



California Dream Act Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for Parents and Students

*****Next Dream Application + certified GPA Verification deadline: March 2, 2015*****

The California Dream Act allows undocumented and nonresident documented students who meet certain provisions to apply for and receive private scholarships funded through public universities, state-administered financial aid, university grants, community college fee waivers, and Cal Grants.

Q. What is AB 540, and how do I obtain AB 540 status?

A. AB 540 students may include undocumented students, students who are US citizens but who are not CA residents, and dependent students whose parents are not CA residents. AB 540 students are those who:

- Have attended a CA high school for at least three years or graduated early from a CA high school with the equivalent of three or more years of credit*, AND
- Graduated from a CA high school, or passed the California High School Proficiency Exam (CHSPE), or obtained a Certificate of General Education Development (GED), AND
- Enrolled in an accredited and qualifying CA college or university, AND
- If applicable, complete(d) an affidavit to legalize immigration status as soon as you are eligible.

*If you graduated early from high school under this provision, you must also have attended CA schools (elementary and secondary) for a cumulative total of three or more years.

To confirm your AB 540 eligibility, you will be required to fill out an affidavit and provide supporting documentation to the campus Residency Deputy, Admissions Office, or Registrar of the college or university you will be attending. You should seek to complete this process in the spring or summer before you begin attending (or in fall for those who will be starting school in the spring). A sample of an affidavit can be found [here](#).

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

A. The CA Dream Act Application is used by **undocumented students** who meet the eligibility requirements of AB 540. The application can be found at www.caldreamact.org. The California Student Aid Commission processes the application and any aid received can only be used at eligible California public or private institutions.

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U.S. citizens and permanent residents meeting the AB 540 criteria above should complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at www.fafsa.gov. They may be eligible for federal student aid as well as California student aid.

The application deadline for students using the CA Dream Act Application or the FAFSA is March 2 prior to the academic year (E.g., **March 2, 2015** for the 2015-16 academic year). For Cal Grants offered under the California Dream Act, you must also submit a certified GPA to the California Student Aid Commission.

Q. Can I fill out the CA Dream Act Application if I don't have a Social Security number?

A. Yes, students who meet the AB 540 eligibility requirements are not required to have a Social Security number in order to submit the application. If an applicant has a Social Security number issued by Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) for work purposes only, that number should be entered on line #8 of the application. Line #8 should be left blank for applicants without Social Security numbers.

In 2015-16, the U.S. Department of Education is encouraging students with DACA Social Security numbers to complete the FAFSA. This is not good advice for California students (attending college in CA). Undocumented AB 540 students should complete the CA Dream Act Application instead of the FAFSA. In the event you have already submitted a FAFSA before learning that you should submit a CA Dream Act Application, complete the CA Dream Act Application, then contact the California Student Aid Commission at 1-888-224-7268 to let them know that you have submitted both applications.

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

A. 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 CA state financial aid—like Cal Grants, Chafee Foster Youth Grant, Middle Class Scholarship—and institutional aid—like University Grants, State University Grants, California Community College Board of Governors (BOG) fee waivers, and private scholarships administered through institutions. Your school will determine your financial aid eligibility. We encourage you to submit the CA Dream Act Application by March 2, because it is the deadline to receive consideration for most types of aid available to you.

Q. Do I have to wait until my parents or I file taxes to complete my CA Dream Act Application?

A. No, do not miss any important deadlines! Simply estimate last year's tax information. Once you or your parents have filed taxes, you must log back into your CA Dream Act Application online to modify the estimated taxes. If you or your parents did not earn enough in the prior year to file taxes, simply select "Will not file" on the tax filing question in the application.

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Q. What if my parents live in another county, and I live with my aunt/boyfriend/sibling/roommate?

A. If you are 24 years or younger, and don't meet any of the independent criteria (application questions #46-58), even if you do not live with your legal parents (your biological and or adoptive parents) you must provide your parents' information, and one parent must sign your application. You cannot report your aunt, grandparent, sibling, boyfriend/girlfriend, legal guardian, or friend's information in place of parent information unless they have legally adopted you.

If you are unable to get your parent information, complete the application as much as you can and see your college's financial aid office (FAO) as soon as possible. The FAO will evaluate your condition and tell you if they can override the need for parent information. The California Student Aid Commission does not have the authority to override dependency or financial information.

Q. Does my parent's citizenship affect my eligibility for Dream Act financial aid?

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

Q. How does my parent sign my application?

A. After completing your online application, navigate to the link that says "Sign Student Application." Your parent must select "Request Parent PIN" and answer the verification questions. Then your parent will be issued a 4-digit electronic PIN code to sign your application. Keep this code in a safe place—*your parent will need it to re-sign each time you make a correction to your application.*

Q. How do I fix mistakes on my CA Dream Act Application?

A. After initial successful submission of your application, the California Student Aid Commission 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 log into your application, when you correct errors, or when you talk to your campus or the California Student Aid Commission. Review the Confirmation Page within your application to alert you to error codes that need correction.

Q. I applied! What's next? Do I automatically get financial aid?

A. Great, you successfully completed your CA Dream Act Application! Next, the California Student Aid Commission will send your application data to all of the colleges you 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 the Cal Grant, you must also submit your high school or community college GPA to the California Student Aid Commission by the March 2 deadline.***

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Qualifying for the Cal Grant is not automatic. Cal Grant is a need-based program. You must meet financial eligibility and GPA requirements. After receiving your CA Dream Act Application and GPA, the California Student Aid Commission will process your application to determine if you are eligible to receive a Cal Grant. . After completion of your CA Dream Act Application, we encourage you to open a WebGrants for Students account at www.webgrants4students.org in order to check the status of your Cal Grant eligibility. Click on the following links for more information: [How to apply for Cal Grants](#) [Cal Grant GPA requirements](#)

Q. How do I submit my GPA if I don't have a Social Security number?

A. You may submit a Non-SSN GPA; this is a school certified GPA that uses information other than an SSN to match the GPA to your application. Ask your school if they will submit a Non-SSN GPA electronically for you. If not, you may download the paper Cal Grant Non-SSN GPA Verification Form [here](#). You will fill out the top portion and your school must verify your GPA and sign the bottom of the form. The form must be mailed to the California Student Aid Commission on or before March 2.

Q. I was notified that I got the Cal Grant! How do I get the money?

A. You must set up a Web Grants for Students account to manage your Cal Grant, 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. Visit www.webgrants4students.org to create an account.

If you are not attending the college that you listed as the primary college on your CA Dream Act Application, you must submit a school change through www.webgrants4students.org.

If you are a male between the ages of 18 and 25, you are required to register with the Selective Service System (SSS) before receiving state financial aid. The Selective Service **does not share** your immigration status. The 2015-16 California Dream Act Application will ask you if you want the California Student Aid Commission to register you through a secure electronic data exchange with the SSS or you can complete and mail in the paper registration form to the SSS. Visit their website for more information: www.sss.gov.

Your college's financial aid office (FAO) is in charge of disbursing all Cal Grant payments. Check your financial aid portal, FAO, or financial aid website to see a schedule of their Cal Grant disbursement dates. If that date has come and gone without you receiving a disbursement, check with your FAO immediately to see if your financial aid file is incomplete.

Q. How do I renew my Cal Grant?

A. If you received the Cal Grant, you must re-submit your CA Dream Act Application every year to renew your award. You will use the same login information (User ID/Password) from the previous year to enter your CA Dream Act Application. To re-submit your application, go to www.caldreamact.org, click the green "Login to Application"

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button, provide your login information, and select the appropriate academic year application. FAFSA filers will use your same PIN each year at www.fafsa.gov.

Cal Grant renewals usually happen in late spring, so you should re-submit your application before then.

If you did not receive the Cal Grant, you can reapply the next year by re-submitting your CA Dream Act Application and new GPA before the March 2 deadline following the same procedure outlined in the paragraph above. If you have never submitted a CA Dream Act Application, go to www.caldreamact.org, click the green “Start Dream Application” button and answer all the required questions. Once again, FAFSA filers will login in to their application at www.fafsa.gov.

Q. Where can I get help with completing my CA Dream Act Application?

A. You can visit your Financial Aid or School Counselor/Advisor, or you can attend a Cash for College workshop. Check out <http://www.calgrants.org/> for help finding a workshop near you.

Q. 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?

A. If you apply, you may qualify for:

- Chafee Foster Youth Aid
- Scholarships offered through California public colleges and universities
- California Dream Act Cal Grants or school grants
- Board of Governors (BOG) fee waivers and California Community colleges
- Private grants and scholarships
- Talk to your institution's financial aid office for more information.

Learn more about the California Dream Act

www.caldreamact.org