

CALIFORNIA STUDENT AID COMMISSION
REPORT ON COMPETITIVE CAL GRANT PROGRAM

Competitive Cal Grant Scoring Matrix

As shown in table 1 below, every year, more than 164,000 eligible applicants on average compete for the March 2nd Competitive Cal Grant awards and more than 196,000 eligible applicants on average receive consideration for the September 2nd Competitive Cal Grant awards. The main distinction between the two award cycles is that eligible applicants must be enrolled in a California Community College to receive consideration for the September competition.

The increased number of applicants in the September competition is the result of newly eligible applicants and the reconsideration of March 2 applicants that were not awarded in the first award cycle and are enrolled in a California Community College for the fall. Thus, there is some duplication of students in the below counts for March and September.

Table 1

Academic Year	Financially Eligible Applicants		Authorized Payable Awards	Maximum Number of Awards
	March 2nd	September 2nd		
2015-16	155,824	203,198	25,750	25,750
2016-17	146,719	215,170	25,750	25,750
2017-18	194,076	218,233	25,750	35,000
2018-19	174,805	195,249	25,750	35,000
2019-20	169,119	179,564	41,000	51,000
2020-21	148,463	167,327	41,000	51,000
Average	164,834	196,457		

In order for the Commission to distribute the limited number of competitive awards to the most financially disadvantaged students, the awarding process includes a scoring matrix which has evolved throughout the years since the inception of the program and most recently updated to the 1000-point scoring model developed by The Institute for College Access and Success (TICAS) in 2017-18. The current scoring matrix includes criteria such as the students' Grade Point Average (GPA), parent educational level, access equalizer, student or parent household status, family income and household size. The same scoring matrix is used for the March and September competitive award cycles.

Competitive Cal Grant Paid Rate

Over the last several years, the Commission and Commission staff have worked on different measures to improve the utilization rates of the limited competitive Cal Grant awards. One of the strategies that has helped in reaching the Commission's goal of 100 percent paid rate was through the legislative change that allowed the Commission to make additional competitive award offers. Financially disadvantaged students are more likely to enroll or continue enrollment in college if they know they will have grant funds available at the start of the academic year.

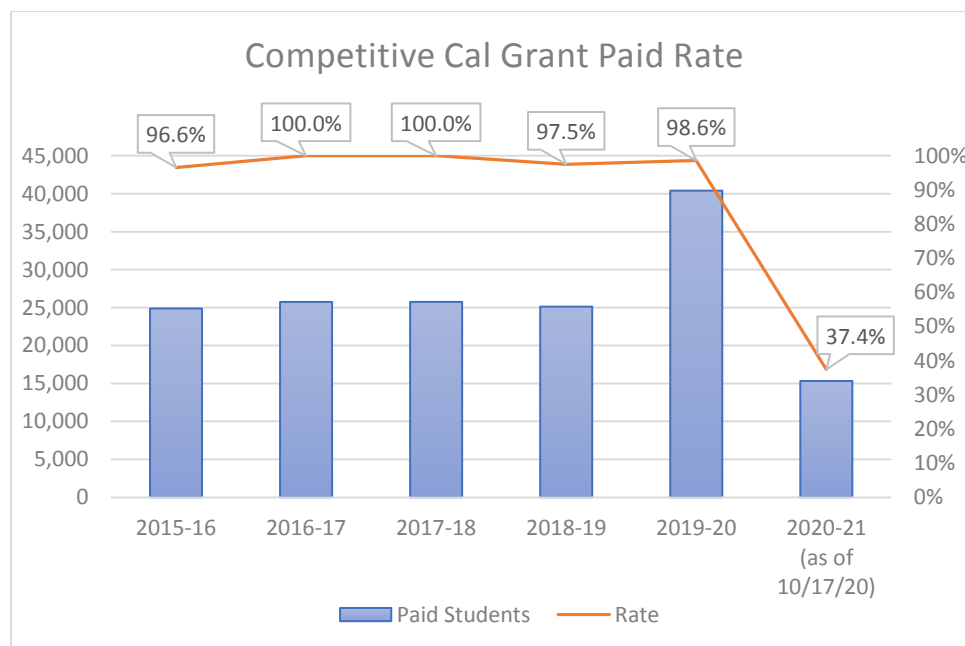
The Commission was previously authorized to make up to 35,000 competitive award offers for the 25,750 payable awards to new recipients. Starting with the 2019 California Budget Act, the Commission is now allowed to make up to 51,000 competitive Cal Grant award offers for a total of 41,000 payable awards to new recipients.

Over 290,000 unduplicated financially eligible applicants were considered for the 41,000 competitive awards in 2019-20. The final paid rate for the 2019-20 award year was 98.6%, exceeding the 97.5% paid rate for the 2018-19 award year in spite of the increase of awards from 25,750 to 41,000.

More than 265,000 unduplicated financially eligible applicants were considered for the 41,000 competitive awards as of September 25, 2020. Commission staff is currently monitoring the competitive paid rate and anticipates scheduling the first award recycle for mid-January 2021.

Chart 1 below provides the Competitive Cal Grant paid rate for the most recent academic years.

Chart 1



California Dream Act Applicants and Award Distribution

Education Code section 69508.5c (General Provisions) added language to specify the intent of the Legislature that all forms of state-based aid in California be made equally available to students who are exempt from paying nonresident tuition and to all other students who qualify for state-based aid. As a result, the competitive Cal Grant eligibility was extended to California Dream Act Applicants (CADAA applicants) starting with AY 2019-20.

Table 2 below provides a breakdown of the March 2 and September 2 Competitive Cal Grant A and B awards as of September 25, 2020. Table 3 provides a comparison of total financially eligible applicants to awardees.

Table 2

Cycle/Grant Program	FAFSA Applicants	CADAA Applicants	Grand Total
March 2 Awards	25,062	658	25,720
A	371	4	375
B	24,691	654	25,345
September 2 Awards	24,745	243	24,988
A	57	0	57
B	24,688	243	24,931
Grand Total	49,807	901	50,708

Table 3

Cycle/Grant Program	FAFSA Applicants	CADAA Applicants	Grand Total
Total Awarded	49,807	901	50,708
Eligible Not Awarded	214,371	2,647	217,018
Total Applicants	264,178	3,548	267,726
Percent Awarded	18.9%	25.4%	18.9%

Commission staff will continue to monitor the paid rate and work with the campuses on timely disbursements to eligible students; as well as coordinating any needed award recycles to ensure maximum utilization of the available Competitive awards.

Student with Dependent Children Paid Rate

The Students with Dependent Children (SWDC) grant is established in Article 9. *Awards for Students with Dependent Children*, section 69465, in Chapter 1.7 of Part 42 of Division 5 of Title 3 of the Education Code. Starting with the 2019-20 award year, Cal Grant awardees who self-certify that they meet the requirements of the grant (providing at least 50 percent of support for a dependent child less than 18 years old) would be eligible for an additional annual award of up to \$6000 for Cal Grant A and B and up to \$4000 for Cal Grant C. Due to the demographics of eligible students, most of those who are awarded this grant are in the Competitive program (almost 90% of Cal Grant A and B).

In 2019-20, over 50,000 students were initially offered a SWDC grant after they reported having a dependent child on the FAFSA or CADAA. Students were then directed to certify their eligibility on WebGrants4Students. Around half (26,725) students certified yes and were eligible to be paid. Of those, 24,940 were paid (93%). Students who certified no or did not self-certify had their awards reduced to the non-SWDC amount; 30 percent of these students were paid. Table 4 displays this information by program.

Table 4

2019-20	Cal Grant A	Cal Grant B	Cal Grant C	Total
Initial Awards	1,029	45,661	3,770	50,460
Certified SWDC	425	23,587	2,713	26,725
Paid SWDC	407	22,331	2,202	24,940
Paid without SWDC	89	6,558	343	6,990

In 2020-21, as of November 16, 2020, over 53,000 students have been initially offered a SWDC grant and over 30,000 have confirmed their eligibility. Of Cal Grant A and B students, 91 percent of initial award offers are for students in the Competitive program. Table 5 shows that, of the students who have certified their eligibility, almost 20,000 (66%) have been paid compared to around 4,500 (20%) who were not confirmed.

Table 5

2020-21	Cal Grant A	Cal Grant B	Cal Grant C	Total
Initial Awards	1,090	47,527	4,669	53,286
Certified SWDC	623	25,975	3,511	30,109
Paid SWDC	378	17,798	1,789	19,965
Paid without SWDC	52	4,284	196	4,532