



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Michael Lemus / 916-206-1285
Michael.Lemus@csac.ca.gov

California Student Aid Commission Announces Updates to Cal Grant Equity Framework (AB 1456), Streamlining Program with Federal Guidelines and Reaching More Students

SACRAMENTO, Calif., April 7, 2021 – The California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) today [released updates](#) to the Cal Grant Equity Framework ([AB 1456](#)) to coordinate and streamline the earlier-introduced proposal with federal financial aid guidelines and to serve more California students.

“Since introducing AB 1456, the California Student Aid Commission has worked diligently to ensure the new Cal Grant Equity Framework reaches the most students while maintaining significant award amounts,” said CSAC’s Executive Director Marlene Garcia. “We thank our higher education, workforce and community partners for providing their input and helping us reach this revised proposal to address various needs.”

Following extensive conversations with the Cal Grant Reform Work Group, including students, higher education partners, and other key stakeholders, CSAC worked with AB 1456 to develop a policy package that considers budget options along with federal policy changes. Under the federal “FAFSA Simplification Act” taking effect October 1, 2022, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid’s (FAFSA) current Expected Family Contribution (EFC) will be replaced with a new Student Aid Index, expanding eligibility for the federal Pell Grant.

In a [recent survey](#) conducted to understand students’ experience during the pandemic, CSAC found that more than seven out of 10 students had lost some or all their income. It has been decades since significant reforms have been made to Cal Grant. This proposal will help address the ongoing basic needs crisis California’s college students are facing.

Each recipient of a Cal Grant award for tuition and fees will receive notification of their receipt of a Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefit and opportunity to apply for CalFresh, the federally funded program that provides financial assistance to help afford nutritious meals. Without receiving such a TANF-funded benefit, many students with significant financial needs are precluded from accessing CalFresh due to federal eligibility restrictions on students.

“This proposal and particularly the CalFresh benefit are significant as we cannot allow our struggling students to go hungry by skipping meals to pay for college expenses,” said Patrick Perry, Director of Policy, Research, and Data at CSAC, who oversaw the [CSAC Student Expenses and Resources Survey](#) that revealed amongst students experiencing food insecurity, 65 percent skipped meals due to affordability

issues. “This is one of many barriers this proposal will help tear down to better meet the needs of even more students.”

An initial down-payment toward the Cal Grant Equity Framework will allow California to expand access to financial aid for more than 280,000 more students in the first year of applications under the new system while removing the eligibility barriers that restrict access to aid for many of the most financially vulnerable students.

The updated Cal Grant Equity Framework is a positive step forward in making higher education more accessible for all students and making California a more equitable state. For more information on the updated proposal, please visit: www.csac.ca.gov/cal-grant-equity-framework

The bill is authored by Assemblymembers Jose Medina (D-Riverside) and Kevin McCarty (D-Sacramento), joined by principal co-author Sen. Connie Leyva (D-Chino). [Support for AB 1456](#) includes the Campaign for College Opportunity, Ed Trust West, and the Fix Financial Aid Coalition of student organizations across California colleges and universities.

For more information on the California Student Aid Commission (Commission) and to apply for financial aid, please visit csac.ca.gov and/or follow us on social media via our [LinkTree](#).

###

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 social media via our [LinkTree](#).