

Massachusetts Assistance for Student Success Program

II. MASSGRANT

II. A MASSACHUSETTS ASSISTANCE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS PROGRAM GUIDELINES

PURPOSE:

The Massachusetts Assistance for Student Success Program (MASSGrant) is a grant assistance program funded by appropriations from the Massachusetts State Legislature in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 15, Section 19A. The MASSGrant program provides need-based financial assistance to undergraduate students who reside in Massachusetts and who are enrolled in and pursuing a program of higher education in any approved public or independent college, university, school of nursing or any other approved institution furnishing a program of higher education. The MASSGrant provides financial assistance to Massachusetts students demonstrating the greatest financial aid need.

DEFINITIONS:

ELIGIBLE INSTITUTION:

An eligible institution is defined as a state-approved public, private, independent, for profit or nonprofit, institution in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts authorized to offer undergraduate degrees, certificates or diploma programs and that is also approved by the U.S. Department of Education to administer Title IV programs. Massachusetts state-approved public, private, independent and non-profit Institutions located in states (VT, PA and the District of Columbia) that have reciprocity agreements with and approved by the Commonwealth, and award Associate and Bachelor's Degrees are also eligible to participate.

ELIGIBLE PROGRAM:

Any eligible degree or certificate program offered by an eligible institution.

ELIGIBLE STUDENT:

A student enrolled in an eligible program and meeting the following requirements:

- 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. is 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. 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 comply with financial aid verification requirements in either the FAFSA or the alternative state-approved form, as applicable;
- d. is not in default of any federal or state loan;
- e. does not owe a refund on any previously received federal or state financial aid;
- f. demonstrates financial need as determined by the Federal Methodology need analysis criteria, or an analysis done through an alternative state-approved form
- g. has a documented Expected Family Contribution (EFC) between **0-6656** based on an eligibility index system approved by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education;

- h. is enrolled as a full-time student (12 undergraduate credits or its equivalent) in an eligible undergraduate degree, certificate or diploma program and must have maintained eligibility at the time of disbursement;
- i. not have reached the maximum semesters of eligibility to continue to receive a MASSGrant award (eligibility is limited to a specific number of semesters based on the type of institution that the student attends);
- j. is maintaining satisfactory academic progress in accordance with institutional and federal standards;
- k. must not have received a prior bachelor's degree or its equivalent;
- l. if enrolled in a clock hour program, the student must:
 - 1) complete a minimum of 24 clock hours per week
 - 2) complete a minimum of 320 hours during the period of July 1 – December 31 to qualify for a Fall disbursement
 - 3) complete a minimum of 320 hours during the period of January 1 – June 30 to qualify for a Spring disbursement;
- m. if enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) program courses, the student must be simultaneously enrolled in either a certificate, associate or bachelors degree program in order to be considered eligible for a MASSGrant. Credits a student earns for ESL program courses may be counted towards his/her full-time enrollment status;
- n. must meet all institutional requirements.

STUDENT AWARD VALUES:

Awards are determined by an indexing system approved by the Board of Higher Education that considers the federal expected family contribution (EFC), and type of institution the student attends. Individual awards for the academic year may not exceed a student's demonstrated financial aid need. Eligibility for the MASSGrant is restricted to a maximum number of semesters as follows:

- 8 semesters if enrolled in a four-year undergraduate program
- 6 semesters if enrolled in a three-year undergraduate program
- 4 semesters if enrolled in a two-year undergraduate program
- 2 semesters if enrolled in a one-year certificate or diploma program

INSTITUTIONAL DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS:

- a) MASSGrant funds are disbursed to the institution in two payments for the fall and spring semesters for students who meet all eligibility criteria, as certified by the institution.
- b) Payment of MASSGrant funds is sent directly to the institution from the Commonwealth's Comptroller's Office. One hundred percent of the funds from the MASSGrant award shall be used to credit the student's account. Funds must be disbursed to students during the traditional academic year.
- c) All refunds shall be sent to the Office of Student Financial Assistance and checks made payable to the *Commonwealth of Massachusetts*.

d) Refunds may occur as a result of adjustments to EFC, changes to dependency status, and/or changes to a student's enrollment status. Refunds may also occur if the institution receives payment and becomes aware that a student has withdrawn, dropped below full-time status, taken an approved leave of absence, or otherwise fails to complete the period of enrollment as charged.

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 representatives who shall have access to the premises wherever such books, records and documents are located. The institution shall retain such financial records for a period of seven years.