On September 23, 2021, the Governor signed Senate Bill 169 (Chapter 262, Statutes of 2021), which established the Higher Education Student Housing Grant Program to increase the current stock of affordable student housing across the three public higher education segments in California, for purposes of supporting low-income students and addressing the most significant non-tuition aspect of students’ total cost of attendance. This program is intended to provide a total of $2 billion General Fund over a three-year period, with $500 million available in fiscal year 2021-22. Of the total amount provided over the three-year period, 50 percent is available for the California Community Colleges (CCC); 30 percent is available for the California State University (CSU); and 20 percent is available for the University of California (UC). The first round of funding from funds available in 2021-22, applicants must submit initial proposals by October 31, 2021.

This program provides one-time grants to applicants for the construction of student housing or for the acquisition and renovation of commercial properties into student housing. The Bakersfield College proposes to apply for a grant to fund a new 152 bed residence hall. The estimated project cost is $71 million. To meet the grant’s desired construction, start date of December 31, 2022, an accelerated design schedule is required. This will result in $3.1 million of pre-grant approval costs to be funded from District Reserves (50%) and College Funds (50%). Additionally, this investment will significantly enhance the competitiveness of the college’s grant application.

California’s community colleges may also submit requests for planning grants for campuses that are exploring or determining if it is feasible to offer affordable student housing. Up to $25 million of total program funding is available for this purpose. Cerro Coso Community and Porterville Colleges will be applying for respective planning grants that may cover preliminary design and working drawing costs. To best position the colleges to apply for future construction program funding (Round II or III), a combined total of $85,000 of pre-grant approval costs will be used to conduct feasibility studies for each college. The study costs will be funded from District Reserves (50%) and College Funds (50%).