

Federal Policy and Advocacy Update

(Provided by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. Information current as of April 5, 2024).

ADMINISTRATION UPDATE

On March 22nd, the U.S. Department of Education (USED) announced that roughly 200,000 of the 1.5 million federal student aid records sent to schools now need to be reprocessed. The department's Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) processing system miscalculated the financial need of dependent students who reported assets, which created an inaccurate picture of how much aid those students might be eligible for. USED has asserted that the issue has been resolved and should not affect any other student aid records moving forward.

In response to USED's announcement as well as other related concerns to the FAFSA, leaders from the American Council on Education, EDUCAUSE, and the National Association of College and University Business Officers sent a letter to Education Secretary Miguel Cardona on March 28th questioning whether financial aid packages can be finalized within the next few weeks. Processing key financial aid data from Institutional Student Information Records may take four to six weeks, and it is unclear when students can expect to be notified of their awards.

APPROPRIATIONS UPDATE

On March 11th, President Biden released his fiscal year (FY) 2025 budget request to Congress. The request includes \$82.4 billion in discretionary funding for USED. It also proposes to increase the maximum Pell Grant award by \$750, to \$8,145. President Biden also proposes an investment of \$75 million for minority-serving institutions and providing \$2.7 billion to boost the capacity of USED's Federal Student Aid office.

On March 20th, the House and Senate Appropriations Committees released the second package of final FY 2024 appropriations bills. The bills retain the Strengthening Community College Training Grants and include several funding proposals for community college nursing programs.