



NEWS RELEASE

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California Student Aid Commission Inaugurates California Chafee Grant Program

RANCHO CORDOVA—Today, the California Student Aid Commission announces the rollout of the California Chafee Grant Program – a federal educational voucher program that gives up to \$5,000 annually to former foster youth between the ages of 16 and 21. The Chafee Grant provides free grant dollars to be used for college or job training.

“We are excited to announce this ground-breaking opportunity for former foster youth in California,” said Diana Fuentes-Michel, executive director of the Commission. “The money is for this school year, so we encourage Independent Living Program (ILP-eligible) youths to apply immediately.”

To apply, ILP-eligible foster youths must have been in foster care on their 16th birthday, and not reached their 22nd birthday as of July 1, 2003. Two forms are required: the 2003-04 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the California Chafee Grant Program Application. The 2003-04 FAFSA is available on line at www.fafsa.ed.gov or can be picked up in paper format at high school counseling offices and college financial aid offices. The Chafee Grant Program Application is available through the Commission’s Web site at www.chafee.csac.ca.gov.

To receive a grant, the applicant must be enrolled in a college or vocational school, and at least half time in a course of study that is at least one year long – and maintain satisfactory academic progress.

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“It is important that applicants remember to use the **2003-04 FAFSA**, and not the 2004-05 FAFSA currently being completed by many students for grants and scholarships for the academic year that starts this fall,” reminded Michel.

In February 2003, the federal government authorized \$42 million for all states for Chafee Education and Training Vouchers for former foster youth. California is receiving nearly \$8 million to use for ILP-eligible foster youth. This is the first year the program has been funded, and future year funding depends on federal budget appropriations.

More information is available through foster youth caseworkers, county ILP coordinators, One-Stop Career Centers, college financial aid advisors and the California Student Aid Commission. On line, visit www.chafee.csac.ca.gov and www.nrcys.ou.edu/NRCYD/etv.htm for more information on the program and its benefits.

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Authority for the Commission to make grants requires approval from the California Department of Finance and California State Legislature to appropriate funds.

The California Student Aid Commission is the state’s principal provider of intersegmental statewide grant aid to postsecondary students. Founded in 1955 as the California State Scholarship Commission, the Commission’s primary programmatic responsibilities include operation of the Cal Grant program, which will distribute about \$612 million to California’s college students during the 2003-2004 school year, and several targeted state scholarship and loan forgiveness programs. The 15-member Commission oversees the activities of its nonprofit student loan services auxiliary, EDFUND. The Commission is headquartered in Rancho Cordova, California.

California Student Aid Commission and its associated graphic are the service mark of the California Student Aid Commission.

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