
California Chafee Foster Youth Grant Program

HIGHLIGHTS

Background

The California Student Aid Commission (Commission), through an interagency agreement with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), is in its ninth year of administering the Chafee Foster Youth Grant Program (Chafee Program). The Chafee Program provides eligible California youth leaving foster care with financial assistance to attend a postsecondary institution. Students may be eligible to receive up to \$5,000 per year.

2010-11 Academic Year

The Commission successfully awarded its entire \$11.2 million Chafee budget to 2,503 California Chafee Grant recipients for the 2010-11 academic year. \$4.9 of that total came from state funds and \$6.3 from federal funding. There were 923 first time awards, and 1,580 renewals. The average award per student was \$4540.

Preliminary 2010-11 awards started July 13, 2010, and Fall term payments began October 18, 2010.

In state fiscal year (FY) 2010-11, 16.1% of checks were returned; in FY 2009-10, 19.7% were returned.

2011-12 Academic Year

Cuts in federal and state funding levels are expected to continue for 2011-12; we're awaiting details on the final budget bill. The California Department of Social Services is providing monthly updates on foster youth eligibility, and the Commission is currently accepting the 2011-12 Chafee Application, FAFSA, and Chafee Need Analysis Report (NAR).

Total applications received so far: 18,176.
Total Foster Youth records: 23,566.

Based on current application submissions, \$4.9 million in preliminary awards could be offered.

Interesting Facts

◆ **Decreased Chafee Funds** – The state General Fund budget for the California Chafee Grant was reduced by 12% in both the 2009-10 and 2010-11 fiscal years.

The Federal Chafee Grant money was also reduced by over \$330,000 in the 2010-11 fiscal year. Total award funds available for FY 2010-11 is \$11.2 million.

◆ **Pending Applicants** – The Commission projects that supplemental funding of approximately \$8.8 million would be needed to award the remaining 1,852 applicants who are eligible to be first time Chafee Grant recipients for 2010-11.

Breakdown of applicants who are pending awards for 2010-11: 2nd time applicant (43), first time applicant aging out (201), first time w/dependents (198), first time demonstrating greater than \$5,000 need (1195), first time demonstrating less than \$5,000 need (215)

Operational Changes

◆ **Reminder Notices to Applicants** – During July and August 2010, the Commission sent reminder notices, via email and mail, to all applicants notifying them of the information needed to be considered for an award. This process of reminding students of application submission information resulted in a record number of complete Chafee applications for 2010-11. The 2011-12 "Missing Information" notices are scheduled to go out in June 2011.

◆ **Returned Checks** – Returned funds will be reserved for 21 days, allowing students time to contact the Commission to report a school change and submit a subsequent Financial Need Analysis Report. Email notifications are sent to the student and if no revision is received within 21 business days, the funds can be offered to other eligible foster youth students.

◆ **Weekly Payment Processing** – Chafee payment processing has moved from Thursday nights to Monday nights. Students and schools can view status updates Tuesday mornings.

◆ **Payment Notice to Schools** – Operations Memos will be sent to schools announcing that new term checks have been mailed.

WebGrants Enhancements

◆ **Payment Date** – WebGrants “Payment Date” has been changed to “Process Date”. When a school clicks on “Chafee Award,” a popup screen will show when the school should anticipate receiving the Chafee payment.

◆ **Status Roster by School, Not Enrolled Status** – In October 2010, the Commission added a “Not Enrolled” section to the *Status Roster by School Report*. The new section allows schools to distinguish a student who it has been determined is not enrolled at their school.

◆ **Important Chafee Updates** – Seasonal Chafee update messages regarding funding levels and award status are now listed on the WebGrants4Students website. Select the “Important Cal Grant/Chafee Updates” link.

◆ **Awards Priority** – Returning Chafee students received awarding priority as the Commission and CDSS agreed to maintain the 2009-10 selection criteria for 2010-11.

◆ **WebGrants NAR and Award Status** – WebGrants and WebGrants4Students “Application Status Screen” enhancement: NAR and Award status can be tracked, with red font for not processed and green checkmark for processed.

Communications and Training

◆ **Chafee Program Information** – The Chafee Application Web page, WebGrants4Students and WebGrants have been enhanced with additional program information.

◆ **Chafee Fact Sheets** – Chafee Fact Sheets, which have been updated, based on feedback received from the Foster Youth Success Initiative (FYSI) and the Community College Chancellor’s Office, are available to order from the Commission’s Shipping Center Warehouse.

◆ **Chafee Training Materials** – The Chafee Program PowerPoint Presentation and Chafee Coordinator’s Guide are available for schools at www.csac.ca.gov. Select “Schools”, “Colleges” and then click on “Training.” They are also available from the WebGrants “Help” link.

◆ **NAR Submissions** – Schools are encouraged to update the NAR for any students who are not eligible so that the funds can be released and awarded to another student. This will also reduce the number of returned checks.

◆ **Returning Checks** – Do not deface Chafee checks by writing “Void” or anything else on them. This causes delays in depositing and recycling the funds to offer new awards.

◆ **Chafee Payment Roster** – WebGrants enhancements are currently being reviewed and tested to improve Chafee payment delivery and tracking. Changes include the transition from the manual State Controller claim schedule process to an electronic process that will decrease the time it takes to deliver Chafee checks to schools. Training will be scheduled for June and July.