



NEWS RELEASE

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Nation's Leading "Dollars for College" Cal Grant Program a Success

RANCHO CORDOVA, CA — The California Student Aid Commission announced today that the number of Cal Grant awards provided to California's students statewide reached a record-breaking high. Now more than ever before in the State's history, students get "free" dollars to pursue their dreams of a college education and their hopes of a life of productive accomplishment.

"I am extremely pleased to announce that the number of 2001-2002 Entitlement and Competitive awards has topped last year's number of Cal Grant awards to California's students," said Commission Chair Michael Cooney of Santa Barbara, California. "The success of the Cal Grant program is an example of the Commission's commitment to give every Californian the opportunity to go to college."

Wally Boeck, Executive Director of the Commission, joined Chair Cooney in announcing that 48,358 Entitlement awards have now been made to just-graduating high school seniors. This number of awards exceeds last year's 39,000 awards by nearly 24%. He further noted that another 7,761 students have received a Cal Grant "C" award to support their vocational aspirations. By the end of August 2001, the last of 11,250 students who graduated from high school in prior years will have received Competitive awards that they can use at any participating California postsecondary school. And, by the end of September another set of Competitive awards will have been made to 11,250 California Community College students. In aggregate, in calendar year 2001, California will have provided a Cal Grant to at least 78,619 of its neediest students.

The expanded Cal Grant program, enacted by the California Legislature and signed by the Governor, went into effect just short of one year ago. Now, graduating high school seniors who qualify with both financial need and good grades get "free" money to pay for tuition and a portion of their living expenses while they pursue a college degree. There are two annual award cycles, one with a March 2 application filing deadline and one with a deadline of September 2 for students attending California Community Colleges.

"The application process requires two relatively simple but comprehensive steps," said Boeck. "It begins when the student files a Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA, with the federal

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processor by the deadline. The FAFSA starts students down the path to many opportunities for federal and state financial aid programs, including Cal Grants in California.” The second step, filing a Grade Point Average (GPA) Verification Form with the Commission, is a legislated requirement that applies to California Cal Grant applicants only.

Students can get help with forms and the application process for Cal Grants and a variety of other financial aid opportunities from their high school counseling office or the financial aid office on the college campus of their choice. In addition, a number of Web sites provide help: www.fafsa.ed.gov provides students with an online FAFSA application that can be completed and submitted directly to the federal processor over the internet. Other resourceful Web sites include: www.collegeboard.com and www.finaid.org. In addition, the Commission’s Web site at www.casca.ca.gov provides valuable college financial aid information.

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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 over \$590 million to California’s college students during the 2002-2003 school year, and several targeted state scholarship and loan forgiveness programs. The 15-member Commission oversees the activities of its non-profit 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.