

# A Milestone for Student Equity: The Cal Grant Equity Framework Prioritizes College Affordability and Eligibility

*As a result of Governor Newsom and legislative leadership, California is one step closer to educational equity through the Cal Grant Equity Framework -- a transformational policy that will make our state's financial aid system more accessible and streamlined to serve California's diverse student community.*

Following years of advocacy from a far-reaching coalition made up of students, equity groups, higher education institutions, business groups and more, Governor Newsom and legislative leadership echoed their commitment to student access, success, and degree attainment, by committing to funding the Cal Grant Equity Framework in the 2024-25 academic year, should state revenues remain stable. In line with the California Student Aid Commission's (Commission) targeted implementation date, the 2022-23 State Budget included \$500,000 for the Commission to begin working on the Framework's implementation immediately. With ample time to ensure that all students can access new aid as soon as it's available, the Commission is already updating grant processing systems and convening a stakeholder working group.

*With revenue predictions indicating the Cal Grant Equity Framework will be adopted following the Commission's original timeline, thousands of Californians will soon have access to life-changing student aid.*

California's college students are some of the country's most diverse and highest-need student populations. Because of the ongoing rise in costs for basic needs, Latinx, Black, Asian, Pacific Islander, and low-income students have struggled to stay in college. Job loss, housing insecurity, and countless other affordability challenges are among the barriers these students face. Our talented, low-income and diverse students will benefit from new state investments that enact the Cal Grant Equity Framework.



Currently ineligible students that will be served under the Cal Grant Equity Framework have an **average income of \$36,000**



Female students represent **60% of all the students** made eligible for aid by the Cal Grant Equity Framework

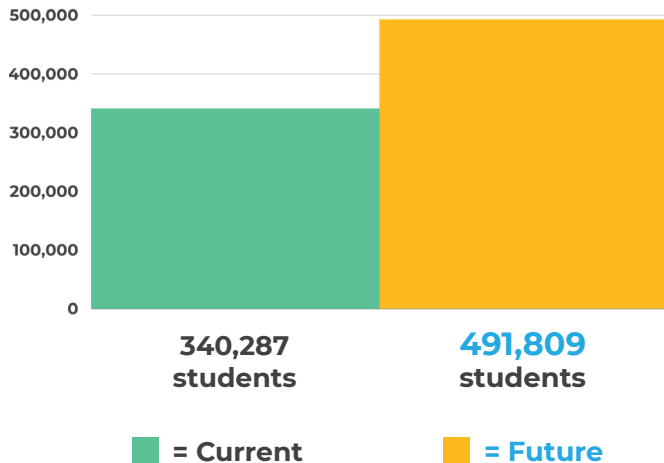
**The Cal Grant Equity Framework provides a solution that will reform California's outdated financial aid system while removing barriers facing students.**

Under this framework, aid will become available for more than:

- 95,000 eligible Latinx students
- 18,000 Asian and Pacific Islander students
- 11,000 African American students
- 3,000 California Dream Act students
- 91,000 female students

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Cal Grant Student Eligibility



## HOW WILL THE CAL GRANT EQUITY FRAMEWORK WORK?

The remodeled Cal Grant will align the eligibility of state-based financial aid with federal policy, eliminate eligibility barriers, and target state resources for the most financially vulnerable students by reaching over **150,000 MORE** students while leveraging all parts of the financial aid system.

Once funded, the Cal Grant Equity Framework will:

- Address gaps in the current Cal Grant program by removing barriers that keep out talented students who make an average income of \$36,000.

- Streamline the eight current Cal Grant programs into two programs - Cal Grant 2 for community college students and Cal Grant 4 for students at four-year colleges.
- Align eligibility with the federal Pell Grant to enable earlier and clear communication with students and families about how much aid they can expect to receive.
- Expand access to awards for foster youth and student parents to use for non-tuition expenses, helping address the student basic needs crisis.

As higher education has become more accessible, talented students from diverse backgrounds have pursued college, and they need financial aid support to succeed. Under the new Cal Grant Equity Framework, aid will:

- Provide additional grants like the Students with Dependent Children (SWDC) to reach more than 44,000 new student parents and uplift more families.
- Work in alignment with other forms of financial aid including the Middle Class Scholarship and institutional aid.
- Enable more students to apply for CalFresh, a federally-funded benefit that helps recipients afford regular meals to help better meet their basic needs.

The Framework will meet the needs of students seeking higher education, as well as the Governor’s ambitious degree or certificate attainment goals once funding is confirmed in 2024.

**California leaders have taken unparalleled steps to address college affordability and decisively close attainment gaps by simplifying the Cal Grant system. California has what it takes to create the most equitable system in the nation by prioritizing its students and removing remaining barriers.**