



Double Down on UC Student Investment with the Cal Grant Equity Framework

Remodeling our Cal Grant system will ensure University of California students have the resources they need to succeed.

University of California students fuel our workforce and move the needle across a wide range of industries and areas of study. But like all college students, the last two years of the COVID-19 pandemic have led to greater financial insecurity and have forced them off course of their degree attainment goals. Our UC students deserve more support and leadership from state policymakers to address these disparities.

The Cal Grant Equity Framework provides a solution to reform California's outdated financial aid system. The Framework, outlined in AB 1746 (Medina, McCarty, & Leyva) will shift California to a state-aid model based on student need—rather than outdated rationing devices like age and time out of high school – that will create a more inclusive financial aid system. If adopted and funded through this year's budget, the Framework will ensure thousands more student parents, adult learners, California Dream Act filers, and returning learners will receive Cal Grant awards than are currently being served.

3,500 newly eligible UC students will have \$13,000 in tuition covered through Cal Grant

As the UC system wrestles with enrollment challenges, we must update our state's outdated 60-year-old financial aid system to reflect the needs of today's college students. The Cal Grant Equity Framework will ensure that more students' tuition costs are covered under Cal Grant 4, regardless of future tuition increases, as the UC begins its new a cohort-based tuition system that charges new, incoming classes of UC students a higher rate each year.

The Cal Grant Equity Framework will also expand eligibility so that 3,500 UC students will become eligible for Cal Grant awards, representing a nearly 10% increase. Under this framework, aid will also become available for more than 95,000 eligible Latinx students, 18,000 Asian and Pacific Islander students, 11,000 additional African American students and 3,000 California Dream Act students.



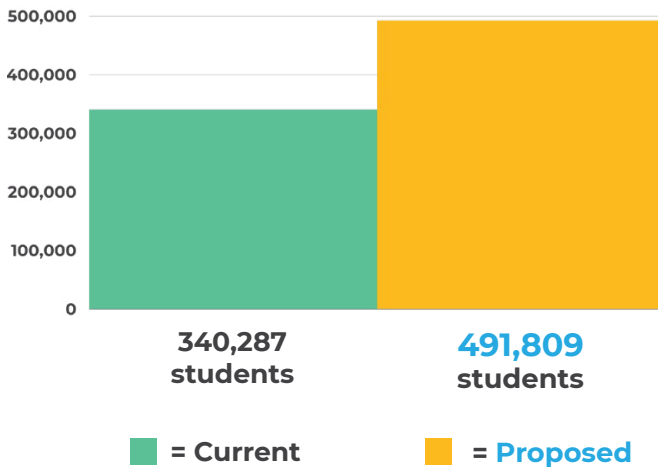
Over 3,000 more CA Dream Act filers are made eligible for aid through the Cal Grant Equity Framework

The Governor is calling for more higher education investments to reach critical attainment goals, and the Cal Grant Equity Framework provides a perfect vehicle to reach those goals via this year's budget. As the economic and educational impacts of COVID-19 persist, the time for policymakers to act is now; UC students and their families across our state cannot afford to wait.

Double Down on UC Student Investment with the Cal Grant Equity Framework

HOW WILL THE CAL GRANT EQUITY FRAMEWORK WORK?

Cal Grant Student Eligibility



The Cal Grant Equity Framework will streamline our current financial aid system to serve more students and revitalize California's economy, businesses and workforce. The remodeled program would align eligibility of state-based financial aid with federal policy, eliminate eligibility barriers and target state resources for the most financially vulnerable students by reaching over 150,000 MORE students by leveraging all parts of the financial aid system.

Fully modernizing California's state financial aid system under the Cal Grant Equity Framework and building off last year's investments would:

- Address gaps in the current Cal Grant program by removing barriers that keep out talented students who make an average income of \$36,000
- Streamline the eight current Cal Grant programs

into two programs - Cal Grant 2 for community college students and Cal Grant 4 for students at four-year colleges.

- Align eligibility with the federal Pell Grant to enable earlier and clear communication with students and families about how much aid they can expect to receive.
- Expand access to awards for foster youth and student parents to use for non-tuition expenses, helping address the student basic needs crisis.

As higher education has become more accessible, talented students from diverse backgrounds have pursued college, and they need financial aid support to succeed. The new Cal Grant Equity Framework will:

- Provide additional grants like the Students with Dependent Children (SWDC) to reach more than 44,000 new student parents and uplift more families.
- Work in alignment with other forms of financial aid including the Middle Class Scholarship and institutional aid.
- Enable more students to apply for CalFresh, a federally-funded benefit that helps recipients afford regular meals to help better meet their basic needs.

The Cal Grant Equity Framework will provide a workable, equitable financial aid system that meets the needs of students of color and lower-income students. The Framework must be adopted and funded through this year's budget if the state is to meet the needs of students seeking higher education as well as the Governor's ambitious degree and certificate attainment goals.

California leaders have an unparalleled opportunity to address college affordability and decisively close attainment gaps by simplifying the Cal Grant system. California has what it takes to create the most equitable system in the nation by prioritizing its students and removing remaining barriers.

Last Updated May 2022