

Massachusetts Assistance for Student Success Program

XXIV. MASSGrant Plus

MASSGrant PLUS

PURPOSE:

The Massachusetts Assistance for Student Success Plus (MASSGrant Plus) is a grant assistance program funded by appropriations from the Massachusetts Legislature in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 15A, Section 16. The MASSGrant Plus provides need-based financial assistance to full and part-time undergraduate resident students enrolled in and pursuing an approved program of study at a Massachusetts public two-year or four-year college or university. An extension of the MASSGrant program, the MASSGrant Plus is intended to provide last dollar financial assistance to ensure that all eligible undergraduate students with unmet need have adequate grant resources to fully cover the cost of tuition and fees (related to instructions), as defined. Support for book expenses is also permitted, provided adequate resources are available.

DEFINITIONS:

ELIGIBLE INSTITUTION:

An institution within the system of public institutions of higher education as identified in Section 5 of Chapter 15A of the Massachusetts General Laws.

ELIGIBLE PROGRAM:

Any approved undergraduate degree or certificate program offered by an eligible institution, as defined.

ELIGIBLE STUDENT:

An undergraduate student enrolled full-time at an eligible four-year public college or university, or enrolled full-time or part-time (minimum of six credits) at a community college in an eligible program and meets the following requirements:

- a) is a permanent legal resident of Massachusetts for at least one year prior to the start of the academic year;
- b) is a United States citizen or a non-citizen eligible under Federal Title IV regulations;
- c) annually files the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- d) if required, is in compliance with applicable law regarding Selective Service Registration
- e) is eligible for Title IV financial aid and is not in default of any federal or state loan

- f) demonstrates financial need as determined by the Federal Methodology need analysis criteria
- g) maintains Satisfactory Academic Progress in accordance with institutional standards;
- h) is not in default with applicable law regarding any Federal or State student education loans for attendance at any institution or owes a refund for any previous financial aid received;
- i) if enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) program courses, is also simultaneously enrolled in either a certificate, associate or bachelor's degree program.

AWARD VALUE:

The MASSGrant Plus shall be awarded to cover the tuition and instructional fees charged to a student for the academic term or year. A modest book allowance is permitted, based on available resources.

The annual maximum book allowance is based on the number of credits. The semester book allowance is half of the annual amount reflected below as follows:

| Number of Credits | Community College | State Universities/UMASS |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 12 or more | \$1,000 | \$1000 |
| 9 - 11 | \$750 | -0- |
| 6 - 8 | \$500 | -0- |
| Less than 6 | -0- | -0- |

AWARD CALCULATION (FINANCIAL NEED DETERMINATION)

In determining eligibility for the MASSGrant Plus, a student must demonstrate “unmet” financial need for each term awarded. As a last dollar grant, the MASSGrant Plus award is determined after all other sources of non-loan aid (grants and scholarships) are considered for the cost of tuition/fees and books, if applicable. In all circumstances, priority is given to Pell eligible students. Institutions may extend MASSGrant Plus to other low-income students after all Pell eligible students are awarded.

As a condition for receiving MassGrant Plus funds, institutions must certify that they have **fully** met the financial aid need for tuition and fees related to instruction for **all** eligible undergraduate students, as defined above, using a combination of federal, state, and institutional aid resources.

Institutions may not use MASSGrant Plus funds to supplant institutional aid. Institutions are expected to continue their level of institutional support to students as reported in prior years.

ANNUAL REVIEW:

The Department of Higher Education is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of the MASSGrant Plus program. Institutions that have signed an agreement to participate in the Massachusetts State financial aid programs are required to share data for all students with the Department of Higher Education or its designee, and the Office of Student Financial Assistance for this purpose. The program may be evaluated annually to determine any immediate impact or to determine if adjustments are required for various processes, such as disbursement of funds.

AUDIT REQUIREMENTS:

- a) It shall be the responsibility of each college and university to maintain documentation of a recipient student's eligibility for the MASSGrant Plus program.
- b) The Commissioner shall require each campus to furnish annually to the Board of Higher Education a report detailing specific information regarding recipients of the MASSGrant Plus Program. The Office of Student Financial Assistance will coordinate specification and procedures for this report.
- c) All financial books, records and documents pertaining to this program shall always be open to inspection, review, and audit by the Commissioner, the State Auditor or their authorized representatives who shall have access to the premises wherever such books, records, and documents are located. The institution shall retain such financial books, records, and documents for seven years. An institution may retain such records for a period of five years if approval is received from the Records Conservation Board in accordance with General Laws, Chapter 30, Section 42.