



All In for FAFSA/ CA Dream Act Application

FACT SHEET

August 2022

Financial Aid for Students

A Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or a California Dream Act Application (CADAA) allows students to be considered for federal aid (FAFSA applicants only), state aid, institutional aid, and loans. Completing a FAFSA or CADAA provides access to various financial aid options to students and their families, allowing them to make an informed decision about pursuing a college, university, or vocational school.

What's new?

In the 2021-22 State Budget Act, the State of California adopted a new requirement that starting in the 2022-23 academic year, local educational agencies (LEAs), including charter schools, will be required to confirm that all high school seniors have completed a FAFSA or a CADAA, expanding access to financial aid to thousands of students, who may have otherwise not been aware of this opportunity. This requirement goes into effect October 1, 2022. (*Education Code Section 51225.7*).

The California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) has developed a Model FAFSA/CADAA Opt-Out Form that has been approved through the state regulatory process and may be used as a template for local school opt out forms (*Title 5, California Code of Regulations, Section 30035*).

Why is this so important?

In California, only 53 percent of high school seniors completed a FAFSA or a California Dream Act Application in the 2021-22 academic year. California currently ranks 17th in the country.

According to the National College Attainment Network:

"Completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is one of the best predictors of whether a high school senior will go on to college. Seniors who complete the FAFSA are 84% more likely to immediately enroll in postsecondary education. For students in the lowest socioeconomic quintile, FAFSA completion is associated with a 127% increase in immediate college enrollment."

Many people don't realize that students and their families learn within about **72 hours** of submitting their FAFSA or California Dream Act Application whether they are eligible for financial aid. This eligibility is empowering information that could make all the difference in a student's decision to attend college, especially if they are a first-generation college student and come from a very low-income background.

California has joined seven other states in the country requiring various approaches to implementing a universal FAFSA completion requirement for high school seniors. States, such as Louisiana and Tennessee, have seen double-digit increases in their completion rates since adopting this requirement.

With this new statute, California has the opportunity to provide all students critical information and support to gain access to financial aid.



CSAC is Here to Help:

CSAC is here to support K-12 school districts and charter schools in assisting high school seniors successfully complete a FAFSA or California Dream Act Application on time. CSAC is implementing an “All In for FAFSA/CA Dream Act” Completion Initiative that will provide resources and tools for local educators to help students complete their financial aid applications. Even if they aren’t sure they will attend college, students should still be encouraged to apply for financial aid to keep their options open.

CSAC has developed a strategic approach in providing assistance to LEAs across the state:

- Provide all schools with a baseline set of materials and resources that help them assist students and families complete the FAFSA or CADAA, including student-level data reports that indicate which students have completed their financial aid applications and which students have not.
- Help districts leverage key community support in the “All In for FAFSA/CA Dream Act” by connecting them to key resources, such as Cal-SOAPs, Regional Coordinating Organizations, and local resources.
- Provide statewide social media and earned and paid media strategies for local schools and districts to build upon.

CSAC resources:

- Provide specialized in-person and virtual training sessions for school-site personnel to help students complete the FAFSA or CADAA.
- Provide support in setting up school-site Cash for College workshops.
- Host virtual statewide Cash for College workshops for students and families, with CSAC financial aid experts.
- Provide “Train-the-Trainer” workshops for school-site officials to learn how to help students and families complete the FAFSA and CADAA.
- Provide local school personnel access to WebGrants FAFSA/CADAA completion data to help target those students who still need to complete their financial aid forms.
- Share branded social media kits and videos to help schools inform students about the importance of completing a FAFSA or a California Dream Act Application.
- Provide information on best practices used by other districts that have seen increases in their completion rates.

Call to Action – All In for FAFSA/CADAA Pledge

Join California educators and administrators statewide in making the **pledge** to help all students complete their FAFSA or CADAA and help hundreds of thousands of students pursue their college dreams by accessing financial aid. For more information visit our website at: csac.ca.gov/all-in