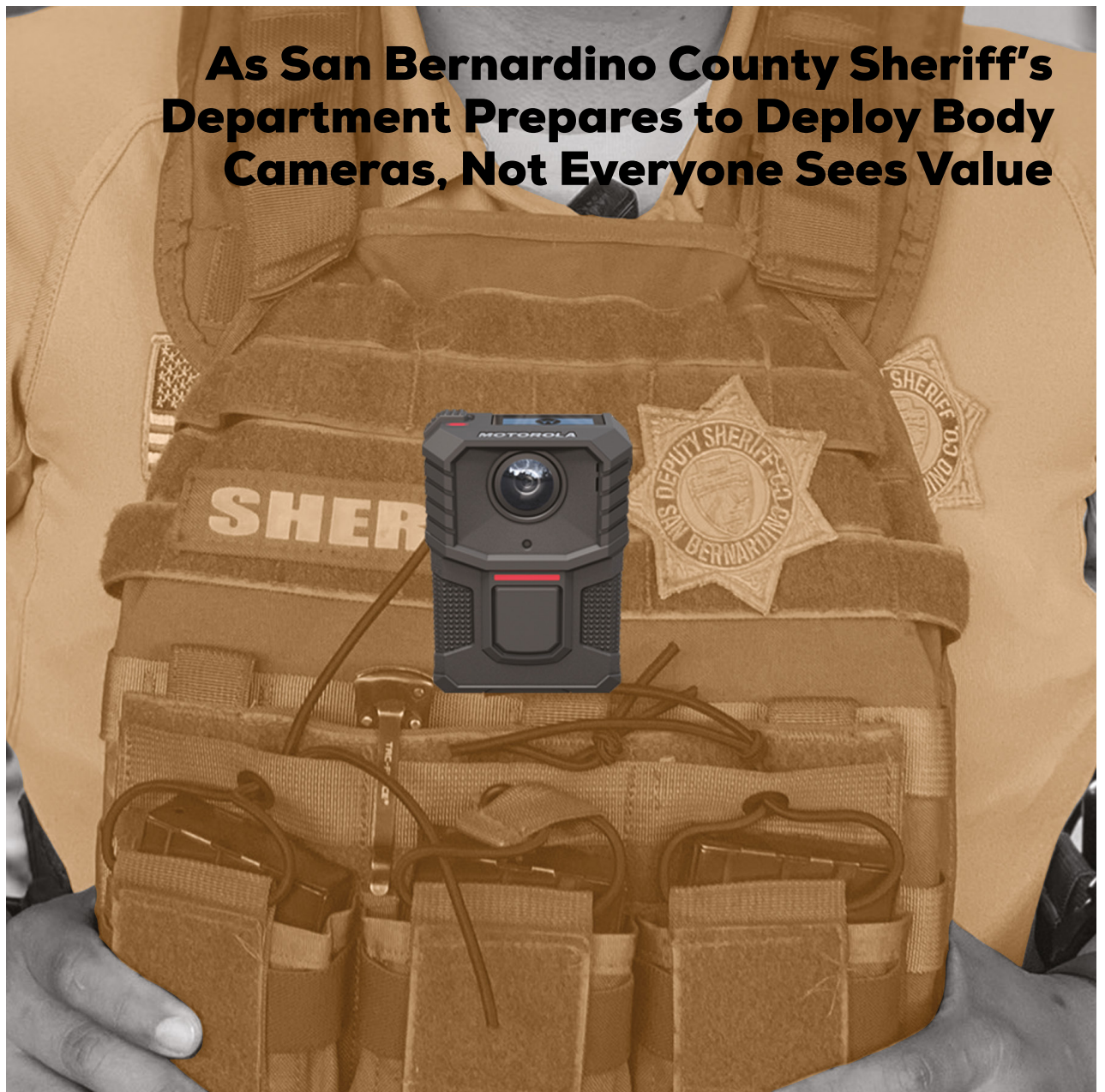
concerns that delayed implementation for nearly five years.

Implementation

According to a press release from the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department, the first officers to wear the AXON body cameras will be Patrol Divisions – deputies, detectives, and supervisors.

As more devices become available, the Corrections Division and other specialized units will also wear the body cameras.

“We appreciate the support of the Board of Supervisors and their partnership to ensure deputies have the best possible tools available



As San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department Prepares to Deploy Body Cameras, Not Everyone Sees Value

San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors Finally Approves Body Worn Cameras for Deputies. (Chris Allen, VOICE)

to them,” said San Bernardino Sheriff officials in the press statement. “Body-worn camera technology is an invaluable tool and one the Sheriff's Department has sought to implement for several years.”

Over the last decade, body cameras have become a standard practice in law enforcement agencies, but many of those active in the social justice movement believe the system needs much more than body cameras.

Not everyone supports the Board's decision.

“Cameras have not changed anything since they have been in use in other departments. The problem goes deeper than us seeing the actions of officers when interacting with the public,” Starting Over Inc Director Vonya Quarles said in a statement via email. “We must move upstream of that contact to address what's behind police violence and why it is most often directed at Black people.”

“Cameras have not changed anything since

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Michael Scaturro | KHN

Washington has joined more than a dozen other states in seeking to crack down on toxic substances in cosmetics after a state-funded study there found lead, arsenic, and formaldehyde in makeup, lotion, and hair-straightening products made by CoverGirl and other brands.

The U.S. stalled out on chemical regulations after the 1970s, according to Bhavna Shamasunder, an urban and environmental policy associate professor at Occidental College.

“

Companies are adding preservatives like formaldehyde to cosmetics products,” said Iris Deng, a toxics researcher for the Washington State Department of Ecology. “Lead and arsenic are different stories. They’re detected as contaminants.

”

And that has left a regulatory void, as lax federal oversight allows potentially toxic products that would be banned in Europe to be sold in American stores.

“Lots of products on the market aren’t safe,” Shamasunder said. “That’s why states are helping create a solution — it’s a patchwork approach.”

The potential exposure to toxicants in cosmetics is especially worrisome for women of color, because studies show that Black women use more hair products than women of other racial groups and that Hispanic and Asian women have reported using more cosmetics in general than non-Hispanic Black and white women.

States Seek Crackdown on Toxic Ingredients in Cosmetics to Close Gaps in Federal Oversight



Research teams asked Hispanic, Black, and multiracial women what beauty products they used. Researchers then tested 50 cosmetics purchased at Walmart, Target, and Dollar Tree, among other shops. (Chris Allen, VOICE)

The Washington state legislation is a second attempt at passing the Toxic-Free Cosmetics Act, after legislators approved a bill in 2022 that was stripped of the ban on toxic ingredients in cosmetics. This year, lawmakers have additional context after a report commissioned by the legislature and published by the state Department of Ecology in January found multiple products with concerning levels of hazardous chemicals, including lead and arsenic in dark-tint CoverGirl Clean Fresh Pressed

Powder foundation. CoverGirl Continuous Color Lipstick and Markwins Beauty Brands’ Black Radiance Pressed Powder foundation were among other products from various brands containing lead, the report found.

Research teams asked Hispanic, Black, and multiracial women what beauty products they used. Researchers then tested 50 cosmetics purchased at Walmart, Target, and Dollar Tree, among other shops.

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#CaliforniansForAll
CollegeCorps



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WWW.CACOLLEGECORPS.COM

IN THE NEWS

Apply Now, continued from page 4

loan default and owe an estimated \$147 billion in college loan debt.

In Long Beach, Project Optimism, currently hosts two College Corps fellows from CSU Long Beach (CSULB). Both are first generation college students. One is undocumented.

According to Ishmael Pruitt, CEO and cofounder, Project Optimism is a non-profit that supports equitable access to nature and environmental justice education to elementary aged children within the Long Beach Unified School District. It focuses on mentorship, empowerment, and uniting community



Ishmael Pruitt, co-founder and CEO of Project Optimism, is a community host partner working directly with two College Corps fellows. (source: California Black Media)

engagement (including food insecurity), and personal development.

Ishmael is working directly with two of our Fellows and Fellows from other College Corps programs in the LA Area.

“We are big on mentoring the mentor,” said Pruitt. “Every intern and employee gets mentored by myself, one of the other directors, or someone from our board. So, they get direct coaching and support beyond their role working with us.”

Beth Manke is a program lead at CSULB. She matches College Corps students with the

non-profit organizations they are assigned to for the program. Manke currently supervises 50 undergraduate students, completing 450 hours of work for 27 different organizations.

“We envision the service they are completing as internships. These are experiences that have proven to be quite transformative for our students,” said Manke. “We honor and draw on the students’ cultural backgrounds by acknowledging their life experiences and how they shape their academic success and well-being.”

The briefing also focused on the challenges students are facing on college campuses post-pandemic and how College Corps can help alleviate some of those issues.

Dr. Allison Briscoe-Smith, a clinical psychologist and Diversity Lead of Student Life at the University of Washington spoke about some of the mental health challenges students are facing and avenues for healing.

“Anxiety is a leading factor for folks on college campuses,” said Dr. Briscoe-Smith. “There was an escalation for students with mental health challenges pre-pandemic. We are finding we are anticipating beating levels of worsening mental health on campus. Many clinicians are hearing challenges of hopelessness, purposelessness, and isolation. Finding purpose through service is something that can be very helpful. The skills that you’re learning and to be able to see yourself in the folks that you serve is an amazing opportunity for transformation and connection.”

Dr. Allison Briscoe-Smith, Diversity Lead of Student Life at the University of Washington, as the founder and principal of Soft River Consultation and as a FFF Science Center where she focuses on developing and implementing the science of bridging (connecting across our differences).

Josh Fryday, California’s Chief Service Officer, introduced the College Corps program a year ago and closed the event with remarks about the hope service can provide.

“When it comes to creating and fostering hope, what we know is that it’s so much more than creating a belief. It’s about action. It’s

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by Asante-Ra

Shirley Coates is an entrepreneur, real estate leader, and the CEO of the Society of Extraordinary Women (SOEW). She is also the founder of the Ignite Leadership and STEM Academy, a program that aims to inspire young women to embrace their leadership potential and excel in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

As an extraordinary woman herself, Coates has a deep understanding of the challenges that women face in these fields and the power that they hold to make a difference. In this interview,

“

I did not set out to start an aerospace electronics company. I was born in a small town and, and then moved here and I was just told to be good in school and I was going to achieve some great results.

”

she shares her journey, her insights, and her passion for empowering the next generation of women leaders.

Coates' journey started in a small town where she was taught to be good in the classroom and achieve great results. Her parents told her that she could do anything she wanted to, and this belief set her on a path of success that she had not imagined.

She had the opportunity to attend a school where she was taught like an adult even in kindergarten and first grade. She learned how to read and do calculations at an early age and was doing basic algebra by the second grade. This experience led her to understand that the mind has an incredible capacity to learn and achieve, and that we should not limit ourselves or others by imposing limits on what they can do.

Igniting the Minds of Extraordinary Young People



This session, the Ignite Leadership and Stem Academy is hosting all of its classes on the campus of Cal Baptist University, in the Dr. Robert K. Jabs School of Business. (soew.org)

Coates started her career with AT&T, and then moved into engineering when she started her own aerospace electronics company. She then founded an international real estate company while attending UCLA and became one of the top realtors at that time. Coates' life experiences gave her the belief in herself and the ability to pursue her dreams, no matter the obstacles in her way. This belief is what led her to create the Ignite Leadership and STEM Academy.

The Ignite Program

The Ignite program is based on Coates' life experiences and her belief in the limitless potential of the human mind. She wanted to find out why some kids were not completing high school or why certain kids did not feel that education was important. She understood that kids wanted to do things like technology and entrepreneurship but did not see a way to do so.

With the Ignite program, Coates and her

team focused on three main factors that caused students not to complete high school or drop-out of college or just not do well in school. These factors were low self-esteem, peer pressure, and a lack of parental support. Coates and her team believe that if they could address these three factors, they could help students overcome the obstacles that prevented them from achieving their academic dreams.

The program focuses not only on leadership and STEM skills, but also on communication skills, which Coates believes are essential for success in any field. Even if you are the best technologist in the world, if you do not have good communication skills, you cannot present your product or findings effectively. The Ignite program aims to give young women the tools they need to be successful in any field they

continued on next page

FEATURE STORY



"I had great parents that just told me I could do anything that I wanted to because I was a star. So that's why I started the Ignite program and the Society of Extraordinary Women." (source: Facebook.com).

choose.

One of the challenges that Coates faced as a Black woman in a predominantly White and affluent area was the skepticism of others who doubted her ability to succeed. As a realtor with her office in Newport Beach, people doubted that she could have success due to being a Black woman. But Coates did not let the doubts of others stop her from pursuing her dreams. She knew that she was a strong entrepreneur and that she belonged, no matter where she went or what she was doing. This attitude is what she wants the young women in the Ignite program to adopt.

The Ignite program is more than just a leadership and STEM Academy; it is a community of extraordinary women who support each other and work together to achieve their goals. Coates believes that women have the power to change the world and that they need to have the courage to believe in themselves and their abilities. She wants young women to know that

they are capable of achieving anything they set their minds to, regardless of their background, race, or gender.

Coates' vision for the future is to see a world where women hold equal positions of power and influence in all fields. She believes that the Ignite program is just the beginning of a movement to empower women to take their place as leaders and innovators in the world. Her hope is that the young women who graduate from the program will become the next generation of trailblazers who will inspire and empower others to reach their full potential.

Through the Ignite Leadership and STEM Academy, Coates is igniting the minds of young people and giving them the tools they need to succeed in any field they choose. Black Voice News had the opportunity to speak with Shirley in a recent interview where she shared exciting news about the future of the program.

BVN: I saw that you worked in aerospace electronics. Can you tell me about how you started in that and how that has influenced your work with the Society of Extraordinary Women?

SC: Well, that influenced my work in just imagining what I could become. I did not set out to start an aerospace electronics company. I was born in a small town and, and then moved here and I was just told to be good in school and I was going to achieve some great results. I had great parents that just told me I could do anything that I wanted to because I was a star. So that's why I started the Ignite program and the Society for Extraordinary Women.

This spring our program started on April 1st and this year we are focusing on GIS and journalism. GIS is geographic information system technology. It's used in every industry in the world, and has over 1,000 applications. I was floored by what I found. All of this information is right here in our backyard. We are so pleased to have Esri as our supporter and we, of course, use their technology and have our students working with the same software that the technology industry is working with. *Esri, located in Redlands, CA, is considered the global market leader in geographic information system (GIS)*



Shirley Coates founder and CEO of the Society of Extraordinary Women and the Ignite Leadership Academy. (soew.org).

software, location intelligence, and mapping.

BVN: How did you go about getting that partnership with the Esri company?

SC: Well, that partnership comes through Dr. Paulette Brown-Hinds [Publisher of Black Voice News] of course. I was part of [a] focus group. We were talking about GIS and we all met at Esri. When I heard about what GIS can do and how it was used around the world, I asked her, "What do we do next? How do I get involved in it?," Shirley recalls saying to Dr. Brown-Hinds. (Prior to this focus group opportunity, Shirley wasn't a GIS specialist but understood its value. Black Voice News' Mapping Black California team is now a partner of the Ignite program. The program connected with Esri in that way).

Among the uses of GIS, students can learn robotics.

If you don't have GIS, robotics doesn't work. When you talk about the space program, the program uses GIS. That's how they can use calculations. That's how the space shuttles work. At the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, how could they determine where the virus was and what direction it was going? That was GIS technology.

The environment and the different weather patterns we talk about, that's GIS technology. The



fire department uses it. The police department uses it. Doctors use it, even artists use it in the music industry and also in art.

It is a very important technology to understand and there's still several people that don't understand the impact of it. That's why we want to share it with our students because this is really cutting edge. Some students aren't introduced to GIS until college. We are starting this in middle school!

Experiential learning

So, why GIS and journalism? GIS use in journalism enhances critical thinking and research abilities. It will help with communication and writing skills.

We have one of the best instructors, [Black Voice News reporter] Breanna Reeves. She is fabulous! The way she gets the kids to engage is very interactive. It's not like she's doing lectures, it's a very interactive class so they explore and learn about GIS, and they actually write about it.

[Also,] when we have an experiment or we bring a scientist in to demonstrate with rockets, they not only get to learn about how to fire the rockets, but then they write about, and then they have to present it. So it helps their writing skills, their presentation skills. It starts to build their self-esteem. They're like, 'Oh my gosh, I accomplished this, and I built this car around that in the class and I'm good at this.'

That's the other reason [for a program that is] part GIS technology and journalism, we add the leadership and entrepreneur component because once they find what kind of project they want to work on, then [the question is] how would you build a company using it? We take them through the whole process and then they have to create a business plan with our marketing team. We ask them: "Who are your officers? Who are your customers? What is your brand?"

At the end of this eight week program, we have a graduation because we know that they've committed their time to learning. It's voluntary, you come on Saturdays from 9:00 to 12:30 and then you make a presentation at graduation. So we actually have a graduation this year. We're going to have our graduation on May 6th at the new Civil Rights Institute at the Diversity Center in Riverside.

BVN: Okay. So that's where the graduation ceremony will be. But, where are the classes held?

SC: All of the classes are held on the campus of Cal

Baptist University, in the Dr. Robert K. Jabs School of Business. It's a great program. They're taught by experienced educators, as well as professors in those fields.

BVN: How did you get the people who are teaching and contributing in that way to get on board and get involved with this program?

SC: We're going into our 10th year. This will be our 10th graduation. We're really happy about that. We just started asking people if they'd be willing to be instructors. Most volunteer, but a few have gotten stipends. Once they saw the value of the program, the first two teachers from Esri stayed with the program for 5 years. They gave so much of their time and helped us to build the program. [There were also] other school counselors and instructors involved and we had some graduate students at the beginning. They all helped us build our program because they saw what it was doing. We also stay in touch with our students.

BVN: Can you tell me more about that?

SC: We are still in touch with the students that started with us 10 years ago. People see the impact we have. We don't just have to talk about it. We have students that were speaking about it themselves. They talk about how great the program has done. What it's done for us. It fills our hearts.

We have a student that attended Spelman University. And she said, "I would not be here had it not been for your class."

We have students that are going into biotechnical engineering. A young woman who has said, "I would not be doing this if it had not been for your class."

BVN: What an amazing impact you've had?

SC: We're just really happy about that and we just want to do more. We want it to have thousands of students. We were just a program for girls and so many people requested for us to add boys as well. So now we have a program for both boys and girls. We just had a science

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If you don't have GIS, robotics doesn't work. When you talk about the space program, the program uses GIS. That's how they can use calculations. That's how the space shuttles work. At the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, how could they determine where the virus was and what direction it was going? That was GIS technology.

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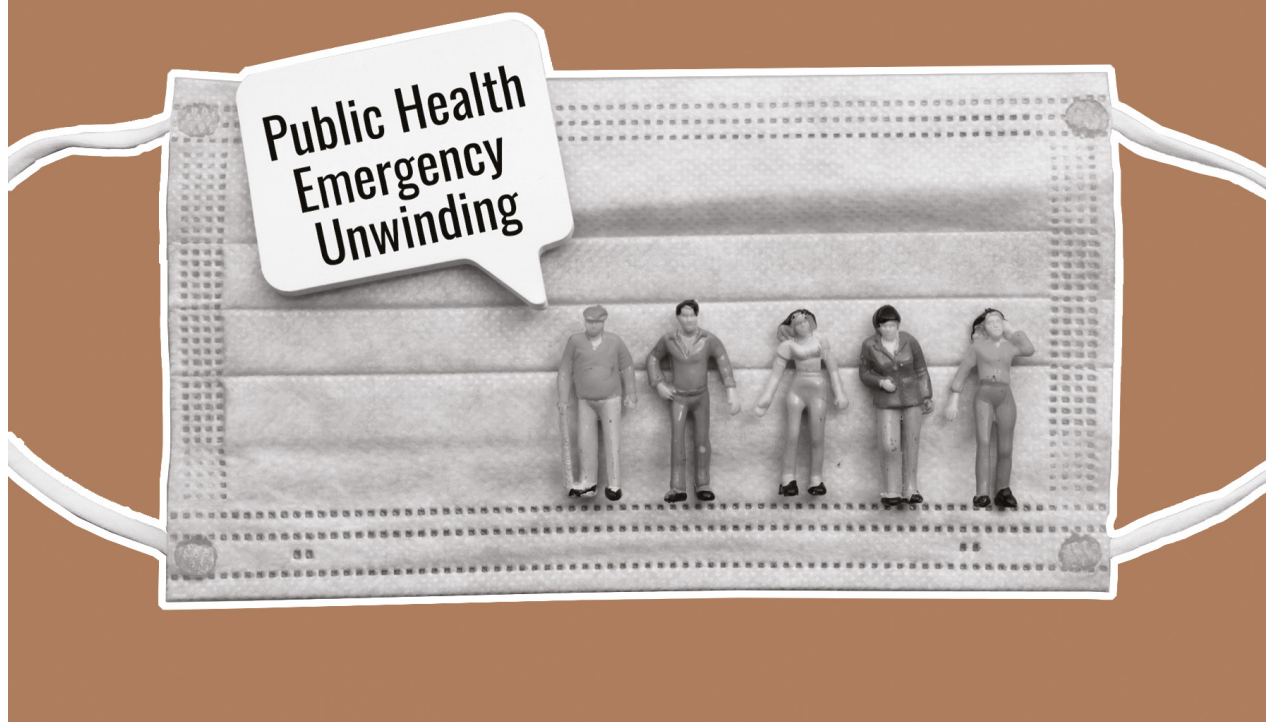
festival at Cal Baptist Aviation School and it was boys and girls.

Learning to fly

And the students had a chance to experience the professional simulators. These are the same simulators that professional pilots that fly commercial airlines use. They train in the same simulators. So that's what students have a chance to do. I think it's so good because more women are becoming pilots for commercial airlines and helicopters. We decided to start our aviation program about 7 years ago because there's a shortage of pilots.

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The Unwinding: Public Health Emergency Ending Soon, and With It – Medi-Cal Coverage for Millions



In 2022, Congress passed the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 which established an end to COVID-19 protections ending the continuous health coverage that were put in place at the start of the pandemic. (source: Chris Allen, VOICE).

Breanna Reeves | Staff

With less than two weeks until COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE) protections end on Mar. 31, 2023, health advocates and local counties across California are encouraging residents to update their contact information in order to keep their Medi-Cal – California’s Medicaid program – coverage.

In 2022, Congress passed the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 which established

an end to COVID-19 protections, putting an end to continuous health coverage that were put in place at the start of the pandemic. This protection allowed beneficiaries to have uninterrupted coverage without having to make any changes or renew their coverage.

According to an analysis by the Kaiser Family Foundation, Medi-Cal enrollment increased by more than two million from the start of the pandemic in March 2020, with approximately

11.5 million beneficiaries enrolled in Medi-Cal and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). CHIP provides low-cost health coverage to children in families and works alongside Medicaid. By November 2022, roughly 14 million beneficiaries were enrolled in Medi-Cal/CHIP.

More than 15 million residents are currently enrolled in Medi-Cal, according to the Department of Health Care Services’ (DHCS) latest available data from December 2022. On Mar. 31, that number may be reduced as states can begin redetermining who is still eligible for coverage and could begin terminating coverage for residents as early as Apr. 1, 2023. Experts estimate that roughly two to three million beneficiaries could lose their coverage, although many may still be eligible.

Across the U.S., an estimated 91 million people are enrolled in Medicaid. Experts estimate that 15 million will lose coverage while 6.8 million could likely still be eligible.

States have 12 months to start all redeterminations that are pending by Mar. 31, 2020 (the end of the continuous enrollment period) and 14 months to complete them. This period of time marks the “unwinding” period where the state can begin the renewal process that could result in termination of coverage for beneficiaries who are no longer eligible or who have not taken action to update their information.

It is important to update contact information

Advocates and local departments are urging Medi-Cal beneficiaries to make sure that their updated contact information, including names, addresses, telephone numbers and email address, is on file with their local county. Beneficiaries will receive a letter in the mail that will let you know if your county needs additional information from you to renew your Medi-Cal coverage or if your Medi-Cal coverage was renewed automatically.

If beneficiaries receive a renewal form in the mail that indicates that they need to submit information, beneficiaries need to complete and

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Igniting the Minds, continued from page 11

BVN: How did you learn about the pilot shortage?

SC: One of our board members Dr. Allen Cummings is a pilot. He's a licensed pilot and also worked a lot with the Tuskegee Airmen. He was really familiar with it and went to all the air shows and so he suggested that we add the aviation component to the program because of that. We were doing it before they were talking about the shortage at that time. It wasn't so much talked about and now it's even greater.

BVN: This program is incredible and I can tell that you are really enthused about it. Your passion for this program is kind of infectious as is the community outreach that you've been doing.

SC: I love to help students and I when I see the potential, I just want to help as many people as I can. And that's why we want to be able to reach as many people as possible. I want to get the word out about Ignite Academy and SOEW in any way I can.

BVN: Is there anything else that you want to

share with our readers? Anything about your goals or your plans for the program this year? Anything new that you might be adding to the curriculum?

SC: Well, we're planning on adding more of the sciences and actually increasing the aviation part of the program. Then my goal is to have a thousand students in the program.

BVN: So what percentage increase would that be?

SC: It would be like a 120% increase. We have already impacted the lives of over 400 kids. When we expand, we'll have more teachers, staff, and additional courses. More than one classroom, so we can expand it. Then we'd have a morning class and an afternoon class and more speakers, of course.

The more we get the word out, I believe we're going to do that. I'd still like to be on the campus. I love being on the campus at Cal Baptist. I have to thank them and Dr. Gramling at the Business School, and Dr. John Marcelus in the Aviation School. We really appreciate them at Cal Baptist and all that they've done.



Students at the Technology and Aviation festival in December 2022 share their favorite parts of the day (Image by Breanna Reeves).

Total Monthly Medicaid & CHIP Enrollment (2019-2022)

Medi-Cal enrollment increased by more than two million from the start of the pandemic in March 2020, with approximately 11.5 million beneficiaries enrolled in Medi-Cal and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). By November 2022, roughly 14 million beneficiaries were enrolled in Medi-Cal/CHIP.

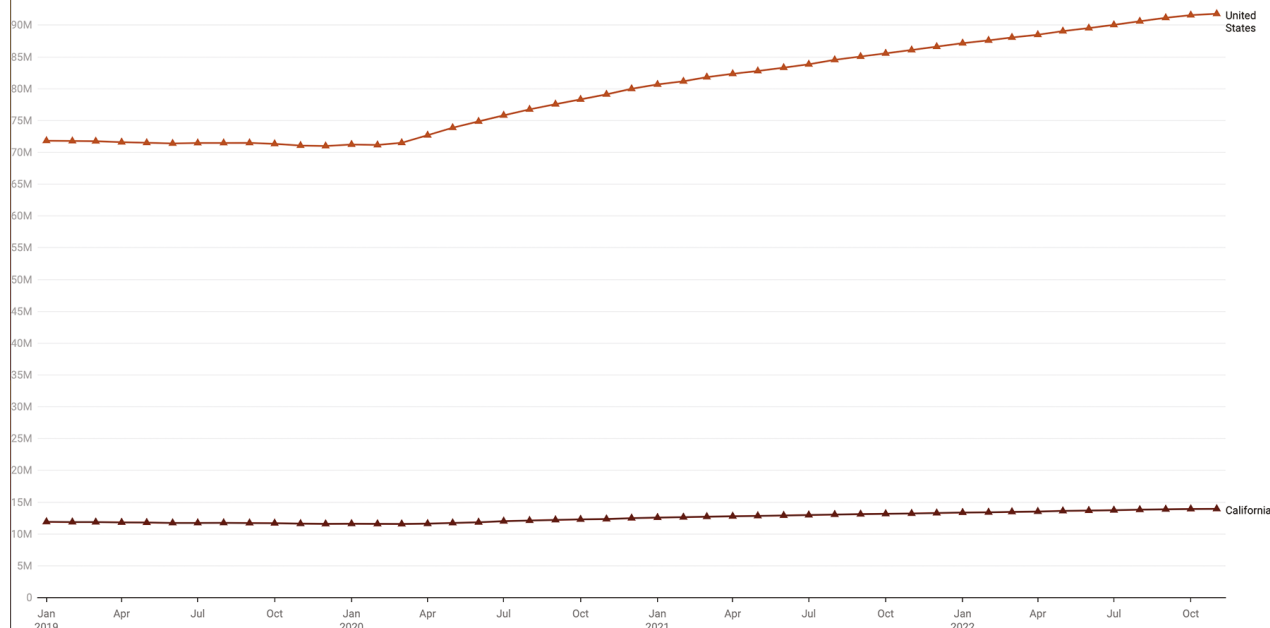


Chart: Breanna Reeves/BVN • Source: KFF • Get the data • Created with Datawrapper

IN THE NEWS

The Unwinding, continued from page 12

return the form as soon as possible in the pre-paid return envelope that is provided. The form can also be submitted online, in-person or by phone.

According to officials, the renewal process can take between 45 to 90 days depending on specific cases or delays such as someone impacted by disability-based obstacles or waiting on correct paperwork from providers. Medi-Cal members will have 90 days to appeal after being disenrolled.

If a resident is considered ineligible for Medi-Cal, the state is required to transfer the account and assess other affordable insurance options like Covered California, the state's free online marketplace for low-cost health insurance plans.

IN THE NEWS

States Seek Crackdown, continued from page 7

“Companies are adding preservatives like formaldehyde to cosmetics products,” said Iris Deng, a toxics researcher for the Washington State Department of Ecology. “Lead and arsenic are different stories. They’re detected as contaminants.”

Markwins Beauty Brands did not respond to requests for comment.

“Nominal traces of certain elements may sometimes be present in product formulations as a consequence of natural mineral origin, as permitted by applicable law,” Miriam Mahlow, a spokesperson for CoverGirl parent company Coty Inc., said in an emailed statement.

The Washington report’s authors said European Union countries ban products like the dark-tint CoverGirl foundation. That’s because arsenic and lead have been linked to brain and nervous system damage and cancer. There is “no known safe level of lead exposure,” said Marissa Smith, Washington state’s senior

regulatory toxicologist, and formaldehyde is also a carcinogen.

“When we find these chemicals in products applied directly to our bodies, we know people are being exposed,” Smith added. “Therefore, we can assume these exposures are contributing to health impacts.”

Though most of the products’ lead content was low, Smith said, people are often exposed for years on end, considerably increasing the danger.

The Washington ecology department findings were not altogether surprising: Other testing bodies have picked up preservatives such as formaldehyde or, more often, formaldehyde-releasing agents such as quaternium-15, DMDM hydantoin, imidazolidinyl urea, and diazolidinyl urea in hair-straightening products marketed especially to Black women. Formaldehyde is one of the chemicals used to embalm corpses before funerals.

In addition to Washington, at least 12 states

— Hawaii, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, and Vermont — are considering policies to restrict or require disclosure of toxic chemicals in cosmetics and other personal care products.

States are acting because the federal government possesses limited authority, said Melanie Benesh, vice president of government affairs for the Environmental Working Group, a nonprofit that researches what’s in household and consumer products.

“The FDA has had limited resources to pursue ingredient bans,” Benesh added.

Congress has not given the Environmental Protection Agency widespread authority to regulate such products, even though contaminants and preservatives from cosmetics end up in the water supply. In 2021, a California man petitioned the EPA to ban toxic chemicals in cosmetics under the Toxic Substances Control Act, but the petition was denied, said

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KEEPING IT REAL

California's, continued from page 3

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“I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I do know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve.”

- Albert Schweitzer

”

the communities benefiting from their service, this truly is a great exchange.

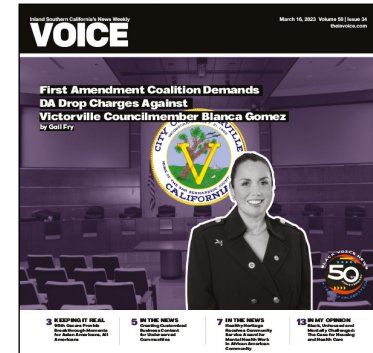
To date, the initiative has benefitted some of California's highest-need students across more than 40 campuses. Among the 3,200 Fellows, 80% are students of color, 64% are first-generation college students, and 68% are Pell grant recipients, meaning they have exceptional financial need. In addition to the financial and professional development benefits of the program, Fellows also credit College Corps with providing a sense of purpose and belonging.

While we watch and celebrate the outstanding contributions these students make – both as Fellows and in the years to come, post-graduation – let us not take our eyes off the ball. For every Fellow, there are hundreds of Californians still facing systemic and institutional challenges that place higher education just beyond reach.

Of course, this is just my opinion. I'm keeping it real.

The recruitment process is underway for the 2023-24 cohort of College Corps Fellows. For more information, please visit CACollegeCorps.com.

S.E. Williams
Executive Editor



Scan the QR Code to read last week's issue online.



State's Seek Crackdown, continued from page 16

Lynn Bergeson, a lawyer in Washington, D.C., because cosmetics are outside the scope of the act's jurisdiction.

“The law is crystal clear on this,” she said.

Bergeson said the regulation of chemicals is subject to the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, but the FDA regulates only color additives and chemicals in sunscreen because those products make the medical claim of decreasing the risk of skin cancer.

Minnesota, for example, fills in the regulatory gaps by testing for mercury, hydroquinone, and steroids in skin-lightening products. It also passed a law in 2013 banning formaldehyde in children's products such as lotions and bubble baths.

California has passed several laws that regulate cosmetics ingredients and labeling, including the California Safe Cosmetics Act in 2005. A law adopted in 2022 bans intentionally added perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, known as PFAS, in cosmetics and apparel starting in 2025.

Last year, Colorado also passed a ban of
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Apply Now, continued from page 8



Dr. Allison Briscoe-Smith, Diversity Lead of Student Life at the University of Washington, is the founder and principal of Soft River Consultation and as a FFF Science Center where she focuses on developing and implementing the science of bridging. (source: California Black Media).

about a plan. It's about having a real path for change. That's what people are looking for. We are seeing the impact in the first 9 months. It gives me hope, the governor hope, and we know it's going to bring hope to our entire state for many years to come."

Eighty percent of students in the Corps are self-identified students of color and 70% are Pell grant recipients. Five hundred undocumented dreamers throughout the state of California participate in the program.

For more information on College Corps and applying to be a fellow, visit California Volunteers.

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they have been in use in other departments. The problem goes deeper than us seeing the actions of officers when interacting with the public," said the Director of Starting Over Inc., Vonya Quarles. (image source: blackvoicenews.com).

In 2013, about 32% of local police departments used some form of body camera. By 2018, according to a report by the National Institute of Justice, "sixty percent of local police departments and 49% of sheriffs' offices had

fully deployed body-worn cameras."

"The cameras are under the control of the officer in critical moments, and when an officer wants to go off camera, they just turn them off. So while it may be helpful in some situations ... a better use of those funds would be to spend that money somewhere in the community," Quarles stated. "Because here, we are able to see a return on the investment of our tax dollars."

State's Seek Crackdown, continued from page 16

PFAS in makeup and other products.

But consumer safety experts said that states should not have to fill in the void left by federal regulations, and that a smarter approach would entail the federal government subjecting cosmetics ingredients to an approval process.

In the meantime, states are fighting an uphill battle, because thousands of chemicals are available to manufacturers. As a result, a gap exists between what consumers need for protection and regulators' ability to act, said Laurie Valeriano, executive director of Toxic-Free Future, a nonprofit that researches and advocates for environmental health.

"The federal systems are inadequate in that they do not require the safest chemicals to be used," Valeriano said. "Instead, they allow hazardous chemicals in personal care products, such as PFAS, phthalates, or even formaldehyde."

Moreover, the federal government's risk assessment system is flawed, she said, "because it attempts to determine how much risk from toxic exposures is acceptable." In contrast, the approach that Washington state hopes to legislate would assess the hazards and ask whether the chemicals are necessary, or if there are safer alternatives — which is to say prevent toxic ingredients in cosmetics in the first place. It's a lot like the approach taken by the European Union.

"We put boundaries and restrictions around these chemicals," said Mike Rasenberg, hazard assessment director of the European Chemicals Agency in Helsinki.

Rasenberg said that because research shows formaldehyde causes nasal cancer, the EU has banned it, plus lead and arsenic, in beauty

products. The EU's 27 countries also work together to test products for safety.

In Germany, more than 10,000 cosmetic products are examined annually, said Florian Kuhlmeier, spokesperson for that country's Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety. And it doesn't end there. This year, Germany will examine about 200 samples of children's toothpaste for heavy metals and other elements banned in the EU for cosmetics, Kuhlmeier added.

The legislation in Washington would move the state toward a more European approach to chemicals regulation. If approved, it would give retailers that sell products with banned ingredients until 2026 to sell existing stocks. Meanwhile, customers can protect themselves by seeking out natural beauty products, Atlanta-area dermatologist Dr. Chynna Steele Johnson said.

"Lots of products have formaldehyde-releasing agents," Steele Johnson said. "But it isn't something customers can find on a label. My suggestion — and this goes for foods too — would be fewer ingredients are better."

This story was produced by KHN (Kaiser Health News), a national newsroom that produces in-depth journalism about health issues. Together with Policy Analysis and Polling, KHN is one of the three major operating programs at KFF (Kaiser Family Foundation). KFF is an endowed nonprofit organization providing information on health issues to the nation.

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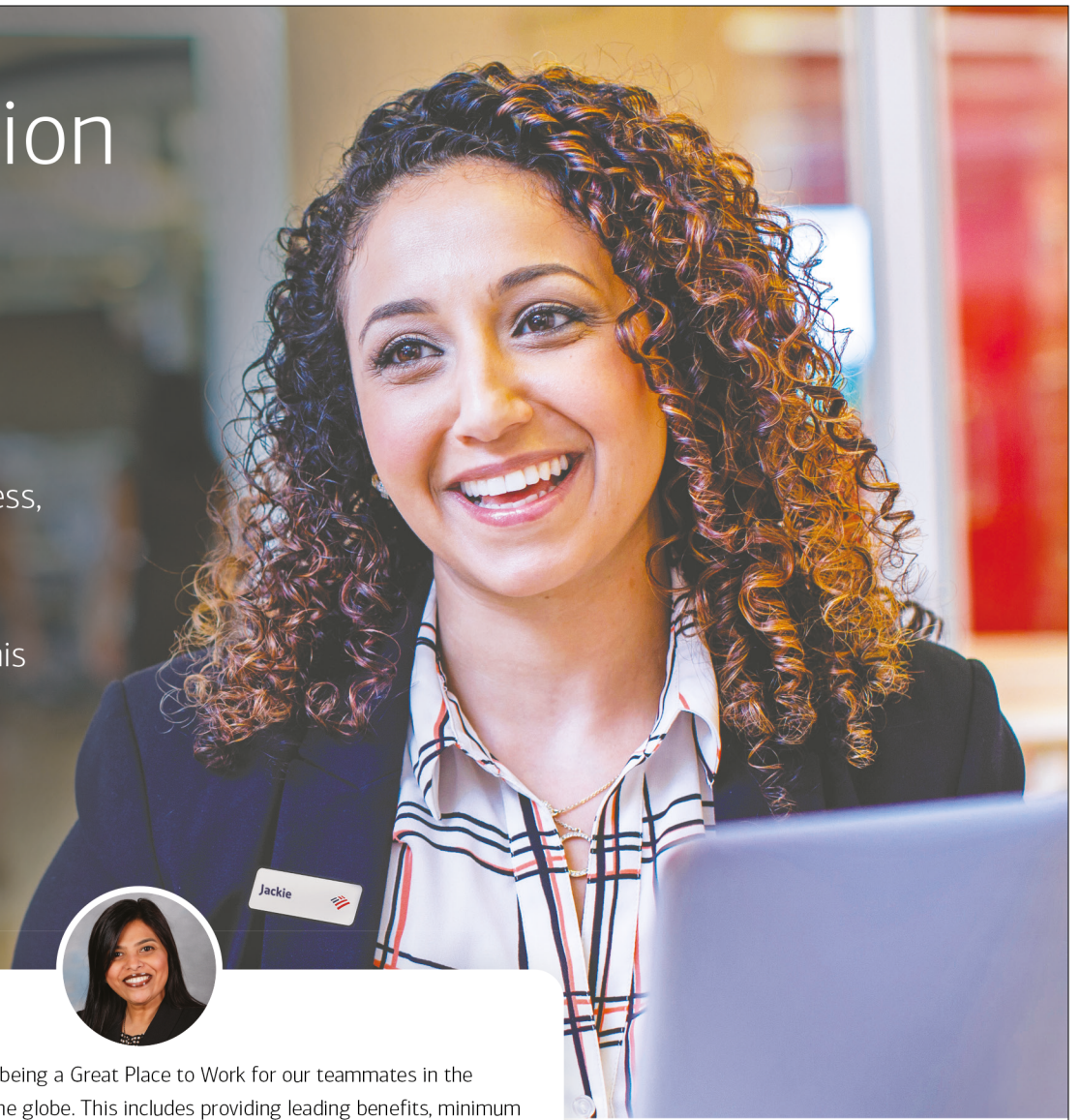
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