

Massachusetts Assistance Student Success Program

**X. Commonwealth of Massachusetts Foster Child
Grant Program**

**DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION
MASSACHUSETTS FOSTER CHILD GRANT PROGRAM**

DEFINITIONS:

ELIGIBLE INSTITUTION:

An eligible institution shall mean a public, private, independent, for profit or nonprofit institution in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the continental United States authorized to offer undergraduate degrees or certificate programs. The institution must be accredited and eligible to participate in Federal Title IV programs.

ELIGIBLE PROGRAM:

Any eligible undergraduate degree or certificate program offered by the institution.

ELIGIBLE STUDENT:

Shall mean a student who has not earned his or her first baccalaureate degree and meets the following conditions:

- a) Physically resides 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 policy;
- b) 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 2023;
- c) Was placed in the custody of the Department of Children and Families through a Care and Protection Petition;
- d) Is under the age of twenty-five (25) at the start of the academic year;
- e) Has signed a voluntary agreement with the Department of Children and Families establishing the terms and conditions for receiving such aid;
- f) Is enrolled full-time (twelve credits or its equivalent);
- g) Completes the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), or another state-approved equivalent form, annually for consideration of assistance by any designated deadline, as may be determined by the Department of Higher Education, and complies with financial aid verification requirements in either the FAFSA or the alternative state-approved form, as applicable;
- h) Is not in default of any federal or state student loans for attendance at any institution or owe a refund for any previous financial aid received;
- i) Is in good standing and meets the institution's requirements for satisfactory academic progress.

STUDENT AWARD:

The award under this program shall be as follows:

- a) maximum of \$6,000 per academic year for eligible students enrolled in public institutions for no more than 5 consecutive years
- b) maximum of \$6,000 per academic year for students enrolled in private non-profit or private for

profit institutions for no more than 5 consecutive years. In all cases, funds must be awarded as “last dollar” grants, with eligibility determined after consideration of all other state, federal and institutional scholarship and grant resources. Institutions may not use the Foster Child Grant to supplant other state, federal or institutional aid previously awarded to the student. Wherever possible, institutions are encouraged to use the Foster Child Grant to reduce student education loan debt.

INSTITUTIONAL DISBURSEMENT OF GRANT:

Each participating institution must provide information to the Department of Higher Education regarding the student’s financial aid award for the current academic year. This information will be used to calculate the student’s Foster Child Grant. Institutions must disburse funds in compliance with guidelines governing all state financial aid programs.

PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT:

All institutions receiving Foster Child Grant funds must have an active State Financial Aid Participation Agreement on file with the Office of Student Financial Assistance.

AUDIT:

- a) It shall be the responsibility of each institution to maintain adequate documentation of a recipient student’s eligibility for the Foster Child Grant Program.
- b) The Commissioner shall require each institution to complete an annual report to the Department of Higher Education which details recipient data for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts’ Foster Child Grant Program
- 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 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.