



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **College Futures Foundation Awards \$750,000 to Support Project Addressing College Affordability Crisis**

*Partnership Between the Foundation for California Community Colleges and the California Student Aid Commission aims to increase accessibility of financial aid for students*

**SACRAMENTO, Calif.—December 16, 2020**—The Foundation for California Community Colleges (FoundationCCC) received \$750,000 in funding from College Futures Foundation (College Futures) to support a project addressing the current college affordability crisis through a partnership with the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC). Philanthropic support from College Futures Foundation will be used to raise awareness of available financial aid opportunities to connect incoming and current college students to urgently-needed dollars across all California higher education systems.

The current coronavirus pandemic and ensuing economic fallout has exacerbated a preexisting basic needs crisis across California colleges, in which students are unable to afford necessities such as food, housing, and rent, impacting historically vulnerable populations at a higher scale. A recent [COVID-19 student survey from CSAC](#) shows many college students have a heightened concern about what the future holds, including uncertainty around how they will afford college and an inability to meet non-tuition costs or basic needs expenses.

Through this new strategic partnership, FoundationCCC and CSAC will leverage grant funds to help address these anxieties for students at California postsecondary institutions. More specifically, this project aims to increase the number of students who apply for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the California Dream Act Application (CADAA), especially low-income first-generation students, continuing community college students, and undocumented and foster youth students through the following project priorities:

- Financial aid application outreach, assistance, and completion: Providing support and resources for community partners leading Cash for College workshops, which guide students in completing financial aid applications. Dollars will also allow for the creation of a California Community Colleges “Race to Submit” dashboard to track and monitor application submission and guide an increase in efforts where identified.

- Undocumented student support and expansion of CalFresh: Establishing a work group to identify needed administrative and policy changes, as well as research to inform improvements on the California Dream Act Application, to help more undocumented students successfully apply for and receive financial aid. This project will also support the convening of a CalFresh Policy Work Group to develop policy recommendations that streamline college student access to CalFresh, California’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, to help them meet their basic needs.
- Research and data collection to improve equitable access to financial aid: Conducting student surveys and increasing participation in the [Student Expenses and Resources Survey](#) to inform programmatic efforts and policy changes that more effectively address equity.

"I am thrilled with today's announcement by College Futures Foundation that it is making a historic \$750,000 investment to make college more affordable for California's most vulnerable, low-income students," said Marlene Garcia, Executive Director of the California Student Aid Commission. "The Commission is honored to partner with College Futures and the Foundation for California Community Colleges to provide hope and opportunity to hundreds of thousands of students who worry deeply about how they will pay for college in the midst of the current crisis and beyond."

Given the magnitude of the current health and economic crisis, California could potentially lose hundreds of thousands of students who would otherwise be on a path to a college degree. Through this new strategic partnership, FoundationCCC and CSAC are committed to ensuring higher education remains affordable to all and that students receive the financial support they need to achieve their goals, enter into the workforce, and play a role in our state’s economic and health recovery.

To learn more about the FoundationCCC and efforts supporting the largest system of higher education in the nation, the California Community Colleges, visit [foundationccc.org](http://foundationccc.org). For more information about CSAC and its mission in promoting educational equity by making postsecondary education affordable for all Californians, visit [csac.ca.gov](http://csac.ca.gov).

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### **About the Foundation for California Community Colleges**

*The Foundation for California Community Colleges is the official nonprofit foundation to the California Community Colleges Board of Governors and Chancellor's Office. The Foundation's mission is to benefit, support, and enhance the missions of the California Community Colleges system, the largest higher education system in the nation. Incorporated in 1998, the Foundation works to benefit all California Community College students, colleges, college foundations, and the system as a whole by accelerating paths to economic and social mobility, strengthening communities, and reducing barriers to opportunities for all Californians. The Foundation is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt non-profit organization. For more information, visit <http://www.foundationccc.org>.*

### **About the California Student Aid Commission**

*The California Student Aid Commission administers the state’s \$2.8 billion portfolio of student financial aid programs and services, including the Cal Grant, the Middle Class Scholarship, and the California*

*Dream Act Application. The Commission serves as a resource for policymakers and the public on college affordability and financing issues, and advocates for policy changes to eliminate cost as a barrier to any qualified California student pursuing a higher education. Visit our website at <https://www.csac.ca.gov> or follow us on Twitter @castudentaid.*