



Frequently Asked Questions About the Dream Act Application

The priority deadline is March 2nd every year.

The California Dream Act allows undocumented and nonresident documented students who meet certain criteria to apply for and receive state-administered financial aid, university grants, community college fee waivers, Cal Grants, and private scholarships administered by their respective university.

Q: What is AB 540, and how do I obtain AB 540 status?

A: Students who qualify for AB 540 may include undocumented students, students who are US citizens but who are not CA residents, and dependent students whose parents are not CA residents. AB 540 students are those who:

- Have attended a CA high school for at least three years or graduated early from a CA high school with the equivalent of three or more years of credit*, AND
- Graduated from a CA high school, or passed the California High School Proficiency Exam (CHSPE), or obtained a Certificate of General Education Development (GED), AND
- Enrolled in an accredited and qualifying CA college or university

If this is applicable, the student must complete an AB 540 Affidavit declaring that they will legalize their immigration status as soon as they are eligible and submit it to the university or college they will be attending.

*If you graduated early from high school under this provision, you must also have attended CA schools (elementary and secondary) for a cumulative total of three or more years (AB 2000).

Q: How do I apply for financial aid under the California Dream Act?

A: The CA Dream Act Application is used by undocumented students who meet the eligibility requirements of AB 540. The application can be found at www.caldreamact.org. The California Student Aid Commission processes the application and any aid received can only be used at eligible California public or private institutions. The application deadline is March 2 prior to the academic year the student will attend.

Q: Can I fill out the CA Dream Act Application if I don't have a Social Security number?

A: Yes, students who meet the AB 540 eligibility requirements are not required to have a Social Security number in order to submit the application. If an applicant has a Social Security number issued by Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) for work purposes only, that number should be entered on question #8 of the application. Question #8 should be left blank for applicants without Social Security numbers. Undocumented AB 540 students should complete the CA Dream Act Application instead of the FAFSA.

In the event you have already submitted a FAFSA before learning that you should submit a CA Dream Act Application, complete the CA Dream Act Application, then contact the California Student Aid Commission at 1-888-224-7268 to let them know that you have submitted both applications.

Q: As an undocumented student, am I eligible for federal student aid?

A: No, undocumented students are not eligible for federal student aid. If you attend an eligible California public or private institution, you will be considered for CA state financial aid—like Cal Grants, Chafee Foster Youth Grant, Middle Class Scholarship—and institutional aid—like University Grants, State University Grants, California Community College Board of Governors (BOG) fee waivers, and private scholarships administered through institutions. Your school will determine your financial aid eligibility. We encourage you to submit the CA Dream Act Application by March 2, because it is the deadline to receive consideration for most types of aid available to you.

Q: Do I have to wait until my parents or I file taxes to complete my CA Dream Act Application?

A: No, do not miss any important deadlines! The Dream Act Application requires tax information from the prior-prior-year (e.g. for the 2017-18 academic year application you will enter 2015 tax information). It is no longer required that you have tax information from the prior year to complete the application. If you or your parents did not earn enough in the prior-prior-year to file taxes, simply select “Will not file” on the tax filing question in the application.

Q: What if my parents live in another county, and I live with my aunt/boyfriend/sibling/roommate?

A: If you are 24 years or younger and don't meet any of the independent criteria (application questions #46-58), even if you do not live with your legal parents (biological or adoptive parents) you must provide your parents' information, and one parent must sign your application. You cannot report your aunt, grandparent, sibling, boyfriend/girlfriend, legal guardian, or friend's information in place of parent information unless they have legally adopted you.

If you are unable to get your parent information, complete the application as much as you can and contact your college's financial aid office (FAO) as soon as possible. The FAO will evaluate your situation and tell you if they can override the need for parent information. The California Student Aid Commission does not have the authority to override dependency or financial information.

Q: Does my parent's citizenship affect my eligibility for Dream Act financial aid?

A: No, your parents' citizenship status does not impact your eligibility to receive Dream Act financial aid.

Q: How does my parent sign my application?

A: After completing your online application, navigate to the link that says “Sign Student Application.” Your parent must select “Request Parent PIN” and answer the verification questions. Then your parent will be issued a 4-digit electronic PIN code to sign your application. Keep this code in a safe place—your parent will need it to sign each time you make a correction to your application and re-apply each year.



Q: I applied! What's next? Do I automatically get financial aid?

A: Great! Next, the California Student Aid Commission will send your application data to all of the colleges you listed on your application. After allowing for processing time, 8-10 business days, you may follow up with those colleges to confirm that they have received your application. To apply for the Cal Grant, you must also submit your high school or community college GPA to the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) by the March 2 deadline (Often times schools will submit student GPAs to CSAC automatically, verify this with your respective high school or community college). Qualifying for the Cal Grant is not automatic. Cal Grant is a need-based program. You must meet financial eligibility and GPA requirements.

Q: I was notified that I got the Cal Grant! How do I get the money?

A: You must set up a Web Grants for Students account to manage your Cal Grant, to make school changes or address changes, and to find out if there are additional actions that must be taken before your school can disburse your first payment. Visit www.webgrants4students.org to create an account.

If you are not attending the college that you listed as the primary college on your CA Dream Act Application, you must submit a school change through www.webgrants4students.org.

Q. How do I renew my Cal Grant?

A: If you received the Cal Grant, you must re-submit your CA Dream Act Application every year to renew your award. You will use the same login information (User ID/Password) from the previous year to enter your CA Dream Act Application. To re-submit your application, go to www.caldreamact.org, click the green "Login to Application" button, provide your login information, and select the appropriate academic year application. The deadline is the same every year: March 2nd.

Learn more about the California Dream Act
www.csac.ca.gov/dream_act.asp