



# Vision-Aligned Reporting FAQ

## General Questions

### What is Vision-Aligned Reporting?

Vision-Aligned Reporting (VAR) is a new program reporting process to collect and report data that directly aligns with student outcome metrics in Vision 2030. By prioritizing meaningful information, our objectives are threefold:

- Maximize colleges' time and resources.
- Provide colleges with support as they continue to evaluate, learn and evolve to better support student success.
- Empower decision-makers to interpret and act on data from our institutions.

### Which programs will be included in the first reporting year (fall 2024–spring 2025)?

The Chancellor's Office has identified 12 programs for inclusion in Year 1:

- NextUp formally known as Cooperating Agencies Foster Youth Educational Support (CAFYES)
- CalWORKS
- College and Career Access Pathways (CCAP)
- Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS)
- Extended Opportunity Program and Services (EOPS)
- \*Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education (CARE)
- Middle College High School (MCHS)
- Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA)
- Student Equity and Achievement (SEA) Program
- Strong Workforce Local Share
- Transfer Centers
- Veterans Resource Centers

\*Colleges requested we split up EOPS and CARE into separate programs. Thus, there are 12 programs reporting via VAR in 2024-2025.

## **What type of data will be collected when this project begins?**

Colleges will be required to collect, organize and report program-level data from the 2024-2025 academic year. The Chancellor's Office has developed the [Vision-Aligned Reporting \(VAR\) General User Manual](#). Additional [program-specific manuals](#) are also available for the 12 programs included in Year 1. These manuals provide campus implementation leads and affected program staff with the information they need to submit their program reporting via the Chancellor's Office VAR process. The first VAR report will have data for the 2024-2025 academic year and will be due Dec. 15, 2025.

## **What if my college does not have all the programs included in Year 1 of the pilot?**

Colleges only have to report on the programs they have implemented on their campus.

## **How can I access the new online tool to collect, organize and report the required data?**

The Chancellor's Office built a permanent, scalable statewide [online reporting tool](#) released on Aug. 1, 2024. Each VAR college implementation lead is required to designate access to their VAR college team. Please refer to the [Vision-Aligned Reporting \(VAR\) General User Manual](#) to learn how to grant access to your team members.

## **How will VAR impact fiscal reporting?**

VAR does not replace fiscal reporting. It provides a layer of context and insight to facilitate strategic, informed programmatic decision-making. Fiscal reporting will still be made through [The Fiscal Standards and Accountability Unit](#) at the Chancellor's Office, and the management information system (MIS) will remain an important platform. Any programs providing budget reports via Student Services Automated Reporting for Community Colleges (SSARCC) or NOVA will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

## **How will Vision-Aligned Reporting impact current management information system (MIS) data use?**

VAR will not replace MIS data. It provides a layer of context and insight to facilitate strategic, informed programmatic decision-making. The Chancellor's Office is working to integrate MIS with VAR by the second year of implementation (2025-2026 fiscal year). Information on this integration will be released to the field in summer.

## **Are program outcomes tied to future funding?**

No. The purpose of the new process is to provide data that allows the Chancellor's Office and colleges to (1) more easily identify the impact of program activities on student progress and outcomes and (2) continuously improve programs and services to ensure equitable student support and success.

## **Will Vision-Aligned Reporting replace NOVA?**

While VAR will replace NOVA reporting for many programs, that will NOT be the case for all reporting for all programs currently in NOVA. The VAR project team put together a table showing what each program currently submits and whether or not the VAR reporting will replace NOVA or SSARCC program requirements. Please refer to page 3 of this [handout](#).

The internal Chancellor's Office VAR Governance Committee will address the alignment of the various tools during the 2024-2025 academic year.

## **Are we collecting data in the aggregate, at the student level or through MIS?**

VAR is being implemented through a phased process that spans multiple years.

In Year 1 (2024-2025 reporting year with the final report due Dec. 15, 2025), programs will report aggregated data for each activity broken out by three disproportionately impacted (DI) groups: Black/African American, Hispanic/Latine and economically disadvantaged. A single student will be counted in each group if multiple characteristics apply.

In Year 2 (2025-2026 reporting year with report due December 2026), programs will report student identification numbers by activity via MIS. The resulting data will be pre-populated into the tool. The Chancellor's Office will provide additional information about this process during summer 2024, and colleges will have until fall 2025 to prepare for this new process.

A student group is "disproportionately impacted" when access to key resources and supports or academic success is hampered by inequitable practices, policies and approaches to student support or instructional practices.<sup>1</sup> Each campus' DI groups are identified in the Student Equity Plan submitted every three years.

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<sup>1</sup> To learn more about DI groups, please review [Understanding Equity Gap Charts and Disproportionate Impact on the Community College Pipeline for Access, Completion, Transfer and Earnings](#).

## **Will there be any validation required between VAR and COMIS, e.g., in terms of head counts?**

Starting with the 2025-2026 reporting year (Year 2 of implementation), colleges will need to submit student IDs for certain program activity categories and subcategories via the MIS data submission process. In the first year, programs will submit aggregated student data broken out by three disproportionately impacted groups.

We are currently working with the Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems team to create the new tables and validation processes. Information on both will begin to be released in Summer 2024.

There are multiple reasons the Chancellor's Office is requiring submission via MIS starting in Year 2:

- Data validation (specific validations are TBD)
- Secure submission of student IDs
- Pre-population of student activity data into VAR, including allowing disaggregations by many student groups

## **How will Vision-Aligned Reporting impact Student Services Automated Reporting for Community Colleges (SSARCC)?**

Programs that report through SSARCC will still report through that platform. The VAR project team put together a table showing what each program currently submits and whether or not the VAR reporting will replace NOVA or SSARCC program requirements. Please refer to page 3 of this [handout](#).

## **Do you have a list of common activities for each program? If so, what does that look like when there are multiple activities per program? I'm not sure that institutional research can pull data on specific activities.**

The VAR support project team has developed program-specific manuals for the 12 programs, and each manual includes a crosswalk designed to ease the transition from current reporting to specific VAR activity categories and subcategories. Please refer to this [Google Drive folder](#) for all program-specific manuals.

## **How many activities can be added? Do we need to report on a minimum number of categories?**

Programs may add as many activities as they would like. We hope that each program will submit information on all high-level activities they undertake to achieve their program's goals. A variety of resources have been provided to programs to clarify what they should report, including the following:

- Programs should use program-specific VAR manuals for each of the 12 programs in conjunction with the [Vision-Aligned Reporting \(VAR\) General User Manual](#). The Chancellor's Office distributed and discussed during the spring regional convenings held in February and March 2024. These program-specific manuals provide a crosswalk between past reporting and the new VAR activity categories and subcategories.
- A list of the entire set of activity categories and subcategories is provided in the appendix (page 25-35) to the [Vision-Aligned Reporting \(VAR\) General User Manual](#) and provides an idea of what is meant by a "high-level" activity.

## **How will VAR college teams stay informed with any changes or updates?**

The VAR project team launched a Vision Resource Center (VRC) VAR Implementation Leads Community channel in fall 2023 to provide updates for VAR implementation leads to share with their team. The VAR project team recently repurposed the community to be open to all college practitioners involved in the VAR project (as of July 2024). We changed the name of the community to [Vision-Aligned Reporting Community](#). You must have a [VRC](#) account to join; please contact us at [VARsupport@foundationccc.org](mailto:VARsupport@foundationccc.org) if you have additional questions. Also, please visit the [Chancellor's Office Vision-Aligned Reporting website](#). We will provide updates, resources and additional materials on this website.

## **My college has a success center that provides instructional or tutoring services to help students succeed. Can we report this center in VAR?**

If the success center is not one of the 12 programs in Year 1 of VAR, there is no need to report it. However, if we get feedback from colleges that they want to report this center as a program, we can work with our technology team to see whether we can integrate a feature for colleges to add college-specific programs starting in Year 2.

## What is the implementation timeline?

### *Implementation Timeline*

<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Objective</b>
<b>Fall 2023</b>	<p>Campus implementation leads are trained to lead the new process on their campus.</p> <p>The Chancellor’s Office provides communications, technical assistance and general support materials to colleges.</p> <p>The Chancellor’s Office MIS unit begins creating required data tables to align with VAR.</p>
<b>Spring 2024</b>	<p>The Chancellor’s Office provides ongoing support to campus leads as they onboard included programs.</p> <p>The Chancellor’s Office holds regional convenings for campus program leads.</p> <p>The Chancellor’s Office continues to provide additional support and materials as needed.</p> <p>The official VAR reporting tool is available for colleges on Aug. 1, 2024.</p>
<b>Fall 2024</b>	<p>Statewide implementation begins for the first 12 program reports.</p> <p>MIS integration rollout begins for Year 2. Fall 2025 marks the start of Year 2.</p>

## Questions related to reporting the total funding received

### **What are the reporting expectations for reporting a program’s total funding vs. the cost of an activity?**

**Programs are no longer (as of June 2024) required to report their total funding received in VAR.**

When reporting the total annual cost of providing an activity, programs should think broadly about what resources the activity requires, including staff time, materials/supplies, technology support, etc. We expect this to be an educated estimate of the cost of the activity and to improve over time. The project team will be sharing best practices as we learn from colleges how best to estimate these costs. **As of June 2024, programs are no longer required to break this cost out into budget codes. Please refer to [June 2024 Updates to Vision-Aligned Reporting](#) to learn more.**

## **Questions from the VAR Virtual Training held March 13, 2024**

**How much can/should we roll up our reporting for the activity level, funding level? (A) For example, if we have tutoring that is funded at multiple locations, perhaps for different groups of students from the same funding source, should we break the reporting down by location or funding source? (B) If we have a person who is funded by multiple sources to offer counseling, should that person's reporting be broken down by each funding source?**

(A) This choice should be made at the college and/or program level. If a program wants to call out something unique about the tutoring going on for a specific set of students at a specific location, they are more than welcome to break that down into a unique activity. However, if they would prefer to report all tutoring in the same activity, they are welcome to do so.

(B) Funding sources should not impact the reporting of activities. Regardless of the funding source, if a counselor is hired by a program to do counseling full-time, the program should include their salary and benefits under the activity of Counseling.

**When will our program-level/college-level reports be due? Will we report by fiscal year or by semester?**

The first VAR report will have data for the 2024-2025 academic year and will be due Dec. 15, 2025. The report will be due each Dec. 15 on a yearly basis.

Starting in fall 2025, programs will submit student IDs by activity category/subcategory via MIS. Those MIS submissions will be due 30 days after each term, with the final report (including narratives) due Dec. 15.

## **Can you share a little more on the relationship between aggregated gathering of data and disaggregating data to identify DI?**

In Year 1 of VAR (2024-2025), programs are asked to submit the number of students served by each activity at the aggregate level. The Chancellor's Office is aware that this may be the first time that programs are collecting this level of information about their activities, and it simply wants programs to do their best to provide this data. When breaking out the total number of students served into DI groups, students may be duplicated across the categories. For example, if a student is both Hispanic/Latine and economically disadvantaged, programs should count them for each category.

Once student IDs are submitted at the activity-level via MIS (beginning in Fall 2025), the data will be able to be duplicated or deduplicated according to the needs of the analyst.

## **How do we account for students in multiple programs (e.g., EOPS, CalWORKS, DSPS)?**

Each program should report each student who receives a service that their program provides. For example, if DSPS is providing a service, it needs to report all students who received that service. Once the data is submitted via MIS (beginning in fall 2025), it will be possible to determine which of those students are EOPS, CalWORKS, DSPS, or some combination of the three.

## **Will the VAR replace any existing reporting that we are currently required to complete?**

The VAR project team put together a table showing what each program currently submits and whether or not the VAR reporting will replace NOVA or SSARCC program requirements. Please refer to page 3 of this [handout](#).

## **If we use materials and supplies (for outreach events) that were purchased in a previous year, do we include the cost even if it was from the previous year?**

Yes. We are interested in the actual cost of the activity for a given year, regardless of when that cost was incurred. So, if you used materials from last year, please report the value of those materials at the time they are used.

**Does this mean that MIS reporting for EOPS/CARE and CalWORKS will be altered to conform to the VAR information and include the elements the colleges are already reporting? Or will those elements be overhauled and aligned with the VAR?**

Yes. Those elements will be overhauled and aligned with the VAR, starting with the fall 2025 MIS reporting. You should have information about this from the MIS team at the Chancellor's Office in summer 2024.

**Is the student-served data duplicated – meaning if a student meets with a counselor multiple times, we report that multiple times?**

For Year 1 (2024-2025), the answer is no. Please just report whether the student was served during the year. Once data is submitted via MIS (fall 2025), the Chancellor's Office will ask programs to report the number of times the program served a specific student via that activity.

**Is there funding tied to this somehow now or down the line?**

No. There is no expectation that funding will be tied to this process.

**Who needs to be a signatory for this effort, so we can decide when individual programs will need to report and get approval from the signatories (and participatory governance, if necessary)?**

The Chancellor's Office does not require specific signatories to the VAR report. However, each program included in the report will have to attest that it has followed the shared governance and/or approval processes appropriate to or required by its campus. The language for each of the program attestations may vary.

**Can counseling serve as an activity within the transfer center, and if so, if a school uses general counseling as a way to serve transfer students, how do we calculate funding for that counseling that occurs across campus?**

Counseling can serve as an activity within the Transfer Center and should be reported as such if the Transfer Center specifically provides the counseling and that program oversees the counselor. The Transfer Center should not report any transfer counseling provided at the counseling center (as separate from the Transfer Center).

## **Questions from VAR virtual training held May 6, 2024**

**How will participants in Strong Workforce-funded not-for-credit, short-term career and technical education programs be counted? These are career education participants who do not have college IDs but are completing training for workforce entry.**

It is important for noncredit students to be included. The internal Chancellor's Office has a Governance Committee for this process and is addressing how these students will be counted. It should release more information prior to the 2025-2026 reporting year. This also applies to not-for-credit students.

**How does the VAR reporting account for students who are enrolled after census but drop at some point in the semester? Would we still count these students and the services we provided them even if they are no longer enrolled?**

Yes, you would still count the students who received services that were reported as an activity.

**Regarding the Crafton Hills example: How does one pull race-based data for Canvas usage? Like many others, I'm worried about how we're going to collect and track data on top of all of our current work and existing reporting requirements.**

Crafton Hills College recommends contacting the person overseeing Canvas or your institutional department to pull this type of data.

**In reference to the pilot colleges, how has the reporting helped improve the effectiveness of the programs? Have programs discovered areas that were actionable?**

Yes. For example, the project has helped programs identify and close gaps in service/resource access across DI groups. Units had time to reflect and discuss their findings with the expectation to develop and implement strategies for closing those gaps. They have also identified where services were duplicated (e.g., former foster youth students had to enroll in multiple mandatory orientations to receive services from various programs), so the VAR college team worked together to streamline program orientations for students, which increased their access to program services.

## **On the surface, the system seems relatively easy to use. Could the pilot colleges share any pain points?**

Pilot college response: Training and facilitation are helpful and are definitely heavy lifts. From [the pilot college lead] perspective, the data reporting is fairly straightforward for the Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness office. However, many programs are not currently collecting student information at the program activity level and will need to do so.

## **Could the pilot colleges share more about how they are setting up the infrastructure for data collection to assist with VAR reporting? Is the data integrated into your Student Information System? Were college program staff interacting with an interface/software to record activities at the student level? Did you find that the programs were not collecting a lot of these data points in a systematic manner?**

Many programs are not currently collecting student information at the program activity level and will need to do so. The Chancellor's Office has identified some vendors that may provide software to support this type of data collection. Contact information for each is available on page 6 of the document titled "[Handouts for regional convenings](#)" in this [Google folder](#). Colleges will need to meet with the vendors and identify which will best serve their needs.

Pilot colleges used a variety of resources to collect this data, including the vendors listed in the document referenced above. In addition, some colleges use multiple programs, depending on the program (e.g., many DSPS programs use Clockworks).

## **Do programs report the data, or is the implementation lead responsible for submitting it?**

This will vary by college based on the culture and size of that campus. During the pilot, some implementation leads collected the data from programs and entered it, while others had programs access the tool directly and submit it themselves.

## **Do the pilot colleges have any guidance in getting classified professionals involved in the process?**

Pilot college response No. 1: "Oftentimes our classified professionals 'are on the ground' registering students for activities or events and assisting [with] facilitating them. They may have great insights on collecting attendee information and identifying gaps in collecting information."

Pilot college response No. 2: “I encourage program leads to bring any staff/faculty (including classified professionals) to meetings to discuss this work, and quite a number do just that. Classified professionals assist in identifying activities, tracking activity use and sharing corresponding data with me.”

## **Are you developing case-studies to help connect the theoretical to the applied as a guidance and reflection support for local colleges?**

The VAR Project Team has developed an [Emerging Best Practices](#) document based on pilot leads’ feedback.

Also, please refer to our [VAR virtual training recording](#) to hear about pilot colleges’ experiences implementing VAR (it starts at 20 minutes and 15 seconds and lasts until one hour and 12 minutes).

No specific case studies have been developed at this time, but some pilot college leads are willing to meet with colleges to discuss their experience. Please contact the VAR Project Team at [VARSupport@foundationccc.org](mailto:VARSupport@foundationccc.org) for more specific information.

## **College Vision-Aligned Reporting Team**

### **Who should be on the core team?**

The core team should be made up of the implementation lead and the staff person(s) for each of the 12 affected programs. Many pilot colleges found it helpful to include individuals from the research and business offices and their campus’ chief student services officer. Please refer to the [Emerging Best Practices](#) resource document for more guidance.

### **Can we see sample narratives or a rubric for the college-level reporting?**

A discussion of how to construct narratives and examples of useful narratives from the pilot are provided starting on page 22 of the [General VAR User Manual](#).

### **What if a college or a full VAR project team did not attend an in-person regional convening or virtual training? How can the college or additional team members get training and support?**

Please reach out to the VAR project team at [varsupport@foundationccc.org](mailto:varsupport@foundationccc.org) directly so we can provide additional support. Some available resources include:

- [Vision-Aligned Reporting \(VAR\) General User Manual](#)

- [Program-specific VAR manuals](#)
- [A VRC Introduction to VAR Module](#) (You must have a [Vision Resource Center](#) account to view.)
- [VAR virtual training recording](#) held May 6, 2024
- A User Helpdesk is available after logging in to the [online reporting tool](#) (August 2024)
- [VAR Regional Convening Handouts](#) Google folder

A virtual, program-specific, two-hour meeting will be held during summer 2024 for each campus program included in VAR reporting in 2024-2025. Please view [2024 Vision-Aligned Reporting Program-Specific Webinar Series](#) to learn more and register. Program staff members are expected to get much of their support from their campus implementation lead, but the project team is available to provide additional materials and support as needed. In addition, by early summer 2024, Chancellor's Office staff members overseeing the affected programs will be prepared to provide support to their specific programs.

## Miscellaneous Questions

**For Strong Workforce, will it be required to report on both Round 8 and Round 9 funds for Dec. 15, 2025, reporting? Round 9 will be the allocation for FY 24-25, but round 8 (FY 23-24 allocation) will be in the final year of the allocation (Year 2)?**

Based on [changes to VAR made in June 2024](#), programs are no longer required to report specific program funding received. When calculating the total annual cost of individual activities, programs should think about the cost of the materials, staff, etc., for each program in the current year, regardless of the year of the source of funding.

**Many programs are short staffed and rely on volunteers/unpaid interns to carry our activities. How do we account for these because there is no object code for them.**

Based on [changes to VAR made in June 2024](#), programs are no longer required to report total annual activity costs by object code. When calculating the total annual cost of individual activities, programs should think about the cost of the materials, staff, etc., for each program in the current year.

Because there is no cost associated with volunteers/unpaid interns, they cannot be calculated into the total unless there is a paid staff person who is responsible for organizing or overseeing them. However, each activity data page includes a "Comments" section, and the information on these unpaid positions can be mentioned there.

## Where can I find additional support or information?

Please visit the [Chancellor's Office VAR website](#). We will provide updates, resources and additional materials on this website. The VAR project team will utilize the VRC [Vision-Aligned Reporting Community](#) channel to provide updates for VAR participants. Please join the VRC VAR Community to stay up to date on changes, guidance, etc.

You can also contact the VAR project team at [VARsupport@foundationccc.org](mailto:VARsupport@foundationccc.org) with any questions or drop in to our weekly office hours on Tuesdays from noon to 1 p.m. at Zoom Meeting ID: 882 8417 9403.