



brought to you by the California Community Colleges

Exclusive Discount Program Helps Students Afford Software Purchases

As part of its ongoing commitment to the California Community Colleges, the CollegeBuys purchasing program recently announced a new discount available exclusively to community college students. The Microsoft Student Offering allows students to purchase Microsoft Office Professional Plus 2010 software at the significantly discounted price of \$39.99. This new software suite includes Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, Publisher and more.

Microsoft Office

The latest version for Mac or PC

\$39.99

Includes:



CollegeBuys.org

Exclusive savings on software and more.

California community colleges serve an important role in the education and growth of California's workforce, but many students cannot afford key educational purchases like the software needed to complete their coursework. Discounts like the Microsoft Student Offering, made possible through a long-standing partnership with Microsoft, make it affordable for students to access personal copies of the software needed to succeed in their studies.

Since its creation in 1999, CollegeBuys has been dedicated to investing in the future of the California Community Colleges by securing discounts for students, faculty and administrators on purchases like software, furniture and office supplies.

For more information about how to take advantage of the Microsoft Student Offering and other exclusive deals, like discounts on Adobe software, visit the CollegeBuys e-commerce site today, at www.CollegeBuys.org.

Coming Soon: Financial Aid Awareness Month & Free Financial Aid Workshops

Each year during Financial Aid Awareness Month (FAAM) in April, the California Community Colleges hosts hundreds of free financial aid workshops at our 112 campuses across the state to provide students with information on the types of aid available and one-on-one assistance completing the applications. Visit www.icanaffordcollege.com/events to view upcoming financial aid events in your area by entering your zip code. Events are posted daily, so you may want to bookmark this site and check regularly for the most up-to-date information.

Stay Connected with Us

Don't forget: The California Community Colleges' "I Can Afford College" campaign is on Facebook and Twitter. Connect with us to stay on top of community college and financial aid news, important deadlines, information, upcoming contests and promotions. Find us at: [facebook.com/icanaffordcollege](https://www.facebook.com/icanaffordcollege) and [@ICANAFRD COLLEGE](https://twitter.com/ICANAFRD COLLEGE).

Be on the Lookout for the "\$5,000 Free Money for College" Sweepstakes

In partnership with Clear Channel, we will hold a contest this spring where the lucky winner will receive \$5,000 toward college costs. The winner could use the funds to help pay for fees, books or supplies. The second place prize isn't too shabby either: an iPad! You will be able to enter the contest on our website. More information to come in our next newsletter. Stay tuned!

Can You? Yes, You "Can"

It may seem daunting...fees, books, supplies and other costs associated with continuing an education or getting re-trained for a new career. For the past nine years, the "I Can Afford College" financial aid awareness campaign has reminded Californians that community colleges are affordable and that financial aid is available year-round. From Board of Governors Fee Waivers, grants and work-study programs, to scholarships and loans, hundreds of thousands of students at the 112 community colleges across the state receive aid to make their higher education dreams a reality – and many got started on their path at www.icanaffordcollege.com. Additionally, the number of community college students receiving some type of financial aid has increased by nearly 70 percent since the campaign launched in 2004.

The campaign website – available in English and Spanish – is the hub of all things related to financial aid. The site also can connect you to your local campus so you can work one-on-one with financial aid advisors and counselors to develop an education plan to complete degree and/or training programs, and navigate the financial aid forms.

The California Community Colleges is now in the strongest position it has been in years, as a result of the passage of Proposition 30 in the November 2012 election. Campuses across the state will get an additional \$210 million in funding to begin rebuilding course offerings and serving more students. So, can you continue your education or get retraining for a new career? Yes, you "Can", and www.icanaffordcollege.com is where you can find information on financial aid that can help make your college dreams become a reality.

Student Success Initiative Approved

The California Community Colleges Board of Governors recently approved changes that will establish system-wide enrollment priorities for students beginning in the fall 2014. The new enrollment priorities are designed to ensure classes are available for students seeking job training, degree attainment or transfer and to reward students who make progress toward their educational goals.

Under the policy, new students who have completed college orientation, assessment and developed education plans will have priority over students who do not meet these criteria, or who have more than 100 units completed. Active-duty military, veterans and current and former foster youth will continue to have first call on courses, followed by students in Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) and Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSPS).

It's important for current community college students to be aware of the changes, so those on probation will have an opportunity to seek help to improve their academic standing and those nearing the unit cap can carefully plan their remaining courses. College districts will maintain discretion to adopt policies exempting certain categories of students from the 100-unit limit, such as those in high-unit majors or programs. College districts are also required to adopt an appeals policy and process for students who lose priority due to circumstances beyond their control, such as accidents or illness.

Continuing community college students can prepare for the upcoming policy change by reviewing your transcripts and developing an education plan if you don't already have one in place. The best way to get this done is to meet with a counselor. Even if you are confident about your schedule, it's still a good idea to check in with a counselor to ensure you are on the right path toward reaching your educational goal while maintaining your priority for registration.

Cal Grant Deadline is Approaching

March 2 is the deadline for new and returning community college students to apply for a Cal Grant for the 2013-2014 academic year (please note: due to March 2, 2013 falling on a Saturday, the deadline is extended to the following Monday, March 4, 2013). Cal Grants can provide students attending a California community college with up to \$1,473 a year to help pay for college-related expenses, such as fees, books, supplies and sometimes even rent. Though other types of financial aid are available year-round at community colleges, students are encouraged to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by the March 2 priority deadline, in order to maximize their financial aid opportunities.

If you are a California Dream Act student (AB 540 eligible), you may apply for multiple forms of financial aid, including Cal Grants, by completing the California Dream Application. Please visit www.icanaffordcollege.com/DreamAct for more information.

Many students don't believe they qualify for aid and therefore do not apply. But, you could be missing out on thousands of dollars of free money for college! So, all students are encouraged to apply. The first step is going to www.icanaffordcollege.com. This site has valuable information about Cal Grants and other types of financial aid, and the zip code locator can connect you with financial aid experts in your area where you can receive free assistance and information on workshops to help you complete the FAFSA. There's nothing to lose and there's a chance you might qualify for financial aid – look into the opportunities today.

Dream Act Update

Thanks to the California Dream Act, AB 540 students at California Community Colleges are now eligible to apply for:

- Privately-funded scholarships
- Board of Governors Fee Waivers
- Assistance from Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS), Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education (CARE) or CalWORKS
- State financial aid like Cal Grants (for the 2013-14 academic year) and Chafee Grants

AB 540 students should check with their local college financial aid, scholarship, EOPS/CARE or CalWORKS offices to see what is available.

To qualify as an AB 540 student, the following criteria must be met:

- Attended a California high school for at least three years;
- Graduated from a California high school, got a GED or passed the California High School Proficiency Exam;
- Are registered or enrolled at a California community college; AND
- If required, complete an affidavit saying you have filed (or will file when you are eligible to do so) for legal immigration status.

To learn more about the California Dream Act and the types of financial aid for AB 540 students, please visit www.icanaffordcollege.com/DreamAct.

About the California Community Colleges

The California Community Colleges is the largest system of higher education in the nation, composed of 72 districts and 112 colleges serving 2.4 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 California Community Colleges system, please visit: californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu.



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