

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 30, 2003

CONTACT: Carole Solov
(916) 526-7991
Gary Zavoral
(916) 496-7326

Act Now to Get Free Money for College

Cal Grant Applications Must be Filed by March 2

SACRAMENTO – The Cal Grant application window begins Jan. 1 for high school seniors to receive up to \$9,700 in free money for college, but time runs out March 2 for people who wait too long to apply.

Cal Grants can fund up to \$9,700 in tuition and costs at almost any California college — public and private universities, community colleges and even vocational schools. The money does not have to be repaid. But to receive a Cal Grant in time for the 2004 school year, qualifying students must file electronically or mail in applications between now and March 2.

Graduating high school seniors and recent graduates can get a Cal Grant if they have at least a 2.0 GPA and satisfy certain financial requirements. To apply, all they have to do is complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and the Cal Grant GPA Verification Form.

Complete information on Cal Grants — including eligibility, where to find forms and instructions on completing the forms — is available online at www.calgrants.org, or by calling toll-free 1-888-CA-GRANT (224-7268). Information on other college financial aid options can also be obtained on the Cal Grants Web site. To obtain FAFSA-specific information, log on to www.fafsa.ed.gov.

More than 60,000 Californians received Cal Grants last year. Cal Grants open the doors to a college education for thousands of Californians by removing the high cost of tuition as an

obstacle. But those who qualify must take the first step on their own, by completing and submitting applications by March 2.

The California Student Aid Commission is also supporting a series of collaborative, statewide College Goal Sunday “Cash for College” workshops with legislators, community-based organizations, schools and others. The workshops will offer applicants and parents step-by-step, hands-on help in completing the FAFSA. All of the workshops are scheduled in January and February, and information on times and locations will be posted on the www.californiacollegegoalsunday.com Web site.

The FAFSA is not only required for Cal Grant applications, but is also used to qualify for other college grant programs.

###

Cal Grant awards are administered by the California Student Aid Commission, which began as a small state scholarship agency in 1955 with a mission of making education beyond high school financially accessible to all Californians. Today the commission administers more than \$3.5 billion in grants and loan guarantees in partnership with its nonprofit loan auxiliary, EDFUND. The partnership also provides financial aid policy analysis and leadership to colleges, universities, financial institutions and financial aid associations while serving as a source of financial aid information for all Californians.