



NEWS RELEASE
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Cal Grant Cuts Would Hit Community College Students Hard

Many more community college students than students at California's four-year colleges would lose financial aid under Governor Schwarzenegger's proposed budget for next year, according to a [new report](#). The Institute for College Access & Success found that the budget-cutting plan would eliminate new Cal Grant awards for 45 percent of community college students who would have received them, compared to five percent of would-be recipients at the University of California and 10 percent in the California State University system.

The Cal Grant program provides eligible low- and moderate-income students with up to \$11,259 to cover fees at public universities and up to \$9,708 for tuition at private colleges in California, along with additional funds for other educational expenses. The maximum Cal Grant for a community college student is just \$1,551, and can be used to cover the cost of books, supplies and transportation to and from the campus.

Students who stand to lose their grants under the current proposal are older, with lower incomes and higher GPAs than other Cal Grant recipients. "Low-income community college students already receive far less financial aid than similar students at other colleges, so these cuts seem especially harsh," said Deborah Frankle Cochrane, the report's author. "Most of those who would be shut out are older students already in the workforce who are trying to get ahead. At a time of economic instability, we should be investing more in the skills and capacity of our workforce instead of eliminating this low-cost, high-impact grant program."

While community college fees are low in California, the report points out that the high cost of textbooks, rent, and other college-related expenses mean that financial aid is critical to making community college accessible and affordable. Last year 114,100 eligible students applied for and were denied Cal Grants because of inadequate funding; 67 percent of them were planning to attend a community college.

"Cal Grants have always been an important but under-funded source of support for students who need and deserve help," said Robert Shireman, president of the Institute for College Access & Success. "Cutting this program would be a major step backwards for higher education, and would likely do more to hurt California's economy in the long run than to help with the current budget crisis."

To see the report, *Proposed Cal Grant Cuts Would Hit Community College Student Hardest*, visit http://www.ticas.org/files/pub/cal_grant_cuts.pdf.

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An independent, nonprofit organization, the Institute for College Access & Success works to make higher education more available and affordable for people of all backgrounds. By conducting and supporting nonpartisan research, analysis, and advocacy, the Institute aims to improve the processes and public policies that can pave the way to successful educational outcomes for students and for society.