

**Massachusetts Assistance for Student Success
Program**

XXI. MASSGrant PLUS Expansion

MASSGrant Plus Expansion

Mass Grant Plus Expansion- Pell Grant Eligible Students

Background:

The Massachusetts Assistance for Student Success Plus (MASSGrant Plus) Expansion Program is a student aid program funded by annual appropriations from the Legislature. MASSGrant Plus Expansion makes it possible for eligible learners to receive additional funds to attend a public, two-year or four-year college or university in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Through a combination of grant aid from federal, state, and other sources, the Program underwrites the costs of tuition, fees, and in some cases books and supplies for eligible learners. The Program is intended to promote enrollment, persistence, and degree completion.

Eligible Institution:

A public, two-year or four-year college or university within the Massachusetts public system of higher education as identified in Section 5 of Chapter 15A of the General Laws.

Eligible Program:

An approved certificate, associate, or bachelor's degree program offered at a Massachusetts public college.

Eligible Student:

To be eligible for the MASSGrant Plus Expansion Program, an applicant must:

- physically reside in Massachusetts for at least one year, as of the start of the enrolled term, with an intent to remain in Massachusetts consistent with Board of Higher Education (BHE) policy;
- be a U.S. Citizen, permanent legal resident, or non-citizen eligible under Title IV regulations; or have an approved eligibility status designated by the Board of Higher Education pursuant to Section 9 of Chapter 15A, as amended by Section 11 of Chapter 28 of the Acts of 2024;
- if enrolled at a community college, the student must be under 25 years of age as of the first day of classes for which funds are being awarded;
- complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) annually for consideration of assistance by any designated deadline, as may be determined by the Department of Higher Education (DHE), or an alternative application designated by the DHE;
- comply with financial aid verification requirements;

- not be in default on any federal or state student loans for attendance at any institution, or owe a refund for any previous state financial aid program;
- have not earned a prior associate or bachelor's degree, or the equivalent;
- enroll, as a matriculated student, full-time or part-time basis (minimum of 6 credits, or the equivalent) in an eligible undergraduate program of study leading to a certificate, associate, or bachelor's degree;
- meet Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) according to institution's requirements and federal standards;
- have a remaining balance owed to the institution for the costs of tuition, fees, books and supplies after all other grant and scholarship aid has been accounted for; and
- have an eligible Pell Grant EFC.¹

MASSGrant Plus Expansion Conditions:

- Disbursement of funds: MASSGrant Plus Expansion funding is to be appropriated to participating institutions through a formula approved by the Commissioner of Higher Education;
- The institution is required to report recipient data to the Department of Higher Education upon request, and on an academic term basis;
- Institutions are encouraged to facilitate access to on-campus support services to students who receive assistance under MASSGrant Plus Expansion, to promote persistence in and completion of their program of study;
- MASSGrant Plus Expansion may be awarded to support trailing summer enrollment if funds are available;
- MASSGrant Plus Expansion funds appropriated during an academic year must be committed to students by institutions and expended at the conclusion of the fiscal year; and

¹ Students, such as undocumented students, who are unable to complete a FAFSA due to their immigration status shall, consistent with the Tuition Equity Law, complete the state alternative financial application and must have an EFC that falls within the eligibility range for Pell, as calculated based on the state alternative form.

- Institutions are required, upon request, to submit data to the Department of Higher Education to demonstrate maintenance in their commitment to institutional aid to students, while participating in the MASSGrant Plus Expansion Program.

Award Value

Subject to appropriation, MASSGrant Plus Expansion assistance must be awarded as a last dollar resource to eligible students under this Program and shall not exceed the calculated costs of tuition, fees, books and supplies, as defined and as published in the institution’s annual Cost of Attendance (COA), for the academic term, during which the award is made.

MASSGrant Plus Expansion funds may not be used to cover educational expenses that are not related to tuition, fees, books and supplies, unless otherwise approved or authorized by the Commissioner of Higher Education, or his designee.

- Higher costs certificate or degree programs that exceed the institution’s average tuition and fee costs may require annual approval by the Department of Higher Education.

Students that have an eligible Pell Grant EFC may be awarded MASSGrant Plus Expansion funds as follows:

Bachelor’s Degree

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| Full-Time | Maximum of 5 years, 10 semesters for full-time (minimum of 12 enrolled credits per academic term) |
| Part-Time | Maximum of 7 years, 14 semesters for part-time (minimum of 6 enrolled credits per academic term) |

Associate Degree

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|-----------|--|
| Full-Time | Maximum of 3 years, 6 semesters for full-time (minimum of 12 enrolled credits per academic term). An additional year of assistance may be awarded based on extenuating circumstances, with approval of a written appeal. |
| Part-Time | Maximum of 5 years, 10 semesters for part-time (6 enrolled credits minimum per academic term). An additional year of assistance may be awarded based on extenuating circumstances, with approval of a written appeal. |

Certificate Program

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| Full-Time | Maximum of 3 semesters (summer enrollment does not count toward the 3-semester maximum). |
| Part-Time | Maximum of 6 semesters (summer enrollment does not count toward the 6-semester maximum). |

Award Calculation (Financial Need Determination)

MASSGrant Plus Expansion shall be awarded to cover the tuition and fees charged to a student for the academic term or year. A modest book allowance is permitted, based on the number of credits as follows:

12 credits or more	\$1,200
9-11 credits	\$ 900
6-8 credits	\$ 600

The Financial Need Calculation – Pell Grant Eligible Students is as follows:

$$\textit{Tuition and fees + books and supplies (minus) all grant aid = MASSGrant Plus award}$$

Award Disbursement

Participating institution must verify that each recipient is eligible in accordance with guidelines established for the MASSGrant Plus Expansion Program, and that the student is enrolled in an approved certificate, associate, or bachelor's degree program. Further, the institution is required to refund any funds that is deemed to have been improperly awarded and disbursed to recipients who are later determined to be ineligible.

Participation Agreement

All institutions receiving funds under the MASSGrant Plus Expansion Program must have an active Massachusetts State Financial Aid Participation Agreement on file with the Massachusetts Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA).

Audit Requirement:

- a. It shall be the responsibility of each college and university to maintain documentation of a recipient student's eligibility for the MASSGrant Plus Expansion 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 Expansion Program. OSFA will coordinate specification and procedures for this report.
- c. All financial books, records and documents pertaining to this Program shall, at all times, 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 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.

MASSGrant Plus Expansion

MASSGrant Plus Expansion – Non-Pell Grant Eligible Students

Background:

The Massachusetts Assistance for Student Success Plus (MASSGrant Plus) Expansion Program is a student aid program funded by annual appropriations from the Legislature. MASSGrant Plus Expansion makes it possible for eligible learners to receive additional funds to attend a public, two-year or four-year college or university in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Through a combination of grant aid from federal, state, and other sources, the Program underwrites the costs of tuition, fees, and in some cases books and supplies for eligible learners. The Program is intended to promote enrollment, persistence, and degree completion.

Eligible Institution:

A public, two-year, or four-year college or university within the Massachusetts public system of higher education as identified in Section 5 of Chapter 15A of the General Laws.

Eligible Program:

An approved certificate, associate or bachelor's degree program offered at a Massachusetts public college.

Eligible Student:

To be eligible for the MASSGrant Plus Expansion Program, an applicant must:

- physically reside in Massachusetts for at least one year, as of the start of the enrolled term, with an intent to remain in Massachusetts consistent with Board of Higher Education (BHE) policy;
- be a U.S. Citizen, permanent legal resident, or non-citizen eligible under Title IV regulations; or have an approved eligibility status designated by the Board of Higher Education pursuant to Section 9 of Chapter 15A, as amended by Section 11 of Chapter 28 of the Acts of 2024;
- if enrolled at a community college, the student must be under 25 years of age as of the first day of classes for which funds are being awarded;
- complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) annually for consideration of assistance by any designated deadline, as may be determined by the Department of Higher Education (DHE), or an alternative application designated by the DHE;
- comply with financial aid verification requirements;

- have an Expected Family Contribution (EFC) that exceeds Pell Grant eligibility, up to \$15,000²
- not be in default on any federal or state student loans for attendance at any institution, or owe a refund for any previous state financial aid program;
- have not earned a prior associate or bachelor's degree, or the equivalent;
- enroll, as a matriculated student, full-time (minimum of 12 credits, or the equivalent) in an eligible undergraduate program of study leading to a certificate, associate, or bachelor's degree;
- meet Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) according to institution's requirements and federal standards;
- have a remaining balance owed to the institution for the costs of tuition and fees after all other grant and scholarship aid has been accounted for.

MASSGrant Plus Expansion Conditions:

- Disbursement of funds: MASSGrant Plus Expansion funding is to be appropriated to participating institutions through a formula approved by the Commissioner of Higher Education;
- The institution is required to report recipient data to the Department of Higher Education upon request, and on an academic term basis;
- Institutions are encouraged to facilitate access to on-campus support services to students who receive assistance under MASSGrant Plus Expansion, to promote persistence in and completion of their program of study;
- MASSGrant Plus Expansion may be awarded to support trailing summer enrollment if funds are available;

² This amount is typical for a family of four with less than \$100,000 in annual adjusted income. Students, such as undocumented students, who are unable to complete a FAFSA due to their immigration status shall, consistent with the Tuition Equity Law, complete the state alternative financial aid application and will have their eligibility calculated based on the state alternative form.

- MASSGrant Plus Expansion funds appropriated during an academic year must be committed to students by institutions and expended at the conclusion of the fiscal year, and
- Institutions are required, upon request, to submit data to the Department of Higher Education to demonstrate maintenance in their commitment to institutional aid to students, while participating in the MASSGrant Plus Expansion Program.

Award Value

Subject to appropriation, MASSGrant Plus Expansion assistance must be awarded as a last dollar resource to eligible students under this Program and shall not exceed the calculated costs of tuition and fees, as defined, and as published in the institution’s annual Cost of Attendance (COA), for the academic term, during which the award is made.

MASSGrant Plus Expansion funds may not be used to cover educational expenses that are not related to tuition and fees for non-Pell eligible students, unless otherwise approved or authorized by the Commissioner of Higher Education, or his designee.

- Higher costs certificate or degree programs that exceed the institution’s average tuition and fee costs may require annual approval by the Department of Higher Education.

Students that have an EFC that exceeds Pell Grant eligibility may be awarded MASSGrant Plus Expansion funds as follows:

Bachelor’s Degree

Full-Time Maximum of 5 years, 10 semesters for full-time (minimum of 12 enrolled credits per academic term)

Associate Degree

Full-Time Maximum of 3 years, 6 semesters for full-time (minimum of 12 enrolled credits per academic term). An additional year of assistance may be awarded based on extenuating circumstances, with approval of a written appeal.

Certificate Program

Full-Time Maximum of 3 semesters (summer enrollment does not count toward the 3-semester maximum).

Award Calculation (Financial Need Determination)

MASSGrant Plus Expansion shall be awarded to cover the tuition and fees charged to a student for the academic term or year. The Financial Need Calculation for Non-Pell eligible Grant Students is as follows:

Tuition and fees (minus) all grant aid = Unmet Need
MASSGrant Plus expansion award is equal to half of the student's Unmet Need

Award Disbursement

Participating institutions must verify that each recipient is eligible in accordance with guidelines established for the MASSGrant Plus Expansion Program, and that the student is enrolled in an approved certificate, associate, or bachelor's degree program. Further, the institution is required to refund any funds that is deemed to have been improperly awarded and disbursed to recipients who are later determined to be ineligible.

Participation Agreement

All institutions receiving funds under the MASSGrant Plus Expansion Program must have an active Massachusetts State Financial Aid Participation Agreement on file with the Massachusetts Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA).

Audit Requirement:

- d. It shall be the responsibility of each college and university to maintain documentation of a recipient student's eligibility for the MASSGrant Plus Expansion Program.
- e. 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 Expansion Program. OSFA will coordinate specification and procedures for this report.
- f. All financial books, records and documents pertaining to this program shall, at all times, 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 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.