

CALIFORNIA STUDENT AID COMMISSION

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STUDENT AID COMMISSION ANNOUNCES EARLY FINANCIAL AID FILING

(Sacramento, CA) 2016 - The California Student Aid Commission (Commission) is pleased to announce the October launch of Federal Application for Free Student Aid (FAFSA) and California Dream Act (CADAA) application season. Effective this year, current and prospective college students and their families may complete and submit their FAFSA and CADAA applications as early as October 1 – three months earlier than the previous January 1 date. In addition, the FAFSA now pulls income data directly from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) secure website, allowing applicants to apply using financial information from the previous year’s tax returns – this year, using 2015 data (known as “prior-prior-year” income, since the income data is from the previous year before the return was filed). This replaces the previous system, in which applicants had to input data from their tax returns manually, using prior-year income – a process that often proved burdensome to families that had not yet filed their tax returns.

“Allowing applicants to file FAFSA early, using ‘prior-prior year’ data obtained directly from the IRS, is a game-changer for California college students and their families,” said Commission Executive Director Lupita Cortez Alcalá. “Now students will be able to find out how much California grant funding is available to them before college and university admission deadlines have passed.”

Last month, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson reached out to school district superintendents, school administrators, and high school principals and counselors to remind them of the October FAFSA and CADAA application processes, and to remind them to submit student Grade Point Averages to the Commission, noting, “The earlier window will provide more time for students and their families to plan and prepare for college.” That letter is available on the State Department of Education website: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/el/le/yr16ltr0906a.asp>.

Students and their families looking for more information about FAFSA or CADAA, including help completing either application, are encouraged to attend a free Cash for College workshop between now and the March 2 deadline to apply for Cal Grants. The Commission sponsors hundreds of these free workshops throughout the state between October 1 and the March 2 Cal Grant application deadline. Potential aid applicants looking to locate a workshop near them should visit the Cash for College website at <http://www.cash4college.org>.

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