THE BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE:

Cash For College =
A Stronger Workforce

The Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce teamed up with the mayor of Los Angeles in 2001 to launch the Cash For College Campaign. With the new session of the Legislature under way, we now have the opportunity to expand this successful program, which is already statewide.

Cash For College has transformed into a great cause that deserves your support.

More than five years ago, L.A. County—the state’s most populous—was in the bottom third of counties in which young people received grants for college under the Cal Grant program. Due to a lack of familiarity with government programs, low income and especially minority youth were not receiving the financial aid they needed to pursue education beyond high school. Something had to be done.

Cash for College began as an innovative campaign with two goals: to make sure young people knew how to get into college, and help them and their families fill out the often complicated forms needed to qualify for Cal Grants.

The results exceeded expectations. Each year we host more than 10,000 young people at a Cash for College Convention, where business and community leaders help families understand the various forms of financial aid available to them. And every year we hear more stories of young people getting the opportunity – and the money – to go to college.

Over the past four years, we have reached more than 50,000 youth with our partners locally, including Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, L.A. City Council, Workforce Investment Board, Los Angeles Unified School District, L.A. Community College District; and statewide the California Student Aid Commission and Ed Fund; and hundreds of businesses and volunteers.

We started with a handful of workshops and this year will conduct more than 75 throughout L.A. County. On Saturday, Feb. 10 Cash For College workshops will be held throughout L.A. We are proud to lead a statewide effort, which will conduct 350 workshops reaching more than 15,000 youth and families.

But millions of dollars in financial aid are still going unused and thousands of high school students still need help.

The Chamber will ask the Legislature and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to invest with us and strengthen and match this private-public partnership. We are working with the offices of Assembly Majority Leader Karen Bass and Sen. Tom Torlakson to carry this legislation.

We ask for your support of this important initiative to improve not only the educational and economic opportunities for our state’s youth, but to strengthen and build our economy as well.

The Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce is the voice of business in L.A. County. Founded in 1888, the Chamber promotes a prosperous economy and quality of life in the Los Angeles region. For more information, visit www.lachamber.org

by Gary Toebben, President & CEO, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce

L.A. Business THIS WEEK

View the latest issue of the Chamber's weekly newsletter.

Join us in supporting our state's youth. It's an investment in our future.

And that's The Business Perspective.