



CALIFORNIA
STUDENT AID
COMMISSION

Better FAFSA, Better CADAA Bulletin

November 15, 2023

Welcome to the third edition of the California Student Aid Commission’s Better FAFSA, Better CA Dream Act Application Bulletin with information, updates, and resources for the upcoming 2024-25 financial aid cycle.

From our Executive Director Marlene Garcia:

While we await the Better FAFSA release in December 2023, CSAC continues to work on updating our Grant Delivery System to reflect all the new FAFSA updates. We are also working on the enhancements to the CADAA.

Be sure to review your action item for this month, and then read “In the Spotlight” for summaries of how to determine who is a FAFSA Contributor and changes to the California Dream Act Application AB 540 affidavit process.

As we enter the fall holiday season, we want to thank you for your dedication in preparing for the upcoming 2024-25 application year. We are all in this together and CSAC is here to support your important work.

Happy Thanksgiving to you and your family!

What’s the Latest?

Upcoming FREE Federal Training:

We encourage you to attend training events that will help you to better understand the new Better FAFSA and the changes it will bring to applicants and practitioners.

- November 28-December 1: [2023 Virtual Federal Student Aid Training Conference](#)

November Action Item:

Federal Student Aid (FSA) released the 2024-25 FAFSA prototype on September 29, 2023. The FAFSA prototype was used in FSA's FAFSA demonstration webinar and at the NCAN conference in October. The FAFSA prototype is an amazing tool that is available to everyone to preview the new 2024-25 FAFSA and walk through the various pre-determined use cases such as starting a new application as a parent or student. The scenarios will allow users to experience the "who is my parent wizard," identify which contributors are needed and invite the contributors to the application. Practitioners should utilize the FAFSA prototype and become familiar with the new application. The FAFSA prototype information with login and access code can be found here:

<https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/library/electronic-announcements/2023-09-29/announcing-2024-25-fafsa-prototype>

In the Spotlight:

Better FAFSA: Who is a FAFSA Contributor?

A contributor, starting with the 2024-25 FAFSA, is anyone asked to provide personal and financial information, a signature, and consent to have their federal tax information transferred from the IRS to the FAFSA form. A student's or parent's answers on the FAFSA determine who is a contributor and use their information to establish eligibility for federal student aid.

- Contributors include the student and their spouse (if applicable), a biological or adoptive parent, or the spouse of the remarried parent listed on the FAFSA (the stepparent).
- Examples of those NOT considered contributors include non-adoptive grandparents, foster parents, aunts or uncles, and legal guardians. Dependency, marital status, and tax filing determine who is a contributor.
- All contributors will need to create an account on StudentAid.gov.

Once the contributor receives an email informing them that they have been identified as a contributor, they can expect an invitation to complete their part of the FAFSA. The contributor will then log in to their account using their FSA ID (account username and password), review the information required to complete their section on the FAFSA form, and then provide consent and approval and sign the form. If any contributors refuse to give consent on the FAFSA form, the student will be ineligible to receive federal financial aid. It is important to note that being identified as a contributor does not equate to being financially responsible for the student's education. See the links below for more information.

[Who Is a Contributor on the 2024-25 FAFSA](#)

[Is My Parent a Contributor on My FAFSA Form](#)

Better CADAA: Embedding the AB 540 Affidavit in the CADAA ([AB 1540](#))

Starting with the 2024-25 CA Dream Act Application (CADAA), students will experience a more streamlined financial aid process as they will be able to submit both their CADAA

and AB 540 affidavit form (also known as the nonresident tuition exemption form) at the same time. As outlined in the Commission's [Renewing the Dream](#) report, this change addresses the multi-step process that resulted in confusion, and in some cases even loss of financial aid for students.

The Commission will provide institutions with an "AB 540 Report" that will include students' responses to the AB 540 questions and can use it to determine students' eligibility. It is important to note that the Commission will *not* determine students' AB 540 status. Campuses are allowed to provide AB 540 affidavit forms to students who do not submit one via the CADAA.

Just Released:

NEW: [Better FAFSA/Better CADAA Social Media Toolkit](#)

To increase awareness and application submissions to the FAFSA, CADAA, and Chafee Grant for Foster Youth, we are running a marketing and outreach campaign encouraging students to apply for financial aid. In order to maximize financial aid opportunities, students should submit their financial aid application by the state priority deadline of March 2, 2024.

2023-2024: [Cash for College Train The Trainer Webinars \(For Partners\)](#)

Become a Cash for College Champion in your community and help students apply for financial aid. Join us for our upcoming free Train the Trainer webinars and learn how you can host Cash for College workshops and webinars in your community. This curriculum covers changes to the FAFSA and CADAA, important financial aid resources, and our Workshop Management System. Earn a certificate and get ready to host your own workshops in this important financial aid cycle.

2023-2024: [Cash for College Webinars \(For Parents and Students\)](#)

Join us for CSAC's Statewide Cash for College Webinars! Learn how to complete the CADAA and FAFSA and get the help you need to assist your students and their families.

Remember, you can find this information, upcoming CSAC training events, and updated resources on our [Better FAFSA, Better CADAA webpage](#).

Key Application Dates to Keep in Mind:

- This year the Better FAFSA, Better CA Dream Act Application opening is delayed from the traditional October 1 date to **December 2023**. The exact date will be communicated once it has been determined.
- The March 2 priority deadline has been extended to **April 2, 2024 for Cal Grant**, due to the delayed application opening. Many campuses use the March 2 priority deadline to award institutional aid.

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