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Contact:

Shelveen Ratnam

916-201-3405

Shelveen.ratnam@csac.ca.gov

California Student Aid Commission and California's Public Higher Education Segments Collaborate to Ease Access to Financial Aid

California Dream Act Applications will open to first-time financial aid applicants from mixed-status families to meet financial aid deadlines for Fall 2024

The California Student Aid Commission (CSAC), together with the University of California (UC), the California State University (CSU), the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) announced today (April 9, 2024) an alternative financial aid application option for California students from mixed-status households for those that have been unable to successfully complete the Free Application for Student Aid (FAFSA). Mixed-status families include a student who is a U.S. citizen with one or more parents without a Social Security Number (SSN). Today's announcement offers first-time mixed-status students who have struggled to complete their FAFSA an alternative avenue to apply for state and educational institution financial aid for those that have been unable to complete the FAFSA.

In recent weeks, the U.S Department of Education has made progress to ensure that the new online FAFSA form is more streamlined for prospective college students who are eligible for federal financial aid. However, students from mixed-status families have faced logistical challenges with the new FAFSA application. We encourage students to attempt to complete FAFSA first, to ensure that federal aid can be received. Additional instructions for mixed-status families completing the FAFSA can be found here: <https://studentaid.gov/announcements-events/fafsa-support/contributor-social-security-number>. Prospective college students still unable to complete the FAFSA, will now be able to complete a California Dream Act Application (CADAA) as a short-term measure until they are able to access and complete a FAFSA to receive the federal financial aid available to them. This joint effort to open the CADAA as an alternative pathway for first-time student aid applicants from mixed-status households reflects a shared commitment to making higher education more affordable and accessible for Californians from all backgrounds.

Completing the FAFSA remains the best way for students to maximize their financial aid. As the state of California continues to find additional opportunities to support

students and families navigating the FAFSA's logistical challenges, mixed-status students must still complete the FAFSA to access their federal financial aid awards, including Pell Grants, Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant, Federal Work-Study, and subsidized federal student loans. The CADAA will only allow students to apply for state and educational institution financial aid.

Students from mixed-status families navigate complex challenges in pursuit of higher education. Many are first-generation college students for whom financial planning and support are essential. Financial aid professionals, advisors and outreach staff from CSAC, UC, CSU, and the community colleges are working to help students and families navigate the process in the coming months.

Today's announcement builds on Governor Newsom's signing of Assembly Bill 1887, which extends the California priority deadline for state financial aid by a month to May 2. Opening the CADAA will allow students from mixed-status families to meet the new May 2 deadline, while bringing much-needed certainty and clarity to the college decision making process.

More information on the California Dream Act and how students from mixed-status families can apply for state financial aid beginning on Tuesday, April 9 is available at www.csac.ca.gov/cadaa-msf. Students and families can receive help filling out the FAFSA or CADAA at [free in-person Cash for College Workshops, found here](https://cash4college.csac.ca.gov/) <https://cash4college.csac.ca.gov/> or [Statewide Cash for College Webinars, found here](https://www.csac.ca.gov/post/cash-college-workshop-registration) <https://www.csac.ca.gov/post/cash-college-workshop-registration>, including at events focused on serving mixed-status families.

Governor Gavin Newsom said, "Every Californian deserves access to an affordable high-quality education. I am grateful that our federal and state partners are working tirelessly to provide options for students and families."

California Student Aid Commission Executive Director Marlene L. Garcia said, "Making sure all students can access the financial aid they are entitled to is at the heart of what we do. We are proud to work with our institutional partners, Governor Newsom, and Legislative leaders to make sure that impacted students from mixed-status families have a viable path to access financial aid and the life-changing opportunities available at our public colleges and universities."

University of California President Michael V. Drake, M.D., said, "The University of California has consistently worked to expand educational access to students of all backgrounds. Offering robust financial aid and removing barriers for all students to access that support are critically important steps to creating opportunity for Californians. The University will continue to advocate for full access to the FAFSA and all federal financial aid for our students from mixed-status families."

California State University Chancellor Mildred García, Ed.D., said, "Ensuring that students from all backgrounds have authentic access to an affordable, high-quality

degree is at the very core of the California State University mission. This includes making sure that students are able to obtain the financial aid to which they are entitled. The CSU is pleased to participate in this joint effort to address the challenges currently confronting first-time students of mixed-status families, and we encourage them to first attempt to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). If they are unable to do so, students should then complete the California Dream Act Application (CADAA) well before the May 2 deadline and later complete the FAFSA as soon as that becomes feasible. The CSU will continue to remain as flexible as possible for these students as we support the U.S. Department of Education in its work toward a permanent solution."

California Community Colleges Chancellor Sonya Christian, Ph.D., said, "This temporary workaround to some of the recent challenges with the new FAFSA rollout will preserve access and support for students transferring from community college to a four-year college or university in the fall. We are committed to overcoming obstacles to providing student financial aid as the U.S. Department of Education works diligently on a permanent solution, and we are grateful to Gov. Newsom, the Legislature, the Student Aid Commission and the Biden administration for their work to provide students with equitable access to an affordable higher education. "

Senate President Pro Tempore Mike McGuire (D-North Coast), said, "The Golden State always advances an unwavering commitment to ensuring that all eligible students can access financial aid. That's what makes California great – we're always helping one another and uplifting the next generation. This interim measure is a step forward, and we will continue our steadfast collaboration with federal counterparts to pursue a permanent solution."

California Assembly Speaker Assembly Member Robert Rivas said, "Families deserve to know with certainty that they continue to have access to their state and institutional aid, in the 2024-25 school year and beyond. As many young Californians struggle with the costs of attending college, we will keep partnering with the federal administration to ensure students from mixed-status families can complete the FAFSA and receive the federal financial aid to which they are entitled."

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The [California Student Aid Commission](#) currently serves over 400,000 students and administers the state's \$3 billion portfolio of student financial aid programs and services, including the Cal Grant, the Middle Class Scholarship, and the California Dream Act Application. The Commission serves as a resource for policymakers and the public on college affordability and financing issues, and advocates for policy changes to eliminate cost as a barrier to any qualified California student pursuing a higher education. Visit our website at www.csac.ca.gov or follow us on social media by clicking on our [Link Tree](#).