

QUESTIONS ABOUT RECEIPT OF FUNDS

When do students actually get their aid?

Financial aid and scholarship disbursements start the Thursday before the beginning of each semester. In order for financial aid to be disbursed, students must complete all **To Do List** items in their Student Center and their file must be complete. Students must be enrolled at least half-time. Wildcat Scholarship recipients must be enrolled full-time, which is 12 units for undergraduate and credential students and 8 units for graduate students enrolled in a master's degree program.

How do students receive their aid?

Registration fees, housing charges, and other financial obligations owed to the University are deducted from the financial aid, and any remaining aid is disbursed to the student. Parent applications for PLUS loans may designate that either the parent or the student receive the funds.

Direct Deposit is recommended. Students who sign up for direct deposit receive their disbursements on disbursement day. Students may enroll in direct deposit by going to the "Financials" section of their Student Center and selecting "Direct Deposit". Parents complete a Parent PLUS Loan Direct Deposit form at www.csuchico.edu/fin/resources/forms.shtml. Be sure to include a voided check. If the student or parent does not enroll in direct deposit, a check will be mailed when the disbursement is ready. This may delay receipt of the check for up to one week.

QUESTIONS ABOUT OTHER RESOURCES

Do students need to notify the Financial Aid and Scholarship Office if receiving funding from a source other than financial aid?

Yes. It is a federal requirement to coordinate all aid. The Financial Aid and Scholarship Office will coordinate fee waivers, stipends and third-party payments with the Student Financial Services Office. Students who receive **external scholarships** (from non-CSU, Chico sources) should have their check mailed to our office, where it is entered into the student's award. The student receives an email when the scholarship has been added to their award. Once part of the award, the scholarship is considered anticipated aid. See above for how funds disburse.



QUESTIONS ABOUT SCHOLARSHIPS

When should students apply for scholarships?

For **Wildcat Scholarships**, students apply *online* through the Financial Aid and Scholarship Office website. The online application is available from **January 2 through February 15** each year, for all university scholarships to be awarded for the next academic year. (www.csuchico.edu/fa/scholarships/wildcat.shtml)

For **private scholarships**, we advise students to begin researching scholarship opportunities as soon as they decide to apply to college. Students may find information from high school guidance offices, books on scholarships available in all libraries, and private scholarship databases available on the internet. Our website gives advice on how to best use these scholarship sites, as well as tips on avoiding scholarship scams. Please note that legitimate scholarship foundations do not charge a fee.

California State University, Chico

Financial Aid and Scholarship Office
Student Services Center 250
Chico, CA 95929-0705

Phone: 530-898-6451 Fax: 530-898-6883

Email: finaid@csuchico.edu

Website: www.csuchico.edu/fa including Live Chat

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ChicoStateFASO

CALIFORNIA
STATE
UNIVERSITY

Chico

Financial Aid and Scholarship Office

FAQs

for Parents



Student Services Center 250

Phone: 530-898-6451

Fax: 530-898-6883

www.csuchico.edu/fa

Live Chat with us on our [website](#)

Frequently asked . . .

BASIC BEGINNING QUESTIONS

Is my child eligible for financial aid?

Most students and their families qualify for some type of financial aid. See our **Steps to Financial Aid at CSU, Chico** (www.csuchico.edu/fa/steps).

Is admission necessary to apply for financial aid?

No. Students should submit the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa> or **CA Dream Act Application (CADAA)** <https://dream.csac.ca.gov> by the March 2 priority filing date prior to the academic year they expect to enroll. However, they need to have applied for admission in order to receive a financial aid offer, and they must be admitted and enrolled in classes before actually receiving financial aid.

When should students apply for financial aid?

Students should apply as soon as possible after October 1 for financial aid for the next academic year.

Is there a deadline to apply for financial aid?

The priority application date for financial aid is March 2 of each year. We continue to accept applications after March 2 and distribute awards throughout the academic year. Please keep in mind that some funds are limited and are awarded to eligible students on a first-come, first-served basis so students will want to file early.

Can my child apply as independent on the FAFSA or CADAA if I do not claim her/him as a tax exemption?

No, not unless your child meets one or more of the criteria to be considered independent for financial aid purposes. See **Dependency Status: Are you independent or dependent?** (www.csuchico.edu/fa/circumstances/dependency.shtml)

QUESTIONS ABOUT AWARDING

What is Expected Family Contribution (EFC)?

The FAFSA or CADAA collects household and family financial information and determines a dollar amount, called the EFC, that is used to determine federal and state student aid eligibility. The federal formula used to calculate the EFC measures a family's ability to pay for college on the basis of income, assets, family size and number of siblings attending college.

If parents are divorced or separated, whose financial information should be used when completing the FAFSA or CADAA?

If the legal parents are separated or divorced, the student should use the legal parent with whom they lived most in the past 12 months. If the student lived with neither parent, or lived with each parent an equal number of days, they should use the parent that provided the most financial support in the past 12 months. If that parent is remarried, federal regulations require the stepparent's financial information be included on the FAFSA/CADAA.

What determines financial need?

The starting point for aid is financial need, which will be different for each school because financial aid is a product of the **difference** between a college's Cost of Attendance and your Expected Family Contribution. See **Understanding Your Award: Determining Your Financial Aid** (www.csuchico.edu/fa/award-info/understand.shtml).

Why has CSU, Chico requested tax information and other verification documents?

We are required to verify certain information that you or your parent(s) provided on your FAFSA/CADAA. Verification is like an audit. Information reported on the FAFSA/CADAA is compared with the student's and/or parents' tax information and other documents as needed. We recommend that you utilize the IRS Data Retrieval Tool on the FAFSA. This option will streamline and expedite the student's verification process. Have your student watch for emails and return all requested items ASAP, as financial aid will be held until verification is complete. See **What is Verification** (www.csuchico.edu/fa/policies/verification.shtml).

What if we have unmet need?

The offered financial aid may not meet unmet need. For additional aid, students may request an unsubsidized loan, which may not have been included in the initial offer or perhaps was declined. Additionally, parents may request a PLUS loan (Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students). Check our website for Stafford Loan Limits (student loans) and information regarding PLUS Loans (www.csuchico.edu/fa/types-of-aid/loans/index.shtml).

QUESTIONS ABOUT LOANS

My child applied for financial aid. Why was a loan offered?

Loans are a form of financial aid. In fact, they make up the largest portion of the federal student aid program. Even if the student is grant-eligible, we will offer a loan to help meet as many expenses as possible. If the EFC does not qualify the student for grants, we will offer loan. The student has the right to accept, reduce, or decline any loan. We encourage students to only borrow as much as they need. View some videos on responsible loan borrowing here: (www.csuchico.edu/fa/fatv-videos/loans-and-responsible-borrowing.shtml).

Can I apply for a loan under my name to be used for my child's education expenses?

PLUS Loans (Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students) are federal direct loans that help parent borrowers pay college expenses for dependent students. Parents may borrow up to the cost of education, minus any other aid received by the student, including Unsubsidized Stafford Loan. Unlike student loan borrowers, parents must pass a credit check or have a qualified endorser to be approved for a PLUS loan.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Can parents talk to the Financial Aid and Scholarship Office about their student's financial aid?

Federal law protects the privacy of student education records. For students 18 or older, our office must have official permission from the student to release any information about their financial aid file. If parent contact is desired, the student can provide authorization for us to disclose their information by completing these steps: 1) Log in Student Center; 2) go to Records section; 3) click the "Authorization to Release" link. With a password provided by the student, parents can talk to our staff directly about their student's file. The student authorization ensures compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Are there possible tax benefits related to a student's education?

There may be tax benefits for educational expenses that can help you. See **IRS Publication 970**, Tax Benefits for Education, for specific tax benefits.