



# EXECUTIVE OFFICE MEMORANDUM

STATE OF  
CALIFORNIA



November 22, 2024

EOM 2024-06

TO: College and University Presidents  
K-12 Superintendents  
High School Counselors  
Financial Aid Administrators  
Cal-SOAP Directors

FROM: Dr. Daisy Gonzales  
Executive Director

**SUBJECT: Upholding the California Dream for All Students**

California is a national leader in equitable access to higher education. We have a strong ecosystem of state and institutional financial aid to build accessible pathways for all Californians. At the center of our work is the California Dream Act Application (CADAA), which provides access to state financial aid to undocumented students, DACA recipients (valid or expired), students with a U visa and students with Temporary Protected Status. During the 2024-25 financial aid cycle when students and families faced challenges with Better FAFSA verification, the CADAA was a reliable and immediate solution for mixed status families (U.S. citizens or “green card holders” whose parent(s) or spouse are undocumented). With this context in mind, the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) is sending this message to affirm our commitment to the success of all students and provide guidance for financial aid professionals during an uncertain future.

## **California Dream Act Application Pathway**

Our financial aid professionals, high school counselors, Cal-SOAP teams, and other community partners join CSAC at the frontlines of hope and dreams. When students interact with high school counselors and financial aid staff, they look for options, guidance and opportunities. While we are on the edge of another non-traditional year for financial aid, our mixed status families and undocumented or DACA students face additional physical and emotional dangers. With a shifting federal landscape, in this moment we must support students through clear information, proactive strategies and action.

In the 2025-26 financial aid cycle the CADAA will continue to be encouraged for mixed status families. Students and families need to know that information

provided on a California Dream Act Application (CADAA) is only used to determine eligibility for state financial aid. Information is never shared with the federal government or used for immigration enforcement. CSAC protects student data and proudly adopts [California's SB 54 Model Policies](#). To that end, CSAC will continue to encourage students from mixed status families to apply for state aid through a CADAA now strategy. As we do this work, we must also be honest with first year students and families about the risks of completing a FAFSA.

### **FAFSA When?**

Financial aid professionals will be faced with uncertainty as they support mixed status families. Many mixed status families and eligible noncitizens have already submitted a FAFSA in prior years. For first time applicants, it is important to share that personal information shared through the FAFSA application does not have the same data privacy assurances. Therefore, completing a CADAA is a viable option for students and families with fears of adverse action by federal immigration enforcement. While forgoing the FAFSA will lead to the loss of federal financial aid, we are hopeful that applicants from mixed status families will recognize their eligibility for state and institutional aid as they make an informed decision.

### **Students First**

As other states make decisions to address local needs, in California we believe that higher education is for everyone. To that end, our local action must be centered in the students we serve, which means we cannot ignore that more than 12% of California high school students have one or more parents without a Social Security Number.

We know local action is already starting with many of you leading cross department meetings. We thank you for this local action to convene your campus administrators, student services professionals, academic senates, student leaders, and local community together to strategize in service of your students and families. In this evolving landscape and as we approach the December 1<sup>st</sup> launch of the California 2025-26 financial aid cycle, we must provide accurate information to students and families, offer all options for aid, and be proactive problem-solvers to ensure that Californians can enroll in higher education.

To that end, CSAC will continue to stay focused on advocacy, including financial aid application deadline extensions in our state. We have also developed and will

continue to urgently deploy the following tools to inform and support financial aid professionals:

- Guidance Memo “EOD 2024-01 Reassuring California Students in the 2025-26 Financial Aid Cycle” ([https://www.csac.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2024-11/oed\\_2024-01.pdf](https://www.csac.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2024-11/oed_2024-01.pdf))
- Guidance Memo “EOM 2024-04 Undocumented Students Data Privacy” ([https://www.csac.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2024-11/eom\\_2024\\_04.pdf](https://www.csac.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2024-11/eom_2024_04.pdf))
- (Forthcoming) Guidance Memo on Mixed-status and immigrant student data privacy. Guidance will be posted under “Executive Office Communication” (<https://www.csac.ca.gov/executive-office-memos>)
- (Forthcoming) Informational resources for mixed status families and immigrant students, which will include talking points for financial aid professionals, risks and options for financial aid and resources including legal services, mental health and call center information. This will be distributed through a Grant Special Alert (GSA) communication.

We want to thank you for your leadership, courage, and humanity during this time. Our students need us now more than ever and CSAC is here to support you and California’s students. Please keep us updated on local barriers and student experiences so that we may continue to support you in real-time. At the statewide level, we will continue to collaborate with segment leaders on legislative and budget advocacy.

To stay informed, please join our monthly webinar series starting on December 2, 2024, from 9 a.m.-10 am. To register please visit: [https://csac-ca.gov.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_SnL7kLD5RaeUnmG-Re16jg#/registration](https://csac-ca.gov.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_SnL7kLD5RaeUnmG-Re16jg#/registration)

*Promoting educational equity by making postsecondary education affordable for all Californians.*