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Information Item

California Student Aid Commission

Update on Chafee Foster Youth Grant Program

The California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) is in its fourth year of administering the Chafee Foster Youth Grant Program (Chafee Program) in partnership with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) through an interagency agreement. Since inception of the Chafee Program in fiscal year 2003-2004, the Commission has successfully awarded over 2,300 awards to eligible foster youth students. Based on the number of applicants and the need for additional funding to make more awards available, the state legislature allocated \$5.7 million in foster youth funds from the General Fund to augment the federal funding for the 2006-2007 award year for a total of \$13.5 million.

Under the direction of the CDSS, CSAC staff established a 2006-2007 renewal priority deadline of October 13, 2006 for renewal students. Upon execution of the 2006-2007 interagency agreement with the CDSS, CSAC staff processed the first Chafee Program award cycle on September 19, 2006 to 499 renewal students. CSAC staff processed weekly renewal awards to students who had all documents in and began running awards for new students on October 16, 2006. To date the Commission is pleased to report that we have successfully awarded 1,736 grant awards to foster youth students totaling over \$7.9 million for the 2006-2007 academic year. As institutions continue to process and complete Financial Need Analysis Reports (FNAR) for their students, additional students will be awarded. CSAC staff will continue to make awards to eligible students on a weekly basis until all funds are disbursed.

CSAC staff has provided new weekly reports for schools to view the status of each of their Chafee Program applicants. The weekly Chafee reports identify the missing forms necessary to process the student for an award. CSAC staff makes every effort to communicate with foster youth students to follow-up on missing forms or information. In addition, all of our communications include a general information flyer on Cal Grants and other financial aid resources to educate them on other financial aid options that may be available to them.

CSAC staff is currently working with the CDSS staff to implement a multi-year contract to help expedite timely payments to students. CSAC staff is also working closely with CDSS staff to make the 2007-2008 online application available early next year and to have WebGrants Financial Need Analysis Reports available late spring

for the upcoming new academic year. These improvements to the application and award process will allow for earlier communication to students and to schools.

CSAC staff will continue to partner with financial aid administrators and other foster youth stakeholders to identify other streamlining recommendations to provide more information and guidance to some of our most vulnerable students. In addition, the CSAC and the CDSS will continue to work together to ensure our processes are efficient and effective and are in the best interest of these foster youth students.

Recommended Action: For information only, no action required.

Responsible Staff: Catalina Mistler, Acting Chief
Program Administration and
Services Division