

Assembly Bill (AB) 1885 Fact Sheet and Bill Analysis

AB 1885 FACT SHEET

Summary:

AB 1885 would make qualifying for the Student Success Completion Grant (SSCG) more equitable by requiring participating community colleges to award a grant to eligible Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS) students who enroll in nine or more units per semester (or the quarterly equivalent) who are considered full-time under a DSPS Academic Accommodation Plan.

Background:

Existing law requires each participating community college to provide a Student Success Completion Grant award to a student attending a community college if the student receives a Cal Grant B or C award, makes satisfactory academic progress, and is a California resident or is exempt from paying nonresident tuition. Existing law awards \$1,298 per semester (or the quarterly equivalent) for eligible students who enroll in 12, 13, or 14 units per semester (or the quarterly equivalent number of units); awards \$4,000 per semester (or the quarterly equivalent) for eligible students who enroll in 15 units per semester (or the quarterly equivalent). Commencing with the 2023–24 academic year, the program will award \$5,250 per semester (or the quarterly equivalent) to eligible students who are current or former foster youth who enroll in 12 or more units per semester (the quarterly equivalent). Lastly, the SSCG total funding is proposed to be increased in the 2024-25 budget from \$376 million to \$412 million.

Problem:

Students who are considered full-time in DSPS, meaning they are taking at least nine units, are currently ineligible for the grant since the minimum for units required is 12. As a result, thousands of students with disabilities are disproportionately excluded.

Solution:

AB 1885 would afford students with disabilities the same financial aid opportunity that a person without a disability has. If the students are considered full-time students in other programs, there is no reason why they should not be eligible for the SSCG as well. In the 2022-23 school year, there were 107,385 students in the DSPS. Of these students, it is estimated that around 5,400 students would be eligible for the SSCG based on a number of program criteria. This expansion of SSCG eligibility represents \$14 million in annual financial aid to DSPS students.

AB 1885 BILL ANALYSIS

Bill Number and Title:

AB 1885: Student Success Completion Grant.

Author:

Assemblymember Dawn Addis (D-San Luis Obispo)

Status:

Referred to the Assembly Higher Education Committee.

Bill Summary:

This bill would require community colleges to award a Student Success Completion Grant (SSCG) to students who enroll in nine units per semester and are considered full-time as part of a Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS) Academic Accommodation Plan (AAP).

Bill Detail:

Specifically, this bill would, starting in 2025-26, make DSPS students who meet all other SSCG requirements and are enrolled in nine units as an accommodation in their AAP eligible for a SSCG in the amount of \$1,298 per semester (same grant amount that all other students taking 12 units receive).

Discussion:

SSCG is a state-funded financial aid award for community college students that attend full time (12 units or more) and is administered by the Chancellor's Office. Cal Grant B recipient students who take 12-14 units receive a supplemental grant of \$1,298 per semester (\$2,596 per year); if they take 15 or more units, the award grows to \$4,000 per semester (\$8,000 per year).

Disabled Student Programs and Services provides support services to students with physical disabilities, learning disabilities, psychological disabilities, developmental delay, brain injury, visual impairments, health problems and hearing impairments. While the SSCG serves most students who are able to attend full-time well, the eligibility requirement disproportionately excludes some students with disabilities, especially those with brain injury, learning disability, developmental delays, and vision impairments.

Currently, to address the limitations posed by their disabilities, a sub-set of DSPS students are provided with accommodations that enable them to be classified as full-time to receive support services locally (such as Promise programs, EOPS, priority enrollment, etc.). This proposal would provide the same type of flexibility for the SSCG program, by creating a narrow exception that expands equitable access to students with a documented accommodation on their DSPS Academic Accommodation Plan for a full-time equivalency.

Fiscal Impact:

Chancellor's Office data shows that there are 5,400 DSPS students that received a Cal Grant but did not receive a SSCG. Not all of those 5,400 are enrolled in nine units so the number of students made eligible by this bill could be less than 5,400.

In terms of dollars, 5,400 students receiving a 12-unit SSCG comes to \$14 million annually. It is also important to note that the Governor's proposed 2024-25 state budget includes a \$50 million increase of the SSCG (\$412 million total).

Arguments in Support:

This is an equity issue. These students are considered full time for academic programs and should also be considered full time for financial aid purposes.

Chancellor's Office Position Recommendation/Rationale:

Official bill sponsor.