

CLIENT NEWS BRIEF

Governor Signs A Suite Of Bills Aimed At Supporting Students In Higher Education

Governor Newsom signed a host of Assembly Bills (AB) and Senate Bills (SB) in support of higher education, which expand existing student aid programs and eligibility criteria, among other things.

California College Promise

The existing California College Promise program waives enrollment fees for eligible students. The program generally targets students from low-income families or who are receiving government assistance, such as Supplemental Security Income or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families. The Budget Act of 2019 (AB 74) expands the California College Promise by providing funding for community colleges to offer up to two years tuition free enrollment to first-time, full-time California students. Another bill, AB 2 expands access to the California College Promise program by allowing students with disabilities to qualify for the program even without a full-time course load. AB 2 also specifically excludes participation by students who have previously earned a degree or certificate from a postsecondary educational institution.

Student Equity and Achievement Program

The Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act of 2012 established the Student Equity and Achievement Program, aimed at closing achievement gaps for students from traditionally underrepresented groups in higher education. AB 943 amends the Program by authorizing the use of Program funding for emergency student financial assistance to help eligible students overcome unforeseen financial challenges that would directly impact the student's ability to persist in their course of study. These challenges include, but are not necessarily limited to, the immediate need for shelter or food as well as textbook purchases and transportation assistance.

Internet Website Notification of Public Services and Programs

Existing law seeks to establish "hunger free campuses" within the University of California (UC), California State University (CSU) and California Community Colleges (CCC). AB 1278 adds a requirement that the attendance student web portal for CSU and CCC campuses include notification of, and a link to, information on public services and programs, such as the CalFresh program, housing resources, and mental health services. UC campuses are "requested" to include this information, but not required to do so. This bill is intended to connect students to existing social services resources to address areas of student need.

California DREAM Loan Program

The California DREAM Loan Program provides educational loans for qualifying undergraduate, UC and CSU students. Qualifying students with a full-time course load may borrow up to \$4,000 per year or \$20,000 total. Effective July 1, 2020, SB 354 expands eligibility for DREAM loans to students enrolled in qualified professional or graduate degree programs, including, but not limited to, a teaching credential program.

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Chafee Educational and Training Voucher Program

The Chafee Educational and Training Voucher (ETV) Program is designed to provide financial assistance for current and former foster youth attending college. Effective July 1, 2021, SB 150 implements changes to the ETV disbursement process by (1) relaxing the academic progress requirements for recipients of student aid (in a manner similar the Cal Grant disbursement process) and (2) instituting an appeals system for those not meeting academic standards. The new disbursement process is structured to provide aid at the beginning of the school year when it is needed most.

If you have any questions about recently signed student aid bills, please contact the authors of this Client News Brief or an attorney at one of our [eight offices](#) located statewide. You can also subscribe to our [podcast](#), follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) or download our [mobile app](#).

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