



CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

PRESS RELEASE

March 19, 2014

Contact: Paige Marlatt Dorr

Office: 916.327.5356

Cell: 916.601.8005

Office E-mail: pdorr@cccco.edu

Mobile E-mail: pmarlatt@comcast.net

The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Launches Updated and Redesigned "I *Can* Afford College" Financial Aid Awareness Website

New portal will continue to inform current and prospective students about the availability of financial aid

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office today launched the redesigned icanaffordcollege.com website to better serve current and prospective community college students. The newly revamped site is easier-to-navigate, offers a clear picture of the many different types of financial aid available and directly connects students to the required forms or to one-on-one assistance at their local college.

"We're delighted to announce this redesign," California Community Colleges Chancellor [Brice W. Harris](#) said. "The 'I *Can* Afford College' campaign has been providing students at our 112 community colleges the critical information they need so that they can begin their higher education journey. With today's launch it will be easier, faster and more convenient for students to find out about the types of aid for which they are eligible and how to apply so they can make their higher education dreams a reality."

The new website brings a modern touch to a financial aid resource that has served current and prospective community college students since the awareness initiative launched a decade ago. The site has a myths/facts section to help visitors better understand financial aid, an easy to access step-by-step guide to applying for financial aid and increased information on aid for veterans.

The new site will also provide students with helpful resources. Some of the new tools include easy access to the California Community Colleges [Salary Surfer](#) website that uses the aggregated earnings of graduates to provide an estimate of the potential wages that can be earned after receiving a certificate or degree; the [Student Success Scorecard](#), which details student performance at all 112 colleges; and the [Associate Degree for Transfer](#) website that provides information on the joint California Community Colleges and the California State University transfer program aimed at making it easier for students to transfer between the two systems.

The new website, fully available in both English and Spanish, still includes many of the key features that were found on the previous site, such as easy access to important forms like the Free Application

- more -

for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the Board of Governors (BOG) Fee Waiver. It also highlights key deadlines and provides valuable application tips.

Students and parents can use the site to connect with a California community college financial aid advisor via phone, e-mail or through setting a one-on-one appointment to get help with the financial aid forms, locating upcoming financial aid events, and accessing important information about the California Dream Act.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, more than 1 million high school seniors, roughly half of all 12th graders in the nation do not file the FAFSA. This figure includes many California students who would be eligible for Pell Grants and Cal Grants — money that doesn't have to be paid back — and the BOG Fee Waiver which waives the per-unit enrollment fee (currently \$46) at any community college throughout the state. For the 2012-13 academic year, roughly 485,000 California community college students received a Pell Grant totaling nearly \$1.6 million and more than 1.1 million students received a BOG Fee Waiver, totaling more than \$751 million.

“Completing the FAFSA is a critical first step for low-to-moderate income students who want access to higher education,” Harris said. “Unfortunately, too many Californians do not apply for assistance because they wrongly think they can't afford college, they believe it will take too long to complete the forms, or they are mystified by the process. Changes to the ‘I *Can*’ website have made it easier than ever to navigate the myriad opportunities and learn about the amounts of aid available. Also, recent changes by the federal government to the FAFSA have cut the filing time for some students to less than 30 minutes. We want every student thinking about going to community college to complete the FAFSA – isn't it worth 30 minutes to potentially get thousands of dollars in aid to pay for your education?”

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 112 community colleges to help pay for fees, books, supplies and sometimes even rent. Since the campaign launched in April 2004, more than 2.5 million people have visited the icanaffordcollege.com website and the number of community college students receiving some type of financial aid has increased by 70 percent.

In addition to visiting the website, students and their families can also connect with the campaign through social media channels at: [facebook.com/icanaffordcollege](https://www.facebook.com/icanaffordcollege), and twitter.com/icanafrcollege.

The [California Community Colleges](#) is the largest system of higher education in the nation. It is composed of 72 districts and 112 colleges serving 2.1 million students per year. Community colleges supply workforce training, basic skills courses in English and math, and prepare students for transfer to four-year colleges and universities. The Chancellor's Office provides leadership, advocacy and support under the direction of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges.