

Increased Financial Aid for Foster Youth

The 2023/2024 budget bill included increased funding for financial aid for foster youth across all three public postsecondary systems. Language governing this funding was included in SB 117, the higher education budget trailer bill.

WHICH FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS WERE EXPANDED FOR FOSTER YOUTH?

The Middle Class Scholarship and Student Success Completion Grant financial aid programs were expanded for foster youth.

HOW DOES THE MIDDLE CLASS SCHOLARSHIP (MCS) WORK?

The MCS is a state financial aid program that provides low- to middle-income undergraduate students, including students pursuing a teaching credential, with a scholarship if they are enrolled in a University of California (UC) or California State University (CSU), or enrolled in a bachelor's program at a California Community College. Students are awarded for up to four years depending on their educational level when first awarded (or five years for a teaching credential).

To qualify, students must be enrolled at least part time, submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or California Dream Act Application (CADAA) by March 2nd, be a California resident, and a U.S. Citizen, permanent resident or meet the requirements for a non-resident tuition exemption. Students must also meet Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) standards.

Individual award amounts are based on the Cost of Attendance (COA) set by each college. For *independent* students, the MCS provides roughly 24% of the remaining unmet need after accounting for other federal, state, and institutionally administered grants, scholarships, and fee waivers and a "self-help" student contribution of \$7,898.

WHAT CHANGES WERE MADE TO THE MCS FOR FOSTER YOUTH?

SB 117 requires that 100% of the remaining COA is covered for current and former foster youth.

WHAT TYPES OF RESOURCES COUNT TOWARD THE "SELF-HELP" STUDENT CONTRIBUTION?

In addition to resources from work and/or savings, private scholarships and institutionally awarded emergency housing funds or emergency basic needs assistance is counted toward the "self-help" student contribution.

HOW DOES THE STUDENT SUCCESS COMPLETION GRANT WORK?

The Student Success Completion Grant is administered by the California Community Colleges and provides a grant award to students that are enrolled in 12 or more units, receive the Cal Grant B or C and are California residents or meet the requirements for a non-resident tuition exemption. Students must also meet Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) standards.

Non-foster students receive \$1,298 per semester, or quarterly equivalent, if enrolled in 12-14 units and \$4,000 per semester, or quarterly equivalent, if enrolled in 15 units.

WHAT CHANGES WERE MADE TO THE STUDENT SUCCESS COMPLETION GRANT FOR FOSTER YOUTH?

SB 117 increased the grant amount for current and former foster youth enrolled in 12 or more units to \$5,250 per semester, or quarterly equivalent.

HOW IS "FOSTER YOUTH" DEFINED ACROSS BOTH OF THESE FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS?

Current and former foster youth is defined as a person whose dependency was established or continued on or after the age of 13.

WHEN DOES THIS FUNDING GO INTO EFFECT?

Funding goes into effect starting in the 2023-24 academic school year.