

FAMILY GUIDE

**FAFSA/CADAA
Completion**



Introduction

This Family Guide is designed to assist parents and guardians of high school seniors in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) in understanding and completing one of the two financial aid applications for postsecondary education. Financial aid includes grants, scholarships, work-study, and/or loans provided to students to help pay for tuition, books, rent, food, and transportation while they are enrolled in a college or career certificate program. The goal is to empower families to support their children in achieving 100% completion of these applications by 2026, thereby enhancing their opportunities for higher education.

Importance of FAFSA/CADAA Completion

Completing the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** or **CA Dream Act Application (CADAA)** is crucial for students seeking financial aid for college. These applications determine eligibility for federal and state financial assistance, which can significantly reduce the cost of higher education. By understanding the importance of these applications, families can better support their children in navigating the college financial aid process.



**Federal Student Aid
(FAFSA)**



**CA Dream Act Application
(CADAA)**

LAUSD is committed to ensuring that every senior has the resources and support needed to complete their FAFSA or CADAA application. This initiative aligns with the district's broader goal of improving academic outcomes, fostering strong partnerships between schools and families, and reaching 100% completion of financial aid applications.



Understanding FAFSA and CADAA

What is FAFSA?

The **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. It collects financial information about the student and their family to determine eligibility for federal grants, loans, and work-study programs.



What is CADAA?

The **CADAA** is California’s state financial aid application operated by the **California Student Aid Commission (CSAC)** that allows undocumented students to receive free financial aid such as: state and university grants, community college fee waivers, Cal Grants, and private scholarships. Additionally, the CADAA allows students to pay in-state tuition at any public college or university in California.



Mixed Status Families

In California, a mixed-status family is one where the student is a **U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen AND their parent(s) or spouse (FAFSA contributors) do not have a Social Security number (SSN).**

These students can use the **CA Dream Act Application (CADAA)** for state aid (grants, UC/CSU aid) as a protected, state-based path, while FAFSA offers federal aid (Pell Grants, loans) but may pose risks for undocumented parents. The California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) is offering **CADAA for Mixed-Status Families** as an alternative financial aid application for students concerned about the security of their personal information., with the recommending students weigh options and potentially start with CADAA for safety, then switch to FAFSA later if comfortable.

Key Differences Between FAFSA and CADAA



Eligibility

FAFSA is for U.S. citizens and eligible non-citizens, while CADAA is specifically for undocumented students.



Financial Aid Sources

FAFSA provides access to federal financial aid, while CADAA offers access to state financial aid.



Application Process

Both applications require similar information, but the CADAA includes specific questions related to residency status.

The Importance of Financial Aid

Completing the FAFSA or CADAA opens doors to various forms of financial aid, including grants, scholarships, and loans. This financial support can alleviate the burden of college expenses and make higher education more accessible.

Financial aid can come in several forms:

Grants

Money that does not need to be repaid, often based on financial need.



Scholarships

Funds awarded based on merit or specific criteria, which also do not need to be repaid.



Work-Study

Part-time jobs for students at the college to earn money while attending school.



Loans

Borrowed money that must be repaid with interest, typically used to cover remaining costs.



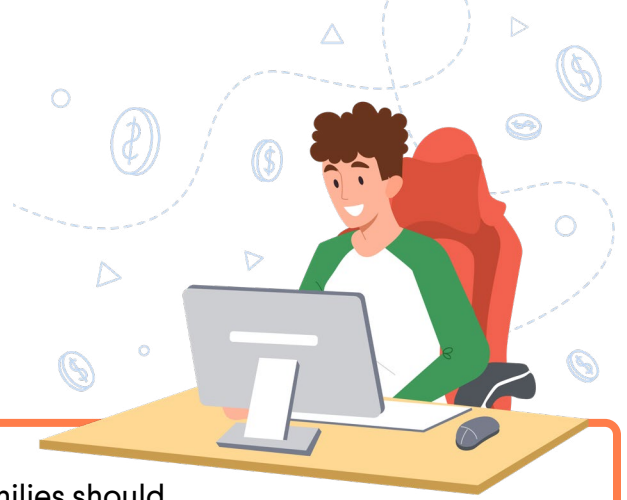
How Financial Aid Supports College Success

Financial aid can significantly impact a student's ability to attend college and influence a student's choice of college. With adequate funding, students may be able to attend their preferred institutions, pursue specific programs, or even consider out-of-state options that may have been financially out of reach.

Financial aid can significantly help students succeed academically. It reduces financial stress, allowing students to focus on their studies and extracurricular activities, ultimately leading to higher graduation rates.



Step-by-Step Guide to Completing FAFSA/CADAA



1 Preparing to Apply

Before starting the application, families should familiarize themselves with the requirements and deadlines. It is essential to create an FSA ID for the FAFSA, which serves as a signature for the application.

2 Gathering Necessary Documents

Collect the following documents to streamline the application process:

- Social Security numbers (or Alien Registration numbers for non-citizens)
- Federal tax returns and W-2 forms for the previous year
- Bank statements and investment records
- Records of untaxed income

3 Completing the Application

Both the FAFSA and CADAA can be completed online. Follow the prompts carefully, ensuring that all information is accurate. Review the application before submission to avoid errors.

Families are encouraged to submit their FAFSA/CADAA application by the **priority deadline** of March 2. Submitting your financial aid application by this date gets you considered for the **most aid**, including limited state/school funds like Cal Grants, which are often first-come, first-served. Missing it doesn't mean no aid, but your chances for the best packages, scholarships, or competitive programs decrease significantly, as many funds run out. Applications are accepted until June 30. However, California Community Colleges have a deadline of September 2.

✓ Tips for Successful Submission

- **Start Early:** Begin the application process as soon as possible to avoid last-minute issues.
- **Seek Help:** Utilize school counselors or financial aid workshops for assistance.
- **Keep Copies:** Save copies of all submitted documents for your records.

✗ Common Mistakes to Avoid

- **Missing Deadlines:** Be aware of federal and state deadlines for submission.
- **Incorrect Information:** Double-check all entries for accuracy to avoid delays in processing.
- **Not Signing the Application:** Ensure that both the student and parent sign the application.

Engaging with Schools



Questions to Ask Teachers and Counselors

Parents should feel empowered to ask questions about the financial aid process. Consider asking:

How can I support my child in their college preparation?

What resources are available to help with FAFSA/CADAA completion?



How to Support Your Child's Learning

Encourage open communication with your child about their college aspirations and financial aid needs. Help them stay organized and on track with deadlines.

During the Application Process

- Set aside time to work on the applications together.
- Encourage open communication about any concerns or challenges.
- Celebrate milestones, such as completing the application.

Connecting Classroom Learning to Home

- Discuss what your child is learning in school and how it relates to their future goals.
- Encourage them to explore college options that align with their interests and strengths.



Building a Partnership with Schools

Establishing a strong partnership with teachers and school staff can enhance your child's educational experience. Attend school meetings and engage in discussions about academic and financial planning.

Resources for Families

LAUSD Support Services

LAUSD offers various support services to assist families with the FAFSA and CADAA process. Parents can contact their child's school counselor for personalized guidance and resources.

Online Tools and Resources

Several online resources can help families navigate the financial aid process:

FAFSA Official Website

**California Student Aid
Commission**



**LAUSD Financial Aid
Resources**

LA Cash for College

Immigrants Rising

Community Workshops and Events

LAUSD hosts workshops and events throughout the year to educate families about financial aid. These sessions provide valuable information and hands-on assistance with completing applications.

Let's work together to achieve 100% FAFSA and CADAA completion by 2026. Start the conversation today, gather the necessary documents, and take the first step toward securing financial aid for your child's college education.

Encouragement for Parents to Participate

We encourage all families to take an active role in their child's education and financial planning. Your involvement can make a significant difference in their future success.

