

AB 469: All in for Financial Aid Including Undocumented Students

California law ([AB 469](#)) now requires that all high school seniors apply for the [FAFSA](#) or [CA Dream Act](#) (CADAA) or complete an opt-out waiver. This is an excellent opportunity to increase awareness of and access to financial aid, including grants. However, it's important to be aware of and sensitive to the unique challenges undocumented students can face—especially if they're not out about their status or live in a conservative environment. Students can opt out if they don't feel comfortable applying. Use the resources in this guide to educate yourself, your colleagues, and your community.

Create a Safe Environment for ALL Students

- A. Use inclusive language!
 - a. Always say “FAFSA or DREAM” together to ensure students are aware of their options.
 - b. Host “Financial Aid Nights”, not “FAFSA” nights.
 - c. Remember the diversity within the undocumented identity: use our guides to ensure your messaging and resources are inclusive of undocumented [Black](#) and [Asian Pacific Islander](#) students.
- B. Ensure you don't inadvertently “out” students.
 - a. Don't require students to reveal their status or identify which application they will be applying for.
 - b. Never speak openly about a student's status without their permission.
 - c. Make your support visible so students don't have to reveal their status to get support.
 - d. Be aware of the factors that might make it difficult for an undocumented student to easily apply or ask for help. These can include fear, family safety, lack of awareness of pathways to pursue higher education, as well as questioning the value of attending college.
- C. Make sure students understand what it means to [opt out of completing the financial form](#).
 - a. Be clear with students that completing a financial aid form is NOT a requirement for graduation, but it CAN provide them access to paying for college.
 - b. Don't make assumptions/judgments about why they opt out.
 - c. Even if students opt out now, remind them that they can fill out the CADAA later.
 - d. If they choose to opt out, be sure to still share resources about completing the CADAA.

Immigrants Rising Resources

Use these resources to help undocumented and other eligible students learn about and successfully apply for the CA Dream Act.

- [FAFSA vs CA Dream Act](#)
- [CA Dream Act Application Checklists](#)
- [Mixed Status Households](#)
- [In-State Tuition vs CA Dream Act vs DACA](#)
- [A Note to Undocumented Students](#)
- [CA Dream Act Application Map](#)
- [Submitting the AB 540 Affidavit](#)

Elevate State and Federal Protections for Undocumented Student Data

- A. Make sure students, parents, and colleagues are aware CSAC will protect data submitted on the CADAA to the fullest extent of the law.
 - a. Promote the protection of data for undocumented students through [this letter from CSAC and CA Department of Education](#).
- B. Learn about, highlight, and ensure compliance with federal, state, and institutional policies at your school and across the state.
 - a. Read and implement recommendations from [Protecting Undocumented Student Data in CA](#).
- C. Add visuals on your campus to ensure students are aware that the information they use on their financial aid applications will be protected.

Replicate Promising Practices to Include Undocumented Students

- A. Host on-campus events to support students submit their FAFSA or CADAA, like San Francisco State University's [Financial Aid Fridays](#).
- B. Prevent inadvertently "outing" students by using terms that refer to both FAFSA and CADAA (such as "Financial Aid Fridays") as opposed to "FAFSA Friday".
- C. Help students keep their information handy regardless of what application they select by replicating FAFSA and CADAA preparation documents such as the ones created by [Los Angeles Trade-Technical College](#) and [El Camino College](#).

Get Support

- A. Don't feel like you have to do this alone! Be sure to tap into the [Statewide & Regional Service Providers](#) who can help you implement these strategies.
- B. Use the [Financial Aid Implementation Worksheet](#) to track your progress in increasing completion rates.
- C. Take advantage of the support available at local colleges and universities. Find contact information for [undocumented support services at CA colleges and universities!](#)
- D. If you are a high school educator, check to see if your district has access to [CaliforniaColleges.edu](#), which can provide [tools to comply with AB 469](#). However, it's important to use them in accordance with this guide.