



SPECIAL ALERT

STATE OF
CALIFORNIA



Update from the California Student Aid Commission

January 02, 2024

GSA 2024-01

TO: Financial Aid Administrators
High School Counselors

FROM: Tae Kang *Tae Kang*
Deputy Director, Program Administration & Services Division

SUBJECT: 2024-25 Financial Aid Applications are Open Now!

This Special Alert from the California Student Aid Commission (Commission) announces the release of the 2024-25 Free Application for Federal Student Aid ([FAFSA](#)) and the California Dream Act Application ([CADAA](#)). Students can begin applying for financial aid for the 2024-25 academic year with the FAFSA or CADAA which can be accessed through the [Commission's homepage](#). The priority deadline for the Cal Grant and Middle Class Scholarship programs is **April 2, 2024**, however, students should keep in mind that some colleges may have an earlier financial aid application deadline for their institutional aid.

Better FAFSA

The Better FAFSA has been completely redesigned to create a better user experience and a simpler application process. Parents, students, and spouses have role-based application sections that are not visible to other contributors. Either a parent or a student can begin a FAFSA using their StudentAid.gov account (formerly FSA ID) and then invite any required contributor(s) to the application. Be mindful of the [Federal Student Aid Announcement](#) on the Better FAFSA soft launch period and the planned maintenances that could impact performance and functionality.

Better CADAA

The Better CADAA has been enhanced to provide students with a more streamlined financial aid process by incorporating the nonresident tuition exemption form, commonly known as AB 540 affidavit, within the application. Unlike the FAFSA, the CADAA will not require any required contributor (i.e. student spouse, parent, parent spouse), to have a separate login to complete the application. The student will continue to play the central role in the completion of the application. Parent(s) of dependent students will see a more streamlined 1-step parental signature process, without the need to remember the system generated 4-digit Parental PIN. Students will also be presented with more clear help text to guide them through the questions – students can select to

automatically display the help text for all questions by enabling the “toggle” button on the screen.

Please refer to [GSA 2023-69](#) for additional details on the Better FAFSA and Better CADAA changes.

Cash for College Webinars

The Commission offers free Cash for College webinars designed to answer common questions about applying for financial aid. During these webinars, financial aid experts are available to answer questions in real-time, for students and families. The [Cash for College webinar schedule](#) is available on the Commission’s website. [Workshops hosted by community partners](#) can be found on the Cash for College Workshop page.

- Additional resources can be found on the [Better FAFSA, Better CADAA Webpage](#).
- Financial aid professionals and community members who assist students in completing their applications can register for a [Train the Trainer webinar](#) to learn more about the updates to the 2024-25 FAFSA and CADAA.
- Follow the Commission on [social media](#) to receive additional updates.

Need to contact us?

- School Support phone number: (888) 294-0153
- E-mail: schoolsupport@csac.ca.gov

Working together to effectively promote education beyond high school!