

Funding Recommendations for the Child Savings Account Grant Program

The California Student Aid Commission (Commission) received a total of 16 applications for the Child Savings Account Grant Program (CSA Grant Program) by the November 20, 2020 deadline noted in the Request for Application (RFA). Nine applicants applied for funding for new programs and seven applicants applied for funding for existing programs. Of the 16 applications received, 11 were deemed by Commission staff to have met the statutory requirements and included the information required in the RFA.

In order to be deemed a qualifying entity, applicants must have submitted a complete application that met the minimum requirements delineated in the RFA. To assist potential applicants during the application process, staff provided;

- 1) Detailed instructions within the RFA to complete the application,
- 2) A Technical Assistance Webinar on October 16, 2020,
- 3) Responded to questions via email and provided Child Savings Account resources on the Commission's website at www.csac.ca.gov/csa,
- 4) Responses to many questions and provided technical assistance to all who requested help, and
- 5) Responses to questions received which were discussed during the Webinar and posted at www.csac.ca.gov/csa.

Minimum Requirements

As stated in the RFA, all applications for CSA Grant Program funding must specify, at a minimum:

1. The amount of grant dollars being requested over the period on or about March 5, 2021 – June 30, 2022.
2. The total number of children that would be served primarily, ages 0-10, by these grant dollars through Fiscal Year 2020-22.
3. The percentage of low-income families, as evidenced by Free and Reduced Priced Meals data, residing in the community served by each participating entity.
4. A narrative including, but not limited to
 - a. A detailed and effective plan to inform local families about the importance of establishing a college savings account and/or educate families about local college savings programs in operation or development;
 - b. Detailed plans to provide local families with college savings fiscal literacy assistance;
 - c. A plan to establish a college-going culture; and
 - d. A description of how the program will be sustained, or, for existing programs, how the program may be expanded.

Scoring Process

Given that up to \$7,400,000 is available to new entities and the accepted applications totaled approximately \$6,900,000, the new applications were not subject to competitive scoring and

each received the amount requested. Applications from existing CSA programs were scored and some were offered reduced funding based on the scoring criteria. Each entity was notified of their approved funding amount and each indicated their acceptance of the preliminary grant with the understanding that the Commission would review the allocations at its January 21, 2021 meeting.

Recommended Funding Allocations

The groups listed below have been offered preliminary awards. Staff recommends approval of the awards as shown in the table below.

Program Name	Preliminary Award Offer Amount
Advancing Modoc Youth (AMY) – Training Employment & Community Help (TEACH)	\$275,000
El Monte Promise Foundation, A Project of Community Partners	\$592,648
First 5 Sonoma County	\$525,600
Glendale Unified School District	\$347,159
Los Angeles Housing and Community Investment Department	\$1,490,174
Oakland Promise	\$487,653
San Francisco Kindergarten to College	\$634,464
San Joaquin A+	\$4,621,220
Santa Cruz Community Ventures	\$375,331
United Way California Capital Region	\$217,812
West Sacramento Home Run	\$232,939

Appeal Process

As noted in the RFA, available funds will be awarded based on an eligible applicant's timely submitted and properly completed application and proposed budget. Five applications were incomplete or did not meet the minimum requirements outlined in the RFA and consistent with statute. The Commission must have received the letter of appeal, with an e-signature by an authorized person, by December 22, 2020 at 3 p.m. PST. Based on the language in the RFA as noted below:

- Appeals shall be limited to the grounds that the Commission failed to correctly apply the standards for reviewing the application as specified in this RFA.

- The applicant pursuing an appeal must file a detailed and complete written statement, including the issue(s) in dispute, the legal authority or other basis for the appeal position, and the remedy sought.
- The Commission will not consider incomplete or late appeals.
- The appeal may not contain any new information that was not originally contained in the applicant's original application.

Commission staff rejected 5 submitted applications for the following reasons:

- Application received after the deadline and incomplete
- Applications received incomplete – empty or incomplete budget documents or missing data.
- Lack of demonstrated evidence of sustainability, community support, funding contributed by the applying entity, local budget commitments or philanthropy.
- Lack of a demonstrated plan to enroll eligible children into the program or that the program can automatically enroll eligible children.

In considering the applications received, the Commission has latitude to fund less than 74 percent of available funding to new programs and more than 24 percent to existing programs. The strength of the applications was taken into consideration to fund the applications that provide evidence of sustainability and community support.

Commission staff received and reviewed two appeals. Staff recommends rejecting both appeals based on the language above. Neither entity reached out to the Commission's CSA program staff during the application period and neither participated in the Technical Assistance Webinar and each were either missing required information or they did not meet the minimum requirements.