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CONTACT:

Michael Lemus

916 206-1285

Michael.lemus@csac.ca.gov

Nearly 100,000 more California Community College students awarded a Cal Grant following historic expansion of eligibility in the 2021-22 State Budget

Sacramento, Calif., November 15, 2021 – The Commission is excited to announce that approximately 99,000 more California Community College students were awarded a Cal Grant this Fall, following historic new investments featured in the 2021-22 State Budget. These students will also be guaranteed to retain their awards if they transfer to a California State University or a University of California campus as long as they maintain eligibility.

For years, students who enter community colleges after a pause from high school have been greatly limited in the financial aid they can access. It has been long documented how the outdated eligibility requirements of age and time since graduating high school have prevented hundreds of thousands of underserved students from receiving the financial aid that will help them succeed in college. In light of continued enrollment declines at the community colleges, which have been seen most dramatically among students outside the “traditional” college-going age, this expanded eligibility to state financial aid will be critical to promoting access to career training and higher education.

Marlene Garcia, Executive Director of the Commission, said “the Commission is so grateful to the Governor and Legislature for their investment to expand eligibility for Cal Grant awards. This momentous investment and eligibility expansion enables more students to realize their college dreams and offset the negative economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has only exacerbated ongoing college affordability struggles.”

“Financial aid changes lives for the students that receive it, and this year’s Budget will allow for lifechanging investments for thousands of more community college students. This change to the Cal Grant marks a critical step in making California’s state financial aid more accessible and equitable for thousands of students and adult learners, a majority of whom are low and middle-income. We at the Commission could not be more excited for California and our students,” said Commission Chair Catalina Cifuentes.

This transformative investment makes financial aid more inclusive and advances our Commission’s critical mission: promote educational equity by making postsecondary education affordable for all Californians. The Commission extends its gratitude to Governor Newsom and our legislative leaders, particularly Asm. Jose Medina, Asm. Kevin McCarty, Sen. Connie Leyva, and Sen. John Laird, for their work to ensure that the 2021 State Budget funded this important investment that allows us to better serve our community college and transfer students. We look forward to continuing to work with the Governor, Administration, and Legislature to build on these efforts in the State Budget process next year so that even more students can benefit from the important support that Cal Grant provides.

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The California Student Aid Commission administers the state’s \$4 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 by clicking on our Link Tree, <https://linktr.ee/castudentaid>.