



FAFSA/CADAA Updates



A relatively new state law (AB 469) requires all graduating seniors to complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or California Dream Act Application (CADAA). This will help determine if they qualify for free money for college (community college, 4-year university, or trade school) in the 2026-2027 school year. Many students are eligible for federal or state aid and weren't even aware, even for family incomes up to \$250,000/year. Opt out is available after meeting with your counselor, but not recommended.

Full-time, First Year Community College students are eligible for "Two Years Free" Programs at all California Community Colleges, per AB 19. The program is NOT income-dependent but to be eligible, a FAFSA or CADAA must be completed by the March 2nd priority deadline!

The FAFSA and CADAA were updated two years ago to be more simplified and streamlined ([FAFSA Simplification Act](#)). The **2026-27 FAFSA and CADAA** can be submitted from **October 1, 2025-March 2, 2026**. You are encouraged to submit your application as soon as possible after it opens. You will use income from the **2024*** tax year and the FAFSA will automatically transfer income tax data. For tips when filling out the FAFSA, visit <https://studentaid.gov/articles/category/fafsa-tips/>. The new FAFSA requires every household income contributor to create an FSA ID account (digital signature). **Avoid delays by having every contributor create an FSA ID account now at <https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id>.**

For the FAFSA online application and more information about the FAFSA, please visit <https://studentaid.gov>. Eligible *non*-citizens (AB 540) should instead fill out a California Dream Act Application (CADAA) at <https://dream.csac.ca.gov>. Foster youth may be eligible to receive CHAFEE Grants. For information and to submit a CHAFEE application, visit <https://www.csac.ca.gov/california-chafee-grant-program-1>.

Cal Grant- free state aid!

Cal Grant recipients receive free tuition at UC and CSU! Income caps are probably higher than you think (up to \$144,700 for a family of 4 with at least a 3.0 GPA)- [Cal Grant Income Ceilings for 2026-27](#)

To be considered for a 2026-27 Cal Grant award, students only need to complete a FAFSA or CADAA. Horizon has already electronically submitted a certified Cal Grant Grade Point Average (GPA) to the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC). There is no need to fill out a Cal Grant GPA Verification Form.

Once you have submitted your FAFSA, be sure to create a student WebGrants account at <https://mygrantinfo.csac.ca.gov/>. You are required to confirm your college and confirm HS graduation.

Plan to attend [Horizon's Financial Aid Presentation](#) in Zoom on **October 13th at 3pm** for more information. Instructions, an [aid estimator tool](#), articles, tips, myths, youtube video, an informational brochure called "How To Get Money For College", [CalKIDS](#), and other financial aid and scholarship information can be found on the [Financial Aid/Scholarship Hub page](#). Be sure to check this [GLOSSARY](#) for important FAFSA/CADAA terms.

HOW TO GET HELP -- Complete [lessons](#) on www.californiacolleges.edu. Refer to the Sallie Mae FAFSA Guide. Attend a free [Cash For College Workshop](#) near you or a [CSAC Cash For College Webinar](#). FAFSA/CADAA workshops are also available at your local community college. Check the Hub for dates/links.

***Students who experienced a decrease in parental income in 2025 should still complete the FAFSA with 2024 income and then follow up with each college's Financial Aid office to explain the special circumstance.**