

FALL 2026 FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID CHANGES



What CSU students need to know · Effective July 1, 2026

New federal rules change how undergraduate, graduate, and professional students borrow for college. Here is what is changing—and what to do about it.

01

ALL STUDENTS

Enrollment Level Can Reduce Loan Eligibility

Loan offers may scale with how many units you take. **Full-time is 12 units** per term for undergraduates; graduate full-time status depends on the program.

FULL-TIME (12 UNITS) Junior level, subsidized loan	AT 9 UNITS Fall	AT 12 UNITS Spring
\$5,500	\$2,074	\$2,766

A 9-unit enrollment for an undergraduate student in Fall, will result in a reduction of the original undergraduate loan offer for the year.

02

UNDERGRADUATES & PARENTS

Parent PLUS Loans Now Have Firm Caps

Starting this fall, Parent PLUS borrowing is capped for the first time:

CAP PER YEAR	LIFETIME CAP, PER STUDENT
\$20,000	\$65,000

At \$20,000 per year, the \$65,000 lifetime cap is reached mid-way through year four, leaving only \$5,000 of borrowing room the student's senior year.

Families should explore other funding options once the lifetime cap is reached.

03

GRADUATE & PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS

Graduate PLUS Loans: Not Available to New Borrowers

Grad PLUS Loans will no longer be available to new graduate or professional borrowers beginning July 1, 2026. Continuing borrowers may qualify for a limited interim exception. New students will generally consider one of these paths:

Federal Direct Loans	Private Loans
Graduate: \$20,500 annually; \$100,000 aggregate. Professional: \$50,000 annually; \$200,000 aggregate, less prior graduate borrowing.	Likely path for some students. Usually requires strong credit or a co-signer and does not offer the same federal protections.

New lifetime cap: academic graduate \$100,000 · professional degree \$200,000, Lifetime \$257,000

04

EVERYONE REPAYING LOANS

Fewer Repayment Plans Going Forward

Repayment choices are narrowing to two options. Existing income-driven repayment plans begin phasing out in 2028.

Standard Repayment Plan	Repayment Assistance Plan (RAP)	Phasing out: Income-Driven Plans
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Contact your loan servicer for more information.

TAKE ACTION

Talk to Financial Aid

Considering part-time enrollment, nearing a Parent PLUS cap, or weighing alternatives to Grad PLUS? Contact your campus financial aid office before finalizing your plans. They can help explain your options.

