

**Educational Participation In Communities (EPIC)**  
**Associated Students Incorporated Funding Support Proposal**  
**Fiscal Year: 2021-2022**

**MISSION**

Our mission is to promote community engagement by creating opportunities for university students to implement classroom theory in real life situations.

Through community service, EPIC inspires and enables university students to realize their full potential as productive, responsible and caring citizens by volunteering in a wide range of community partner organizations serving a broad spectrum of communities throughout the Los Angeles area.

With the support of the administration, staff, and community partners, students are the keystone of the program and the basis for its continued success in serving the community.

**ABSTRACT**

Established in 1966 by ASI and the Division of Student Affairs, the EPIC Program was created to show how the great potential of qualified student volunteers could become mobilized to address critical community needs.

Over decades, EPIC has served to utilize and leverage Cal State LA resources. Through planning and operating student-led projects, student activism took form in community involvement programs that brought Cal State LA's most valuable resource to the community- its students. Engaged in program planning and implementation, student leaders are at the forefront of community engagement and play a key role in the success of the program.

The development of opportunities and relationships between EPIC and community non-profit organizations have exposed leaders of tomorrow to the issues facing community today. Working closely with hundreds of community partners overtime, EPIC has sustained profound partnerships with various non-profits and schools that have served to help educate and enrich Cal State LA students with valuable work experience and civic-minded values. To-date, EPIC manages 180 in-person partnerships and over 70 remote service partnerships.

In 2014, EPIC came under the direction of the newly established Center for Engagement, Service, and the Public Good. The goal of the center is to transform the University into a hub of civic engagement and public service for our communities, our city, and our region. This change has put EPIC in a position to work collaboratively with other Center programs to support campus initiatives and to build capacity for curricular and co-curricular community engagement.

**PROGRAMS & SERVICE**

Community-Engaged Learning Support: EPIC supports the facilitation of student placement in the community to fulfill community engagement course requirement for credit. Placement

support involves connecting students with open opportunities with community partners, guiding risk management requirements and student learning guidelines, tracking student service outcomes, and managing student data. Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) course designation encourages collaboration among faculty, students, and community partners in applying knowledge that fulfills pedagogical objectives and meets community needs. Community-Engaged Learning can include service, service-learning, and varied forms of community-based teaching, research, and creative endeavors.

Community Partnership Development: EPIC manages over 180 community based partnerships with non-profit organizations, public and charter schools, local government agencies, medical offices and hospitals, and law enforcement agencies. EPIC facilitates the coordination of all risk management and community service agreement processes.

New restrictions for community engagement are in place due to COVID. All community engagement is 100% remote. This situation has limited the capacity for our community partners to host students during this time which has limited viable placement offerings at this time. Partners are required to establish a Community Engagement Remote Agreement with the university. EPIC has worked persistently to outreach to partners in effort to provide support for this remote agreement process. To-date, EPIC has facilitated over 70 remote agreements.

In spring 2021, the Eagle Connect online platform was launched. This platform manages the connection between students and community based organizations for the purpose of placing students with community partners for credit and non-credit community engagement. The platform is student-centered and friendly. Students can access the platform on the Center for Engagement, Service, and the Public Good website.

Community Partner Fair: The Community Partner Fair hosts community partner organizations prepared to offer engagement opportunities to Cal State LA students. A wide range of partners attend a one-day event. Students are provided with a first-hand opportunity to network directly with community partner representatives.

America Reads and Counts Program: Established on the Cal State LA campus in 1999, this national tutorial program targets elementary school students who are achieving below grade level in the subjects of reading and math. Cal State LA students serve to provide support to the intervention plan designed by our partner sites. Annually, the program places 25-30 students across five local LAUSD elementary schools and one charter school. Students work directly with teachers and children, gaining first-hand experience in a classroom setting. This program provides Federal Work Study employment to students. On average, a student tutor provides eight hours of tutorial support per week. Students make a commitment to the program for one academic year.

Due to COVID restrictions, this program has gone 100% remote. The program is offering virtual tutorial sessions and pre-recorded lessons. The program will resume in-person service when restrictions are lifted.

Summer Youth Employment Program: In the 17th year of partnership with Para Los Ninos, EPIC coordinates the placement of youth from local communities and from preference high schools. The four-week program provides youth, 14-24, with 80 hours of valuable work-readiness information and exposes them to higher education on the Cal State LA campus. The campus community is invited to invest in this program by partnering with EPIC to engage in events designed to connect Cal State LA students and campus professionals with youth. This program coordinates a summer employment for a cohort of student leaders.

Student Employment Program: Students join EPIC through formal employment. Positions offer students with opportunities to grow their interest, develop leadership potential, gain work experience, and refine work ethic and skills. Student employees are key to the success of all programming.

## **PROGRAM OUTCOMES**

Community Engagement: Cal State LA students transition successfully into the college environment and build a greater sense of pride and belonging in the University community. They prepare themselves as leaders by participating in meaningful engagement opportunities civically. They are informed, engaged and make a positive impact on our city, state, nation and world.

Personal, Social, and Professional Identity Development: Cal State LA students pursue personal growth and understanding. They act independently with integrity, accountability, ethical consideration and advocacy for self and others. They achieve positive interpersonal relationships within multicultural settings, including valuing, respecting and learning from diversity. They understand, articulate and connect knowledge and interdisciplinary skills to career and life after graduation. They identify and connect with mentors who encourage and support them in successfully pursuing their goals and dreams

Social Justice: Cal State LA students develop skills informed by an awareness of identity, heritage and culture to navigate and transform institutional organizations and societal structures to advocate for social justice. They understand and articulate how the intersectionality of multiple identities shapes people and their experiences, which empowers students to engage with others in more meaningful ways.

## **MARKETING AND OUTREACH PLAN**

- Social Media: Marketing and outreach are strategically coordinated with the assistance of the student leader employed as our Digital Marketing Coordinator.
- Student Emails: Student updates are sent to the EPIC student volunteer directory.
- Website: Opportunities and updates are announced and located on our public site.
- Campus Emails: Opportunities and update messages are shared with departments and offices.
- Cross-Promotion: Collaborating with campus programs and departments to reach students.

## **FINANCIAL PLAN AND EXPENSE DETIAL**

Funding Request: EPIC is requesting funding support in the amount of \$10,000. Funds will go to support community engagement program, service, and student employment.

## **PROGRAM EVALUATION AND QUALITY CONTROL MECHANISMS**

EPIC has a long history of working collaboratively with campus-wide offices and departments. Quality of programming managed by assuring University policy and protocols are in place. Working directly with offices like Public Safety, Student Health Center, Golden Eagle, and other pertinent areas, keep the campus community updated and EPIC gains assistance in the respective expertise area.

Best practices and program standards are fixed into the program planning process. Evaluation of programing is managed though the process of assessing programming outcomes and student participation.