

Riverside City College Black Serving Institution (BSI) Application

June 2025

- 1) State your institution's commitment to address Black and/or African American student success and explain how your commitment is consistent with your institution's mission.**

Riverside City College (RCC) is unequivocally committed to advancing the academic and holistic success of Black and African American students. This commitment is both principled and mission-aligned, reflecting RCC's identity as an open-access, Hispanic-Serving Institution that builds upon the strengths and socio-cultural experiences of our diverse student population. RCC's mission explicitly centers equity, access, and inclusion, which guides our strategies to promote social and economic mobility through degrees, certificates, and transfer programs.

RCC's vision—to provide excellent educational opportunities that are responsive to the diverse needs of its students and communities—grounds our focus on Black student success. Our TIGER PRIDE values, particularly Equity, Inclusivity, Respect, and Student-Centeredness, inform every layer of our institutional culture. We understand that equity is not just a goal but a shared responsibility that demands systemic change and sustained attention.

Our 2025–2030 B.E.S.T. Strategic Plan reinforces this commitment through core pillars of Build, Engage, Serve, and Treasure. The plan emphasizes equity-based infrastructure, culturally responsive teaching and advising, and community partnerships that support our students from enrollment to transfer. These strategic actions align directly with RCC's 2025–2028 Student Equity Plan, which identifies Black students as disproportionately impacted in key metrics including successful enrollment, completion of transfer-level Math and English, and certificate/degree completion.

As part of our application to become a California Black-Serving Institution, RCC has established ambitious, data-informed benchmarks:

- Increase Black student completions from 445 to 600+ annually
- Double 3-year completion rates from 9.1% to 18%
- Raise 6-year completion rates from 13.8% to 25%
- Improve transfer rates from 12.5% to 20%+
- Increase math and English taking in the first year

To meet these goals, RCC is scaling successful equity-focused strategies, including:

- Expanding cohort-based programming such as Umoja
- Providing intrusive, strengths-based academic advising
- Embedding culturally sustaining pedagogy across disciplines
- Strengthening engagement centers and academic support hubs
- Prioritizing resource allocation through equity-based budgeting frameworks
- Reducing the stigma of mental health supports and increasing access for those supports for African American students.

This institutional commitment is not a new direction—it is a natural extension of RCC’s long-standing mission and vision. The BSI designation will serve to enhance, accelerate, and institutionalize efforts already underway through the B.E.S.T. Strategic Plan and the Student Equity Plan. RCC views this moment not as an accolade, but as a responsibility to lead with courage, accountability, and care in advancing racial equity and academic excellence for Black and African American students.

2) Please state the percent of the institutions enrolled student population identifying as Black/African American for the current term.

- The **percentage** of the institution’s currently enrolled student population who identify as **Black/African American**:
 - 7.0% (as of Feb 26, 2025)

3) Please state the number of students identifying as Black/African American enrolled at the college or university for the current term (Spring 2025).

- The number of currently enrolled students who identify as Black/African American. 1504 for African American ONLY for Spring 2025.

* Note: For Spring 2024, there were also an additional 913 students who identified as African American AND some other Race or Ethnicity. It is likely that for Spring 2025, this number would be similar (once we get our MIS detail in June) making the total percentage of students who identify as Black / African American for at least one of their identities over 2200 students and 11% of the enrolled students.

4) Describe the academic goals for the institution to achieve within the five-year period in which the initial designation is awarded. The goals described in this section should outline the institution's plans to improve retention, time-to-degree or time-to-certificate completion, and graduation rates of Black and African American students.

Riverside City College (RCC) is committed to improving educational outcomes for Black and African American students through measurable, equity-focused academic goals over the next five years. The college has identified three core areas of improvement: retention, time-to-degree or certificate completion, and graduation rates. These goals are aligned with our B.E.S.T. Strategic Plan – particularly under 'Build' and 'Serve' – as well as the RCC Student Equity Plan metrics.

Five-Year Academic Goals:

- Increase the number of degrees and certificates completed by Black and African American students from 445 (2023–24) to 600+ annually by 2029–30.
- Improve 3-year completion rates from 9.1% to 18%.
- Improve 6-year completion rates from 13.8% to 25%.
- Raise transfer rates to four-year institutions from 12.5% to 20%.
- Increase math and English taking in the first year
- Improve retention of African American students in online or hybrid courses

Key Strategies (aligned with B.E.S.T. Plan – Build, Engage, Serve):

- Expand cohort-based programming (e.g., Umoja).
- Embed intrusive academic advising and milestone tracking.
- Strengthen first-year experience pathways.
- Provide culturally-sustaining faculty and staff development on liberatory pedagogy and servingness.
- Offer culturally-affirming virtual peer mentorship, actionable early alert systems, and online coaching specific to African American and Black students' experiences

- 5. Describe the academic equity goals your institution aims to achieve within the five-year period of the initial designation as a California Black-Serving Institution. Specifically, outline how these goals will improve academic equity gaps in retention, time-to-degree or time-to-certificate completion, and graduation rates between your Black and African American students and the overall student population. Provide data-driven benchmarks and strategies for achieving these objectives.**

RCC's academic equity goals for the five years of the initial BSI designation are designed to close gaps in retention, completion, and transfer through targeted and measurable goals supported by culturally affirming practices. These goals directly align with our Student Equity Plan and the B.E.S.T. Strategic Plan goals 'Engage' and 'Treasure'.

Current Gaps (2023–24):

- 3-Year Completion Rate: 12.6% (All) vs. 9.1% (Black) = -3.5% gap
- 6-Year Completion Rate: 21.4% (All) vs. 13.8% (Black) = -7.6% gap
- Transfer Rate: 13.4% (All) vs. 12.5% (Black) = -0.9% gap
- Online/hybrid course Retention rate: 71 % (All) v. 50% (Black)=-21% gap

Equity Goals by 2029–2030:

- Eliminate the 3-year completion gap (both groups reach 18%).
- Narrow the 6-year completion gap to less than 3%.
- Equalize or exceed the overall transfer rate for Black students.
- Narrow the online/hybrid course retention rate to less than 5%

Strategies to Close Gaps (aligned with Student Equity Plan):

- Use equity dashboards disaggregated by race and gender.
- Implement targeted academic and wellness support for Black/African American students.
- Expand faculty diversity and training in cultural competency, and culturally-relevant teaching.
- Launch culturally-affirming early alert systems tailored to online African American students
- Scale inclusive online pedagogy training for faculty

6) Identify institutional memberships, charters, or affiliations to organizations dedicated to the advancement of Black and or African American Students.

- * 100 Black Men of the Inland Empire
- * A²MEND (African American Male Education Network and Development) Charter
- * Ant-Racist Riverside
- * Black Student Success Week
- * Inland Empire Black Nurses Association
- * Inland Empire Health Plan
- * NANDI Organization for African American Community College Educators
- * National Council of Negro Women
- * National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
- * Riverside County African American Achievement Initiative Committee
- * Riverside Unified School District Equity Task Force
- * Umoja Community

7) Attach your institution's strategic plan to address the academic goals and academic equity goals your institution aims to achieve within the five-year period of the initial designation as a California Black-Serving Institution. The strategic plan should include, but not be limited to, all the following: (A) a mission statement that addresses the applicant's commitment to serve Black and or African American students; (B) outreach services to potential Black and or African American students; (C) existing and/or proposed academic or basic needs support services to assist in the academic success of Black and/or African American students. Support services described in this section may include campus affinity centers, coursework, activities or events; (D) an outline of the planned allocation of resources during the five-year period in which the initial designation awarded; (E) an outline of how the institution is using or will use existing resources to provide culturally relevant professional development for the applicant's faculty and staff in pursuit of Black Serving Institution goals. (to be uploaded)

8) **Community College** applicants submit the following for the previous three academic years: **(A)** The number of degree and certificate programs completed by all students, and by Black and or African American students. **(B)** The number of all students, and of Black and or African American students, who completed degree and certificate programs within normal time and up to 300 percent of normal time to degree completion. **(C)** The student transfer rates for all students, and for Black and or African American students, to four-year colleges and universities. **WENDY**

Student Completion and Transfer Data – Past Three Academic Years

- **(A) The total number of degrees and certificates** completed:

Academic Year	(A) Degrees & Certificates All Students	(A) Degrees & Certificates- Black Students
2021-2022	5389	284
2022-2023	4950	277
2023-2024	4829	445

- **(B) The number of students who completed degrees and certificates** within:

Academic Year	(B) % Completed w/in 3 yrs-All Students	(B) % Completed w/in 3 yrs-Black Students
2021-2022	12.6%	9.1%
2022-2023	12.6%	9.1%
2023-2024	12.6%	9.1%

Academic Year	(B) % Completed w/in 300% Time-All Students	(B) % Completed w/in 300% Time-Black Students
2021-2022	21.4%	13.8%
2022-2023	21.4%	13.8%
2023-2024	21.4%	13.8%

- **(C) Student transfer rates** to four-year colleges and universities for:

Academic Year	(C) Transfer Rate to 4-Year - All Students	(C) Transfer Rate to 4-Year - Black Students
2021-2022	13.4%	12.5%
2022-2023	13.4%	12.5%

2023-2024

13.4%

12.5%

9) Please Submit a certification, in writing, by the chief administrative officer of the college or university, of the applicant's commitment to address Black and African American student success that is consistent with the applicant's mission. (to be uploaded)

10) Describe the campus resources available to promote equity and inclusion for Black and African American students. Include details on academic support programs, cultural centers, mentorship opportunities, student organizations, financial aid initiatives, and any other institutional efforts designed to foster an inclusive and supportive campus environment.

RCC's commitment to address Black and African American student success is demonstrated in its support for the development, implementation, and ongoing sustaining of the following programs and initiatives. These programs were designed to create culturally-affirming learning environments which would foster academic success and cultivate opportunities for economic and social mobility; and nurture personal development outcomes for Black students:

- **A²MEND (African American Male Education Network and Development) Student Charter**

RCC supports the A²MEND Student Charter, which provides Black male students with mentorship, culturally-informed leadership development, and a supportive community grounded in academic excellence. The charter connects students with Black faculty, classified employees, and administrators, along with introductions to many professional networks. The student charter fosters a sense of purpose and persistence through brotherhood and advocacy.

- **African Diaspora Education Summit (ADES) Fellows Project:** In 2022, 2024 and in 2026 through 2030, RCC will participate in A2MEND ADES summit. Project for the fellows include: healing and restoration project, rooted in liberatory consciousness; African Centered Education Summer Institute for faculty that teach Black and African American Students; developing fundraising campaigns to support African American students to participate in study abroad programs.

- **Black Faculty and Staff Association (BFSA)**

RCC's BFSA was founded in the summer of 2020—in the wake of the onset of the COVID Pandemic, and the racial reckoning activated by the murder of George Floyd. BFSA actively supports Black student success through mentoring, professional advocacy, and institutional accountability. BFSA members contribute to key campus initiatives, policy reform, and culturally-relevant programming that ensure RCC remains responsive to the

needs of its Black community—especially to persistence and success of Black students and retention of Black employees.

- **Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) tour.** The college has supported an annual tour of HBCUs since 2016. This program, which has been written into RCC's Student Equity Plan, directly aligns with the **California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office HBCU Transfer Agreement**, creating a tangible pipeline to baccalaureate attainment at partner institutions. Over the past several years, our students have been accepted to Grambling State University, Southern University, Dillard University, Stillman College, Spellman College, Prairie View A & M University, Florida A & M University, Morgan State University, Lincoln University, Xavier University, Howard University, Morehouse College, Norfolk State University. Not only have our students been exposed to the wide diversity of HBCUs, their exposure on these trips has also opened them up to the benefits of travel and some have gone on to participate in our Study Abroad programs, and engaged in travel on their own as well.
- **HOME Room Student Engagement Center (Established 2008)**
The HOME Room, founded in 2008 by African American faculty who were voluntarily coordinating The Ujima Project, serves as a culturally-affirming space that centers the experiences and voices of Black students. HOME is an acronym for Hope, Opportunity, Mentoring, Empowerment. This engagement center, the first Student Engagement Center on the RCC campus, provides integrated academic support through commitments to serve the students by faculty, classified professionals, and administrators. The HOME Room offers community-building programming, and a safe, empowering environment that reflects the college's commitment to equity and racial justice.
- **Outreach: Targeted Outreach to Feeder High Schools (Launching Summer 2025)**
Beginning Summer 2025, RCC will initiate targeted outreach to local feeder high schools with significant Black student populations. This outreach will include culturally-relevant campus tours, college readiness workshops, parent engagement efforts, and early access to academic resources and support services—all designed to create a stronger, more intentional bridge from high school to college for Black students.
- **President's Action Committee for Equity and Justice:** Riverside City College President, Dr. Claire Oliveros, has launched an action committee that will focus on campus climate, student voice, transparency in college commitment to diversity and equity. Made up of employee groups from across the college, this committee will have a direct impact on bringing matters of diversity and equity and of concern to African American students and employees to the attention of the college president for action and advocacy.

- RCC-UCR Student Transfer Student Success Residential Housing Experience:**
 Launching in Fall of 2025, this ground-breaking housing and student support program is a collaboration between RCC and University of California at Riverside that will allow RCC students that plan to transfer the opportunity to live in residential housing at UCR. This could have a profound impact on their undergraduate student experience and result in increased transfer rates to UCR. **We are proud to state that 30% of the students accepted into this program are African American students, and a significant proportion of these are students in RCC's Umoja program.**
- Riverside Community College District Foundation Umoja Scholarship:** A key pillar of RCC's equity efforts is the Umoja Scholarship, initiated through a \$10,000 investment from 100 Black Men of the Inland Empire. This scholarship provides direct financial assistance to students in RCC's Umoja Community—a nationally recognized initiative that fosters success through culturally grounded education, mentorship, and academic support.
- TIGER PERC/Men of Color Learning Community:** The Men of Color Learning Community was launched as an outgrowth of a pilot program to create learning communities for faculty to implement high impact practices in high enrollment courses. Now entering its third consecutive year, the Men of Color learning community engages men of color faculty from disciplines of English and ESL, sociology, mathematics, counseling, communication studies, business administration and entrepreneurship; along with leadership support from Title V and Title III grants, Vice President of Student Services, Dean of Languages, Humanities and Social Sciences, and Vice President of Planning and Development. This learning community amongst RCC peers meets monthly. While some teach paired courses, all collectively engage in discussions about teaching practices and curriculum that support male students of color, as well as develop community-strengthening programs for men of color students on campus.
- Umoja Community Program (established 2003)**
 The Umoja Community at RCC provides holistic support, including intrusive academic counseling and mentoring with principles and practices that are rooted in African and African American traditions, values, and African Centered Education principles. Our program offers culturally-grounded instruction in “Umoja-fied” classes and learning communities for English, math and other allied general education courses. The Umoja Program at RCC has a broad network of supports with faculty, classified professionals, and administrative allies in departments, services and programs across the campus. The Umoja Program has been at RCC since 2003 when African American faculty began a mentoring and academic support program for Black and African American students. Initially known as the Ujima Project, RCC joined the state-wide Umoja Consortium in

2013. Our student club still bears the name of the Ujima Student Club in homage to its founding. Elements of our Umoja Community at RCC include: Ujima Student Club, Umoja Queens, Umoja Learning Community.

11) Include any additional information that the governing board should consider in evaluating your institution's readiness to be identified as a Black Serving Institution.

Riverside City College is distinctly prepared to be designated as a California Black-Serving Institution, as reflected by our institutional mission, equity-centered strategies, and holistic student success model grounded in culturally responsive practices. Our readiness stems not only from deep engagement with our Black students but also from RCC's commitment to transformational change that is systemic, intentional, and sustained.

a. Institutional Capacity to Serve

- In addition to the specific dedicated programs for African American students identified in response to Question 10, RCC Black and African American students are disproportionately represented across multiple high-touch, high-need, cultural or affinity-based student support programs that provide valuable services, a sense of belonging and a culture of care. These programs include EOPS/CARE/NextUp (23%), CalWORKs (17%), TRIO, Guardian Scholars (18.5%), Veterans Services (17%), Basic Needs Housing Insecure Program (12%), and Athletics (20%). These programs offer proactive advising, mentorship, wrap-around support, and community-building efforts that support Black students' experiences on campus and in the community.
- As an example, EOPS/CARE/NextUp currently supports 262 Black students (23% of enrolled students in these programs) with holistic case management, mentoring, and targeted recruitment in collaboration with Umoja, Upward Bound, and community partners. EOPS Counselors participate in Umoja events, developing comprehensive educational plans, and leading male mentorship initiatives.

b. Intentional and Sustained Outreach

RCC has demonstrated a proactive commitment to building a robust pipeline of Black students from local feeder high schools. Our Outreach and Welcome Center provides culturally-affirming outreach that includes frequent visits to Heritage programs, one-on-one matriculation support,

culturally-relevant campus tours, onboarding workshops, and collaborations with community organizations such as the Council for African American Parents. With additional support, RCC is prepared to expand our outreach by embedding weekly RCC representatives and peer mentors at high schools with significant Black student populations, facilitating “Senior Days,” and offering family-focused college-going events and church-based outreach. These practices ensure a humanizing approach from the moment a student encounters RCC—supporting enrollment, access, and early connection to campus.

c. Mental Health as a Core Equity Strategy

Goals for RCC’s Student Health and Psychological Services (SHPS), with regard to serving Black and African American students, include increasing utilization of culturally-responsive mental health services, reducing mental health-related course withdrawals, integrating mental wellness into First-Year Experience, and launching a Mental Health & Success Task Force. Two key goals of SHPS with regard to Black and African American students are 1) to normalize accessing mental health support; and 2) to integrate mental health and academic support.

RCC embeds mental health as a critical equity strategy, recognizing that emotional wellness is foundational to student success. Key efforts include:

- The Soulful Circle for Black women.
- Hiring culturally trained counselors.
- “Healing While Black” campaigns and stigma-reduction events.

Conclusion: Why RCC is Ready to Lead as a BSI: Final Statement of Commitment

Riverside City College submits this application not as the work of one person, one department, or one initiative—but as a bold, unified declaration of who we are and who we strive to become. We believe that equity is not a program. It is a principle. It is a shared responsibility that animates our values, shapes our decisions, and drives our commitment to justice.

This plan reflects our enduring commitment to the academic success and holistic well-being of Black and African American students. But it also reaches further—affirming the belonging, voice, and leadership of Black faculty, classified professionals, and administrators who are essential to the life of our college. We recognize that cultivating a truly equitable institution means investing in the growth, advancement, and visibility of Black employees at every level. RCC is committed to creating a workplace where Black professionals thrive, lead, and shape the future of education.

The goals outlined in this plan are not dependent on the passion of a few; they are embedded in our institutional systems. Through shared equity leadership, professional development, and equity-based budgeting, we are building the long-term capacity to sustain and scale this work. We

will move forward with humility and resolve—grounded in data, informed by experience, and guided by the lived realities of our students and employees.

Above all, this plan is about joy, belonging, and excellence. We do this work to honor the brilliance of our Black students and colleagues—and to create a campus community where they are not only welcomed, but celebrated, supported, and empowered to thrive. RCC proudly commits to advancing racial equity and educational justice—not just for the next five years, but for generations to come.