Guidelines Effective August 1, 2026 (BHE 27-05)

MASSGrant Plus Expansion

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
Massachusetts Office of Student Financial Assistance

PURPOSE

An extension of MASSGrant Plus, the MASSGrant Plus Expansion program provides financial assistance to non-Pell eligible students and families with a Student Aid Index (SAI) that does not exceed $15,000. This expansion program is funded subject to the availability of funds and appropriation from the Massachusetts Legislature (M.G.L. c. 15A, Section 16). Students who meet the eligibility requirements and enroll in an approved program of study at a Massachusetts public four-year college or university may receive up to half the cost of tuition and fees towards a bachelor's degree. These guidelines pertain to the MASSGrant Plus Expansion program.

DEFINITIONS

- **Eligible Institution:**
  A Massachusetts four-year college or university 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.

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ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for the MASSGrant Plus Expansion program, the student must:

a) be enrolled in an eligible institution, as defined;

b) (1) be a U.S. Citizen, permanent legal resident, or non-citizen eligible under Title IV regulations and 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 policy; or (2) 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) complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or, if ineligible to complete the FAFSA, then complete the Massachusetts Application for State Financial Aid (MASFA) by **June 30, 2026**;

d) comply with financial aid verification requirements;

e) not be in default on any federal or state student loans or owe a refund for any previous state financial aid program;

f) not have earned a prior associate or bachelor's degree if enrolled at a community college, or a prior bachelor's degree if enrolled at a four-year college or university;

g) enroll, as a matriculated student, on a full-time basis (minimum of 12 credits, or the equivalent) in an eligible undergraduate program of study leading to a bachelor's degree; and

MASSGRANT PLUS EXPANSION CONDITIONS

- Disbursement of funds: MASSGrant Plus Expansion funding is to be allocated to participating institutions through a formula or process approved by the Commissioner of Higher Education.

- MASSGrant Plus Expansion funds allocated during an academic year must be committed to students by institutions and expended at the conclusion of the fiscal year.

- The institution is required to report recipient, programmatic, and other data to the Department of Higher Education (DHE) upon request; and no less than on a quarterly basis.

- Institutions shall facilitate access to on-campus support services to students who receive assistance under the MASSGrant Plus Expansion program, to promote persistence in and completion of their program of study.

- The institution is responsible for verifying student eligibility, to include an accurate determination of whether the student has earned a prior associate or baccalaureate degree (or equivalent), which may include a signed affidavit from the student after all reasonable attempts were made by the student to access prior transcripts.

- MASSGrant Plus Expansion funding may be used to prioritize awards to Pell eligible students who qualify under the MASSGrant Plus program.

- MASSGrant Plus Expansion may be awarded to support summer enrollment, if funds are available.

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

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY BY ENROLLMENT INTENSITY

Eligible students may be awarded MASSGrant Plus Expansion funds as follows [1]:

Bachelor's Degree

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

AWARD VALUE

Subject to appropriation and the availability of funds, the MASSGrant Plus Expansion is a last is a last dollar resource made available to students enrolled at any one of the Commonwealth public four-year colleges and universities. Awards should not exceed 50 percent of the

[1] Please note that an additional year of assistance may be awarded based on extenuating circumstances, with prior approval of a written appeal by the institution.

calculated costs of tuition and fees as determined by the institution and published in its annual Cost of Attendance (COA) for the academic term during which the grant is made.

AWARD CALCULATION

A student enrolled at a public four-year college or university, pursuing an undergraduate program of study leading to a bachelor's degree, and whose Student Aid Index (SAI) does not exceed $15,000 may receive a **MASSGrant Plus Expansion Award** for up to half of the costs associated with tuition and fees charged for the academic term or year. The award calculation for an eligible student is as follows:

- ***MASSGrant Plus Expansion Award*** = ***[****Tuition and Fees* ***(minus)*** *All Other Non-Loan Aid****]*** *(****multiplied by****) 0.50 (50 percent)*

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 bachelor's degree program. Further, the institution is required to verify that the student has not earned a prior bachelor's degree (or equivalent) before awarding and disbursing funds, which may be done through a signed affidavit after all reasonable attempts were made to secure prior transcripts, if any.

Institutions are required to refund to the DHE any funds that are deemed to have been improperly awarded and disbursed to recipients who are later determined to be ineligible for the program. Refunds may occur because of adjustments to SAI, 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. MASSGrant Plus Expansion funds may be awarded to support trailing summer enrollment that occurs prior to the end of the corresponding fiscal year, if funds are available.

ANNUAL REVIEW

The Department of Higher Education is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of the MASSGrant Plus Expansion 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 Massachusetts Department of Higher Education (DHE) or its designee, and the Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA) 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.

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 to maintain documentation of a recipient student's eligibility for the MASSGrant Plus Expansion program.

b) The Commissioner shall require each college to furnish annually to the BHE a report detailing specific information regarding recipients of the MASSGrant Plus Expansion program. OSFA will establish the timeline, specifications, 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 are 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.