

2025-26 FAFSA vs CADAA Aid Comparison



The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is a federal financial aid application for U.S. citizens, permanent residents (“green card” holders), T-visa holders, and other eligible non-citizens to apply for state and federal financial aid.



The CA Dream Act Application (CADAA) is California’s state financial aid application operated by CSAC that allows undocumented students to receive free financial aid.

U.S. citizens or “green card holders” whose parent(s) or spouse are undocumented (mixed-status families) can also apply for the CADAA if they do not want to submit a FAFSA.

Pros	Determination of eligibility for: Federal Aid (grants, loans, work-study) and, State Aid (state and university grants, community college fee waivers, cal grant, and private scholarships).	Determination of eligibility for State Aid only: State Aid (state and university grants, community college fee waivers, cal grants, and private scholarships). Non-ssn contributors will not be required to create an account
	Non-ssn contributors will need to create an FSA ID.	No access to federal aid. Eligibility requirements may reduce amount of financial aid award.
	Non-ssn contributors information will be stored in the Department of Education’s system protected by current student privacy laws.	Less financial aid for students that are planning on attending institutions with higher tuition costs.
Cons		
Risk		

Types of aid offered to eligible students

		FAFSA® Federal Student Aid	California DreamAct
Pell Grant	\$7,395	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Loans	varies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Work-study	varies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
FSEOG	\$100 - \$4,000	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Middle class scholarship	varies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Cal Grant	A: \$12,630 B: \$1,672 C: \$1,094	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Private scholarships	varies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Institutional Aid	varies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CCPG	Enrollment fees	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
DSIG	up to \$4,500		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

FAFSA & CADAA priority deadline: March 3rd, 2025

Last updated on December 3rd, 2024 (JDR)

For additional resources please visit the pages listed below.

Free immigration legal services and case support for students and employees on California community college campuses statewide or virtually.

<https://findyourally.com/>

Mental Health Resources:

https://immigrantsrising.org/wp-content/uploads/Immigrants-Rising_Mental-Health-Resources-for-Undocumented-People.pdf

The Dream.US: Scholarships and information for undocumented students:

<http://www.thedream.us/>

United We Dream: Immigrant youth-led organization information, advocacy, scholarships:

<http://unitedwedream.org/>

Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC): Providing legal trainings, educational materials, and advocacy for immigrant rights:

<https://www.ilrc.org>

Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF): Latino civil rights organization, scholarship directory, legislative updates for immigrant rights:

www.maldef.org/

State policies from across the country that provide undocumented students with access to in-state tuition and financial aid.

<https://www.higheredimmigrationportal.org/states/>

Understand the differences: In-state tuition vs CA Dream Act vs DACA

https://immigrantsrising.org/wp-content/uploads/Immigrants-Rising_Understand-the-Differences_In-State-Tuition-vs-CA-Dream-Act-vs-DACA_Accessible.pdf

Know your rights

<https://www.sjsu.edu/undocuspartan/resources/know-your-rights.php>

Glossary of Common Legal Terms

<https://immigrantsrising.org/resource/glossary-of-common-legal-terms/>