

California Student Aid Commission & **FEDERAL POLICIES TO SUPPORT STUDENTS**



THE CALIFORNIA STUDENT AID COMMISSION

The California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) is the **largest state agency in the country responsible for administering over \$3.5 billion in state financial aid programs each year** to hundreds of thousands of students attending public & private universities, colleges, & vocational schools in California. Guided by its mission to make postsecondary education affordable for all Californians, the Commission also:

- **Serves as a resource** for policymakers & the public on college affordability & financing
- **Provides direct assistance** to educators, students, & families on how to complete the FASFA & the California Dream Act Application
- **Evaluates the effectiveness** of financial aid programs
- **Conducts research & long-range planning** as a foundation for program improvement & reports on state financial aid needs
- **Disseminates financial aid information** to government agencies, K-12 schools, colleges & universities, students, & families

COMMISSION STRUCTURE

THE COMMISSION IS AN INDEPENDENT STATE AGENCY MADE UP OF **15 COMMISSIONERS** THAT ARE APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR, SENATE, OR ASSEMBLY & REPRESENT EACH OF THE DIFFERENT SEGMENTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION, K-12, COLLEGE STUDENTS, & THE PUBLIC.

THE COMMISSIONERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR GUIDING THE GOALS & MISSION OF THE COMMISSION & FOR ALSO HIRING AN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.

CAL GRANT PROGRAM

The Cal Grant is **California's landmark & largest state financial aid program** that provides eligible undergraduate students with financial need a grant to help pay for tuition and, for some, non-tuition costs at a qualifying California college or university.

OTHER STATE FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS

In addition to the Cal Grant program, the Commission also administers numerous **specialized financial aid programs** such as:

- CA Dream Act Application
- CA Dream Act Service Incentive Grant Program
- Chafee Grant for Foster Youth
- Golden State Education & Training Grant Program
- Golden State Teacher Grant Program
- Learning Aligned Employment Program
- Middle Class Scholarship
- California Military Department GI Bill Award Program
- Law Enforcement Personnel Dependents Grant Program

STUDENT OUTREACH PROGRAMS

The Commission also has robust **outreach programs designed to raise financial aid awareness, literacy, & applications** among Californians such as:

- Cash for College
- California Student Opportunity & Access Program (Cal-SOAP)
- Train the Trainer Programs

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FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

INCREASING THE PELL GRANT AWARD

Each year, Pell Grants help over seven million low-income students afford college. However, Pell Grants now cover a smaller & continuously shrinking share of college costs for students. Over 50 years ago, the Pell Grant covered 79 percent of a student's total cost of attendance (COA) for a public four-year institution; over time, the Pell Grant award's inability to keep up with inflation has eroded its purchasing power to the point that it now only covers 26 percent of those costs.

If President Biden's proposed Pell Grant increase for the FY 2023 federal budget is enacted, California stands to gain over \$1 billion dollars going to California's students. Without this increase in Pell aid, making higher education more accessible & affordable for low-income students struggling to recover from the pandemic will raise significant doubts about whether they can afford college without going into deep debt.

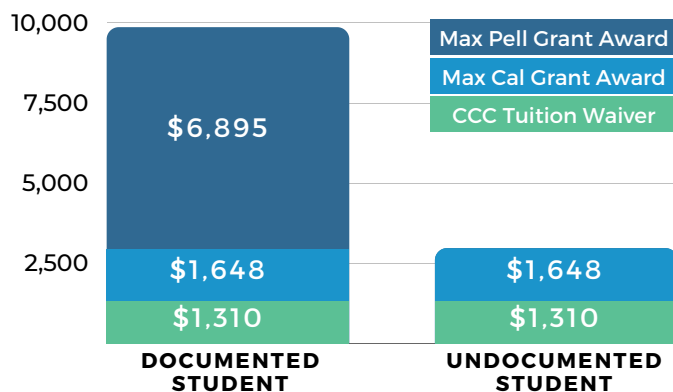
COSTS COVERED BY MAXIMUM PELL GRANT

79%
IN 1975-1976

26%
IN 2020-2021

NASFAA Issue Brief: Doubling the Maximum Pell Grant, 2021

FINANCIAL AID FOR DOCUMENTED VS DACA STUDENTS IN COMMUNITY COLLEGE



PELL FOR DACA RECIPIENTS

Making college affordable for all students must be centered on equal access. Each year, thousands of students with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) pursue higher education without the access to federal financial aid despite having the same, if not greater, financial need as their documented peers. DACA students remain ineligible for work-study programs, federal student loans, & Pell Grants. Expanding Pell Grant eligibility to DACA students would lessen the financial burden of total cost of attendance, & better position them to succeed as they pursue their postsecondary education.

REMOVING STUDENT BARRIERS TO SNAP/CALFRESH

CalFresh is the California program that executes the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), one of the most expansive anti-hunger programs in the world. While this benefit is available for postsecondary students, only a fraction of students apply & receive CalFresh benefits.

In our report, **Access to Proper Nutrition Equals College Success: Making CalFresh Work for Students**, we identify several key barriers, such as: the interview requirements, student eligibility requirements, & the reverification process. Eliminating & streamlining these three processes would help combat food insecurity among our postsecondary students & help set them up for success.

STUDENTS ENROLLED IN CALFRESH VS POTENTIALLY ELIGIBLE STUDENTS IN CA

