

QUESTIONS ABOUT RECEIPT OF FUNDS

When do students actually get their aid?

Once students accept their financial aid, it disburses the Thursday before the beginning of each semester. In order for financial aid to disburse, 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 refunded to the student. Parent applications for PLUS loans will designate if the parent or the student is to receive the funds.

Students: e-Refund (direct deposit) is recommended to avoid disbursement delays. Students may enroll in e-Refund by going to the "Financials" section of their Student Center.

Parents—Direct Deposit: 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 funds.

QUESTIONS ABOUT OTHER RESOURCES

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

Yes. It is a federal requirement to coordinate all financial aid, including external scholarships. The Financial Aid & Scholarship Office will coordinate fee waivers, stipends and third-party payments with the Student Financial Services Office. Students who receive an **external scholarship** (from non-Chico State sources) should have their check mailed to Student Financial Services (530-898-5936) so it can be coordinated with their other financial aid. The student receives an email when the scholarship has been added to their award. See above information for how funds disburse.



QUESTIONS ABOUT SCHOLARSHIPS

When should students apply for scholarships?

Students apply for **Wildcat Scholarships** online at www.csuchico.edu/fa/scholarships/wildcat.shtml. The application is open from **January 2 through February 15** each year, for university scholarships to be awarded for the next academic year.

For **private scholarships**, we advise students to begin researching scholarship opportunities as soon as they decide to apply to college. Students may find information through high school guidance offices, books on scholarships available in 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, nor can they guarantee that a student will receive a scholarship.

California State University, Chico

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

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California State
University Chico

FAQs for Parents

Financial Aid & Scholarships

Student Services Ctr 250

530-898-6451

www.csuchico.edu/fa

Frequently asked . . .

BASIC QUESTIONS

Is my student eligible for financial aid?

Most students qualify for some type of financial aid, which may include grants and/or loans. See **Steps to Financial Aid** on our website: www.csuchico.edu/fa/steps

Is admission to college necessary to apply for financial aid?

No. Students can submit their application before they are admitted. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and CA Dream Act Application (CADAA) are currently open.

- FAFSA: studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa
- CADAA: dream.csac.ca.gov

Students must apply for admission in order to receive a financial aid offer. They must be admitted and enrolled in classes to receive financial aid. Note: financial aid offers are based on full-time enrollment. Students who attend less than full time may have their aid adjusted.

When should students apply for financial aid?

Submit the 2024-25 FAFSA or CADAA as soon as possible after it opens. Note: Students need to apply every year.

Is there a deadline to apply for financial aid?

Some funds are limited and are awarded to eligible students on a first-come, first-served basis. Students will want to apply before the priority deadline, which is usually March 2. **For 2024-25 the priority deadline has been extended to May 2.** We do continue to accept applications after that and distribute awards throughout the academic year.

Can my student 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/appeals/dependency.shtml

QUESTIONS ABOUT AWARDING

What is Student Aid Index (SAI)?

The FAFSA or CADAA collects household and family financial information for an index, called the SAI, to determine your federal and state financial aid eligibility. The formula used to calculate the SAI measures a family's ability to pay for college on the basis of income, assets and other variables. It does not represent an actual dollar amount that your student will owe or receive in refunds.

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 Student Aid Index. See **Understanding Your Award: Determining Your Financial Aid:** www.csuchico.edu/fa/award-info/understand.shtml

What if we have unmet need?

The offered financial aid may not meet your unmet need. For additional aid, students may request an unsubsidized loan that 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 Federal Direct Loan Limits (student loans) and information regarding PLUS Loans: www.csuchico.edu/fa/types-of-aid/loans/index.shtml

Why has Chico State requested tax information and other verification documents?

We are required to verify certain information. Verification is like an audit, and information reported on the FAFSA or CADAA is compared with the student and/or parents' tax information and other documents as needed. On the FAFSA, students and their contributors must consent to usage of the IRS Direct Data Exchange. Have your student watch for emails and return all requested items quickly, as financial aid will not be disbursed until verification is complete. See **What is Verification?** www.csuchico.edu/fa/policies/verification.shtml

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

If the parents are divorced or separated, answer the questions about the parent who provides the greater portion of the student's financial support, even if the student does not live with them. If this parent is remarried when the FAFSA or CADAA is completed, answer the questions about that parent and the stepparent.

QUESTIONS ABOUT LOANS

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

Loans are a type of financial aid. Students may be offered loans to help cover educational and living expenses. The student has the right to accept, reduce, or decline any loan. If a student accepts loans, they should accept subsidized loans, if eligible, before accepting other loans as this may save money. We encourage students to only borrow as much as they need. View responsible loan borrowing videos 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 student's education expenses?

Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students (PLUS loans) are federal direct loans that help parent borrowers pay college expenses for dependent students. Parents may borrow up to the cost of attendance, minus any other aid received by the student, including federal direct unsubsidized loans. Unlike student loan borrowers, parents must pass a credit check or have a qualified endorser to be approved for a PLUS loan. www.csuchico.edu/fa/types-of-aid/loans/plus.shtml

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Can I talk to the Financial Aid & Scholarship Office about my student's financial aid?

Yes, however federal law protects the privacy of student education records. For students 18 or older, our office must have official permission from your student to release any financial aid information. Your student can provide authorization for us to disclose information to you by completing these steps: 1) Log in to the Student Center; 2) go to Student Records section; 3) click the "Authorization to Release" link. With an access code provided by your student, you can talk to our staff directly about your student's file. The student authorization ensures compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). **Please note:** due to federal regulations, we cannot share student federal tax information (FTI) even with your student's authorization.

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.