

# United Way Bay Area's SparkPoint program

**SparkPoint** is a program of United Way Bay Area, an organization focused on helping families fight poverty, assisting students and workers seeking employment, and supporting community members working to achieve their financial stability goals. At postsecondary institutions SparkPoint offers basic needs and financial health resources that help students stay in school, be successful, and fully engage in college programs. In 2011, United Way Bay Area developed the *SparkPoint Replication Toolkit for Postsecondary Institutions*. The toolkit codifies the program model, documents best practices, and provides a blueprint for implementation at additional postsecondary sites.

## Program Services

- **Financial support.** Financial coaching, credit and debt counseling, financial planning, and tax preparation
- **Employment resources.** Job search assistance, vocational skills training, career development, and educational counseling
- **Basic needs support.** Food pantries, cash and rental assistance, and benefits screening and enrollment assistance

*“SparkPoint has impacted my college experience in a very positive way. I have benefited from many of their services, such as personal finance development, CalFresh, and free tax preparation.”*

– Student participant

## California higher education institutional partners

Cañada College, *Redwood City*

Chabot College, *Hayward*

City College of San Francisco, *San Francisco*

Contra Costa College, *San Pablo*

College of San Mateo, *San Mateo*

Diablo Valley College, *Pleasant Hill*

Evergreen Valley College, *San Jose*

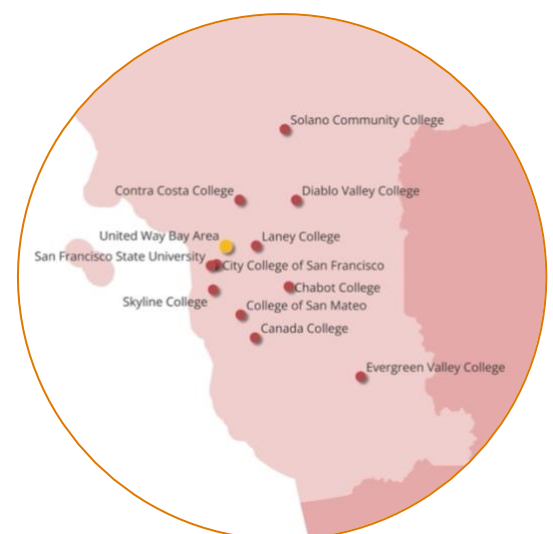
Laney College, *Oakland*

San Francisco State University, *San Francisco*

San Jose City College, *San Jose*

Skyline College, *San Bruno*

Solano Community College, *Fairfield*



# SparkPoint is connecting students to resources and supporting their future financial stability

## SparkPoint is invested in getting to know students and connecting them to services that meet their individual needs.

SparkPoint participants reflected on how the organization is invested in getting to know their individual needs and finding services to meet them where they are “in any way they can.”

*“SparkPoint is truly trying to help you in the best way they can, in any way they can. The college is sometimes so big, and they tend to forget about you. SparkPoint is connected to so many different programs that are specific for students.”*

– Student participant

## SparkPoint is a connector for students to access resources in the community.

Representatives at SparkPoint partner institutions describe the SparkPoint program as a connector between the institution and the community to meet the needs of their students.

*“We’re connected to other community-based organizations so we can make referrals for students. We have one foot out in the community and one foot at the college so that our students get what they need when they need it.”*

– Institutional partner

## SparkPoint participants learn financial literacy skills and share learnings with family and friends.

SparkPoint participants value the opportunity to learn financial literacy skills including budgeting, banking, building credit, and tax preparation. Students describe sharing learnings with their families and friends to support their future financial stability.

*“When I learned about SparkPoint, I started to focus on budgeting, different banking options, and learning how to build my credit. I’ve been able to tell my family and friends about the tax prep help, and they’ve been able to benefit from it.”*

– Student participant

