



2017 Bond Election Frequently Asked Questions

What is a bond election?

Community college systems must ask voters for permission to sell general obligation bonds to investors to raise money for capital projects, including new construction, renovations or other campus capital improvements. Such bonds are an authorized means for community colleges to borrow money to finance construction or other capital improvements with an extended period of time for repayment.

How will this bond affect my taxes?

The District's property tax rate is made up of two components: (i) debt service, and (ii) maintenance and operations. The District designates a portion of its property tax revenues to repay debt incurred for bond-funded improvements. At current property value assessment rates, the issuance of the bond will not cause an increase in the District's tax rate for debt service from the present rate.

What is the current District tax rate?

The existing District combined tax rate is \$0.149150 per \$100 valuation, which means that, assuming the average home valuation in San Antonio for 2016 (\$182,891), the homeowner pays \$272.78 in property taxes to the District annually.

Has the District recently increased its property tax rate? How does it compare to other community college systems in Texas?

The District has not increased its property tax rate since 2012. The District's total property tax rate was exceeded by 30 of the 50 community college districts in Texas as reported in January 2016.

What if I am a senior citizen, 65 years or older?

Senior citizens are eligible for a property tax freeze absent a significant improvement of their homestead, and should not be affected by any property tax increase. Regardless, at current property value assessment rates, the issuance of the bond will not cause an increase in the District's tax rate for debt service from the present rate.

How were the bond projects selected?

The Alamo Colleges District Board of Trustees directed the administration to prepare a Capital Improvement Project (CIP) project list consistent with its 2017 Debt Management Plan adopted May 17, 2016. The project list was presented to the Board, which then formed a Citizens' Bond Advisory Committee to review the CIP. The Board charged the committee with reviewing the draft CIP project list and providing input, which resulted in the approved CIP project list which will go before voters on May 6, 2017.

Why is the District proposing this bond?

More than 33% of the Alamo Colleges District's facilities, comprising more than 2 million square feet, are more than 25 years old. Many are more than 50 years old. The bond will provide funds to upgrade infrastructure, redevelop interiors and exteriors and repurpose many of these facilities.

The bond will also fund new facilities to address anticipated population growth and the community's educational priorities. These priorities include: expanding training for high-demand, high-growth business and industry occupations in the region; increasing emphasis on education in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields; supporting college programs with smart classrooms and labs, and specialized program spaces; and serving a growing number of students as population in Bexar County is expected to increase by one million residents by 2035.

The bond also will provide funding for Regional Centers and expansion of current college facilities to continue to provide educational services throughout Bexar County, the population of which continues to grow, particularly in the north, south, and west areas of San Antonio and Bexar County. The bond also will fund acquisition of additional land to expand the geographic distribution of our Regional Centers in order to make the District's education and job training programs more accessible.

The bond will address the rapid expansion of information technology and technology demand in the learning and student support enrollment area by funding ongoing technology infrastructure development.

What educational programs would be supported by the bond?

Students at the colleges range in ages from high school age through their 80's. The District offers associate degrees and workforce training certificates and assists employers in upgrading their employment skills under state and federal grants. Students may pursue an associate degree, a workforce certificate, courses in preparation for transfer to a four-year institution, summer courses in support of a degree program at another institution, workforce skills improvement and, for college credit while a high school student, dual credit courses and/or an early college high school program.

Doesn't the state provide funds to build new buildings and repair existing ones?

Formula state funding of Texas community colleges, as compared to independent school districts, is not intended for use to construct or maintain facilities, and special legislative appropriations for construction of college facilities rarely occur. Local property taxes are the intended source of funding for facility construction and maintenance. Bonded indebtedness repaid from non-state revenue sources is the usual means of financing the construction of community college facilities. Furthermore, the state has reduced its contribution to the cost of operating community colleges from approximately 33% of revenues to approximately 23% over the period 2008-09 to 2016-17.

Does the bond project list include the construction of a new building to house District Support Operations (DSO) employees?

No, the bond project list does not include funding for the new district support operations (DSO) building.

How do voters know that the money will be used as described, and not for such things as administrators' salaries?

General obligation bond proceeds are legally prohibited from being used to fund operations, such as salaries, but rather must be used to acquire or improve capital assets with a significant useful life. The District has provided a list of projects that the bond funds will finance to inform voters. The bond funds will be first applied to the projects that are on this list. The list has some general categories to allow flexibility for the specific classrooms, labs and projects needed to support the implementation of academic department plans. The District will set up a Citizen's Oversight Committee that will have regular meetings and review the expenditures against the project list. There will also be annual fiscal audits conducted by an independent audit firm.

Where and when can I vote?

The Alamo Colleges District bond election will be held on Saturday, May 6, 2017. Early voting takes place April 24-May 2. For a list of polling places and other voter information, visit the Bexar County Elections Department at www.bexar.org/1568/Elections-Department.

How can I learn more about the Alamo Colleges District's proposed Bond Program?

Members of the community can view all related Bond Program information on the Alamo Colleges District website at www.alamo.edu/Bond



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