



## **Excite Credit Union and Excite Foundation Receive \$1 Million Grant to Promote College Savings Programs for Low-income Students**

Funds provided by the California State ScholarShare Investment Board to promote CalKIDS and local college and career savings programs

SAN JOSE, Calif. (July 25, 2023) – Excite Credit Union and Excite Foundation today announced that they have been selected by California’s ScholarShare Investment Board (SIB) to launch education and awareness programs to promote multiple college and career savings strategies for low-income families in East San Jose.

Studies show that California high school students from low-income families are half as likely to enroll in a four-year college. Research also shows that low-income children with just \$500 in a college savings account are three times more likely to enroll in college and four times more likely to graduate. The SIB grants will fund programs to educate eligible low-income families about college savings programs. The SIB awarded \$5 million statewide to eleven local programs that provide similar college savings accounts in communities such as San Jose, Los Angeles, Oakland, and West Sacramento.

Excite has long been an advocate of helping lower-income families save for college. Excite Credit Union created the [Step Up Savings](#) program in 2019 to accelerate college savings for qualified California and North Carolina students, meeting and matching deposits at specific milestones. The Excite Foundation launched [College In My Future](#) in 2021 to automatically provide college savings accounts for children in San Jose’s Franklin-McKinley school district.

In August 2022, the State of California launched the [CalKIDS](#) (California Kids Investment and Development Savings) Program to help eligible low-income public school students save for college. The CalKIDS Program also provides a savings account for every child born in the state on or after July 1, 2022. SIB, an agency of the State of California chaired by State Treasurer Fiona Ma, administers the CalKIDS Program and oversees California’s official college savings plan, [ScholarShare 529](#). Together, CalKIDS and ScholarShare 529 help families jumpstart their savings for higher education.

The SIB grant funding will be used to promote outreach to parents and teens to ensure they are aware of these programs and ready to take advantage of them on a timely basis. For example, eligible low-income seniors who graduated high school in 2022 and 2023 already have a \$500 balance in their CalKIDS accounts, but many are unaware of the program. Excite Credit Union will partner with local schools and education non-profits to raise awareness among all ages.

“We are very proud to have launched CalKIDS by funding accounts for over 3.4 million low-income students,” said Julio Martinez, Executive Director of ScholarShare Investment Board. “So far, over 200,000 children have been registered to view their accounts online, which also prepares them to access the funds when they enroll in post-secondary education. In fact, over 16,000 students have already accessed their funding to ease the cost of higher education. By supporting local programs that have long-standing relationships in the community, we expect to increase awareness and adoption of the CalKIDS accounts. We are pleased that Excite Credit Union and Excite Foundation will be our partners in the San Jose area.”

“We are thrilled to receive this funding so that we inform parents throughout the community of the amazing savings programs available to their children right now,” said John Hogan, Vice President of Community Relations at Excite Credit Union and Executive Director at Excite Foundation. “After they claim CalKIDS funding, we can help them determine which college and career savings programs will work best for them, including the California state ScholarShare 529 savings programs. Our ultimate goal is to work with schools and non-profit partners to build a strong savings and post-secondary education culture throughout our community.”

### **About Excite Credit Union**

Excite Credit Union is Member-owned and Member-focused, giving everyone the chance to build a stronger financial future. With branches in California and North Carolina, Excite offers a full range of banking services and is committed to making life affordable for everyone. Excite also is the only credit union based in Santa Clara County designated as a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), Low Income Designated Credit Union (LICU), and a Juntos Avanzamos Member. These designations reflect the credit union’s ongoing commitment to serving low-to-moderate income and immigrant communities with fair, safe bank deposit and loan products. For more information, visit [www.excitecu.org](http://www.excitecu.org).

Media Contact:

Nina Cole  
408-979-3653  
ncole@excitecu.org