



CALIFORNIA  
STUDENT AID  
COMMISSION

# CALIFORNIA STUDENT AID COMMISSION

MAKING EDUCATION BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL FINANCIALLY  
ACCESSIBLE TO ALL CALIFORNIANS

California Student Aid Commission's Newsletter

FALL 2015

## Newsletter for High School Guidance Counselors

Welcome to the 2015-16 school year! The purpose of this newsletter is to provide high school counselors with updated and relevant information from the California Student Aid Commission. As we get ready for FAFSA submissions from students and GPA submissions from high school counselors, we are doing everything we can to make the process as easy and smooth as possible. Please find up to date information, dates, mini-training videos, and forms on the Commission's website at: [www.csac.ca.gov](http://www.csac.ca.gov).

### Upcoming Changes to the 2017-18 FAFSA: Prior Prior Year (PPY)

With the implementation of prior-prior-year, the 2017-18 FAFSA application period will open on October 1, 2016 and extend through June 30, 2018. Income from tax year 2015 will be used to complete the 2017-18 FAFSA. The 2017-18 FAFSA will be able to be filed earlier allowing students and their families to be provided with more timely communication and transparency about cost and out-of-pocket expenses.

The Commission invites you to participate in a newly established workgroup for the 2017-18 earlier FAFSA and prior-prior year changes. If you are interested in joining this workgroup, please contact Jeff Morrison at [csac\\_fafsa\\_ppy@csac.ca.gov](mailto:csac_fafsa_ppy@csac.ca.gov). Please include any questions you may have about the FAFSA changes to this mailbox.

*“Education costs  
money, but then so  
does ignorance.”*

*- Sir Claus Moser*



Let the FAFSA season begin!

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**Deadline to Submit Students' GPA is March 2, 2016**

## **Education Code 69432.9 (Assembly Bill 2160)**

On September 27, 2014, Governor Jerry Brown approved and signed Assembly Bill (AB) 2160, authored by Assemblymember Phil Ting (D-San Francisco), which requires all public high schools to electronically submit grade point averages (GPA) information for all graduating grade 12 students to the California Student Aid Commission by the **March 2, 2016 deadline**.

By creating this mandate, AB 2160 simplifies the Cal Grant application process and helps an additional 4,000 students to receive a Cal Grant award offer. One of the main reasons that students failed to receive a Cal Grant was due to failure to submit a GPA.

GPA verification, along with a completed Free Application for Federal Student Aid form or Dream Act Application, is required for students to be considered for a Cal Grant. Cal Grants can be used by students at community colleges, state and private universities, and technical schools. Student awards peak at \$12,192 but average \$4,650. They can be used for tuition, room and board, books, and other supplies.

High School counselors have been able to upload GPAs for their seniors starting September 8. Counselors can also upload GPAs of students that graduated the prior year, as this may help some of those students qualify for a Cal Grant. Use the [WebGrants](#) system to electronically submit GPAs. Access to this system is gained by submitting a [WebGrants System Access Request Form](#).

## **Education Code 69432.9 (Assembly Bill 2160) — Cal Grant Opt-Out Form**

Students and their parents or guardians (for students under 18 years of age) may choose to opt-out of being automatically deemed a Cal Grant applicant and having their GPA submitted by their high school to the California Student Aid Commission.

School districts and charter schools must contact their students in writing no later than October 15 to inform students when the school will first send grade point averages to the Commission.

The Commission offers a [Cal Grant GPA Opt-Out Form](#) in both English and Spanish that schools may use or adapt in order to comply with the opt-out notification process. This form is available at [www.csac.ca.gov](http://www.csac.ca.gov), by selecting the "High Schools" tab and the "GPA Submission" link.





**STEPS TO COLLEGE**  
**PASOS A LA UNIVERSIDAD 2016**

## Consulate General of Mexico Hosts Steps to College 2016

**Steps to College 2016** takes place on Saturday, February 6, 2016 from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Consulate General of Mexico in Sacramento, located at 2093 Arena Boulevard, in the Natomas neighborhood of Sacramento. This event is **FREE**.

**Steps to College 2016** will highlight the importance of higher education for Latino high school students. This event is presented in both Spanish and English and parents are encouraged to attend. Students will have the opportunity to apply on-site for the California Dream Act financial aid, Cal Grants, and institutional aid and, if students are eligible, federal grants. The college financial aid application period in California begins on January 1, 2016 and is open until March 2, 2016.

Register online at [www.stepstocollegesac.org](http://www.stepstocollegesac.org)

**Among other great resources, students and parents attending this event will have the opportunity to:**

- Learn about the California Dream Act financial aid eligibility, requirements and timelines.
- Get assistance to apply on the spot for financial aid through the California Dream Act application.

**Save the Date:** details here... [Steps to College Flyer](#)

**Steps to College 2015 video - to view click below!** [Steps to College 2015 video](#)



# CASH FOR C//LLEGE

## Time to register a Cash For College event at your site!

Every January and February, students and families attend **FREE** Cash For College workshops across California for help to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and California Dream Act Application (CADA). Our mission is to help low-income and first-generation college-goers complete the application process so they can access financial aid for education and career/technical training beyond high school.

The registration process is different this year as we develop an enhanced registration portal. If your site is interested in hosting a Cash For College workshop, you will need to complete an [Outreach Action Plan](#) and [Partnership Agreement](#) (found here: [www.csac.ca.gov/ccfc.asp](http://www.csac.ca.gov/ccfc.asp)) and then email the forms to [cashforcollege@csac.ca.gov](mailto:cashforcollege@csac.ca.gov).

Upon review, you will be granted access to the Commission's Eventbrite page to request your workshop. Upon approval of workshop (in collaboration with RCOs), you will receive a Workshop ID number and order form to obtain CCFC materials.

Students will be able to find a nearby workshop to attend and register by using [www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com). Students must type CCFC2016 and the City or Zip Code they wish to attend in "Search for events"

# FAFSA Tips For Your Students

1. File Early!
2. Not Sure You'll Get Aid? File Anyway.
3. Be Sure to Fill Out the Form Completely.
4. Move Money Out of Children's Bank and Brokerage Accounts.
5. Use a Supplemental Letter to Explain Extenuating Circumstances.
6. Spending Down Savings Can Help If You're Dealing With a Large Sum.
7. Appeal a Disappointing Aid Package.
8. Be Prepared for Different Aid Packages.
9. Beware Capital Gains, But Not Retirement Accounts
10. Don't Game the System.

Excerpt taken from [TIME Magazine: Educational Financing: 10 Tips for Getting the Most Out of College Financial Aid](#)

**Before you start the FAFSA,** here are the documents you'll need to have on hand. If you're a dependent student, you'll need all of these from your parents as well:

**Your Social Security number.**

**Your driver's license number,** if you have one.

**Your alien registration number** if you're not a U.S. citizen.

**Records of investments,** including stocks and bonds and real estate (not including the home you live in), and business and farm assets.

**A Federal Student Aid PIN** to sign electronically. (You can get one at [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov))

**Bank statements,** savings and checking account balances.

**Records of untaxed income,** including child support, interest income and veterans non-education benefits.

**Federal tax,** including W-2s.

## The Commission's Institutional Support Employee Spotlight

**Name:** Jon Waldrep

**Title:** MST in Program and Training Support

**Hometown:** Born in LA – lived all over the place, including abroad for 11 years

**Graduated From:** Palouse High School (Palouse, WA). Attended Washington State University, Humboldt State University, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh

**How long have you worked at the Commission:** 18 months

**What are some of your daily tasks:** Support schools via phone calls and e-mail. Assist with training, do the majority of the live webinars. Record training modules. Process forms.

**Favorite part of your job:** Anything involving outreach. I like participating in trainings and workshops. I enjoy doing Cash for College events. I love doing anything that promotes the Dream Act and helps our Dreamers.

**Advice for high school counselors:** Thank you for all that you do! Keep up the good work. The little ripple that starts when you help one of your students get into college becomes the wave of success that will carry them for a long time.

**If I could go back in time to visit my high school self, I would tell him/her:** Burn that plaid shirt. Enjoy your hair while you have it. Graduate from college. Learn to play an instrument. Invest in tech. Eat better.



# Operations Memos and Special Alerts From the California Student Aid Commission

- GSA 2015-25: [2015-16 California State Budget Update](#)
- GSA 2015-26: [Renewal of High School WebGrants Access Forms](#)
- GSA 2015-27: [Customer Relations Phone Support Hours – Upcoming Changes](#)
- GSA 2015-41: [California Dream Act Workgroup](#)
- GSA 2015-43: [Earlier FAFSA Prior-Prior Year Workgroup](#)
- GSA 2015-50: [Upcoming Changes to the 2017-18 FAFSA](#)
- GSA 2015-53: [Lupita Cortez Alcalá – New Executive Director](#)
- GSA 2015-54: [Register for a California Cash for College Workshop](#)
- GOM 2015-23: [California Dream Act Application Update](#)
- GOM 2015-25: [2015-16 Cal Grant Award Amounts and Dream Act Renewals Eligible to File a FAFSA](#)
- GOM 2015-33: [Assembly Bill 2160 – Electronic Grade Point Average Submission](#)
- GOM 2015-35: [Assembly Bill 2160 – Cal Grant Opt-Out Form](#)
- GOM 2015-37: [Student Expense Budgets / Income and Asset Ceilings](#)
- GOM 2015-38: [CA Chafee Foster Youth Grant Program Website Enhancements](#)
- GOM 2015-39: [2016-17 Cal Grant GPA Verification](#)
- GOM 2015-40: [2016-17 Cal Grant Electronic GPA Submission Training Resources](#)

To Subscribe to our ListServ and receive Operations Memo and Special Alerts straight to your email inbox, click [here](#).

## Contact Us

Give us a call or write to us for more information or support.

### California Student Aid Commission

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Visit us on the web at [www.csac.ca.gov](http://www.csac.ca.gov).

### Institutional/School Support:

Toll Free (888) 294-0153

Email: [schoolsupport@csac.ca.gov](mailto:schoolsupport@csac.ca.gov)

### Technical Support:

Toll Free (888) 294-0418 or (916) 464-7222

Email: [csachelpdesk@csac.ca.gov](mailto:csachelpdesk@csac.ca.gov)

