

## What the Cal Grant Program Means to California's College Students

### The Cal Grant Program

- Helped almost 220,000 low- and middle-income Californians afford college in 2009-10
- Provides financial assistance to students who need help paying for tuition, books, and other expenses
- Cal Grant eligibility is based on students' family income and their grades
- Recent high school graduates who meet income and GPA criteria are guaranteed an award
- Other students – typically those who delayed going to college after high school – can apply for a very limited number of “competitive” awards. For the 2010-11 year, there were 13 eligible applicants for each available competitive grant.

### Cal Grants Help Students Succeed

A 2004 study found that students who received Cal Grants were more likely to stay enrolled than students who did not receive a grant, even after controlling for family income and academic preparation. Community college students who received Cal Grants were more likely to transfer than those who did not receive grants.<sup>1</sup>

### Cal Grants Reduce Students' Need to Borrow

Fewer bachelor's degree recipients graduate with student loan debt in California than in most other states, and those who do take out loans borrow less. Of students graduating with BAs in 2009, 48 percent had taken out an average of \$17,326 in student loans, making California 43<sup>rd</sup> in the nation in the share of graduates borrowing and 44<sup>th</sup> in the amount borrowed.<sup>2</sup>

### The Faces of Cal Grants

These and more than 250 other student stories can be found on [Facebook](#).<sup>3</sup>



**Mahmoud:** “Hi I go to San Diego Mesa College and I believe the Cal Grants are very important not just for me but for all my fellow students...They give many opportunities for all of us to better ourselves and become contributors to our society.”



**Nora:** “I attend Cabrillo College in Aptos, CA and the Cal Grants that I receive allow me to study more and work less. This means more time for classes and studying and still having money for food and rent... I am grateful for the opportunity that Cal Grants affords me!”



**Mayra:** “The Cal Grants I've received is probably one of the main reasons I am able to attend UCSC. I come from a low-income family and cannot possibly afford to attend school without financial help like these grants.”



**Sammy:** “Without Cal Grants I would have to work at least one full time job JUST to pay my tuition. I wouldn't be able to devote my time to studying and getting good grades. What is the point of going to school if you can't even benefit from it?”

<sup>1</sup> EdFUND, 2004, “Determined to Succeed: Realizing the College Dream in California”

<sup>2</sup> Project on Student Debt, 2010, “Student Debt and the Class of 2009”

<sup>3</sup> Student stories collected by CalPIRG, and available at:  
<http://www.facebook.com/topic.php?uid=240416953666&topic=13099>