The Pell Grant is the foundation of federal student aid, providing access to millions of students who might otherwise be unable to attend college.

The vast majority of Pell recipients come from families with incomes at or below $30,000. Many are first generation students, who face additional hurdles related to persistence and completion.

In 2014-15, over 214,000 CSU students received Pell Grants. Even with CSU’s modest annual tuition and fees – alongside robust state and institutional aid – Pell is critical to the success of our students, providing an average annual grant of nearly $4,300.

In 2013-14, more than half (nearly 45,000) of CSU bachelor’s degrees earned went to Pell Grant recipients. These graduates go on to succeed in diverse professions that drive the state’s and nation’s economy. Starting and mid-career salaries for CSU alumni exceed national averages.

**Year-Round Pell Would Help More Students Complete College and Earn Degrees Faster**

Many students exhaust their annual Pell eligibility after just two semesters, making it difficult for them to afford summer courses and more likely to wait until the beginning of the next academic year to continue their studies. A year-round program would allow such students to receive a third semester of Pell in an academic year.

- A more flexible program would better meet the needs of modern students, including those who work or who support or care for families. For example, three out of four CSU students work more than 20 hours per week. Year-Round Pell could also support developmental coursework for students requiring remediation in the summer before freshman year.

- Research shows that academic momentum and credit accumulation help students persist and complete.

- Faster completion can lower the overall financial burden on students, reducing the need to take out loans.

- As overall completion rates improve, campuses will be able to admit additional qualified students and enroll more students in high-demand classes.
Constructing a New Year-Round Pell Program

A Year-Round Pell program existed from 2009-2011, but was eliminated during the economic recession. In that short time, over 12,000 CSU students benefited per year.

Year-Round Pell has always had strong bi-partisan support and there are currently numerous proposals from across the political spectrum to restore a program similar to the one that previously existed.

The CSU strongly supports renewing the program and believes the following would strengthen the program’s efficacy:

- Ensure Year-Round Pell does not come at the expense of regular Pell program recipients or any other education program.
- Allow part-time students to benefit. For example, a student who carries 9 units per semester can still accelerate progress toward a degree if able to utilize Year-Round Pell.
- Target additional investments in institutions that graduate large numbers of Pell eligible students. Public institutions like the CSU are committed to substantially increasing student success. The system’s Graduation Initiative 2025 aims to boost CSU bachelor’s degrees earned by 100,000 over the next decade relative to current graduation rates. The initiative sets specific goals for improved completion rates for first-time freshmen, transfer, historically-underrepresented and low-income students.
- Fund campus programs that support efforts to further increase retention and graduation of low-income students. For example, the CSU has implemented a broad array of reforms designed to decrease time to degree and increase completion rates, from streamlining degree requirements to providing enhanced academic advising.
- Provide additional grant resources to such institutions that could be used for supplemental need-based institutional aid.

CSU Campuses

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