An act to amend Section 69439 of the Education Code, relating to student financial aid.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

SB 52, as introduced, Atkins. The Cal Grant Program: Cal Grant C awards.
Existing law, the Cal Grant Program, establishes the Cal Grant A and Cal Grant B Entitlement awards, the California Community College Transfer Entitlement awards, the Competitive Cal Grant A and B awards, the Cal Grant C award, and the Cal Grant T award under the administration of the Student Aid Commission, and establishes eligibility requirements for awards under these programs for participating students attending qualifying institutions. Existing law requires that a Cal Grant C award be utilized only for occupational or technical training in a course of not less than 4 months. Existing law also requires that the maximum award amount and the total amount of funding for the Cal Grant C awards be determined each year in the annual Budget Act.

Effective commencing with the fall term or semester of the 2020–21 academic year, this bill would require the commission to establish an application deadline of September 2 of an academic year for students to apply for a Cal Grant C award for that academic year.

SECTION 1. Section 69439 of the Education Code is amended to read:

69439. (a) For the purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

(1) “Career pathway” has the same meaning as set forth in Section 88620.

(2) “Economic security” has the same meaning as set forth in Section 14005 of the Unemployment Insurance Code.

(3) “Industry cluster” has the same meaning as set forth in Section 88620.

(4) “Long-term unemployed” means, with respect to an award applicant, a person who has been unemployed for more than 26 weeks at the time of submission to the commission of his or her application.

(5) “Occupational or technical training” means that phase of education coming after the completion of a secondary school program and leading toward recognized occupational goals approved by the commission.

(b) (1) A Cal Grant C award shall be utilized only for occupational or technical training in a course of not less than four months. There shall be the same number of Cal Grant C awards each year as were made in the 2000–01 fiscal year. The maximum award amount and the total amount of funding shall be determined each year in the annual Budget Act.

(2) Effective commencing with the fall term or semester of the 2020–21 academic year, the commission shall establish an application deadline of September 2 of an academic year for students to apply for a Cal Grant C award for that academic year.

(c) The commission may use criteria it deems appropriate in selecting students to receive grants for occupational or technical training and shall give special consideration to the social and economic situations of the students applying for these grants, giving additional weight to disadvantaged applicants, applicants who face economic hardship, and applicants who face particular barriers to employment. Criteria to be considered for these purposes shall include, but are not limited to, all of the following:

(1) Family income and household size.
(2) Student’s or the students’ parent’s household status, including whether the student is a single parent or child of a single parent.

(3) The employment status of the applicant and whether the applicant is unemployed, giving greater weight to the long-term unemployed.

(d) The Cal Grant C award recipients shall be eligible for renewal of their grants until they have completed their occupational or technical training in conformance with terms prescribed by the commission. A determination by the commission for a subsequent award year that the program under which a Cal Grant C award was initially awarded is no longer deemed to receive priority shall not affect an award recipient’s renewal. In no case shall the grants exceed two calendar years.

(e) Cal Grant C awards may be used for institutional fees, charges, and other costs, including tuition, plus training-related costs, such as special clothing, local transportation, required tools, equipment, supplies, books, and living expenses. In determining the individual award amounts, the commission shall take into account the financial means available to the student to fund his or her course of study and costs of attendance as well as other state and federal programs available to the applicant.

(f) (1) To ensure alignment with the state’s dynamic economic needs, the commission, in consultation with appropriate state and federal agencies, including the Economic and Workforce Development Division of the Office of the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges and the California Workforce Investment Board, shall identify areas of occupational and technical training for which students may utilize Cal Grant C awards. The commission, to the extent feasible, shall also consult with representatives of the state’s leading competitive and emerging industry clusters, workforce professionals, and career technical educators, to determine which occupational training programs and industry clusters should be prioritized.

(2) (A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the areas of occupational and technical training developed pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be regularly reviewed and updated at least every five years, beginning in 2012.

(B) By January 1, 2016, the commission shall update the priority areas of occupational and technical training.
The commission shall give priority in granting Cal Grant C awards to students pursuing occupational or technical training in areas that meet two of the following criteria pertaining to job quality:

(i) High employer need or demand for the specific skills offered in the program.

(ii) High employment growth in the occupational field or industry cluster for which the student is being trained.

(iii) High employment salary and wage projections for workers employed in the occupations for which they are being trained.

(iv) The occupation or training program is part of a well-articulated career pathway to a job providing economic security.

(B) To receive priority pursuant to subparagraph (A), at least one of the criteria met shall be specified in clause (iii) or (iv) of that subparagraph.

(g) The commission shall determine areas of occupational or technical training that meet the criteria described in paragraph (3) of subdivision (f) in consultation with the Employment Development Department, the Economic and Workforce Development Division of the Office of the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges, and the California Workforce Investment Board using projections available through the Labor Market Information Data Library. The commission may supplement the analyses of the Employment Development Department’s Labor Market Information Data Library with the labor market analyses developed by the Economic and Workforce Development Division of the Office of the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges and the California Workforce Investment Board, as well as the projections of occupational shortages and skills gap developed by industry leaders. The commission shall publish, and retain, on its Internet Web site a current list of the areas of occupational or technical training that meet the criteria described in paragraph (3) of subdivision (f), and update this list as necessary.

(h) Using the best available data, the commission shall examine the graduation rates and job placement data, or salary data, of eligible programs. Commencing with the 2014–15 academic year, the commission shall give priority to Cal Grant C award applicants seeking to enroll in programs that rate high in graduation rates and job placement data, or salary data.
(i) (1) The commission shall consult with the Employment Development Department, the Office of the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges, the California Workforce Investment Board, and the local workforce investment boards to develop a plan to publicize the existence of the grant award program to California’s long-term unemployed to be used by those consulting agencies when they come in contact with members of the population who are likely to be experiencing long-term unemployment. The outreach plan shall use existing administrative and service delivery processes making use of existing points of contact with the long-term unemployed. The local workforce investment boards are required to participate only to the extent that the outreach efforts are a part of their existing responsibilities under the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-220).

(2) The commission shall consult with the Workforce Services Branch of the Employment Development Department, the Office of the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges, the California Workforce Investment Board, and the local workforce investment boards to develop a plan to make students receiving awards aware of job search and placement services available through the Employment Development Department and the local workforce investment boards. Outreach shall use existing administrative and service delivery processes making use of existing points of contact with the students. The local workforce investment boards are required to participate only to the extent that the outreach efforts are a part of their existing responsibilities under the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-220).

(j) (1) The Legislative Analyst’s Office shall submit a report to the Legislature on the outcomes of the Cal Grant C program on or before April 1, 2019. This report shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, information on all of the following:

(A) The age, gender, and segment of attendance for recipients in two prior award years.

(B) The occupational and technical training program categories prioritized.

(C) The number and percentage of students who received selection priority as defined in paragraph (3) of subdivision (f).
(D) The extent to which recipients in these award years were successfully placed in jobs that meet local, regional, or state workforce needs.

(2) For the report submitted pursuant to paragraph (1), the Legislative Analyst’s Office shall include data for two additional prior award years and shall compare the mix of occupational and technical training programs and institutions in which Cal Grant C award recipients enrolled before and after implementation of subdivision (f).

(3) Notwithstanding Section 10231.5 of the Government Code, the commission shall submit a report to the Legislature on or before April 1, 2021, and on or before April 1 of each odd-numbered year thereafter, that includes the information specified in paragraph (1).

(4) A report to be submitted pursuant to this subdivision shall be submitted in compliance with Section 9795 of the Government Code.