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Río Hondo College Awarded \$2.8 Million to Empower Students Through Hire UP Pilot Program

Whittier, California – Río Hondo College will continue its mission to remove barriers to educational opportunity for students, as the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office (CCCCO) selected Río Hondo as one of 10 community colleges statewide to implement the Hire UP Pilot Program.

Hire UP is a five-year pilot program designed by CCCCCO to acknowledge and address historic racial inequity and socioeconomic barriers to workforce participation. The CCCCCO allocated \$2.8 million in funding to Río Hondo College to provide eligible students with stipends to help meet the true cost of college attendance and gain clear access to academic programs and workforce support.

Students who participate in the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) and RISE Scholars Program, along with former foster youth, are eligible to apply for Río Hondo College’s Hire UP Program.

“This is a unique opportunity for our eligible students to get paid to finish their degree or certificate,” said Cecilia Rocha, Río Hondo College’s Dean of Student Equity and Achievement. “It is an honor to be one of 10 schools in California chosen to lead the way with this program that will have a profound impact on so many.”

The Río Hondo College Board of Trustees unanimously voted to accept the one-time allocation of \$2.8 million from the CCCCCO to start Hire UP at its Nov. 8, 2023 board meeting.

“Through Hire UP, eligible students will receive regular stipend payments for completion interventions. Students can earn anywhere from \$4,960 to \$9,920 per semester based on their enrollment from six to 12 units,” said Dr. Earic Dixon-Peters, Río Hondo’s Vice President of Student Services. “Students have the opportunity to gain valuable, employable skills while completing their educational goal through completion intervention opportunities, such as career, job and entrepreneurship seminars.”

Applications for Río Hondo College’s Hire UP Program will begin during the spring semester. Students can email financialaid@riohondo.edu for more information.

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“Hire UP is a perfect fit for us at Río Hondo College and will play a pivotal role in our ongoing commitment to fostering an inclusive and equitable educational environment,” Río Hondo College Superintendent/President Dr. Marilyn Flores said. “This partnership will help us empower our students as they participate in experiential, hands-on completion interventions towards future employment opportunities.”

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