Compton College Students Who Received Emergency Aid via Edquity Were Twice as Likely to Graduate

Preliminary evaluation finds cash grants hold promise for promoting degree completion among community college students, even during the COVID-19 pandemic

February 10, 2021 – Brooklyn – Today, [Edquity](), a Brooklyn-based emergency aid technology platform, released the results of a [preliminary evaluation](). The analysis examines the short-term results of distributing emergency grants to students at Compton College in spring 2020. The evaluation finds that students who received emergency aid via Edquity were twice as likely to graduate by August, compared to comparable students who did not receive aid.

"The design and delivery of emergency aid is challenging, and we drew on the best-available evidence to design our approach at Edquity. It gives us hope to see this early indication of what we're achieving with our partners to support students during this extremely difficult time," said Dr. Sara Goldrick-Rab, Edquity's Chief Strategy Officer for Emergency Aid.

The evaluation examined grants in the amount of $250 to students at Compton College, where 85% of students are Black or Latinx and 90% receive financial aid. Grants were distributed to recipients using a proprietary decisioning framework developed by Goldrick-Rab to assess their need. In total, 289 students applied for support during the first wave of the pandemic, and 90 were selected to receive grants. The vast majority of grant recipients were able to apply for and receive funds in less than 48 hours. Just 11% of students completed their degrees by August if they were not funded, while 22% of comparable grant recipients graduated. That difference was statistically significant.

The funded students were selected through a needs assessment, a verification process with the college, and a random element to distribute limited funds. This created comparison groups of unfunded students. Economist Drew Anderson, who has led several rigorous independent evaluations of financial aid, including programs in [Wisconsin]() and [New Jersey](), conducted the analysis.

"Compton College faculty, classified staff, and administrators are focused on students' needs and are constantly developing and implementing ways to serve our students by supplementing their basic needs. As the first California community college to work with Edquity, I am encouraged to see this initiative translate into results for our students and am excited to continue to expand our use for emergency aid to increase retention, graduation, and enrollment for both our dual enrollment students from local high schools within our District and students who have withdrawn from Compton College due to the pandemic," said Keith Curry, President/CEO of Compton College.

"The Compton Community College District Board of Trustees is excited about the District's partnership with Edquity," said Sonia Lopez, Compton Community College District (CCCD) Board of Trustees President. "Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have been committed to providing emergency aid and support to our students. The Board of Trustees is closely monitoring the distribution of emergency aid, which is essential to Compton College students' success."

These findings arrive as colleges and universities are set to distribute unprecedented amounts of federal and state emergency aid to students. Between the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act passed in December and an impending third stimulus bill, which the House and Senate cleared the way for last Friday, postsecondary institutions will receive as much as $26 billion in emergency aid that they are mandated to distribute to students.

Edquity is currently working with over 30 colleges and universities – having scaled rapidly from one partner on May 15 of last year – and has helped distribute over $13 million to students, including over $10 million in CARES federal emergency aid. Unlike standard emergency aid programs, Edquity's approach maximizes both equity and efficiency by moving quickly and accurately to assess need and distribute funds to students, 24/7.

"This initial evidence from Compton is promising, particularly because it seems like ours is a very cost-effective approach, which is so important in this economic moment," said CEO David Helene. "We look forward to future evaluations to see if these results replicate; we intend to continue learning and refining our model."

Edquity is actively accepting new partners and is ready to support any and all institutions around managing their federal emergency aid.

For institutions considering how to deploy their HEERF II or new stimulus emergency aid, Edquity has summarized key differences between the most recent federal emergency aid programs relative to the CARES Act as well important considerations for ensuring racial equity in emergency aid program design.

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About Edquity
Edquity offers the first research-driven basic needs insecurity and emergency aid technology platform for college students, which includes emergency aid underwriting and disbursement functionality as well as a one-stop hub for social services referral. Edquity has partnered with more than 30 organizations across the country to serve over 25 colleges, has processed over 30,000 applications, and has helped partners distribute over $13MM in emergency aid. Edquity has received over $6MM in support from leading philanthropic partners that include the ECMC Foundation, Lumina Foundation, Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, among others.