



# SAC STATE UNIVERSITY FIRST STAR ACADEMY

## 2025 IMPACT REPORT



# ABOUT FIRST STAR CSUS ACADEMY



## CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND SUCCESS

Student Engagement & Success is designed to support your student's life and success outside of the classroom. These areas provide services for educational success, personal development, and rewarding student experience.

The Sacramento State First Star Academy for Foster Youth is a collaborative effort by CSU Sacramento, First Star Inc., the Sacramento County Child, Family, Adult Services Department (DCFAS), and other local stakeholders.

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**Website:** [www.csus.edu/student-affairs/retention-academic-success/first-star-academy.html](http://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/retention-academic-success/first-star-academy.html)



**Instagram:** @fssacstate



## FIRST STAR MISSION

First Star provides high school youth in foster care with the opportunity, tools, and support to successfully transition to self-sufficiency through higher education or other viable pathways



**HIGH SCHOOL  
GRADUATION  
COMPLETION**

**COMPARED TO 50% NATIONALLY**





SACRAMENTO  
STATE

## FIRST STAR CSUS ACADEMY IN THE SPOTLIGHT



2025 Creation Conference



2025 CA Foster Youth Education Summit

# THE ACADEMY MODEL

## ACADEMY PROGRAMMING INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:



### MONTHLY ACADEMIES

Monthly programming over four years for youth in foster care focused on academics and life skills while they are in high school.

### SUMMER ACADEMY

Intensive 2-4 week residential enrichment program on a university campus.

### CAREGIVER ENGAGEMENT

Seminars and workshops that provide tools to caregivers to become advocates for their youth.

### VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT

Weekly mentoring and tutoring sessions, as well as an open environment to connect and build community through virtual hangouts.



### STEAM ACADEMY

Virtual Tech Talks and access to labs that focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math.



RAISE  
YOUR VOICE  
**SCHOLAR  
ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE**

### SCHOLAR ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC)

Leadership opportunity for scholars focused on becoming civically engaged and enacting change in their local communities.



### ALUMNI PROGRAM

Offered to scholars who graduate the Academy as a resource during their transition to adulthood.



# BRIGHT FUTURES AHEAD

## CELEBRATING SCHOLAR SUCCESS



### FIRST STAR ALUMNI PROGRAM

The First Star Alumni Program's goal is to remain connected and ensure Alumni have access to resources and the First Star network as they transition into adulthood, career, and advanced education.



**100%** of the 2025 graduating class enrolled in the Alumni Program

**79%** of enrolled Alumni engage with the program via resources, newsletters and events

**22%** of peer mentors are First Star Alumni

### FIRST STAR STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC)

First Star encourages advocacy and engagement in social justice through the Scholar Advisory Committee (SAC). SAC is composed of current scholars from across the First Star Academy network and from the Alumni Program. SAC allows scholars to build community, freely share their ideas and opinions, and dialogue about important issues!



**80%** of SAC scholars were returners from last year

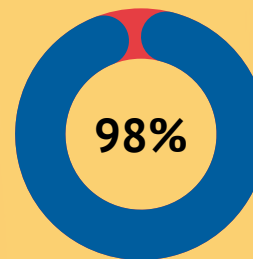
**100%** of SAC scholars stated they felt more confident taking on leadership roles

**100%** of SAC scholars stated they felt more confident in advocating for themselves

### NATIONAL FIRST STAR CLASS OF 2025

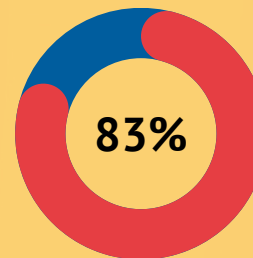


#### National Graduating Class



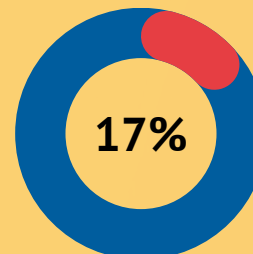
**H.S Diploma: 98%**  
Credit Recovery: 2%

#### Post-Secondary Pathways



**4-year: 46%**  
**2-year CC: 29%**  
**Vocation/Trade School: 8%**

#### Workforce Pathways



**Apprenticeship/Union: 0%**  
**Full-Time Employment: 17%**  
**Military: 0%**

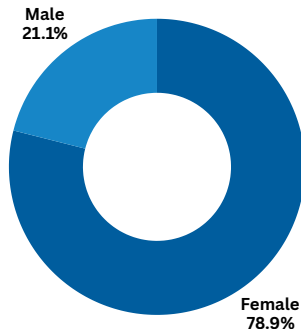




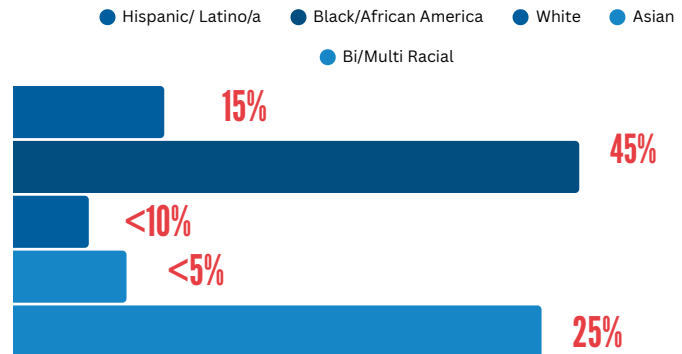
# FIRST STAR SACRAMENTO STATE ACADEMY

## SCHOLAR PROFILE

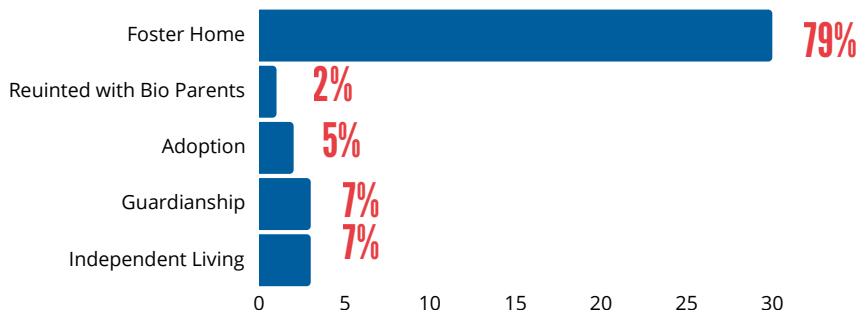
### GENDER



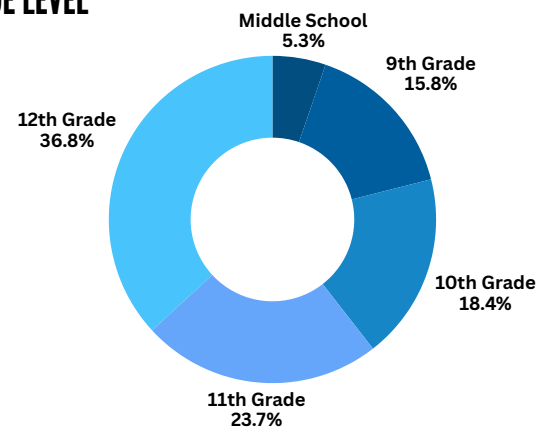
### RACE AND ETHNICITY



### PLACEMENT STATUS



### GRADE LEVEL



## Celebrating Class of 2025

100%

of First Star CSUS scholars graduated High School on time!

75%

of First Star CSUS graduates are pursuing post-secondary opportunities.

25%

of First Star CSUS graduates are pursuing workforce pathways.

# FIRST STAR SACRAMENTO STATE IMPACT

## 2024-2025 ACADEMIC YEAR

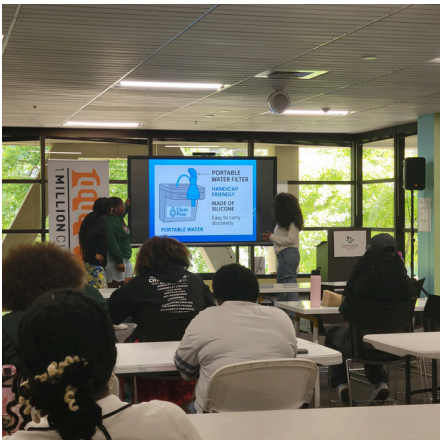


### LIFE SKILLS AND SELF DISCOVERY

Scholars developed healthy habits and resilience through a variety of wellness experiences. They earned their food handler's license while practicing cooking skills and learning about nutrition, and engaged in fitness activities such as hiking, swimming, and mindfulness walks at the Gateway Mountain Retreat. Opportunities for balance and stress relief included sound bath meditation, a dance workshop led by Jayy's U Jam, and water-based activities at Velocity Water Park. Scholars also strengthened their sense of identity and connection by sharing stories through art at the Foster Youth Museum, celebrating Juneteenth, and participating in the Black Youth Leadership Project, which focused on leadership and cultural enrichment.

### HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Activities such as sound bath meditation, a dance workshop led by Jayy & U Jam, and water-based obstacle courses and beach lounging at Velocity Water Park promoted balance and stress relief during Summer Academy.



### COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

Scholars expanded their horizons through hands-on career experiences, including the PIXAR Digital Art and Design class, the Carlsen Center entrepreneurship workshop, and the Armstead Academic Project with the California Department of Fish & Wildlife. They also explored diverse fields such as philosophy, the arts, and culinary studies, building skills in public speaking, creativity, teamwork, and innovation. From a backstage tour of the Sofia Theater to preparing meals with professional culinary tools, students developed practical skills while discovering pathways to future careers.

### LEADERSHIP AND SELF ADVOCACY

Scholars strengthened their leadership and advocacy skills through social justice workshops during the Juneteenth Celebration, culminating in a call-to-action parade focused on cultural advocacy and equity. They expanded their networks by connecting with foster youth rights advocates, exploring cultural expression through dance, and accessing resources at a community fair. Scholars also visited the Foster Youth Museum to share stories and gain inspiration from peers, and toured the Project Rebound Program, enhanced by a presentation from Guardian Scholars, to learn how advocacy and support systems can open pathways to success.





# FIRST STAR SACRAMENTO STATE ACADEMY

## BRIGHT FUTURES AHEAD

The National Bright Futures Survey was developed in partnership with Dr. Philip Hong from the University of Georgia to better understand our scholars' hopes and aspirations as it relates to their academic and future goals. In creating this survey and collecting feedback from scholars, we are embracing the challenge young people face and how we can be better stewards of their emotions and feelings as we support their growth in our Academies!

85%

of First Star scholars are feeling hopeful about the future and expect to complete further education after high school!



75%

of scholars feel a sense of belonging and connection since joining First Star!

70%

of scholars are confident that they have the necessary skills to succeed in college since joining First Star!

## SUMMER ACADEMY

The Summer Residential Program offers scholars an immersive and transformative experience, fostering personal growth, meaningful connections, and hands-on learning that equips them with the skills and confidence to thrive in their future endeavors.



Health & Wellness



STEAM Focused  
Career Exploration



Leadership & Advocacy

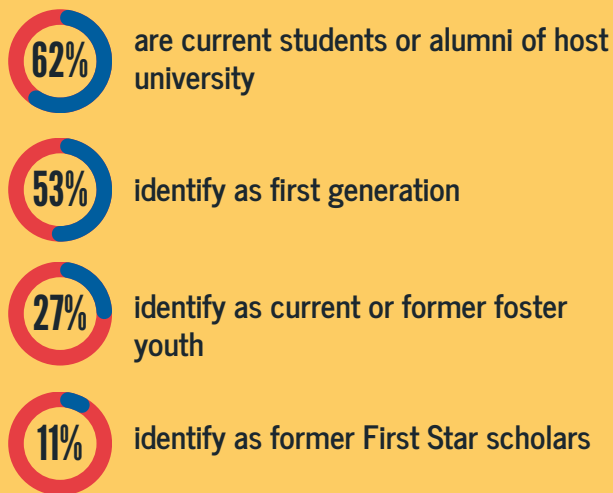
# FIRST STAR SACRAMENTO STATE ACADEMY

## COMMUNITY IMPACT



### PEER MENTOR RECOGNITION

First Star recognizes the positive impact peer mentors have on our scholars. The First Star Academies awarded peer mentors this summer for their years of service and unwavering support of the academy.



### CAREGIVER ENGAGEMENT

First Star CSUS Academy hosted two Caregiver Orientations, one at the beginning of the year and another for our Summer Immersion Program.

**100% of families at CSUS Academy receive regular check-ins on their scholar's participation in the program and are involved in their student's academic case management meetings.**

### CREATION CONFERENCE



First Star Hosted the first-ever nationally broadcast creation conference. This Conference was a student-centered opportunity for students to engage with speakers and feel connected to the entire First Star network. During the conference, scholars experienced:

- A nationally recognized keynote speaker sharing insights on resilience and leadership
- An interactive storytelling workshop led by the showrunner and cast of Marvel's Runaways
- Education sessions, team games, and networking opportunities
- Access to valuable resources and ongoing support from First Star's national network



# FIRST STAR SACRAMENTO STATE ACADEMY

## THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS



### Community Stakeholder Acknowledgments

#### Academy Programming Partners

Black Youth Leadership Project Team

Dr. Hajra, Math Literacy

UC Davis SAYS program

Queen Sheba

#### Scholar Recruitment Partners

Denisha "Coco" Bland, SAYS Associate Director

Felicia Bessent, and the Mosaic School of Integrated Arts

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

Celebration Arts, Sacramento CA

Gateway Mountain Center



On March 26, members of The Foster Youth Pre-College Collective gathered in Sacramento for our inaugural Advocacy Day to highlight the specific educational needs of California's youth in foster care. The collective met with 15 lawmakers, including Senator Ashby, to share the Collective's vision and discuss how our programs empower system-involved young people to reach "Destination Graduation" and prepare for their futures.

## HOW TO GET INVOLVED

REFER A STUDENT.

VOLUNTEER.

DONATE.