

December 16, 2025

Nick Maduros, Secretary  
California Government Operations Agency  
1304 O Street, Suite 300  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Secretary Nick Maduros,

In accordance with the State Leadership Accountability Act (Leadership Accountability), the Office of Cradle-to-Career Data submits this report on the review of our internal control and monitoring systems for the biennial period ending December 31, 2025.

Should you have any questions please contact Lesley Taylor, Director of Operations, at (916) 208-8493, [lesley.taylor@c2c.ca.gov](mailto:lesley.taylor@c2c.ca.gov).

## **GOVERNANCE**

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### **Mission and Strategic Plan**

The 2021-22 State budget package created the Office of Cradle-to-Career Data (C2C) within the Government Operations Agency (GovOps) to be the managing entity for the Cradle-to-Career Data System, serving as a neutral administrative body to initiate the data system; ensure wide, appropriate, and legal use of the data system as a one-stop shop for cradle-to-career data to support policy researchers; scale operational tools to better serve educators, students, and families; and implement communications, professional development, and technical assistance that supports data system use.

The mission of C2C is to be California's source of actionable data and research on education, economic, and health outcomes for individuals, families, and communities; to expand access to tools and services to navigate the education to employment pipeline. The vision is that the California Cradle-to-Career Data System connects individuals and organizations with trusted information and resources, providing insights into critical milestones in the pipeline from early care to K-12 to higher education, skills training, and employment. The data system empowers individuals to reach their full potential and fosters evidence-based decision-making to help California build a more equitable future.

Strategic goals and objectives are articulated in the Strategic Plan of the California Cradle-to-Career Data System Governing Board (August 2023) and the California Cradle-to-Career Data System 2025-26 Workplan.

## **Control Environment**

The C2C staff team collaboratively developed core values that the Executive Director first shared with the C2C Governing Board in February 2023. The values are: advancing equity, transparency, accountability, collaboration, and curiosity. C2C operationalizes these values and challenges its team to demonstrate these values, integrity, and ethics in all aspects of C2C's work.

Oversight of C2C is provided by a 21-member Governing Board that includes representatives of C2C's data partners, two legislators, and eight public members—four appointed by the Governor and four appointed by the Legislature. The Governing Board provides oversight of the data system and operational direction to C2C as the managing entity by adopting a strategic plan; approving budget change concepts; ensuring C2C uses a user-centered design approach; reviewing and approving plans, recommendations, and content changes; conducting data quality audits; providing for other audits and evaluations; adopting rules and exercising authority to promulgate regulations; and providing regular reports to the Legislature and Governor. The Governing Board has adopted a Governance Manual, which is designed to define and describe the authority, policies, and procedures for the oversight and governance of the Cradle-to-Career Data System.

C2C is led by an Executive Director selected by the Governing Board. The organizational structure is largely based on four verticals—Data Infrastructure, Data Programs, Engagement, and Operations. The Executive Team is comprised of the Executive Director, the Directors of each vertical, and the General Counsel and Chief Privacy Officer, ensuring an appropriate level of responsibility and authority. All levels of management recruit, develop, and maintain a competent workforce. Management evaluates performance and enforces accountability through the timely administration of probationary reports and performance appraisals.

The control system is anchored in C2C's accountability to its Governing Board and the requirements of its authorizing statute. Specific opportunities to assess internal and external risk and control include weekly meetings between C2C executive staff and GovOps executive staff, weekly C2C leadership meetings, biweekly meetings between C2C leadership and the C2C Governing Board Chair and Chair Elect, and regular meetings with control agencies.

## **Information and Communication**

C2C communicates information necessary to achieve its objectives through internal and external channels. Regular internal communication throughout C2C occurs during all-staff stand-up meetings four days per week, regular 1:1 meetings between supervisors and direct reports, regular vertical team meetings, weekly leadership meetings, and bimonthly all-staff equity-building collaborative sessions. These structures encourage employees to apply organizational values in the exploration of potential inefficiencies. Employees receive

information about Whistleblower protections upon hire and on an annual basis organization-wide. Other channels for internal communication include applications used for email, group chats and direct messages, project management, and electronic file management.

C2C works and communicates regularly with partner agencies that provide essential services and reliable information for operational, programmatic, and financial decision-making under the scope of interagency agreements that leverage civil service capacity. C2C continuously works across organizational lines in partnership with its Data Providers to accomplish the objectives of the authorizing statute.

C2C regularly shares information with interested parties and the general public through quarterly Governing Board meetings; five annual Advisory Board meetings; Governing Board committee meetings; and Community Conversations—interactive webinars to engage the public to inform development, interpretation, and awareness of the data system, and foster an environment and culture of collaboration. All public meetings are webcast to increase accessibility. Other external communication channels include C2C's website and social media presence.

## **MONITORING**

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The information included here discusses the entity-wide, continuous process to ensure internal control systems are working as intended. The role of the executive monitoring sponsor includes facilitating and verifying that the Office of Cradle-to-Career Data monitoring practices are implemented and functioning. The responsibilities as the executive monitoring sponsor(s) have been given to: Lesley Taylor, Director of Operations.

C2C responds to potential risks and vulnerabilities as they are identified by developing policies and procedures, conducting training for employees and contractors, and consulting with experts such as C2C's Security Policies Task Force. Routine activities to identify potential problems include frequent and regular meetings, clear written documentation of which staff member is accountable for achieving each item on the C2C workplan, outcomes-focused management, and implementation of project management practices across the organization. Ownership for addressing vulnerabilities is assigned and tracked according to clearly defined roles.

Oversight from GovOps, the C2C Governing Board, and control agencies provides opportunities for external review and progress monitoring. Management and staff regularly check progress against key performance indicators in the context of the California Cradle-to-Career Data System 2025-26 Workplan, including during public meetings of C2C's

Governing and Advisory Boards. Based on the progress made and a comparison of results to expectations, C2C prepares a new annual workplan each fiscal year.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

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The following personnel were involved in the Office of Cradle-to-Career Data risk assessment process: executive management, middle management, front line management, and staff.

The following methods were used to identify risks: brainstorming meetings, employee engagement surveys, ongoing monitoring activities, other/prior risk assessments, external stakeholders, questionnaires, consideration of potential fraud, and performance metrics.

The following criteria were used to rank risks: likelihood of occurrence, potential impact to mission/goals/objectives, timing of potential event, potential impact of remediation efforts, and tolerance level for the type of risk.

## **RISKS AND CONTROLS**

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### **Risk: Cyber and Data Security**

A security incident represents a significant potential legal exposure that would result in a loss of credibility with C2C's Data Providers, control agencies, the Legislature, and the public. Response to an incident could be very costly and time consuming.

#### **Control: Implement recommendations of Security Policies Task Force**

The Security Policies Task Force consists of representatives from C2C's Data Providers, particularly people responsible for information security at those state agencies, as well as security experts identified by C2C. The Task Force is entrusted with advising the managing entity on security documents and processes for the system. The Task Force meets at least once a year to review security policies and practices, and to recommend updates. The Task Force complements required

planning and reporting activities related to information security and helps to reduce this risk.

### **Control: Work to advance Zero Trust Maturity**

The C2C Data System houses sensitive data and must continue securing critical infrastructure. As budgetary resources permit, C2C will assess, procure, and implement industry-leading security tooling and cybersecurity services necessary to progress toward optimal levels of Zero Trust Maturity for each of the five pillars (Identity, Devices, Networks, Applications and Workloads, and Data) as outlined in the CDT Technology Letter 23-01.

## **Risk: Workforce Capacity and Retention**

C2C has only 27 authorized positions, which can create challenges in distributing work and cross-training backups. Staff experts are often relied upon exclusively without sufficient backup to assist in their absence. An extended absence or loss of key personnel is likely to result in significant gaps between organizational bandwidth and critical operational needs, including progress toward statutorily-defined objectives. C2C leverages the bandwidth and expertise of GovOps and GovOps departments, retired annuitants, and staff at partner organizations to complement staff capacity to advance C2C's statutory obligations.

### **Control: Develop a Workforce Plan**

C2C achieved a zero percent vacancy rate in September 2025. As positions become vacant in the future, C2C's Operations vertical will support hiring managers to secure well qualified applicants and reduce time-to-hire. C2C participates in the Statewide Workforce Planning Community and is in the

process of drafting a Workforce Plan using the State of California Workforce Planning Model.

**Control: Implement employee engagement strategies**

C2C supports a human-centered organizational culture that values individuals and promotes balance to avoid burnout. Based on annual survey results, C2C develops and implements an Employee Engagement Action Plan prioritizing engagement strategies that support employee wellbeing and increase retention potential.

**Control: Explore public-private partnerships**

Nationally, the State Longitudinal Data Systems that are C2C's functional counterparts rely on different combinations of state funds, federal grants, philanthropy, and cost recovery. To maximize the impact of C2C's State appropriation, C2C will seek out opportunities for public-private partnerships that would increase workforce capacity.

**CONCLUSION**

The Office of Cradle-to-Career Data strives to reduce the risks inherent in our work and accepts the responsibility to continuously improve by addressing newly recognized risks and revising risk mitigation strategies as appropriate. I certify our internal control and monitoring systems are adequate to identify and address current and potential risks facing the organization.

**Mary Ann Bates, Executive Director**

CC: California Legislature [Senate, Assembly]  
California State Auditor  
California State Library  
California State Controller  
Director of California Department of Finance  
Secretary of California Government Operations Agency