

## SOCAL CAN RESPONDS TO FAFSA CRISIS WITH FREE IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL FINANCIAL AID APPLICATION ASSISTANCE

**WHAT:** This year's rollout of the simplified Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) was meant to streamline financial aid access. However, delays and technical glitches severely hindered students' ability to apply, exacerbating inequities in college access, particularly for underrepresented students, such as students from low-income, first-generation and immigrant backgrounds.

[The Southern California College Attainment Network \(SoCal CAN\)](#), a leading organization for college success in Southern California, has been at the forefront of addressing these challenges. SoCal CAN launched its [FAFSA/CADAA Summer Support Campaign](#) offering vital assistance to students by hosting over 30 free financial aid clinics throughout the greater Los Angeles region and providing free virtual appointments with trained advisors.

- SoCal CAN is also partnering with L.A. Cash for College, one of the region's largest financial aid awareness programs, to promote the support available to the greater LA community. L.A. Cash for College will be providing a \$25 gift card to eligible students who attend an in-person clinic or book a virtual appointment.
- These efforts will guide students through the complexities of the FAFSA and the California Dream Act Application (CADAA), ensuring they have the support needed to access higher education.
- According to the [National College Attainment Network \(NCAN\)](#), the high school class of 2023 left \$4 billion in Pell Grants on the table by not completing the FAFSA. California is the state with the most financial aid left on the table with over \$493 million foregone by the class of 2023. Additionally, high school seniors who complete the FAFSA are [84%](#) more likely to immediately enroll in postsecondary education.

**WHERE:** For more information on booking a virtual appointment or for a list of all the financial aid clinics available, please visit: <https://letsgotocollegeca.org/finaidhelp>

**INTERVIEWS:** Marcos Montes, SoCal CAN's Policy Director & Let's Go Program Manager and María Marquez Alvarez, L.A. Cash for College's Program Manager are available for interviews to discuss the FAFSA/CADAA Summer Support services and answer any questions. We can also arrange for you to speak with a student who has received assistance in navigating the financial aid application process.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Norma Kelly, 818-395-1342 or [norma@momentumsolutionsteam.com](mailto:norma@momentumsolutionsteam.com)

With over 127 programs reaching more than 350,000 students in the Los Angeles region, SoCal CAN not only provides direct counseling and financial aid assistance but also drives policy reforms to dismantle barriers to higher education. They responded to the FAFSA crisis by advocating for extended deadlines and alternative application pathways, ensuring that students from mixed-status immigrant households were not unfairly blocked from accessing financial aid.