

# California Student Aid Commission

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## Item 14 (Information)

### Update on California Dream Act

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#### **SUMMARY:**

This information item provides an update on the California Dream Act Application (CADAA) for the 2016-17 and 2017-18 academic years (AY).

The total number of CADAAs received by the March 2 deadline was 36,048 which surpassed the on-time application counts of the 2016-17 AY by 5%.

This item also describes the efforts to date from Commission staff and the California Dream Act workgroup to explore some technical enhancements to the 2018-19 CADAA to streamline the application for Dream Act applicants and their parents.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Commission staff will continue to focus on addressing the needs of Dream Act students to increase applications, awards and paid rates.

#### **BRIEF HISTORY OF KEY ISSUE(S):**

The CADAA was launched during the 2013-14 Cal Grant application period with the passage of the California Dream Act in 2011. Currently, the CADAA allows students who qualify under Education Code section 69508.5 to apply for various forms of state-funded financial aid, including but not limited to, the Cal Grant Program, Middle Class Scholarship (MCS), Board of Governor's Fee Waiver at California Community Colleges (CCC), institutional aid, California DREAM Loan Program at certain UC and CSU campuses, and private scholarships.

Through the administration of the California Dream Act, staff have become aware of some of the challenges that Dream Act students face in understanding their eligibility and critical components of the application process including the difference between the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and CADAA applications. As discussed at the February 23, 2017 Commission meeting, actions at the federal level and media coverage on undocumented students created uncertainty for many families through the 2017-18 state financial aid application period. Several efforts were instituted in collaboration with campus financial aid administrators, high school counselors and other community partners to encourage and assist students in applying for financial aid, achieving positive results by the March 2 deadline.

#### **ANALYSIS:**

##### **Update on the California Dream Act**

The numbers in Table 1 show a gradual increase of On Time applications per year, including the 2017-18 AY. Commission staff continued its efforts to reduce confusion between the DACA and the CADAA and Executive Director Lupita Alcalá engaged the press to encourage students to apply for the California Dream Act up until the March 2 deadline. There were over 15 media placements in radio, TV and internet articles, as well as an Univision phone banking event that the CSAC actively participated in to support CADAA. These efforts proved to be very effective, increasing the number of CADAAs submitted from 17,819 as of February, 9, 2017, to 36,048 by the March 2 deadline. The number of

CADAAs received during the first four months of the 2017-18 application period were doubled in the last three weeks, exceeding the on-time application counts of the 2016-17 AY by 5%. During those last three weeks in the state financial aid application period, the student support line registered a significant increase in call volume from Dream Act students regarding the application process and timelines.

**Table 1**  
**Dream Act Applications by Academic Year**  
**Data as of 5/08/2017**

	2013-14 Counts	2014-15 Counts	2015-16 Counts	2016-17 Counts (not final)	2017-18 Counts (not final)
<b>On Time (met March 2 deadline)</b>	20,746	27,359	30,775	34,177	36,048
<b>After March 2</b>	16,524	13,163	12,909	13,673	2,451
<b>Total Applications</b>	37,270	40,522	43,684	47,850	38,499

In addition to the efforts mentioned above, the Commission received support through the following initiatives:

- **CSAC/California Department of Education (CDE) Joint Letters (12/26/16) and (2/21/17) which**
  - o Highlighted the difference between the CADAA and DACA program
  - o Emphasized that state financial aid is available for eligible Dream Act students
  - o Urged all eligible students to submit their CADAA
  - o Assured students that their information is protected and only used to determine financial aid eligibility
  
- **California State Assembly Resolution 20 (2/23/17)**
  - o Introduced by Assembly Members Medina, Gonzalez Fletcher and Bonta, stated:

*“WHEREAS, The Legislature, the Governor, and all of the state’s public institutions of education, including the Student Aid Commission, the State Department of Education, the University of California, the California State University, and the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office, have all pledged to do everything within the power of the law to protect Dreamers and DACA residents from discrimination”*
  
- **Segmental Support**
  - o A press release on February 24, 2017 by California Community College Chancellor Oakley urged students to apply for the California Dream Act.
  - o UC, CSU and AICCU provided similar communications in support of Dreamers.
  
- **Commission Outreach Programs**
  - o Cal-SOAP projects directors worked with high school administrators and students in encouraging CADAA completion and providing direct service in submitting the application.

- o Cash for College Regional Coordinators (RCO) and other site organizers promoted their workshops to encourage AB 540 students to complete the CADAA. Commission staff provided CADAA training to high school counselors and other school administrators hosted by the Los Angeles Cash for College RCO.

### **Dream Act Advisory Workgroup**

The California Dream Act Advisory Workgroup was established to provide updates to external stakeholders and allow them the opportunity to provide feedback, share best practices, and explore enhancements for the CADAA. The workgroup met on February 9, 2017, and again on February 28, 2017. Some of the main topics discussed during the meetings included:

- Security and confidentiality of student information
- Cal Grant eligibility and application process for students with Temporary Protected Status
- Use of the CADAA for out of state students
- Selective Service requirement for Dream Act students
- AB 540 certification and process

The workgroup also discussed the list of over 30 proposed technical changes and enhancements to the 2018-19 CADAA. A technical subgroup was established to review and rank the various enhancement requests. The technical subgroup met on February 22, February 28, March 9, and March 16, 2017. Some of the submitted requests were addressed in the 2017-18 application, and the others were reviewed and ranked by the technical subgroup. Among the top priorities identified by the technical subgroup are:

- Countdown timer changes to minimize anxiety from students
- Placement of the Expected Family Contribution to enhance clarity
- System generated email confirmation when the CADAA is successfully submitted
- Skip logic for “Asset Question” to mirror the FAFSA

In addition to the list of priorities, the technical subgroup also discussed enhancements to the CADAA homepage, the parent pin/signature, and the confirmation page. There was also discussion about the removal of certain questions on the CADAA including the DACA, Selective Service and the student loan question. Commission staff worked on the business requirements for the priorities and proposed changes to the homepage, parent pin/signature and confirmation page, and submitted them to the Commission’s Information Technology Services Division (ITSD).

The Commission’s ITSD is currently reviewing all the proposed changes to determine which items could be completed within the timeframe to successfully open the 2018-19 CADAA on October 1, 2017.

Commission staff is currently working on a compilation of technical and general topics that have been raised by workgroup participants, in order to define any general guidelines needed and determine main points of concern related to CADAA. Some technical topics have been identified as unattainable at this point due to the level of effort and current capabilities of the Grant Delivery System. The California Dream Act Advisory Workgroup will continue its collaboration to address the needs of Dream Act students.

## Paid Rate

Commission staff continues to monitor the paid rate of Cal Grant awards to Dream Act students in order to identify any trends and measure the number of paid CADAA award offers. Staff continues its communication efforts with students and institutions through email, outbound phone contact and paper mail, and expects an increase in the paid rates for the 2016-17 AY. As of May 8, 2017, the 2016-17 AY paid rate is 63% as shown in Table 2. This percentage is consistent with prior years at this same point in time with a slight increase in the paid rate for Private 4-year institutions.

**Table 2  
Dream Act Award Offers & Payment by Segment  
Data as of 5/08/2017**

	2015-16			2016-17 (not final)			2017-18
	Offered Awardees	Paid Recipients	Paid Rate	Offered Awardees	Paid Recipients	Paid Rate	Offered Awardees
Community College	4,085	2,235	55%	4,689	2,390	51%	3,344
UC	1,078	983	91%	1,296	1,148	89%	1,285
CSU	2,392	1,866	78%	2,852	2,047	72%	3,910
Private Non-Profit	188	113	60%	230	154	67%	341
Private For-Profit	35	13	37%	52	20	38%	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,778</b>	<b>5,210</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>9,119</b>	<b>5,759</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>8,905</b>

Table 3 shows the paid rate by type of Cal Grant program. These rates are expected to increase as the academic year progresses, including the number of 2017-18 High School Entitlement award offers. There is a 27% increase in the number of 2017-18 Transfer Entitlement award offers when compared to the 2016-17 AY.

**Table 3  
Dream Act Award Offers & Payment by Program  
Data as of 5/08/2017**

	2015-16			2016-17 (not final)			2017-18
	Offered Awardees	Paid Recipients	Paid Rate	Offered Awardees	Paid Recipients	Paid Rate	Offered Awardees
High School Entitlement	6,767	4,385	65%	7,977	4,885	61%	7,737
Transfer Entitlement	799	725	91%	922	774	84%	1,168
Cal Grant C	212	100	47%	220	100	45%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,778</b>	<b>5,210</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>9,119</b>	<b>5,759</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>8,905</b>

Commission staff expects an increase in the paid rates for 2016-17 as the AY progresses, and will continue to monitor them. Efforts to reach eligible Dream Act students to make them aware of the financial opportunities available through the CADAA will continue through the upcoming 2018-19 financial aid application period. Furthermore, Commission staff will continue to collaborate with workgroup members and other partnerships to strengthen the California Dream Act Program application and award process.

**RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S):**

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