



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Student Aid Commission Praises Gov. Newsom For Continued Commitment to Cal Grant Program in January's Proposed Budget**

**"But student aid agency warns gaps in Cal Grant system must be modernized to ensure access for those most in need."**

**SACRAMENTO, Calif., Jan. 8, 2021** – The California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) commends Governor Newsom for supporting equity and access by maintaining a strong commitment to Cal Grant funding and financial aid that makes postsecondary education affordable for students across the state. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to exacerbate challenges faced by students, California must maintain its commitment to college affordability and the Cal Grant program.

California Governor [Gavin Newsom's proposed 2021-22 budget](#) released today includes over \$2.6 billion in Cal Grant funding. The Cal Grant is among the most generous and progressive financial aid programs in the country. The Commission estimates that over 400,000 students will receive a Cal Grant in the 2021-22 academic year.

In addition to the sustained financial aid for students, the Governor's proposed budget also includes several new ongoing investments and immediate responses to ensure students can maintain access to aid throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, including:

- \$58.2 million to preserve access to Cal Grants for students who had a change in living status due to COVID-19 and might have otherwise lost eligibility as a result;
- \$35 million in ongoing funding to increase the number of Competitive Cal Grant awards available from 41,000 to 50,000;
- \$20 million in ongoing funding to provide current or former foster youth with an increased Cal Grant Access Award of up to \$6,000;
- \$100 million in one-time funding to expand the Golden State Teacher Grant program to support students in teacher preparation programs and who commit to working in a high-need field at schools with high rates of non-credentialed or waiver teachers;

- A new requirement for schools to confirm that all high school seniors complete an application for financial aid, beginning in the 2021-22 academic year;
- And \$295 million in one-time funding for emergency financial assistance for low-income students, with \$250 million allocated to the California Community Colleges, \$30 million toward the California State University, and \$15 million to the University of California for this purpose.

“We at the Student Aid Commission are grateful to the Governor for his commitment to making college affordable for students,” said Marlene Garcia, Executive Director of the CSAC “By investing in financial aid, we are investing in California’s economic recovery with equity. As we work through this crisis and rebuild our economy, college student success is a strategic resource that will help accelerate the state’s economic growth and recovery.”

Catalina Cifuentes, Chair of the Commission, added, “I am thrilled to see Governor Newsom secure the futures of our high school students by ensuring we leave no stone unturned as we leverage federal and state resources to help them pay for college. The Commission is eager to work with our K-12 partners to ensure that all students in California graduate knowing there is financial aid available to help them pursue higher education.”

The Commission will continue to partner with policymakers to respond to students' growing needs, ensuring financial aid remains accessible to students throughout the COVID-19 crisis and beyond. As part of that effort, the Commission looks forward to continuing discussions on Cal Grant modernization and adoption of an “Equity Framework” as the first step to align with recent federal policy changes, better support students, and position the program for further investments as budget conditions improve.

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*The California Student Aid Commission administers the state’s \$2.8 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 Twitter @castudentaid.*