



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 15, 2004

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California Student Aid Commission Awards First Chafee Program Grants

RANCHO CORDOVA, CA— Today, the California Student Aid Commission is pleased to announce the first California Chafee Grant Program awards to 180 college students for nearly \$750,000 total in free federal grants – and more awards are on the way. The California Chafee Grant Program is a federal educational voucher program that gives up to \$5,000 annually to former foster youths. The Program provides free grant dollars to be used for college or vocational training.

“We are excited to announce these first awards to former foster youths pursuing their higher education goals,” said Diana Fuentes-Michel, executive director of the Commission. “The money is for the 2003-04 academic year, and there is still grant money available. We encourage youths who might be eligible to apply immediately, if they have not already applied.”

To apply, Independent Living Program (ILP) eligible foster youths must be in foster care between their 16th and 18th birthdays, and not reached their 22nd birthday as of July 1, 2003. Two forms are required: the 2003-04 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the California Chafee Grant Program Application. The 2003-04 FAFSA is available on line at www.fafsa.ed.gov or can be picked up in paper format at high school counseling offices and college financial aid offices. The Chafee Grant Program Application is available through the Commission’s Web site at www.chafee.csac.ca.gov.

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To receive a grant, the applicant must be enrolled in a college or vocational school, and at least half time in a course of study that is at least one year long – and maintain satisfactory academic progress. Youths who have aged out of foster care in another state, and subsequently reside in California, may also qualify for a Chafee Grant.

In February 2003, the federal government authorized \$42 million for all states for Chafee Education and Training Vouchers for former foster youth. California has nearly \$8 million to use for ILP eligible foster youth. This is the first year the program has been funded, and future funding depends on federal budget appropriations.

More information is available through foster youth caseworkers, county ILP coordinators, One-Stop Career Centers, college financial aid advisors and the California Student Aid Commission. On line, visit www.chafee.csac.ca.gov for more information on the California program and its benefits.

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The California Student Aid Commission is the state's principal provider of intersegmental statewide grant aid to postsecondary students. Founded in 1955 as the California State Scholarship Commission, the Commission's primary programmatic responsibilities include operation of the Cal Grant program, which will distribute about \$612 million to California's college students during the 2003-2004 school year, and several targeted state scholarship and loan forgiveness programs. The 15-member Commission oversees the activities of its nonprofit student loan services auxiliary, EDFUND. The Commission is headquartered in Rancho Cordova, California.

California Student Aid Commission and its associated graphic are the service mark of the California Student Aid Commission.

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