



California Student Aid Commission
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April 24, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Revised request to letter dated April 21, 2020 due to new guidance from U.S. Department of Education regarding aid to undocumented students

Dear Governor Newsom:

As you know, the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) released new guidance earlier this week that undocumented students do not qualify for certain federal CARES Act Funding. This action has a significant impact on the request the California Student Aid Commission (Commission) and the California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) submitted to the Governor earlier this week.

Here is the relevant excerpt from the [guidance](#):

What students are eligible to receive emergency financial aid grants from the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF)?

Only students who are or could be eligible to participate in programs under Section 484 in Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA), may receive emergency financial aid grants. If a student has filed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), then the student has demonstrated eligibility to participate in programs under Section 484 the HEA. Students who have not filed a FAFSA but who are eligible to file a FAFSA also may receive emergency financial aid grants. The criteria to participate in programs under Section 484 of the HEA include but are not limited to the following: U.S. citizenship or eligible noncitizen; a valid Social Security number; registration with Selective Service (if the student is male); and a high school in an approved homeschool setting.

While this guidance may not directly apply to the **Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEERF)**, it may be more advisable at this time to provide aid to

undocumented students via state sources rather than federal stimulus funds. Thus, we have slightly revised our ask.

The Cal Grant B program provides tuition and fee assistance (full coverage at UC and CSU) to low income students. Additionally, students may receive a \$1,672 Access Award per year for living expenses. The **average family income** of a student receiving a Cal Grant B award in the 2018-19 academic year was **\$19,700**. Clearly, students receiving a Cal Grant B have great financial need that is likely only exacerbated by the economic crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The table below shows a breakdown of the total number of students in each program and the total cost associated with providing those students with a \$500 supplemental emergency grant to their Access Award (prorated by enrollment) for the 2020-21 award year. The yellow highlighted rows represent our ask to the Governor.

FAFSA Filers – 2020-21 Award Year			
	Number of Students	Percent CCC Students	Total Cost
Cal Grant B Entitlement	180,020	38%	\$85M
Cal Grant B Competitive	70,944	71%	\$24 M
Total	250,964	n/a	\$109 M
CADAA Filers – 2020-21 Award Year			
	Number of Students	Percent CCC Students	Total Cost
Cal Grant B Entitlement	10,868	44%	\$4.7 M
Cal Grant B Competitive	860	78%	\$0.4 M
Total	11,728	n/a	\$5.1 M

All estimates are based on May Revise projections and include new 2020-21 awards and renewal awards.

The Commission and the CCCCO recommends:

1. For FAFSA filers: The State provide a **\$500 supplemental emergency grant (prorated by enrollment) to all Cal Grant B recipients in the Competitive Cal Grant pool, funded by the federal GEERF funds.** For **70,944 students** (FAFSA filers only), this would work out to an estimated **\$24 million**. Note we separated out the CADAA filers from the original \$25 million ask in light of the aforementioned federal guidance.
2. For CADAA filers: The State provide a **\$500 supplemental emergency grant (prorated by enrollment) to all Cal Grant B recipients in both the Competitive AND Entitlement Cal Grant pools, funded by the State General Fund.** For **11,728 students** (CADAA filers only), this would work out to an estimated **\$5.1 million**.

In summary, the total ask is \$29.1 million. For reference and comparison, the cost to fund ALL Cal Grant B recipients - regardless of whether they are FAFSA or CADAA filers - would be \$114.1 million (\$5.1 million of which would likely need to come from State sources).

There are currently 11,728 CADAA students (undocumented students apply for aid via the California Dream Act Application or CADAA) receiving Cal Grants B awards – 860 CADAA students in the Competitive pool and 10,868 CADAA students in the Entitlement pool. Because there are only 860 CADAA students in the Competitive Cal Grant B pool, **we recommend that the State fund a \$500 supplemental emergency grant to the Access Award (currently \$1,672) for ALL 11,728 Cal Grant B CADAA recipients.**

We did not include CADAA students receiving Cal Grant A because they currently do not receive Access Awards. The Commission would need to create a new program to provide Access Awards to Cal Grant A CADAA students, an effort that would involve significant staff time and programming costs.

Undocumented students and families are often front-line workers and early responders during this COVID-19 crisis. The fact that they are not eligible for any federal stimulus funding only underscores the dire need to provide emergency aid to undocumented students pursuing a college education.

Staff have been researching various possibilities to meet this need and would be happy to discuss in light of this new federal guidance.

Signed,

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California Student Aid Commission

ELOY ORTIZ OAKLEY
Chancellor
California Community Colleges

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Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis
California State Senate President Pro Tem Toni Atkins
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Assemblymember Kevin McCarty, Chair of Subcommittee on Education Finance
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