California Dream Act FAQ's for Students and Parents

Background and Eligibility

Q1.   What is the California Dream Act?

The California Dream Act allows undocumented and nonresident students (U.S. Citizens and eligible non-citizens) who qualify for a *non-resident exemption* under Assembly Bill 540 (AB 540) to receive certain types of financial aid such as: private scholarships funded through public universities, state administered financial aid, university grants, community college fee waivers, and Cal Grants.

In addition, the California Dream Act, allows eligible students to pay in-state tuition at any public college in California.

Q2.   Who can apply for the California Dream Act?

Students who live in California and meet the eligibility requirements for a *non-resident exemption*, as well as students who have a U Visa or TPS status, can use the California Dream Act application (CADAA). Similarly, students without Social Security Numbers or students who have lost DACA status (or never applied for DACA), may still be eligible.

The full language of the law and eligibility requirements is stated in CA Education Code 68130.5.

Q3.   What is the difference between the FAFSA and the California Dream Act application?

Students should only complete one of the applications (not both), according to the citizenship requirements below:

1. You are eligible to complete the FAFSA at www.fafsa.ed.gov if you are a:
    - U.S Citizen
    - Permanent Resident
    - Eligible non-citizen
    - T Visa holder

2. You are eligible to complete the CADAA at https://dream.csac.ca.gov if you are:
    - Undocumented
    - Have a valid or expired DACA
    - U Visa holders
    - Have Temporary Protected Status (TPS)

- Meet the *non-resident exemption* requirements under AB 540

Note: If you have further questions, including how to ensure you are completing the correct financial aid application, you can visit the *Immigrants Rising* website and review the document titled, "FAFSA VS CA Dream Act: Apply to the Correct Financial Aid," at https://immigrantsrising.org/resource/fafsa-vs-ca-dream-act-apply-to-the-correct-financial-aid-in-ca/

Q4. What are the *non-resident exemption* requirements under AB 540?

Students must meet all four (4) requirements to be eligible:

1. Time and coursework requirements

   - High school attendance in California for three or more years, **OR**
   - Attainment of credits earned in California from a California high school equivalent to three or more years of full-time high school coursework and a total of three or more years of attendance in California elementary schools, California secondary schools, or a combination of those schools. **OR**
   - Attainment of credits earned at a California adult school, **OR**
   - Credits earned at a California Community College, **OR**
   - A combination of the schools listed above

2. Degree or unit requirements (completion of either of the following):

   - Graduation from a California high school or the equivalent (GED, HiSET, TASC)
   - Attainment of an Associate degree from a California Community College
   - Fulfillment of the minimum transfer requirements from a California Community College to a UC or CSU campus

3. Register or enroll in an accredited and qualifying California college or university
   For a list of Cal Grant eligible schools, please visit:
   https://webutil.csac.ca.gov/CalGrant_Inst/CalGrantInstSearch.aspx

4. Submit a signed "Non-Resident Exemption" Request
   Some schools will refer to this document as an "AB 540 affidavit." This form states that you meet all the requirements to qualify for a non-resident exemption under AB 540 and, if you are undocumented, that you are in the process of legalizing your immigration status (or will do so as soon as you are eligible).

   Please contact the Residency Deputy or the Admissions and Records office at your college for information on how to complete your non-resident exemption form and to determine if supporting documentation is needed. You should complete this form upon accepting an offer to attend a college in California and at least one semester or quarter before you are scheduled to start classes.

Q5. **What should I do if I've already submitted a FAFSA before learning that I should have submitted a CADAA?**

You must first complete the CADAA and then complete the *"Application Conversion Form G-55"* which can be obtained at: www.csac.ca.gov/post/application-conversion-form Please make a copy of this form for your records, send the original form (along with documentation to prove your identification) to the Commission and contact the financial aid office at the college you plan to attend to inform them of this error.

Q6. **Can I fill out the CADAA if I don't have a Social Security Number?**

Yes. Students are not required to have a Social Security Number to submit the CADAA. However, students will need to meet the *non-resident exemption* requirements under AB 540 to receive state aid.

Q7. **What is a "U" or "T" Visa?**

The "U" Visa provides eligible crime victims with legal status to temporarily remain in the U.S. while assisting law enforcement. The "T" Visa is set aside for those who are or have been victims of human trafficking and allows victims to remain in the United States to assist in an investigation or prosecution of human trafficking. AB 1899 allows "T" and "U" Visa holders to be eligible to apply for, and participate in, all student financial aid programs and scholarships administered by a public postsecondary educational institution or the State of California.

U Visa holders should file the CADAA, T Visa holders should file the FAFSA.

Q8. **Are "temporary" non-immigrant visa holders eligible to complete the CADAA?**

No, students who hold a temporary nonimmigrant visa are not eligible to complete the CADAA. The exception is the U Visa. For a list of "temporary" non-immigrant visas, please visit www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/temporary-nonimmigrant-workers

Q9. **I have a Social Security card, but it says, "VALID FOR WORK ONLY WITH DHS AUTHORIZATION." Can I file the FAFSA?**

A Social Security card with this designation is issued to people lawfully admitted to the United States on a temporary basis who have Department of Homeland Security (DHS) authorization to work. If you meet the *non-resident exemption* requirements detailed in previous questions, you may file the CADAA.

Q10. **As an undocumented student, am I eligible for federal student aid?**

No, undocumented students are not eligible for federal student aid. If you attend an eligible California public or private institution, you will be considered for California state financial aid. For example, Cal Grants, Chafee Grant (for current or former Foster Youth) and institutional aid. Examples of institutional aid are: "Blue and Gold Opportunity" Grants (UC), State University Grants (CSU),

California College Promise Grant (formerly known as the BOG fee waiver), and private scholarships administered through the college or university.

Eligible students attending the University of California (UC) or the California State University (CSU) may be eligible for the Dream Loan or the Middle Class Scholarship. Your college or university will determine your financial aid eligibility. We encourage you to submit the CADAA by March 2, because it is the deadline to receive consideration for most types of aid available to you.

How to apply for the CADAA

Q11.   How do I apply for financial aid under the California Dream Act?

The CADAA is used by undocumented students who meet the *non-resident exemption* requirements under AB 540. The application can be found at https://dream.csac.ca.gov. The California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) processes the application and any aid received can only be used at eligible California public or private institutions. For a list of eligible schools, please visit https://webutil.csac.ca.gov/CalGrant_Inst/CalGrantInstSearch.aspx.

U.S. citizens and eligible non-citizens such as permanent residents should complete the FAFSA at www.fafsa.ed.gov. They may be eligible for federal student aid as well financial aid through the State of California.

To be considered for a Cal Grant award, a completed financial aid application and a certified Grade Point Average (GPA) must be submitted by the March 2 deadline.

Q12.   When will the CADAA be available?

The online and paper application for the next academic year will be available October 1st. For faster processing time, the CSAC recommends completing your application online.

Q13.   Where can I get help with completing my CADAA?

You can visit the financial aid office (FAO) at your college or speak with your high school counselor/advisor, or you can attend one of the many Cash for College workshops held every year throughout the state, from October 1 to the March 2 deadline. These workshops are FREE, are often staffed by financial aid experts and students can receive one-on-one help with completing their financial aid applications, including the Chafee Grant (for current or former foster youth). To locate your nearest Cash for College workshop, please visit www.cash4college.csac.ca.gov

Q14.   Does my parent's citizenship status affect my eligibility for financial aid under the California Dream Act?

No, your parents' citizenship status does not impact your eligibility to receive financial aid under the California Dream Act.

Q15. Am I required to register for Selective Service?

If you are a male between the ages of 18 and 25, in most cases you are required to register with the Selective Service System (SSS) and show proof of registration to your college/university before receiving state financial aid. The SSS does not share your immigration status.

You do not need to have a Social Security Number (SSN) to register for Selective Service. If you do not have an SSN, or have been issued an SSN through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, you can register for Selective Service by completing a paper *"Selective Service Registration"* form, which can be picked up at any U.S. Post Office or can be downloaded for print here: https://www.sss.gov/Portals/0/PDFs/regform_copyINT_1.pdf

Q16. Do I have to wait until my parents or I file taxes to complete my CADAA?

No. The CADAA is now using prior-prior-year tax information. If you or your parents were not required to file taxes during that year, simply select "Will not file" on the tax filing question in the application.

Example of Prior-Prior Tax year:

If you will be attending college during:	You should complete the CADAA for:	You will be using income from:
July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020	October 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019	2017
July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021	October 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020	2018

Application Deadline and Parent Signature Information

Q17. When is the deadline to submit the CADAA?

Students are encouraged to apply by the March 2 priority deadline to ensure they are considered for all financial aid for which they might be eligible.

Q18. Should I fill out the CADAA if I missed the March 2 priority deadline?

Yes, still complete your application because you can still be considered for other aid such as the California College Promise Grant (formerly known as the BOG fee waiver) at community colleges and institutional grants at some CSU and UC campuses. Keep in mind that students who apply after the March 2 deadline will not be considered for Cal Grants or the Middle Class Scholarship, therefore you should submit your CADAA by March 2 in future years. The CSAC has junior and senior financial aid checklists to help you plan and meet important deadlines. To view the financial aid checklists, please visit: www.csac.ca.gov/pod/financial-aid-checklist.

Q19. How does my parent sign my application?

Parents will sign your CADAA using a self-selected PIN. The PIN is a 4-digit number that can be used each year to "electronically" sign the CADAA. Parents can apply for a California Dream Act PIN only after you (the student), has completed your online application. To apply for a PIN and to sign the CADAA, parents will navigate to the link that says, "Submit Student Application." Keep this PIN in a safe place – your parent will need it to re-sign each time you make a correction to your application.

Q20.   What if my parents live in another country and I do not live with them?

Students who are under the age of 24 as of December 31 of the award year and do not meet any other very limited criteria, are considered "Dependent" for financial aid purposes and therefore, must provide parental information. One parent must sign your application, even if you do not live with your legal parents (your biological and/or adoptive parents). Widowed stepparents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, foster parents, siblings or legal guardians are <u>not</u> considered your parent(s) for financial aid purposes, unless they have legally adopted you.

If you are unable to get your parent information, complete the application as much as you can and contact your college's financial aid office (FAO) as soon as possible. The FAO will evaluate your situation and inform you if they can override the need for parent information. The CSAC does not have the authority to override dependency or financial information.

Note: For a complete list of "Dependency" questions, to help you determine whether you are dependent or independent for financial aid purposes, please visit: www.studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa/filling-out/dependency

For help with determining which parent(s) should be included on your CADAA application, please visit: www.studentaid.ed.gov/sa/sites/default/files/who-is-my-parent.png

After Submitting Your Application

Q21.   How do I fix mistakes on my CADAA?

After you submit your application, review the Confirmation Page to identify and fix any errors that need correction. After the initial successful submission of your application, the CSAC will send you an email with your nine-digit Dream ID number. If you haven't received an email from us, be sure to check your spam/junk folders. Keep this number in a safe place; you will use your Dream ID number to create a *WebGrants 4 Students* account, when you talk to your college, or the CSAC.

Q22.   I applied for financial aid using the CADAA. What's next?

After completing the CADAA, the CSAC will send your application data to all the colleges listed on your application. After allowing for processing time, 8-10 business days, you may follow up with those colleges to determine whether you are eligible for campus aid. To apply for a Cal Grant, your GPA must be submitted to the CSAC by the March 2 deadline. California law requires that by October 1, 2018, all public high schools (including charter schools), electronically upload GPAs for current enrolled high school seniors that do not opt out.

Qualifying for a Cal Grant is not automatic, it is a need-based program. You must meet financial income and asset eligibility, and GPA requirements. After receiving your CADAA and GPA, the CSAC will process your application to determine if you are eligible to receive a Cal Grant. After completion of your CADAA, you must create a *WebGrants 4 Students* account at https://mygrantinfo.csac.ca.gov/ in order to check the status of your Cal Grant eligibility.

Additional information on how to apply for a Cal Grant can be found at www.csac.ca.gov/how-apply

Q23. **How do I submit my GPA for a Cal Grant if I don't have a Social Security Number (SSN)?**

You do not need to have a Social Security Number to have your GPA submitted to CSAC. California law requires that by October 1, 2018, all public and charter high schools electronically upload GPA data for current enrolled high school seniors that do not opt out. If you are a current high school senior or graduated from high school last year, your high school may have already submitted your GPA.

To check on the status of your GPA, please check your *WebGrants 4 Students* account or speak with your high school counselor (if you are a current high school senior or graduated last year) or contact your financial aid office at your college (if you are a college student).

If your GPA has not been submitted, you can download the paper *Cal Grant GPA Verification Form (G-4)* and complete questions 1-9. Take this form to the guidance counseling office at your high school. Your high school will verify your GPA and sign the form. You must mail this completed form to CSAC on or before the March 2 deadline. To download the paper *GPA Verification Form*, please go to: www.csac.ca.gov/post/cal-grant-gpa-verification-form

Note: If your school is uploading your GPA electronically, please <u>do not</u> send the paper *GPA Verification Form.*

Q24. **I am a foster youth and I don't have a Social Security Number or any paperwork about my biological parents. Can I get any financial aid for college?**

If you meet the *non-resident exemption* requirements, you may file the CADAA. Furthermore, eligible foster youth students may qualify for other types of aid such as:

- Chafee Grant
- Cal Grant
- Scholarships offered through California public colleges and universities
- California College Promise Grant (formerly BOG fee waiver)
- Private grants and scholarships

Q25. **I was notified that I was awarded a Cal Grant! How do I receive the money?**

You must set up a *WebGrants 4 Students* account to manage your Cal Grant. This account allows you to make school changes or address changes, and to find out if there are additional actions that must be taken before your school can disburse your first payment. To create your account, go to https://mygrantinfo.csac.ca.gov/

Upon logging on to your *WebGrants 4 Students* account, verify that the college that is displayed, is in fact the college you are attending. If it is not, you can submit a school change via your *WebGrants 4 Students* account. Your college will be responsible for disbursing all Cal Grant payments. Check your school's student portal, the financial aid office, or your school's financial aid website to see a schedule of the Cal Grant disbursement dates. If that date has come and gone without you receiving a disbursement, check with your college immediately to see if your financial aid file is incomplete.

Q26.   How do I renew my Cal Grant?

If you received a Cal Grant, you must re-submit your CADAA every year to renew your award. You will use the same login information (User ID/Password) from the previous year to enter your CADAA. To re-submit your application, go to https://dream.csac.ca.gov and choose the "Login" option. You will need to provide your login information and select the appropriate academic year application. Refer to **Question #16** of this document, should you need help determining which application year to complete.

Students will receive their Cal Grant renewal notification in late spring, so you should re-submit your CADAA before then. If you were not awarded the Cal Grant, you should reapply the following year by re-submitting your CADAA and a new GPA before the March 2nd deadline. Refer to **Question #23** of this document for details on how to submit your GPA. If you have never submitted a CADAA, go to https://dream.csac.ca.gov and click on the "Start" button.

Q27.   What is the Dream Loan?

Senate Bill 1210 establishes the California DREAM Loan Program for purposes of extending loans to students who meet the *non-resident exemption* requirements established by AB 540 and have demonstrated a financial need. The DREAM Loan authorizes any campus of the University of California or the California State University to participate. California community colleges are not authorized to participate. Eligible students should contact their college/university for more information.

Q28.   Is it safe for me to apply for the CADAA?

CSAC released a joint statement with the California Department of Education stating,

"The information provided via the California Dream Act Application is used solely to determine eligibility for state financial aid and isn't shared with the federal government or used for immigration enforcement purposes. The CSAC will protect this information to the fullest extent of the law."

To read the full statement, visit www.cde.ca.gov/nr/el/le/yr17ltr0221.asp

Talk to your institution's financial aid office for more information.

Learn more about the California Dream Act

https://dream.csac.ca.gov