

Massachusetts Assistance for Student Success Program

VII. MASSACHUSETTS PUBLIC SERVICE GRANT PROGRAM

**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
MASSACHUSETTS PUBLIC SERVICE GRANT PROGRAM**

PURPOSE:

In recognition of the hardship that a family experiences upon the loss of a parent and/or spouse who is killed or missing in the line of public service duty in the Commonwealth, a grant program has been established to provide educational opportunity to the remaining family members. This important program is the only Grant Program not based on demonstrated financial need, but rather on entitlement.

DEFINITIONS:

INSTITUTIONAL ELIGIBILITY:

Shall mean a public or independent college or university in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts which is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges and is authorized by the Commonwealth to offer undergraduate degree programs.

ELIGIBLE STUDENT:

An eligible student must meet all of the following conditions:

- a) Is a permanent legal resident of Massachusetts for at least twelve months preceding the start of the academic year for which the grant is awarded and is a U.S. citizen or a non-citizen eligible under Federal Title IV regulations.
- b) Has not yet received a first bachelor's degree and is currently pursuing a course of study in an eligible institution.
- c) Will be enrolled full-time (at least twelve credits or its equivalent) in an eligible institution
- d) Is maintaining satisfactory academic progress in accordance with federal regulations as established by the college or university the student is attending.
- e) Is not in default of any federal or state loan or owe a refund for any previous financial aid received.
- f) Is in compliance with Selective Service Registration requirements.
- g) Will provide the necessary documentation to evidence one of the following conditions:
 - Child or widowed spouse of a Massachusetts Police Officer, Firefighter or Corrections Officer who was killed or died from injuries received while performing his or her duties. This shall also include authorized training duty.
 - Child of a Prisoner of War or Military Service Person Missing In Action in Southeast Asia whose war time service was credited to the Commonwealth and whose service was between February 1, 1955 and the termination of the Vietnam campaign.
 - Child of a Veteran whose service was credited to the Commonwealth and who was killed in action or died as a result of such service.
- h) If enrolled in a clock hour program, the student must

- Complete a minimum of 24 clock hours per week
- Complete a minimum of 320 hours during the period of July 1 – December 31 to qualify for a Fall disbursement
- Complete a minimum of 320 hours during the period of January 1 – June 30 to qualify for a Spring disbursement

ACADEMIC YEAR:

Shall mean the period of time between July 1 of one year and June 30 of the subsequent year.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

All students applying for consideration for a Public Service Grant must complete the following procedures:

- a) Obtain a Public Service Grant Application from the Office of Student Financial Assistance's website at www.osfa.mass.edu.
- b) Provide the necessary documentation as stated on the application.
- c) Return the application and documentation to the OSFA.
- d) Annually file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

Awards made under this program shall be as follows:

- a) For a student attending a Massachusetts Public College or University, the award shall be equal to the cost of the institution's full time annual tuition charges.
- b) For a student attending a Massachusetts Independent College or University, the award shall be equal to the full time annual tuition charge to the University of Massachusetts, Amherst not to exceed \$2500.

AWARD DISBURSEMENT

Awards granted under the Public Service Grant Program will be disbursed as follows:

- a) At the beginning of each academic semester a Certification/Payment roster will be mailed to each Massachusetts institution with eligible Public Service Grant recipients.
- b) The Institution must certify the student eligible according to the Massachusetts Public Service Grant Guidelines and return the roster to OSFA.
- c) Payment will be sent directly from the Treasurer's Office to the institution.

REFUNDS

All refunds must accompany the completed Certification/Payment roster.

APPEAL

OSFA maintains an open and fair process for students, parents and institutions. Therefore, an institution or applicant may, at any point in the process, appeal in writing to the OSFA Appeals Committee for

reconsideration. The appeals committee will meet periodically and will inform all concerned parties in writing. The OSFA maintains the right of final approval on all appeals.

PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

All institutions participating in The Public Service Grant Program must file a State Financial Aid Participation Agreement to be maintained on file in the OSFA.

AUDIT REQUIREMENTS

All financial books, records and documents pertaining to this program shall, at all reasonable times, be opened to inspection, review and audit by the Commissioner, the State Auditor or their authorized representative who shall have access to the premises wherever such books, records and documents are located. The institutions shall retain such financial books, records and documents for seven years.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

- a) Complete a Public Service Grant Application and submit the necessary documentation.
- b) Applicant must also file a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- c) For a child or widowed spouse of a Massachusetts Police Officer, Firefighter, or Corrections Officer whose death occurred in the line of duty, submit a certificate from the Massachusetts Retirement Board.
- d) For a child of a Prisoner of War, Military or Service person missing in action in Southeast Asia between February 1, 1955 and the termination of the Vietnam campaign, or veteran who was killed in action or who died as a result of such service, submit the following:
 - Copy of your birth certificate.
 - Copy of Veteran's death certificate.
 - DD214 Form to show Veteran's service was credited to Massachusetts. You may obtain this form from your local Veterans Administration Office.
 - Proof that Veteran's death was service connected. You may obtain this from:

The Veterans Administration Regional Office
J.F.K. Federal Building
100 Cambridge Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02203

FIRST TIME APPLICANTS ONLY

All first time applicants must complete the application and provide all the supporting documentation that is requested. It is the applicant's responsibility to provide all the necessary information. The Office of Student Financial Assistance reserves the right to request additional documentation if necessary.

RENEWAL APPLICANTS ONLY

To renew the Public Service Grant, recipients must annually, contact the Office of Student Financial Assistance for a renewal application for the Public Service Grant Program.

The application and all supporting documentation must be submitted to:

*DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION
Office of Student Financial Assistance
Massachusetts Public Service Grant Program
454 Broadway, Suite 200
Revere, Massachusetts 02151*

APPLICATION DEADLINE IS MAY 1, 2016

The May 1st deadline applies to new applicants only.