



CALIFORNIA
STUDENT AID
COMMISSION

Better FAFSA, Better CADAA Bulletin

October 19, 2023

Welcome to the second edition of the California Student Aid Commission’s Better FAFSA, Better CA Dream Act Application Bulletin with information, updates, and resources for the upcoming 2024-25 financial aid cycle.

From our Executive Director

In our continuing effort to support you as we all prepare for changes to the 2024-25 federal and state financial aid applications, check out “What’s the Latest?” for information about the new FSA resource to calculate an estimate of a student’s financial aid information while we await the Better FAFSA release in December 2023.

Be sure to review your action item for this month, checkout free training opportunities, and then read “In the Spotlight” for a synopsis of the coming change for families with more than one dependent attending college. Further, you can now find upcoming CSAC training events and updated lists of resources we included in the first edition of this bulletin on our [Better FAFSA, Better CADAA webpage](#).

What’s the Latest?

The U.S. Department of Education’s office of Federal Student Aid (FSA) released a new online tool called the “[Federal Student Aid Estimator](#)” that will generate an estimate of the new Student Aid Index (SAI) and federal Pell Grant eligibility calculation. The estimator tool is available for use by anyone seeking preliminary SAI and federal financial aid information ahead of the December 2023 FAFSA release. The estimator tool will require answering a few questions about the applicant’s financial situation. **Please note the estimator may not always be available due to high traffic volume.*

October Action Item: [Registration is now open](#) for the 2023 College Affordability Summit on November 7 and 8 at the Riverside Convention Center. Be sure to register and

benefit from hearing about the latest updates, resources, and tools and **Keynote Speaker Soledad O'Brien**, award winning documentarian, journalist, and author whose documentary *Hungry to Learn* highlights the food insecurity challenges many students face.

Upcoming FREE Federal Training:

We encourage you to attend training events that will help you to better understand the new Better FAFSA and the changes it will bring to applicants and practitioners.

- October 25 & 26: [5th Annual Federal Financial Aid Virtual Bootcamp](#)
- November 28-December 1: [2023 Virtual Federal Student Aid Training Conference](#)

In the Spotlight

One significant Better FAFSA change will affect families with multiple students concurrently attending college. Under the current FAFSA model, a student's Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is divided by the number of the student's siblings who attend college. As a result, the student and the sibling both benefit from receiving a Federal Pell Grant award.

Starting with the 2024-25 year when the Student Aid Index (SAI) will replace EFC, only the student applicant is considered in the formula. While the sibling will no longer be considered in the SAI formula, the FAFSA will still require applicants to disclose the total number of people that will be attending college for the academic year in the parent section. According to a "[Dear Colleague](#)" letter issued by FSA on August 4, 2023, financial aid offices may exercise professional judgement to adjust COA or SAI for additional costs due to other siblings' enrollment in college.

Just Released: Check out the recently launched [Better FAFSA, Better CADAA webpage](#) for updates, training opportunities, and helpful resources.

Key Application Dates to Keep in Mind:

- This year the Better FAFSA, Better CA Dream Act Application opening is delayed from the traditional October 1 date to **December 2023**. The exact date will be communicated once it has been determined.
- The March 2 priority deadline has been extended to **April 2, 2024 for Cal Grant**, due to the delayed application opening. Many campuses use the March 2 priority deadline to award institutional aid.

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