

Changes to Financial Aid Regulations & Processes 2025-2026



Fullerton College

The 2025-2026 FAFSA and the 2025-2026 California Dream Act Application (CADAA), were initially scheduled to open on October 1, 2024, but due to technical issues, they opened for all applicants on December 1, 2024. Students may submit the 2025-2026 financial aid applications until June 30, 2026.

The state Cal Grant priority deadline has been extended from the usual March 2nd date to April 2nd to accommodate the delayed rollout. This allows students additional time to submit their 2025-2026 FAFSA or 2025-2026 CADAA for Cal Grant consideration.

The 2024-2025 FAFSA introduced the Student Aid Index (SAI) to replace the Expected Family Contribution (EFC), providing a more accurate reflection of a student's financial need. SAI continues to be used for the 2025-2026 FAFSA form.

The 2024-2025 FAFSA allowed applicants to identify as nonbinary. However, in February 2025, the Department of Education announced that the FAFSA form would be altered to no longer allow students to identify as nonbinary, in compliance with an executive order defining gender as a strict male-female binary.

The maximum Pell Grant award for the 2025-2026 academic year remains at \$7,395 for eligible students, while the minimum award remains at \$740.

The 2025-2026 FAFSA and 2025-2026 CADAA require student and parent income for year 2023.

Financial aid eligibility for the 2025-2026 academic year is determined based on 2023 income. If you and/or your parent(s) have experienced a significant reduction in income due to job changes, pay cuts, layoffs, or other circumstances, please reach out to the Financial Aid Office to inquire about a special circumstance appeal (previously called an income appeal). Through this process, your financial aid eligibility will be reassessed based on the updated, lower income, which could lead to a revised financial aid offer for the current award year.

The 2025-2026 CADAA allows for students to submit both the CADAA and the AB 540 affidavit (non-resident tuition exemption form) simultaneously, simplifying the process for students.

FAFSA students who are in a *mixed status family may be facing a tough decision about applying for financial aid this year. FAFSA students are considered for all federal and state aid programs. For the 2025-2026 academic year, FAFSA students in mixed status families may choose to submit the CA Dream Act Application (CADAA) instead of the FAFSA. CADAA students are considered for only state aid programs. You can learn about the differences and similarities of the FAFSA and CADAA on our Financial Aid Applications-FAFSA & CADAA flyer. You may also read more about what it means for a FAFSA student to submit a CADAA on the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) website: <https://www.csac.ca.gov/cadaa-msf>. Please contact the Financial Aid Office for additional information and support.

**Mixed status family means the student is a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen and the parent (for dependent students) or spouse (for independent students) does not have a social security number (SSN).*

In previous years, students who received the full amount of their Pell Grant during the fall and spring semesters could only receive Pell Grant in the summer if they were enrolled at least half-time (a minimum of 6 units). Starting in the 2025-2026 academic year, half-time enrollment will no longer be required to receive Pell Grant in the summer. The Pell Grant amount will be based on eligibility and the number of units enrolled.

Students who were previously determined independent due to homelessness or approved unusual circumstance appeals (formerly known as dependency override appeals) will maintain their independent status. However, it is the student's responsibility to notify the Financial Aid Office of any changes or updates to their circumstances. Students who report special circumstances on their FAFSA/CADAA will be considered provisionally independent, but their status will not be officially confirmed until they complete the unusual circumstance appeal process.

The Federal Work-Study (FWS) program provides part-time employment for eligible students with financial need, allowing students to earn money to help pay educational expenses. The FWS question has been removed from the FAFSA since 2024-2025. To be considered for 2025-2026 FWS, students must submit their FAFSA by the priority filing deadline of April 2, 2025 and submit all required documents by May 30, 2025. FWS awards are not guaranteed, as the funding is limited. Eligible students must accept their FWS award via myGateway, which will prompt them to create a JobX account where they can search and apply for available FWS positions. Interested students may inquire about FWS by contacting our office.

Beginning fall 2025, Disability Support Students (DSS) receiving a Cal Grant enrolled in at least 9 units will be considered full-time for eligibility of the Student Success Completion Grant (SSCG) in the amount of \$1298. All students are required to be enrolled in 15 units or more to be eligible for the higher amount of \$4000.