



**PRESS RELEASE**

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**State Leaders Encourage California Dreamers to Apply for Financial Aid**

*The California Community Colleges and higher education leaders team up with state lawmakers to urge California Dream Act-eligible students to apply for financial aid.*

SACRAMENTO, Calif. –The California Community Colleges system today launched a new online [video](#), that encourages California students to apply for financial aid despite the current federal immigration climate. The new video, titled “Follow Your Dreams,” features California Community Colleges [Chancellor Eloy Ortiz Oakley](#), Senate President pro Tem Kevin de León, Asm. Speaker Anthony Rendon, Asm. Jose Medina, Asm. Lorena Gonzalez Fletcher, students and other voices in California higher education.

The 60-second online video is aimed at current and prospective California community college students and their parents and teachers. It is [currently live on the California Community Colleges “I Can Afford College” financial aid awareness website](#).

The California Community Colleges produced the video to reassure AB 540 students that under the California Dream Act, no student’s personal information is shared with the federal government, and to encourage eligible students to apply for financial aid. The video also aims raise awareness about California’s commitment to providing higher education opportunities for AB 540 students.

“For students who participate in the California Dream Act, we don’t share their personal information with any federal agencies or authorities,” said California Community Colleges Chancellor Eloy Ortiz Oakley. “We welcome Dreamers on our campuses and are going to protect their personal information and ensure that they feel comfortable and valued.”

According to the California Student Aid Commission, Cal Grant applications for Dreamers in the first months of this year were lower than in the same period of last year. Advocacy efforts by the California Community Colleges, University of California, California State University systems and the California Student Aid Commission in February helped raise those figures just before the Cal Grant March deadline.

Senate President pro Tem Kevin de León signed on to participate in the video because he believes the California Community Colleges’ message of inclusion and opportunity.

“Immigrants are the fabric of California’s success and prosperity and Dreamers will help fuel our economy into the future,” said Senate President pro Tem Kevin de León. “We’re doing everything in our power to defend immigrants in California because here we celebrate diversity. We don’t ban it. We don’t deport it. We don’t wall it off.”

The [California Dream Act](#) allows AB 540 students to apply for financial aid. For more information and for free, one-on-one assistance in beginning the application process, visit the California Community Colleges [icanaffordcollege.com](http://icanaffordcollege.com) website, which is available in English, Spanish and traditional Chinese.

*The California Community Colleges is the largest system of higher education in the nation composed of 72 districts and 113 colleges serving 2.1 million students per year. Community colleges supply workforce training, basic skills education and prepare students for transfer to four-year institutions. The Chancellor's Office provides leadership, advocacy and support under the direction of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges. For more information about the community colleges, please visit <http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/>.*

*The California Community Colleges "I Can Afford College" campaign is a statewide, financial aid awareness initiative sponsored by state of California. The purpose of the campaign is to educate current and prospective students about the year-round availability of financial aid at California's 113 community colleges to help pay for fees, books, supplies and sometimes even help with the rent. Since the campaign launched in April 2004, more than two million people have visited the [icanaffordcollege.com](http://icanaffordcollege.com) website and the number of community college students receiving some type of financial aid has increased by 70 percent.*

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