



Financial Aid/Cal Grant Overhaul Talking Points

- California Community College students are not adequately served by the existing Cal Grant structure. Because of built-in inequities of the Cal Grant program, just 5 percent of community college students received a Cal Grant in 2017-18. That compares to nearly 40 percent of undergraduate students at the University of California and approximately 36 percent of students at the California State University system.
- California Community Colleges enroll about two-thirds of the state's undergraduate students, yet they receive just 7 percent of Cal Grant funds.
- These inequities cannot stand: the California Community Colleges system is the largest provider of workforce training in the nation and—with 115 colleges serving 2.1 million students—is the largest higher education system in the country.
- The California Community Colleges system has the most diverse student body of any higher education system, and it is at the forefront in paving the way for residents from all walks of life to realize upward social mobility.
- For more than 75 years, California Community Colleges charged no tuition or fees. That changed in 1984 when a statutory fee and fee waiver program were established. Today, the total cost of attending a California Community College for a student living independently is nearly \$20,000, when room and board, transportation, tuition, textbooks, and miscellaneous costs are taken into account.
- Despite such costs, the maximum aid package for a California Community College student enrolling in 15 or more units per semester will leave that student nearly \$6,700 short of meeting his or her total cost of attendance.
- In most regions of California, community colleges have a higher net price for low-income students than a nearby California State University or University of California campus.
- Community colleges enroll more low-income Pell Grant recipients than do the CSU, UC, and California's nonprofit colleges and universities combined.
- Very few community college students qualify for financial aid to cover living expenses, transportation, or textbooks.
- Low-income students with unmet financial need have limited choices: work more hours, take fewer courses, drop out of school, or take on what can become crushing debt.



- During the 2017-18 legislative session, the Legislative Analyst's Office, the Washington, D.C.-based Century Foundation, and the nonprofit Institute for College Access and Success all recommended infusing additional resources into the Cal Grant program directed specifically toward community college students.
- The Cal Grant program's focus on traditional-aged students is patently unfair to community college students, as significant percentages of those attending community colleges are returning students. In fact, more than 4 in 10 California Community College students are 25 years old or older, and more than 1 in 5 are 35 years old or older.
- Cal Grant reforms should be based on a student's financial needs, regardless of their age or how long ago they graduated high school, and they should link a student's financial aid to the total cost of attendance—not just the tuition and fees.
- Students come to California Community Colleges with many educational goals and they should receive the necessary financial support needed to allow them to reach those goals. Cal Grants should be available to any student meeting the requirements for the federal Pell Grant.
- The Cal Grant program should be extended to all certificate and degree programs offered at community colleges, regardless of whether the programs are oriented toward those transferring to four-year colleges or universities.
- Adjustments to the Cal Grant program are imperative if we are to meet the goals set forth in the California Community Colleges' Vision for Success, which call for eliminating equity gaps and significantly increasing the number of students earning a degree or credential and transferring to a UC or CSU campus.
- The Governor's Budget Proposal to expand the Cal Grant program with an infusion of more than \$130 million is a first step, but it is only a first step.