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California Student Aid Commission Partners with U.S. Senator Alex Padilla to Kick-off 2022-2023 Financial Aid Application Season—With New Innovative Strategies

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SACRAMENTO, Calif., Oct. 1, 2021 - As California's students continue to navigate the many layers of the current crisis — the prolonging global pandemic, hybrid learning, and widespread economic uncertainty — the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) is enlivening its outreach and marketing programs through both traditional and digital means to encourage more students to apply for financial aid beginning Oct. 1. With application rates for both the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and California Dream Act Application (CADAA) falling below last year's application rate, it is vital the Commission expand its reach in order to access as many students and families as possible. This is why U.S. Senator Alex Padilla (D-Calif.), has partnered with the Commission on a [public service announcement \(PSA\)](#) campaign encouraging students to apply for financial aid.

“As a proud son of immigrants and a first-generation student, I remember when I first applied for college and for financial aid - I was excited and a little overwhelmed,” said Padilla. “That’s why I’m proud to join this important effort to help inform students and families across California about the financial aid resources available to them.”

“We work every day to inform students and families that financial aid is available to go to college. This is especially important during these difficult times we are living in,” said CSAC Executive Director Marlene Garcia. “The Student Aid Commission embraces the need to lead with empathy and innovation in order to ensure the most vulnerable families take advantage of financial aid to pursue a higher education and advance their economic mobility.”

As the nation's largest state financial aid administrator, CSAC is committed to ensuring students, policymakers and educators have accurate information and resources regarding financial aid packages. To keep up with the ever-changing interests and academic environments of students, the Commission is launching a significant outreach and marketing campaign, that is inclusive of: social media advertising, radio and tv spots, public service announcements, training opportunities, community-based partnerships, and more.

This year, the Commission has also developed a [Social Media Toolkit hub](#), where partners across the state can download free marketing materials developed to help spread the word about this year's financial aid cycle. The Commission is also launching their first podcast, *Financial Paid: Paying For College in California*, which is set to premier later this fall.

"The commission stands ready to help students and their families access financial aid. California has made historic new investments in financial aid this year alone. The state invests close to \$4 billion in financial aid resources to help students pay for college", said Commission Chair Catalina Cifuentes. "Now is the time to apply and together we can spread the word that there are resources available for you to pay for college. Whether it be the Commission, Senator Padilla, community partners, educators, or students themselves, the message is the same: Financial aid is available, so apply today."

The official kick-off date for the new financial aid season is [October 1](#) when California students and families can [apply](#) for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the California Dream Act Application (CADAA) to receive college financial aid for the 2022-2023 academic year. The state priority deadline in which students can qualify for the most financial aid possible and receive preliminary information on how much financial aid they can attain is March 2nd, 2022.

To mark the beginning of this year's financial aid season, the Commission will be hosting a [Cash for College](#) event at Cordova High School in Rancho Cordova. Simultaneously, Commission staff will be partnering with Sacramento State's [Feria de Educación](#), where students will be able to receive virtual assistance in completing their FAFSA or CADAA applications.

Interested students and families can also attend free Cash for College [workshops](#) near them or virtually through [Cash for College Statewide Webinars](#) for help in completing the FAFSA, CADAA and Chafee Grant for Foster Youth applications. To expand its efforts and reach additional student populations throughout the state, the commission has also developed a [Train the Trainer Program](#), which will equip community partners with the tools and resources they need to host their very own Cash for College workshops.

In her very own [public service announcement](#) CSAC Executive Director Marlene Garcia spoke directly to students letting them know exactly what they need to do in order to access financial aid, "All you need to do is fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid also known as the FAFSA or the California Dream Act Application. So what are you waiting for? Apply now! Go get that money to pay for college and leave the rest to us."

The commission is committed to carrying out its mission in promoting educational equity by making postsecondary education affordable for all Californians. Students can access financial aid applications via the Commission's homepage at <https://www.csac.ca.gov/>.

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The California Student Aid Commission administers the state's \$4 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 <https://www.csac.ca.gov/> or follow us on Social Media by clicking on our Link Tree, <https://linktr.ee/castudentaid>.