



A Stronger Cal Grant is the Key to Meeting California's College Attainment and Equity Goals:

Expand access to the Cal Grant program to over 150,000 more students now

As student, financial aid, higher education, and equity advocates, we celebrate last year's historic investments to expand access to the Cal Grant program to over 150,000 more students, especially those attending community colleges. But we cannot rest because much work remains to bring the high and still growing costs of college into true reach for all Californians. Additionally, comprehensive financial aid reform is more urgent than ever to support California's long-term economic and social wellbeing. And if we want to increase college attainment in our state, access to financial aid is critical.

Fortunately, the student-centered proposals included in Assembly Bill 1746 by Assembly Members Medina and McCarty and Senator Leyva provide a roadmap for simplifying and strengthening the Cal Grant in 2022-23. The Cal Grant Equity Framework included in the bill would:

- Streamline the eight current Cal Grant programs into two programs - Cal Grant 2 for community college students and the Cal Grant 4 for students at four-year colleges.
- Align eligibility with the federal Pell Grant to enable earlier and clearer communication with student and families about how much aid they can expect to receive in grant aid.
- Address non-tuition expenses which are a greater proportion of college costs.
- Remove barriers for students to get the aid they need to pursue their college and workforce training goals.

The Cal Grant Equity Framework once enacted will be life changing for California's student parents, adult learners, CA Dream Act filers, veterans and returning learners who seek meaningful credentials that meet the needs of a quickly evolving economy and workforce. An overwhelming portion of these students come to our colleges from low-income households and/or from communities of color that have been underserved in our college and universities due in part to cost barriers. California's financial aid investments in their futures will pave the way to a more inclusive, thriving future for all.

As the economic and educational impacts of COVID-19 persist, the time for policymakers to act is now; students and families across our state cannot afford to wait. Together we are ready to work with Governor Newsom and the Legislature to keep momentum going by building upon last year's critical Cal Grant investments through adoption and implementation of the Cal Grant Equity Framework in the 2022-23 State Budget. California can and must continue to set the bar for the most effective, student-centered, and equitable financial aid system in the nation.

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