

Legislative Update

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Budget Update – Early Action



- Restore UC/CSU cuts - \$300M ongoing to UC and CSU to restore 20-21 cuts
- CCC Emergency Aid - \$100M one-time Prop 98 for emergency financial aid to CCC students who are at least part-time
- CalFresh college student outreach
 - \$11.8M one-time GF and \$16.9M federal funds to CDSS to increase CalFresh college student enrollment
 - \$6M one-time GF and Prop 98 to UC, CSU, and CCCs for CalFresh outreach and application assistance
- Cal Grant GPA exemption for home school students (AB 86)
 - For students that are home schooled and cannot submit a verified GPA or submit a test score due to COVID-19
 - Students have until May 16, 2021 to complete and submit their financial aid application for 2021-22 award year and signed certification (for purposes of Cal Grant consideration)

Cal Grant Equity Framework

AB 1456 (Medina & McCarty)

- Cal Grant 2: Guarantee an access award (entitlement) for all CCC students with an EFC of \$0
- Cal Grant 4: Guarantees a tuition/fee award to students with an EFC equal to or less than \$5,576 (Pell Grant cutoff)
- Students with Dependent Children Grant: available for eligible student-parents enrolled at CCC, CSU, or UC with \$0EFC
- Elimination of age, time out of high school, and GPA (for CG2) barriers

AB 1456 (Medina & McCarty)



- Status: Assembly Higher Education
- Position: SUPPORT
- Cal Grant Modernization Press Roundtable Event – February 25th

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TOPICS

AUDIO & VIDEO

PROJECTS

COMMENTARIES

DATA

PUBLICATIONS

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California lawmakers propose Cal Grant reforms to help low-income students

Hundreds of thousands of additional students would be eligible for Cal Grants under AB 1456.

Los Angeles Times

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FREEDOM OF THE PRESS EVENT**

CALIFORNIA

Major expansion of Cal Grant financial aid proposed for state's college students

Lawmakers Push for Cal Grant Expansion

Proposed changes to the state aid program would make older students eligible for awards and loosen high school grade requirements.

By **Emma Whitford** // February 26, 2021



DAVID PAUL MORRIS/STRINGER/GETTY IMAGES

Lawmakers are attempting to expand the Cal Grant program, a student financial aid program in California.

Cal-SOAP Modernization

SB 737 (Limon)

- Update/modernize the functions and priorities of Cal-SOAP to help student and families:
 - Understand the true costs of college
 - Understand their financing options (grants, scholarships, student loans, and work opportunities)
 - Apply for financial aid using the FAFSA or CADAA
- SB 737 strengthens data collection and project evaluation
- **Status:** Senate Education (March 24th)
- **Position:** SPONSOR
- **Co-Sponsor:** The Education Trust West
- **SB 737 Webinar** – March 18th (11am-12pm)

AB 469 (Reyes)

- Requires local educational agencies (LEAs) to ensure that high school seniors complete and submit the FAFSA/CADAA.
- **Status:** Assembly Education
- **Sponsor:** Education Trust-West
- **Position:** SUPPORT
- **Alignment with Priorities:** Advance early awareness of financial aid for California students and families.

AB 1185 (Cervantes)

- In state of emergency (COVID-19), certain Cal Grant eligibility requirements related to time limits and age would be waived
- **Status:** Assembly Higher Education
- **Position:** SUPPORT
- **Alignment with Policy Priorities:** Maximize the effectiveness of state financial aid programs

Priority Legislation for Monitoring



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AB 104 (Gonzalez)

- Authorizes a high school student to request a change from letter grade to Pass/No Pass during the 2020-21 school year
- Impact to CSAC: high school GPA is used to determine Cal Grant eligibility; Pass/No Pass does not have an assigned GPA value
- **Status:** Assembly Education
- **Position:** Watch; work with author's office to ensure student's financial aid application is not negatively impacted

AB 288 (Bonta)

- California Ban on Scholarship Displacement Act of 2021
- Would prohibit the displacement of student aid awards due to receipt of private scholarships for students who are eligible for the Pell Grant at institutions of higher education
- **Status:** Assembly Higher Education (March 24th)
- **Sponsor:** Northern California College Promise Coalition
- **Position:** Pending; potential amendments may impact CSAC operations

AB 299 (Villapudua)

- This bill would establish the Apprenticeship Grant Program under the administration of the Commission.
- The program would provide grants to students who qualify for the Federal Pell Grant or for state financial aid and who participate in approved apprenticeship programs at the CCC.
- **Status:** Assembly Higher Education (March 24th)
- **Position:** Pending; potential amendments may alter where the program is administered

AB 1097 (Santiago)



- This bill would make public postsecondary educational institutions established outside of the State of California – but that operate a branch or other location physically located in the state and meet certain requirements - eligible to receive Cal Grant awards for California residents attending these institutions.
- **Status:** Assembly Higher Education
- **Position:** Watch; author's office indicated that AB 1097 would be a two-year bill

AB 1290 (Lee)



- This bill would require the Student Aid Commission to include four student members, one from each of the following: UC, CSU, CCC, and a California private postsecondary institution.
- **Status:** Assembly Higher Education
- **Sponsor:** Student Senate for California Community Colleges
- **Position:** Watch; the Commission has not historically taken positions on governance bills

SB 20 (Dodd)

- This bill would require the Commission, to the extent that it possesses pertinent information, to provide written notice to students who qualify for a waiver of the community college enrollment fee, or meet other exemptions to the student eligibility rule, that they may qualify for benefits under the CalFresh program
- **Status:** Senate Education (March 10th)
- **Sponsor:** Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organization (CCWRO)
- **Position:** Watch; the Commission is currently in compliance with this language as written; potential amendments may impact Commission operations

SB 388 (Stern)

- Commencing with the 2024-25 academic year, this bill would establish the CalServe Higher Education Grant Program, under the administration of the Commission, which would award annual grants to eligible students to finance mandatory systemwide tuition and fees not covered by federal, state, or institutionally administered grants or fee waivers.
- **Status:** Senate Education (March 24th)
- **Position:** Watch; Commission staff currently analyzing the impact to the Commission

New Member Outreach Campaign

- 17 New Member Briefings
 - 4 meetings with legislators
 - 13 meetings with legislative staff
- Outreach Materials
 - Legislative Packet with summary of legislative priorities and other resources
 - Spring 2020 COVID-19 Student Survey Report
 - 2019-20 Legislative District Report
 - Cal Grant Modernization Equity Framework Summary
 - Cash for College Toolkit
 - SB 737 Fact Sheet
- Next steps: CSAC Advocacy Day

Federal Update



CALIFORNIA
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COMMISSION

Double the Pell Coalition Letter



March 5, 2021

California Congressional Delegation
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Members of Congress,

As the official representatives of California's students, higher education segments, and the state Student Aid Commission, we are writing to urge you and your colleagues to prioritize doubling the maximum award of the Pell Grant, the largest and most important federal financial aid investment in our students.

Each year Pell Grants help over seven million low-income students afford college. Pell Grants boost college enrollment, reduce drop-out rates, and improve student outcomes. However, despite their proven success, Pell Grants now cover a smaller and continuously shrinking share of college costs for students. Nearly 50 years ago, the Pell Grant covered more than 75 percent of a student's total cost of attendance for a public four-year institution; over time, continued disinvestment in higher education and the Pell Grant award's inability to keep up with inflation has eroded its purchasing power to the point that it now only covers 28 percent of those costs. If bold action is not taken to meaningfully increase the maximum award, the Pell Grant's continued impact in making higher education more accessible and affordable will be jeopardized.

The COVID-19 health crisis only exacerbated the financial strain faced by so many of today's college students. Students were already struggling to cover the costs of food, housing, transportation, and childcare before the health crisis caused campus closures and student displacement.¹ We understand and appreciate the many competing demands on federal resources at the current time. Doubling the maximum Pell Grant award, however, positions the nation to address the student basic needs crisis and meet long-term workforce

¹ COVID-19 Student Survey, California Student Aid Commission (2020): <https://www.csac.ca.gov/survey2020>

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California educators want Congress to double the maximum Pell Grant award

More than 700,000 students at California's public colleges and universities receive Pell Grants.

American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (H.R. 1319)



- \$40 billion in aid to colleges and universities
 - 50% for student aid
 - Same terms and conditions as Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021
 - Maintenance of effort requirement
- Tax exemption for student loan borrowers that receive forgiveness (between Dec 31, 2020 – Jan 1, 2026)
- \$91M to Education Department for student and borrower outreach (financial aid, economic impact payments, means-tested benefits, unemployment assistance, tax benefits, etc.)