



ASSOCIATION OF  
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UCLA



CECE

INNOVATION AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AWARDS PROGRAM

IEP CATEGORY - TALENT

2025  
CASE  
STUDY

**University of California,  
Los Angeles**  
UCLAxCareerBridge

## WHAT IS UCLAxCAREERBRIDGE?

UCLAxCareerBridge is a certificate completion program providing adults from diverse communities access to professional training to prepare for in-demand careers in Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counseling, Early Childhood Education and Data Science. The program, launched by UCLA Extension in 2020, uses state funding to remove the financial barriers of tuition and books, and provides additional supportive services such as a dedicated Student Success Coach. Each certificate program covers a specialized field and provides the educational background needed to attain employment and career pathways for advancement.

## CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS OFFERED

CareerBridge addresses three areas of high need and growth in the workforce, aligning with the following UCLA Extension certificates:

### *Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counseling Certificate (ADAC)*

The Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counseling Certificate (ADAC) provides training to meet a critical need in treating substance use disorders (SUD). Approximately 2.9 million Californians (9%) age 12 and older have a substance use disorder (reported 2018-2019). California is undertaking a major effort to expand SUD services, and well-educated and certified counselors are in demand, especially since multiple reports indicate drug overdoses to be significant public health problem. Students completing the ADAC serve an in-demand role in SUD treatment and gain employment in substance use disorder treatment facilities, residential treatment centers, prisons, juvenile detention centers and government agencies. Students are required to complete a total of 13 courses and an on-site agency practicum that requires 255 contact hours to complete. The practicum allows students the opportunity to receive support from their peers and guidance from an instructor as they implement the skills required to be successful in their career as a counselor.

### *Early Childhood Education - Associate Teacher Certificate*

Graduates of the Early Childhood Education - Associate Teacher Certificate (ECE) are in high demand because of the essential need for quality early care for young children's outcomes and for working adults. In 2020, it was projected that 200,000 new early-learning teachers would be required in the state. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated this issue, with California permanently losing 10% of the ECE teaching force. This certificate provides the foundational knowledge needed to



become an Associate Teacher in a preschool or childcare setting for children aged from birth to five years. It meets the 12 ECE/CD units needed for the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing Associate Teacher permit. Students funded by the grant are required to take a prerequisite course, five core courses, and a practicum. The field-work practicum places students at an agency to obtain in-classroom experience and an opportunity to apply what they have learned in their courses in a supervised setting. Courses are offered in English and Spanish.

### *Data Science Certificate*

The [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) predicts data scientist jobs will experience 36% growth between 2021 and 2031, significantly faster than the average rate. The Data Science Certificate offers students technical skills that are marketable and in high demand so they can start careers in data science. This certificate provides hands-on experience in data management, programming, statistics and machine learning to extract, analyze and communicate findings. Students learn to leverage the power of big data to gain insights and improve decision-making related to real-world problems.

## **STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND SUPPORT**

Students are recruited through community partners, who help identify potential students for the program. Prospective students must meet minimum qualifications such as having a High School Diploma or GED, basic computer skills ability and eligibility to work in the United States. Interested students must attend an information session and the student orientation.

Once enrolled, CareerBridge works directly with students to address any additional complex challenges and barriers that may come up during their time in the certificate program. If a student is facing difficulties academically, their advisor may modify their course load, extend their time to complete the courses, and/or provide academic support services. Additionally, students facing homelessness or other barriers are referred to partner organizations to avail themselves of additional supportive services.

## **COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS**

CareerBridge has over 35 partner organizations referring students from across LA County. Most recently, new partnerships have been formed with Crystal Stairs' African American Providers Network (AAPN) and CodeTalk. (see Table 1)



AAPN was created in 2022 in response to the negative impact the COVID pandemic had on African American early care and education professionals in greater South Los Angeles. This network was created as a safe place for members to connect with, learn from, and support one another. UCLA has recruited 35 African American students into the Early Childhood Education – Associate Teacher Certificate from this partnership.

CodeTalk is a digital technology job training program for low-income, underemployed, and underserved women. Through this partnership, 16 of their referrals enrolled in UCLA Extension's Data Science Certificate program in the Fall of 2024.

## PROGRAM IMPACT

In addition to removing financial barriers for students to obtain certifications, UCLA aims to prepare a diverse candidate pool for employers. The intentionality behind collaborating with partners to recruit students allows UCLA Extension to have a diverse student population that more closely reflects the diversity in Los Angeles and California. Of the students served through CareerBridge, over 90% are students of color with 46% identifying as Hispanic/Latino/Chicano, and 25% as Black/African American. Additionally, 75% of students identify as female.

In addition, this program model led to a cross-campus collaboration with the UCLA Chancellor's Office to offer the Veterans Job Education and Training Program (VetJET). Through VetJET, veteran students are eligible to obtain a certificate at no cost.



Table 1: UCLAxCareerBridge Partners List

Organization Name	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Place Called Home</li> <li>• Bright Horizons</li> <li>• Child Development Center at FairPlex</li> <li>• Childcare Alliance Los Angeles</li> <li>• Children’s Institute</li> <li>• Downtown Women’s Center</li> <li>• First 5 L.A.</li> <li>• Homeboy Industries</li> <li>• iFoster</li> <li>• Instituto Cervantes</li> <li>• Lennox School District</li> <li>• LA County Department. of Workforce Development and Aging Community Services</li> <li>• Los Angeles County Office of Education</li> <li>• Los Angeles Unified School District</li> <li>• Los Angeles Urban League Head Start Consortium</li> <li>• Loyola Immigrant Justice Clinic</li> <li>• Mexican American Opportunity Foundation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pajaro Valley Unified School District</li> <li>• Para los Niños</li> <li>• People Assisting the Homeless (PATH)</li> <li>• Puente Learning Center</li> <li>• Quality Start Los Angeles</li> <li>• South Bay Workforce Investment Board</li> <li>• South LA Transportation &amp; Empowerment Zone (SLATE-Z)</li> <li>• STEM Advantage</li> <li>• The Asian American Drug Abuse Program</li> <li>• The Training &amp; Research Foundation 28. UCLA Early Care &amp; Education</li> <li>• UCLA Veterans Initiatives and Partnerships</li> <li>• Ventura County Office of Education</li> <li>• Vermont Slauson Economic Development Corporation</li> <li>• Wellnest</li> <li>• West Los Angeles Veteran Affairs</li> </ul>



## LINKS TO MORE INFORMATION

### Supporting Information

- [UCLAxCareer Bridge](#)
- [Certificate - Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counseling](#)
- [Certificate - Early Childhood Education - Associate Teacher](#)
- [Certificate - Data Science](#)

### Videos:

- [UCLA Extension Graduate Stories: Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counseling Certificate](#)

### Articles

- [Graduate profile: A teacher follows in her father's footsteps – 3,000 miles from home](#)
- [Graduate profile: An economics aficionado buys into data science](#)
- [Graduate profile: For Phillip Reed, overcoming addiction is an act of love](#)



## ABOUT APLU

The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) is North America's oldest higher education association. APLU is a research, policy, and advocacy organization dedicated to strengthening and advancing the work of public universities in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. The association's membership consists of public research universities, land-grant institutions, state university systems, and affiliated organizations.

APLU's mission is to expand access and improve student success to deliver the innovative workforce of tomorrow; advance and promote research and discovery to improve society, foster economic growth, and address global challenges; and build healthy, prosperous, equitable, and vibrant communities locally and globally.

Based in Washington, DC, the association's work is furthered by an active and effective advocacy arm that works with Congress and the administration as well as the media to advance federal policies that strengthen public universities and benefit the students they serve.

## ABOUT THE IEP PROGRAM

APLU and its [Commission on Economic and Community Engagement \(CECE\)](#) established the Innovation and Economic Prosperity (IEP) Program to help higher education institutions codify, elevate, and advance their campus enterprise supporting economic and community development.

The **IEP Program** recognizes institutions that have demonstrated a meaningful, ongoing and substantial commitment to economic and community development, growth, and economic opportunity.

The **IEP Awards Program** recognize exemplary and innovative projects in university-based economic and community engagement:

- Talent and workforce development
- Innovation, entrepreneurship, and tech-based economic development
- Place development through public service, outreach, and community engagement

Learn more at: [www.APLU.org/IEP](http://www.APLU.org/IEP)

