

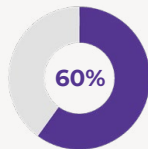


Double Down on California Community College Investment with the Cal Grant Equity Framework

A modern, accessible financial aid system will enable more diverse, talented Californians to be educated at California Community Colleges and enter the workforce or transfer to a four-year university.

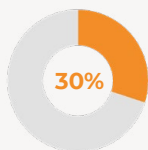
California Community Colleges are one of the most accessible higher education pathways for our state's diverse student population. Despite their vital [role](#) in our state's workforce pipeline, California Community Colleges have suffered significant drops in enrollment due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with many CCC students experiencing financial insecurity and having to sacrifice their dreams of higher education. But [research shows](#) that students receiving a Cal Grant had significantly higher persistence rates and completed more units compared to other CCC students. We cannot let these students slip away, especially when we have solutions in front of us to keep them on a path to getting their degree and joining the workforce.

The Cal Grant Equity Framework provides a solution that will reform California's outdated financial aid system and build on the tremendous investments already made by the Newsom Administration and Legislature. The Framework, outlined in AB 1746 (Medina, McCarty, & Leyva) will shift California to a state-aid model based on student needs – rather than outdated rationing devices like age and time out of high school – that will create a more inclusive financial aid system. If adopted and funded through this year's budget, the Framework will ensure thousands more student parents, adult learners, California Dream Act filers, and returning learners will receive Cal Grant awards than are currently being served.



Over **109,000 additional CCC students** will be eligible under the Cal Grant Equity Framework – a **60% increase** from the current number of eligible students.

California Community College students stand to benefit most from the Cal Grant Equity Framework, with an increase of 60% of newly eligible students. This investment in new Cal Grant awards will ensure the CCC system is more accessible and equitable for students, particularly those who may be returning learners, veterans or student parents. In turn, these new awards will encourage more students to return to CCCs and resume their higher education journeys, ultimately fueling our state's workforce pipeline.

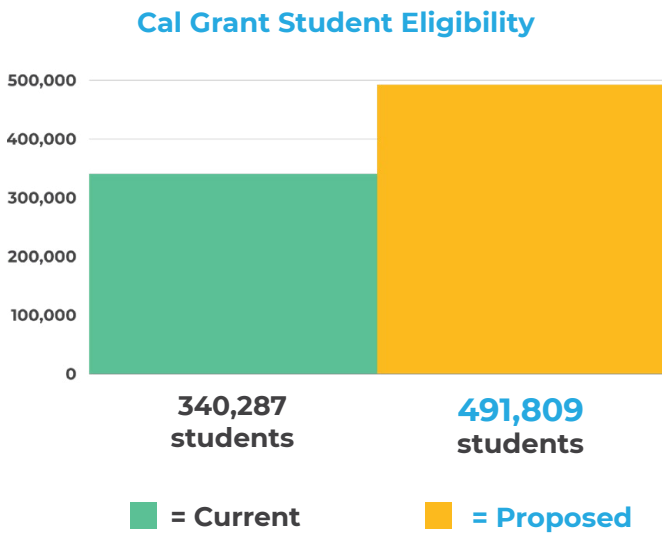


The Cal Grant Equity Framework makes over **44,000 student-parents eligible for Cal Grants**, representing 30% of all newly eligible students under the Framework. Of those newly eligible student parents, **38,000 are enrolled at community colleges.**

The Governor is calling for more higher education investments to reach critical attainment goals, and the Cal Grant Equity Framework provides a perfect vehicle to reach those goals via this year's budget. Due to the unfortunate enrollment decline caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, now is the best time for California to address financial aid reform and lay the path forward for increased enrollment, attainment and affordability. The time for policymakers to act is now; California Community College students and their families across our state cannot afford to wait.

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HOW WILL THE CAL GRANT EQUITY FRAMEWORK WORK?



The Cal Grant Equity Framework will streamline our current financial aid system to serve more students and revitalize California's economy, businesses and workforce. The remodeled program would align eligibility of state-based financial aid with federal policy, eliminate eligibility barriers and target state resources for the most financially vulnerable students by reaching over **150,000 MORE** students by leveraging all parts of the financial aid system.

Fully modernizing California's state financial aid system under the Cal Grant Equity Framework and building off last year's investments would:

- Address gaps in the current Cal Grant program by removing barriers that keep out talented students who make an average income of \$36,000
- Streamline the eight current Cal Grant programs into two programs - Cal Grant 2 for community college students and Cal Grant 4 for students at four-year colleges.

- Align eligibility with the federal Pell Grant to enable earlier and clear communication with students and families about how much aid they can expect to receive.
- Expand access to awards for foster youth and student parents to use for non-tuition expenses, helping address the student basic needs crisis.

As higher education has become more accessible, talented students from diverse backgrounds have pursued college, and they need financial aid support to succeed. The new Cal Grant Equity Framework will:

- Provide additional grants like the Students with Dependent Children (SWDC) to reach more than 44,000 new student parents and uplift more families.
- Work in alignment with other forms of financial aid including the Middle Class Scholarship and institutional aid.
- Enable more students to apply for CalFresh, a federally-funded benefit that helps recipients afford regular meals to help better meet their basic needs.

The Cal Grant Equity Framework will provide a workable, equitable financial aid system that meets the needs of students of color and lower-income students. The Framework must be adopted and funded through this year's budget if the state is to meet the needs of students seeking higher education as well as the Governor's ambitious degree and certificate attainment goals.

California leaders have an unparalleled opportunity to address college affordability and decisively close attainment gaps by simplifying the Cal Grant system. California has what it takes to create the most equitable system in the nation by prioritizing its students and removing remaining barriers.

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