

# California Dream Act Service Incentive Grant Program

## FAQ for Institutions

### 1. Who is eligible for the California Dream Act Service Incentive Grant Program (DSIG)?

- Completed and submitted California Dream Act Application (CADAA) for that academic year.
- Active recipient of a Cal Grant B Award.
- Demonstrate enough financial need (determined by CSAC or the institution).
- Enrolled in a qualifying institution.

### 2. How many DSIG awards are available?

The program is limited to 2,500 participants annually. Students must meet the criteria for an eligible student, attend a qualifying institution, and perform the required service hours with a qualifying organization.

Potentially eligible students will be notified by CSAC when the application period opens.

### 3. How much can students receive?

The California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) will award up to \$3,000 per academic year (up to \$1,500 per semester or up to \$1,000 per quarter).

### 4. What do students need to do to receive the award?

The California Dream Act Service Incentive Grant Program (DSIG) encourages California Dream Act Application (CADAA) students with a Cal Grant B award to perform community or volunteer service. Students shall perform at least 150 hours per semester or 100 hours per quarter of community or volunteer service.

### 5. Where can students perform service hours?

Students can volunteer with any of the organization(s) on the List of Service Organizations or any organization not on the list if it meets the criteria for a qualifying community or volunteer service organization. On-campus community or volunteer service organizations affiliated with a Cal Grant eligible school, such as outreach, student services, and multi-cultural organizations are deemed eligible.

### 6. What volunteer activities are permissible under the requirement that “The community or volunteer service performed by the participating student is not advocacy of a political, social, or religious nature?”

A student cannot volunteer for an organization that engages *exclusively* in political, social, or religious advocacy. Therefore, participating students can only work on tasks that are unrelated to advocacy efforts for organizations that have a mix of advocacy and non-advocacy programs.

We (CSAC) will validate this requirement by reviewing all of the activities listed on the Service Hour Tracker that the accepted student submits with their Payment Requests and verify that the activities were not directly tied to any political, social, or religious advocacy, as described in the paragraph above.

We encourage you to contact [schoolsupport@csac.ca.gov](mailto:schoolsupport@csac.ca.gov) if you still have questions about this requirement.

**7. Are students required to complete a Live Scan to participate in DSIG?**

No. Background checks are not required to participate in DSIG. However, some service organizations may require Live Scan or other types of background checks.

**8. Can students volunteer at more than one service organization at a time?**

There is no limit to the number of organizations students can volunteer with. All organizations must meet the requirements of a qualifying service organization and be listed on the Grant Application form.

**9. How do students apply for DSIG?**

Students will need to apply annually to participate in the California Dream Act Service Incentive Grant Program (DSIG). The DSIG Grant Application and directions can be found on the Apply webpage. Students must also meet Satisfactory Academic Progress and complete any necessary verification for their Cal Grant B award.

Institutions will need to provide the name, email, and signature of the Financial Aid Administrator on the Grant Application. Institutions must validate the check boxes on the form. DSIG award should be part of the self-help portion of the student award package (loans and work study) and follow campus award packaging guidelines. Any verification requirements must be completed per campus policy.

**10. When is the application due?**

Applications are available beginning July 1st and will be accepted through the end of the academic year (June 30<sup>th</sup>) or until all awards are exhausted, whichever comes first.

**11. Does DSIG eligibility rollover?**

No, DSIG eligibility is based on the corresponding Cal Grant award year. Students will need to apply annually to participate in the California Dream Act Service Incentive Grant Program (DSIG). The program is open from July 1 to June 30 and follows the annual academic year.

**12. How long can students receive DSIG?**

A student can receive DSIG for as long as they have an active Cal Grant B award. Students can receive the grant for up to 8 semesters or 12 quarters. When a student has exhausted their Cal Grant B eligibility, they will also no longer be allowed to participate in DSIG.

**13. Students status has changed and no longer can fill out the California Dream Act Application (CADAA), can they still receive DSIG?**

No, a student must be eligible to complete a California Dream Act Application (CADAA) to participate in DSIG.

**14. What is unmet need and how does it affect DSIG?**

Need is established by taking the cost of attendance and subtracting expected family contribution (EFC). If a student does not have enough need they will not qualify for the award. Students should consult with their financial aid office for information regarding their current unmet need.

Institutions must validate that the student has at least \$3,000 of financial unmet need to be eligible to receive up to \$1,500 per semester or up to \$1,000 per quarter.

**15. Are students attending school less than full-time eligible?**

Students enrolled half-time and three-fourths time are eligible, but the grant amount will be reduced based on enrollment. For half-time students, 50 percent is awarded. For three-quarter time (three-fourths full-time) students, 75 percent is awarded. Regardless of enrollment, students shall perform at least 150 hours per semester or 100 hours per quarter of community or volunteer service.

**16. Are students attending school less than half-time eligible?**

No, in order to receive the grant, a student must be enrolled at least half-time.

**17. Enrollment dropped below half time, what happens to the student's award?**

DSIG will follow your standard Cal Grant B payment process. Payments will be made based on the recipient's enrollment status using the institution's add/drop date, financial aid census date, or its equivalent. Students should consult with their financial aid office for information on how changing enrollment status can affect their financial aid.

**18. Students completed the required service hours. How do they receive payment?**

Students can request payment after performing at least 150 hours per semester or 100 hours per quarter of community or volunteer service. Students must submit the Payment Request form along with documentation of the service hours performed. The Payment Request form and directions can be found on the Request Payment webpage.

Institutions will need to provide the name, email, and signature of the Financial Aid Administrator on the Payment Request. Institutions must validate the check boxes on the form.

**19. Does the student need to complete their hours within the term they will be requesting payment?**

No. If the student is accepted into the program, once they have completed their required 150 hours per semester or 100 hours per quarter, they can request payment as long as the hours are completed within the academic year (July 1 through June 30).

**20. How do students show CSAC they completed the required number of service hours?**

Documentation of service hours performed can be submitted on the California Dream Act Service Incentive Grant Program (DSIG) Service Hours Tracker or on any other type of documentation utilized by the service organization(s) if the documentation includes the name and signature of the certifying official.

Institutions do not validate service hours and their completion.

**21. How will students be paid for service?**

Student and Financial Aid Administrator will be notified via email when they are approved for payment. Payment will be processed by the institution of attendance and can take 4-6

weeks. Initial DSIG payment will occur after student receives at least one Cal Grant B payment.

DSIG funds will no longer be released via the weekly claim schedule process as previously announced. CSAC will mail check to the student's institution. A check will be made out to the student and the Financial Aid Office will need to notify the student once the check is available for pick up.

**22. What are the DSIG disbursement policies for check handling?**

If a student is accepted into the program and their Payment Request has been approved, no one, under any circumstance, is allowed to pick up check on behalf of a recipient. According to generally accepted accounting practices, the institution is required to keep the recipient's signature on file to verify the recipient received the check.

**23. Can DSIG funds be used to pay a student's existing balance?**

DSIG disbursement must align with existing published institutional policies for Cal Grant B Access disbursements. Therefore, institution must notify or post their campus Cal Grant payment policy and allow student to directly receive their DSIG payment, if they request them.

**24. Is there a deadline to request a DSIG payment?**

Yes. DSIG payment deadline is the same as the Cal Grant payment deadline- in September following the award year. However, student must complete their required hours for DSIG (150 hours per semester/100 hours per quarter) within the academic year the student is accepted into the program.

**25. How many hours must students complete before payment?**

Students can request payment after performing at least 150 hours per semester or 100 hours per quarter of community or volunteer service.

**26. Can students who have completed less than the required number of hours request a partial payment?**

No, a student may only request payment after completing the required number of hours.

**27. What if students transfer to another institution?**

Student needs to re-register and submit a new Grant Application form with validation from the new institution.

**28. What if students attend more than one institution?**

Students must select one campus in charge of disbursement. Students should consult with their financial aid office for more information.

**29. Is the DSIG program open to undergraduates only?**

No, 5<sup>th</sup> year Teacher Credential Program (TCP) students are eligible. Students can receive the grant for up to 8 semesters or 12 quarters. When a student has exhausted their Cal Grant B eligibility, they will also no longer be allowed to participate in DSIG.

**30. Are 5<sup>th</sup> year programs eligible?**

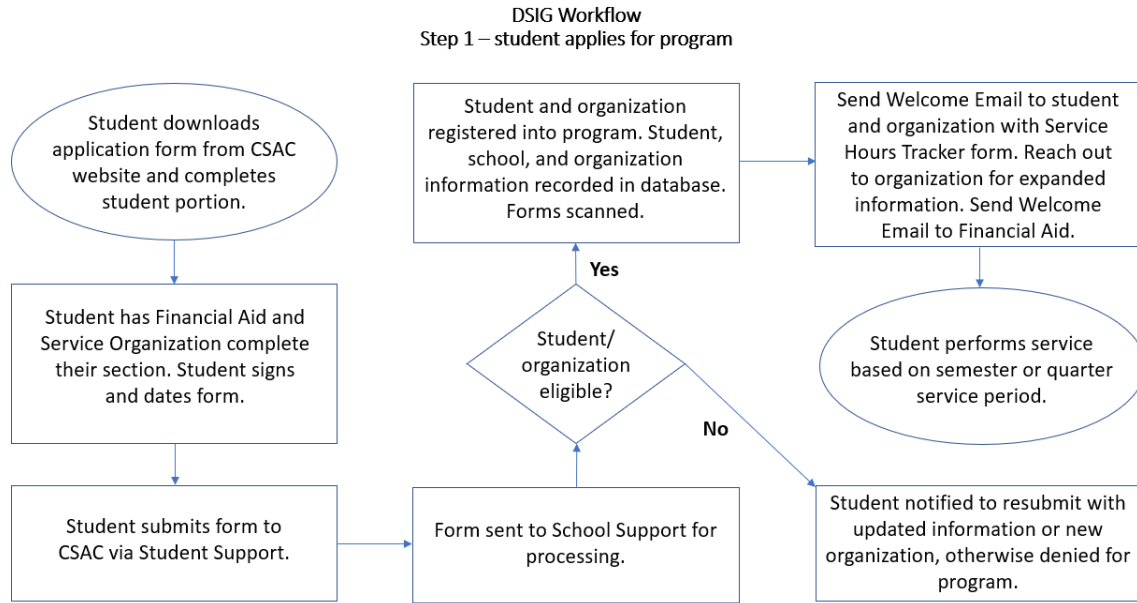
Yes. However, students can only receive the grant for up to 8 semesters or 12 quarters. When a student has exhausted their Cal Grant B eligibility, they will also no longer be allowed to participate in DSIG.

**31. Do Foster Youth qualify for extended eligibility?**

No, students can only receive the grant for up to 8 semesters or 12 quarters. When a student has exhausted their Cal Grant B eligibility, they will also no longer be allowed to participate in DSIG.

# DSIG Workflow

## Step 1 – Student applies for the California Dream Act Service Incentive Grant Program



## Step 2 – Student requests payment from the California Dream Act Service Incentive Grant Program

