

The CASA community is excited to announce that after long and tireless efforts in the fight for Higher Education for All, a major milestone has been realized...

Beginning September 2019, young people regardless of their immigration status will be able to go to community college for *free* (if their families meet the income requirements). If someone qualifies for the Maryland Dream Act, they also qualify for various Maryland grants and scholarships. However, they must submit the alternate FAFSA by **MARCH 1**. Below you will find information about this form:

The Maryland State Financial Aid Application (MSFAA) is here!

What is the MSFAA?

The MSFAA is a Maryland financial aid form for MD resident students who are ineligible for federal aid (i.e. undocumented students)

What I need to fill this out:

- Create an MDCAPS account: <https://mdcaps.mhec.state.md.us/MDCAPS/StudentRegisterForLogin.aspx>
 - Need email account
- If you are a male between 18-25, you need to register with the Selective Service System and be able to provide proof of this
 - Forms available at any U.S. Post Office
- Tax information
 - *Are you a dependent or independent filer?*
 - Need tax forms for the year 2017

State Scholarships to Apply for that Require MSFAA to be submitted by MARCH 1:

- Guaranteed Access Grant:
https://mhec.state.md.us/preparing/Pages/FinancialAid/ProgramDescriptions/prog_gagrant.aspx
 - Under age 22 at time of graduating high school
 - Unweighted cumulative 2.5 GPA
 - Must enroll at a two or four year institution as full time (12 credits/semester)
 - All required documents DUE **APRIL 1**
- Educational Assistance Grant:
https://mhec.state.md.us/preparing/Pages/FinancialAid/ProgramDescriptions/prog_ea.aspx
 - Must enroll at a two or four year institution as full time (12 credits/semester)
 - Must demonstrate financial need
 - DUE **MARCH 1**
- Promise Scholarship:
<https://mhec.state.md.us/Pages/Community-College-Promise-Scholarship.aspx>
 - Unweighted cumulative 2.3 GPA
 - Apply within 2 years of graduating high school or earning GED
 - Must enroll at a two or four year institution as full time (12 credits/semester)
 - **Note:** *The application will be available for the 2019-2020 academic year after April 1, 2019*

Local Colleges to Apply to:

- Prince George's Community College
https://www.pgcc.edu/Admissions_and_Registration/Applying_to_PGCC/First_Time_College.aspx
 - \$25 Application Fee
 - Bilingual persons to contact for questions with the application process:
 - Jessenia Marston: marstojl@pgc.edu; 301-546-0861
 - Samantha Howard: garciasx@pgcc.edu; 301-546-0862
- Montgomery College
<https://www.montgomerycollege.edu/admissions-registration/application.html>
 - \$25 Application Fee
 - General admissions number: 240-567-1501

For further questions contact Jessica Cruz: je.cruz@casa.org; 240-246-5233

The fight for Higher Education for All is not yet over! There are still many students who are ineligible to take advantage of the aforementioned opportunities and pursue their educational dreams. Join the movement! Unite your voice to the thousands of others to ensure that one day soon every student hoping to pursue higher education, can do so.

To learn more contact Trent Leon-Lierman: tleon@wearecasa.org; 443-897-0079



FAQs for the Maryland State Financial Aid Application (MSFAA)

<https://mhec.state.md.us/Pages/MSFAA-FAQS.aspx>

Beginning with the 2019-2020 award year, the qualified children of undocumented immigrants who are eligible for in-state tuition under §15–106.8 of the MD Education Article are also now eligible to apply for various State financial aid grants and scholarships.

Q1. Who should complete the Maryland State Financial Aid Application (MSFAA)?

The Maryland State Financial Aid Application (MSFAA) is available to applicants who are ineligible to receive federal aid using the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The MSFAA allows qualified children of undocumented immigrants, who qualify for in-state tuition under §15–106.8 of the MD Education Article, to apply and be considered for certain types of State need-based financial aid, such as the: Howard P. Rawlings Educational Excellence Awards Program, the Part Time Grant, the Maryland Community College Promise Scholarship, and the Richard W. Collins III Leadership with Honor Scholarship.

Q2. What are the requirements for qualified children of undocumented immigrants to be exempt from paying the out-of-state tuition rate at an in State institution?

The requirements are set forth in §15-106.8 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland:

- Attended a secondary school in Maryland for at least 3 years
- Earned a high school diploma or the equivalent (i.e. GED)
- Provides documentation that the individual or their parents/legal guardians have filed a Maryland income tax return

You should consult your institution with questions.

Q3. Will any of my information on the application be shared?

The personally identifiable information provided on the Maryland State Financial Aid Application is confidential and used solely to determine eligibility for state financial aid. The personally identifiable information will be disclosed only as required by law.

Q4. What is the difference between the FAFSA and the Maryland State Financial Aid Application (MSFAA)?

Students should only complete one of the applications (not both), according to the requirements below:

1. You are eligible to complete the FAFSA at <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa> if you are a:
 - U.S. Citizen
 - Permanent Resident
 - Eligible non-citizen
 - T Visa holder
2. You are eligible to complete the MSFAA if you are:
 - Undocumented
 - Meet the non-resident exemption as described under §15–106.8. of the MD Education Article

Q5. As an undocumented student, am I eligible for State student aid?

If you attend an eligible Maryland public or private institution, you may be eligible for various Maryland State financial aid programs.

Those programs are the: Howard P. Rawlings Educational Excellence Awards Program, Part Time Grant, Maryland Community College Promise Scholarship, and the Richard W. Collins III Leadership with Honor Scholarship. For more information concerning the eligibility requirements of these programs visit <http://www.mhec.state.md.us/preparing/Pages/FinancialAid/descriptions.aspx>

Q6. What should I do if I've already submitted a FAFSA before learning that I should have submitted a MSFAA?

You must complete the MSFAA through the Maryland College Aid Processing (MDCAPS) portal, as MHEC will not be able to use the FAFSA to determine your eligibility for State financial aid. The MDCAPS portal is found on the MHEC website at www.mhec.maryland.gov.

Q7. Can I fill out the MSFFA if I don't have a Social Security Number?

Yes. Students are not required to have a Social Security Number to submit the MSFAA. However, students will need to meet the non-resident exemption requirements as described under §15-106.8. of the MD Education Article to qualify for aid.

Application Process

Q8. As an undocumented student, how do I apply for financial aid through the State of Maryland?

The MSFAA allows qualified children of undocumented immigrants to be considered for various State financial aid programs. Eligible applicants will complete the application online through the Maryland College Aid Processing Portal (MDCAPS).

Note: U.S. citizens and eligible non-citizens such as permanent residents should complete the FAFSA at <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa> . They may be eligible for federal student aid as well financial aid through the State of Maryland.

Q9. When will the MSFAA be available?

It is available *now!*

In the subsequent years the online application will be available October 1.

Q10. Am I required to register for Selective Service?

If you are a male between the ages of 18 and 25, in most cases you are required to register with the Selective Service System (SSS) and show proof of registration to MHEC before receiving state financial aid.

You do not need to have a Social Security Number (SSN) to register for Selective Service. If you do not have a SSN, or have been issued a SSN through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, you can register for Selective Service by completing a paper "Selective Service Registration" form, which can be picked up at any U.S. Post Office.

Q11. Do I have to wait until my parents or I file taxes to complete my MSFAA?

Yes. Under §15–106.8. of the MD Education Article , the qualified children of undocumented immigrants must file taxes. MSFAA uses the prior-prior-year tax information as noted below:

Example of Prior-Prior Tax year:

depends on the grant/scholarship you're applying for

| IF YOU PLAN TO ATTEND COLLEGE FROM | YOU WILL SUBMIT THIS MSFAA | YOU CAN SUBMIT THE MSFAA FORM | USING INCOME AND TAX FORM |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020 | 2019-2020 | October 1, 2018 - June 30, 2020 | 2017 |
| June 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021 | 2020 - 2021 | October 1, 2019 - June 30, 2021 | 2018 |
| July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022 | 2021 - 2022 | October 1, 2020 - June 30, 2022 | 2019 |

Q12. When is the deadline to submit the MSFAA?

The MSFAA must be completed by the established deadline for the scholarship or grant program the applicant is applying for.

- Guaranteed Access Grant **DUE March 1**
- Educational Access Grant..... **DUE March 1**
- Promise Scholarship..... **DUE March 1**

To view the MSFAA deadlines for the various state financial aid grant and scholarship programs go to <https://mhec.state.md.us/preparing/Pages/FinancialAid/descriptions.aspx>

Q13. What if my parents live in another country and I do not live with them?

Students who are under the age of 24 as of December 31 of the award year and do not meet any other very limited criteria, are considered “Dependent” for financial aid purposes and therefore, must provide parental information.

One parent must sign your application, even if you do not live with your legal parents (your biological and/or adoptive parents). Widowed stepparents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, foster parents, siblings or legal guardians are not considered your parent(s) for financial aid purposes, unless they have legally adopted you.

If you are unable to get your parent information, complete the application as much as you can and contact your college’s financial aid office (FAO) as soon as possible. The FAO will evaluate your situation and inform you if they can override the need for parent information. MHEC does not have the authority to override dependency or financial information.

Q14. I applied for financial aid using the MSFAA. What's next?

After completing the MSFAA, you will be considered for the various State of Maryland's financial aid grant and scholarship programs.

It is important to note that several financial aid programs require applicants to complete a separate application in addition to the MSFAA to be considered. Those grant and scholarship programs are: Maryland Community College Promise Scholarship and the Richard W. Collins III Leadership with Honor Scholarship. To apply for these programs you must complete an application through MDCAPS at <https://mdcaps.mhec.state.md.us/MDCAPS/login.aspx?c=-8586587860093499742&ReturnUrl=/MDCAPS/int/FinAid/index.aspx>

MHEC will notify applicants in late April if they are awarded an Educational Assistance Grant or Guaranteed Access Grant for the 2019-2020 award year.

Awarding for the other state grant/scholarship programs will occur in the summer and eligible applicants will be notified by email if they are awarded. Your institution will notify you if you have been awarded the Part-Time Grant and Campus Based Educational Assistance Grant award.

Students are encouraged to monitor their "To Do List" in MDCAPS to verify no additional information is required for any of the grant or scholarship programs you may have applied for. If additional information is needed, be sure to submit all required documents by the deadline.

Note: MHEC communicates with all applicants by email therefore students are encouraged to provide email address that they frequently check on all applications.

Q15. I was notified by email that I was awarded a State grant/scholarship? What do I do next?

You must accept your award online through your MDCAPS portal. Students have up to 6 weeks to accept or decline their state grant/scholarship award. Failure to accept your award within that timeframe will result in your award being canceled and the award will not be reinstated.

If you have any questions concerning the acceptance process of your grant/scholarship award, email the Office of Student Financial Aid: osfamail.mhec@maryland.gov

§15-106.8 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland

<http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/frmStatutesText.aspx?article=ged§ion=15-106.8&ext=html&session=2019RS&tab=subject5>

- Beginning with the 2005–2006 school year, attended a public or nonpublic secondary school in the State for at least **3 years**;
- Beginning with the 2007–2008 school year, **graduated** from a public or nonpublic secondary school in the State or received the equivalent of a high school diploma in the State (i.e.);
- Registers as an entering student in a community college in the State not earlier than the 2011 fall semester;
- Provides to the community college documentation that the individual or the individual's parent or legal guardian has filed a Maryland **income tax return**:
 - Annually for the 3 years while the individual attended a public or nonpublic secondary school in the State in accordance with item (1) of this subsection;
 - Annually during the period, if any, between graduation from a public or nonpublic secondary school in the State and registration at a community college in the State; and
 - Annually during the period of attendance at the community college;
- In the case of an individual who is not a permanent resident, provides to the community college an **affidavit** stating that the individual will file an application to become a permanent resident within 30 days after the individual becomes eligible to do so;
- In the case of an individual who is required to register with the **Selective Service System**, provides to the community college documentation that the individual has complied with the registration requirement; and
- Registers in a community college in the State **no later than 4 years after graduating** from a public or nonpublic secondary school in the State or receiving the equivalent of a high school diploma in the State.

Students entering a four year institution:

- Attended a community college not earlier than the 2010 fall semester and met the above requirements
- Was awarded an associate's degree by or achieved 60 credits at a community college in the State;
- Provides the public senior higher education institution a copy of the affidavit submitted
- Provides to the public senior higher education institution documentation that the individual or the individual's parent or legal guardian has filed a Maryland income tax return:
 - Annually while the individual attended a community college in the State;
 - Annually during the period, if any, between graduation from or achieving 60 credits at a community college in the State and registration at a public senior higher education institution in the State; and
 - Annually during the period of attendance at the public senior higher education institution; and
- Registers at a public senior higher education institution in the State not later than 4 years after graduating from or achieving 60 credits at a community college in the State.

Howard P. Rawlings Guaranteed Access (GA) Grant

https://mhec.maryland.gov/preparing/Pages/FinancialAid/ProgramDescriptions/prog_gagrant.aspx

The **Howard P. Rawlings Guaranteed Access (GA) Grant** is a grant that provides postsecondary financial assistance to eligible in-state students currently enrolled as high school seniors who will complete a college preparatory program or a student who has obtained a General Educational Development Diploma (GED), and is under the age of 26. The amount of the GA Grant equals 100 percent of the student's financial need and a student may receive an award for up to **\$18,600**.

How do I become eligible for the GA Grant?

High School Seniors:

- You must be eligible for in-state tuition;
- You must file the Maryland State Financial Aid Application (MSFAA) if eligible for in-state tuition, but ineligible to receive federal aid.
- You must file your FAFSA by **March 1**;
- You must demonstrate need and meet certain income requirements;
- You and your parents (if you are a dependent student) must meet the in-state tuition requirements per your institution;
- You must enroll at a two-year or four-year Maryland college or university as a full-time (12+ credits per semester; audited courses cannot be used to reach the minimum credit hours required for full-time status), degree-seeking, undergraduate student;
- You must have an unweighted cumulative 2.5 high school grade point average (GPA);
- You must be under the age of 22 at the time of graduating high school; and
- You must submit all required verification documents no later than **April 1**.

General Educational Development Diploma (GED) Recipients:

- You must be eligible for in-state tuition;
- You must file a separate State financial aid application if eligible for in-state tuition, but ineligible to receive federal aid. For more information, visit <https://mhec.state.md.us/Pages/MSFAA.aspx> ;
- You must file your FAFSA by **March 1**;
- You must demonstrate need and meet certain income requirements;
- You and your parents (if you are a dependent student) must meet in-state requirements per your institution;
- You must enroll at a two-year or four-year Maryland college or university as a full-time (12+ credits per semester; audited courses cannot be used to reach the minimum credit hours required for full-time status), degree-seeking, undergraduate student;
- You must have scored a minimum of 165 per module on the diploma (GED) examination;
- You must be under the age of 26 years at the time of receiving the first award; and
- You must submit all required verification documents no later than **April 1**.

Income Requirements

All students being considered for the Guaranteed Access Grant for the 2019-2020 academic year, **must** meet the following income requirements.

| Family Size | 130% OF POVERTY LEVEL (NEW) | 150% OF POVERTY LEVEL (RENEWAL) |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| 1 | \$15,678 | \$18,090 |
| 2 | \$21,112 | \$24,360 |
| 3 | \$26,546 | \$30,630 |
| 4 | \$31,980 | \$36,900 |
| 5 | \$37,414 | \$43,170 |
| 6 | \$42,848 | \$49,440 |
| 7 | \$48,282 | \$55,710 |
| 8 | \$53,716 | \$61,980 |
| For each additional person add | \$5,434 | \$6,270 |

How can I be considered?

For an overview of the application process, see the Step by Step Handout. For additional information on how to complete the GA verification forms, please see the links below:

- *How to Complete the Required Verification Forms for the GA Grant program:*
<https://mhec.maryland.gov/preparing/Pages/FinancialAid/GA-Verification-Forms.aspx>
- *How to Complete the Low Income Form*
<https://mhec.maryland.gov/preparing/Pages/FinancialAid/Low-Income-Form-Directions.aspx>

How Do I Obtain a 2017 IRS Tax Return Transcript:

MHEC may ask students that are selected for the verification process to confirm their eligibility for the GA Grant by submitting a 2017 IRS Tax Return Transcript . This includes as applicable, a copy of the student's, or student's spouse, and or parent(s) 2017 IRS Tax Return Transcript.

Tax Return Transcripts provide taxpayers with a computer-created record of their tax return which includes most of the line-items filed with the IRS, including any accompanying forms and schedules.

NOTE: The 2017 IRS Tax Return Transcript can no longer be mailed from the IRS to a third party (such as MHEC). This document will only be mailed directly to the tax filer's address as provided on the tax return. If the tax filer is no longer living at the address indicated on the tax return, the tax filer will need to update the address information with the IRS in order for the Tax Return Transcript to be sent to the correct address. Please be mindful that the IRS allots 5 to 10 calendar days for the requestor Tax Return Transcript to be delivered.

For more information regarding obtaining a Tax Return Transcript, please visit Get Transcript FAQs at <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/get-transcript-faqs>

Is the GA Grant a Renewable Award?

- To renew an award, you must maintain satisfactory academic progress at the college you are attending;
- You must file the FAFSA or separate State financial aid application no later than March 1 each year;
- You must continue to demonstrate financial need and be within 150% of the federal income poverty levels;
- You may continue to receive the award for a total of three additional years, if you remained enrolled full-time, in a degree-seeking undergraduate program of study; and
- You must successfully complete at least **24 credits** at the end of your second academic year of receiving the award and thereafter.

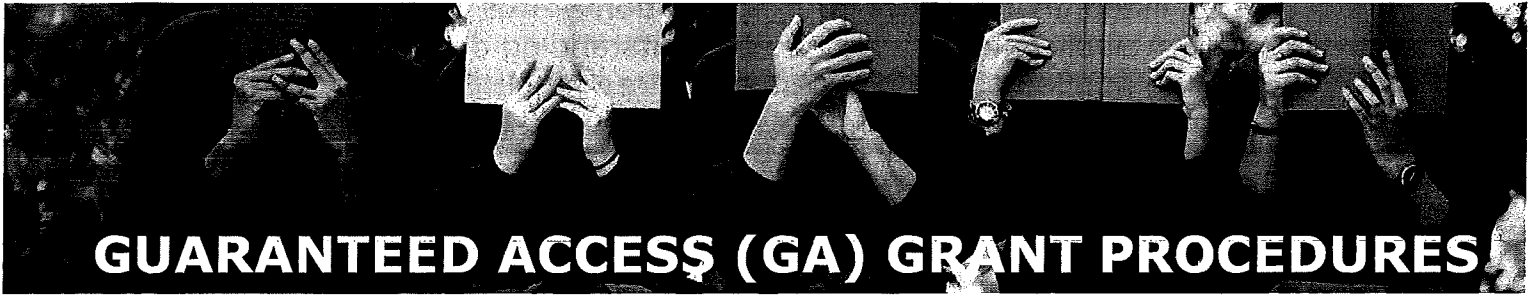
What is the Guaranteed Access Partnership Program (GAPP)?

The Guaranteed Access Partnership Program (GAPP) provides a matching grant award to eligible Maryland students who receive a GA Grant and enroll at a participating Maryland independent college or university as a new undergraduate student.

The Maryland institutions that are participating include: Capitol Technology University, Goucher College, Hood College, Johns Hopkins University, Loyola University Maryland, Maryland Institute College of Art, McDaniel College, Mount St. Mary's University, Notre Dame of Maryland University, Stevenson University, St. John's College, Washington Adventist University, and Washington College.

For more information about the GAPP program, please contact your institution's financial aid office so that they may assist you in completing the process.

STEP - BY - STEP



STEP ONE: FILE THE FAFSA OR MARYLAND STATE FINANCIAL AID APPLICATION (MSFAA) BY MARCH 1

The FAFSA or Maryland State Financial Aid Application (MSFAA) is the first step in applying for the Guaranteed Access (GA) Grant, as well as all need-based awards offered through the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC). The FAFSA is available on October 1 each year.

The State of Maryland's deadline to file the FAFSA and MSFAA is March 1.

To complete your FAFSA now [click here](#). Students who are ineligible to receive federal aid complete the MSFAA by clicking [here](#).

STEP TWO: CREATE AN MDCAPS ACCOUNT

The Maryland College Aid Processing System (MDCAPS) is the online system that is used for students to view the status of their GA Grant. In order to access this system, you must create an MDCAPS account by visiting:

<https://mdcaps.mhec.state.md.us>.

Once your account has been created you can view all required outstanding documents under 'Check Your Application Status'. All documents must be submitted to MHEC by **April 1**.

STEP THREE: CHECK YOUR MAIL/EMAIL FOR NOTIFICATIONS FROM MHEC

When determining a student's eligibility for the GA Grant, MHEC uses the income information as reported on the FAFSA or MSFAA. Students who meet the 2019-2020 income requirements may be considered for the GA Grant. Upon receiving the FAFSA or MSFAA, MHEC will notify you by mail and email of the documents to submit to confirm your eligibility for the GA Grant.

STEP FOUR: SUBMIT REQUIRED DOCUMENTS BY APRIL

All documents listed under 'Check Your Application Status' in MDCAPS must be submitted by **April 1**. MSFAA applicants may not see the outstanding documents required in MDCAPS however, will be notified of all documents required by MHEC.

Important tips:

- MHEC strongly advises you to submit all requested documentation as soon as you receive the first notification.
- Check your MDCAPS account regularly to view any changes, additional documentation, or documents not received by MHEC.
- Review each form to ensure that all documents are completed accurately and all forms are completed in accordance with instructions outlined on the form.
- Students can submit documents via ga.mhec@maryland.gov.
- Allow at least 14 business days for MHEC to process documents that have been submitted.

STEP FIVE: IF AWARDED, YOU MUST ACCEPT YOUR AWARD

Students awarded the GA Grant will be sent an email notification of how to accept the award through MDCAPS.

If the student fails to accept the award within the allotted time frame, the award will be canceled and **not** reinstated.

Awarding for the GA Grant takes place after April 1.

Howard P. Rawlings Educational Assistance (EA) Grant

https://mhec.maryland.gov/preparing/Pages/FinancialAid/ProgramDescriptions/prog_ea.aspx

Who may apply:

Current high school seniors and full-time, degree-seeking undergraduates.

How to apply:

Complete and file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online at <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa>

You must file the Maryland State Financial Aid Application (MSFAA) if eligible for in-state tuition, but ineligible to receive federal aid.

When to apply:

October 1 through March 1, each year.

Eligible majors:

All majors are eligible. **This award is a grant and does not need to be repaid.**

Eligibility Requirements

- You and your parents (if you are a dependent student) must be Maryland residents.
- You must enroll at a two-year or four-year Maryland college or university* as a full-time (12+ credits per semester), degree seeking, undergraduate student. Audited courses cannot be used to reach the minimum credit hours required for full-time status.
- You must demonstrate financial need. All applicants are ranked by Expected Family Contribution (EFC). Your EFC is based on information reported on the FAFSA. Students with the lowest EFC are awarded first.

Educational Assistance Grant awards may be used at an institution out of state only if the award recipient is a deaf or hearing impaired student and their institution makes special provisions for deaf and hearing impaired students that are not available at Maryland institutions.

Financial Need

An EA Grant is determined by student need. Your need for an EA Grant is determined using the following formula:

- OSFA College Cost of Attendance
- EFC + or - Regional Cost Of Living Adjustment
- Certain State scholarship awards (if awarded)
- Federal Pell Grant (if eligible)

= OSFA Adjusted Financial Need

Award Amount

Students attending four-year institutions will be awarded an EA Grant equal to 40% of OSFA adjusted financial need. Students attending community colleges will be awarded an EA Grant equal to 60% of OSFA adjusted need. The minimum annual award amount is \$400 and the maximum award is \$3,000. Should you be offered and accept certain State scholarship awards, your EA Grant will be recalculated. You may hold the EA Grant with all State awards except the Guaranteed Access Grant and Part-Time Grant. The total dollar amount of all State awards may not exceed your cost of attendance as determined by your school's financial aid office or \$28,000, whichever is less. All financial aid received, including State aid, may not exceed your cost of attendance.

Funds may not be available to award all eligible students.

Renewing An Award

To renew an award, you must:

- Maintain satisfactory academic progress at the college you are attending and
- Submit the FAFSA **no later than March 1** each year.
- Continue to demonstrate financial need.

You may be a recipient of an EA Grant for a total of four years of full-time, degree-seeking, undergraduate study.

HOWARD P. RAWLINGS
EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE GRANT
Conditions of Award
Academic Year 2018-2019

Eligibility Requirements:

- **You may not falsify or conceal a material fact in connection with your application. If you do, you may be subject to criminal prosecution;**
- You must be a Maryland resident. If you are a dependent student, your parents must also be Maryland residents.
- You must enroll each semester as a full-time (12+ credits per semester) degree-seeking undergraduate student at an eligible institution in Maryland.
 - Educational Assistance Grant awards may be used at an institution out of state only if the award recipient is a deaf or hearing impaired student and their institution makes special provisions for deaf and hearing impaired students that are not available at Maryland institutions.
- Audited courses cannot be used to reach the minimum credit hours required for full-time status.
- You must maintain the satisfactory academic progress standards of your institution.
- You must not be in default on a Federal Title IV student loan.
- You must accept your award within two weeks of the date of your notification or your award will be cancelled.
- This award is based on financial need. Your need is based on the cost of the institution you attend and your housing status. If you change institutions or housing status your award may be increased, decreased or canceled.
- You may be required to verify information you reported on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). You will be notified at a later date if verification is required.
- It is your responsibility to **immediately** inform OSFA, **in writing**, of all matters relating to your award.
- The total dollar amount of all **State scholarship awards** may not exceed your cost of attendance, as determined by your school's financial aid office, or \$28,000, whichever is less.

As a condition of receiving a Maryland State scholarship or grant, you pledge to remain drug free for the full term of the award. Unlawful use of drugs and alcohol may endanger your enrollment in a Maryland college, as well as your Maryland financial aid award.

NOTE: If you fail to meet any of these eligibility requirements, your award will be canceled.

Overawards: Please be aware that if the institution you are attending notifies OSFA that you are receiving other financial assistance that causes you to exceed your financial need for the award or exceed the cost of attendance at the institution (e.g.: private scholarships; Veteran's Benefits; athletic scholarships), your State financial aid may be reduced or cancelled.

Renewing Your Award:

- Your award will be renewed if you:
 - Complete and file the FAFSA by March 1, each year;
 - Demonstrate financial need each year;
 - Maintain the satisfactory academic progress standards of your institution each year;
 - Students that have completed their 2nd year or more of college are required to complete 30 credits in order to have their EA award reinstated for the full amount.
 - Students that complete 24-29 credits beginning with their 2nd year, their award will be prorated
 - Students must complete a minimum of 24 credits, beginning in their 2nd year for the EA award to be reinstated
 - Meet the eligibility requirements as outlined above.
- This award may be renewable for up to three additional years of undergraduate study.

NOTE: Awards are subject to the availability of funds.

Payment to Your Institution: At the beginning of each semester your institution will be asked to certify that you meet the requirements of the award. When the institution completes the certification and returns it to OSFA, your award will be processed for

payment. **Payment to the institution will be made approximately four weeks after the institution completes the certification.** Contact your institution's financial aid office if you have questions about the payment status of your award.

*To accept your awards, please log in to our online financial assistance site, MD CAPS, at <https://mdcaps.mhec.state.md.us>. You will be required to create a user id and password. You will be sent an email requiring you to **ACTIVATE** your account in MD CAPS, after which you may log in. There is a user's manual at the top of the home page for your use in accepting your award. There is also a link to *Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)* on the login page.*

Community College Promise Scholarship

<https://mhec.maryland.gov/Pages/Community-College-Promise-Scholarship.aspx>

Community College Promise Scholarship

The Maryland Community College Promise Scholarship Program will become available to applicants beginning with the 2019-2020 academic year.

The Promise Scholarship creates opportunities for students to attend one of Maryland's public community colleges by providing tuition assistance for any student eligible for in-state tuition.

Who May Apply:

Education Article §§ 18-3401 – 18-3407 of the Annotated Code of Maryland states that an individual may be eligible for a Promise Scholarship if the individual, within two years after graduating from high school or successfully completing a GED in the State, enrolls in a public community college as a candidate in a credit-bearing vocational certificate, a credit-bearing certificate, or an associate degree program.

How to Apply:

An individual must:

- Submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online at www.fafsa.gov or submit the Maryland State Financial Aid Application (MSFAA) online through MDCAPS for any applicant who is ineligible to receive federal aid but is eligible for in-state tuition by **March 1, 2019**;
- Complete the Promise Scholarship application online through MDCAPS by the established deadline as determined by MHEC. The application will be available for the 2019 - 2020 academic year after April 1, 2019; and
- Submit all documentation, if required, by the established deadline as determined by MHEC. Documentation received after this date will not be accepted.

Eligibility Criteria:

An applicant is eligible for a scholarship if the applicant:

- Is enrolled in a public community college as a candidate in a credit-bearing vocational certificate, a credit-bearing certificate, or an associate degree program within two years after graduating from a high school or successfully completing a GED in the State on or before the July 31 prior to the start of the Fall semester;
- Completes at least 12 credits per semester at the community college;
- Is eligible for in-state tuition, as determined by the community college in accordance with Education Article, Title 15, Annotated Code;
- Earned an overall unweighted high school grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.3 or its equivalent;
- Had an annual adjusted gross income of not more than:
 - \$100,000 if the applicant is single or resides in a single-parent household; or

- \$150,000 if the applicant is married or resides in a two-parent household for the 2017 tax year as defined by MHEC;
- Has not earned a bachelor's degree or an associate degree; and
- Has not been awarded another educational grant or scholarship that covers the applicant's full cost of attendance at the community college.

Award Amount:

Students can receive an award of up to \$5,000 to cover any remaining tuition and mandatory fee expenses at the community college after all other non-loan aid has been applied.

Renewing an Award:

The Maryland Community College Promise Scholarship is renewable for up to two years as long as the student remains qualified by:

- Applying annually with MHEC by the established deadline;
- Remaining eligible for in-state tuition;
- Completing at least 12 credits per semester;
- Maintaining a cumulative GPA of at least 2.5;
- Making satisfactory academic progress toward a credit-bearing vocational certificate, credit-bearing certificate, or associate degree;
- Meeting the income requirements; and
- Submitting by March 1 the FAFSA or separate Maryland State Financial Aid Application (MSFAA) for students ineligible to receive federal aid but eligible for in-state tuition.

*****SERVICE OBLIGATION REQUIREMENTS*****

Recipients of the Maryland Community College Promise Scholarship Program must sign an agreement to work full-time in the State within one year after earning the credit-bearing vocational certificate, credit-bearing certificate, or associate degree.

Any recipient who received the award for more than one year must work full-time in Maryland for each year they received the award. If the student fails to fulfill the service obligation and secure employment within the State, the award will convert into a loan payable to the State.

FAQs for the Maryland Community College Promise Scholarship

<https://mhec.maryland.gov/Pages/MCCPSFAQ.aspx>

Q1. What is the Maryland Community College Promise Scholarship?

The Maryland Community College Promise Scholarship provides tuition assistance for eligible students to attend one of Maryland's public community colleges.

Q2. Who is eligible for the Promise Scholarship?

Students who graduated from high school on or after **January 1, 2018** and/ or successfully completed a General Education Development (GED) in the State of Maryland on or before July 31 prior to the start of the Fall 2019 semester, and meet the following requirements:

- Enroll in a Maryland public community college as a candidate in a credit-bearing vocational certificate, a credit-bearing certificate, or an associate degree program;
- Completes at least 12 credits per semester;
- Be eligible for in-state tuition, as determined by the community college in accordance with Education Article, Title 15, Annotated Code;
- Have earned an unweighted cumulative high school grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.3 or its equivalent;
- Had an annual adjusted gross income of not more than:
 - \$100,000 if the applicant is single or resides in a single-parent household; or
 - \$150,000 if the applicant is married or resides in a two-parent household for the most recent tax year (2017) as defined by MHEC;
- Has not earned a bachelor's degree or an associate degree (or graduate degree or Ph.D.); and
- Has not been awarded another educational grant or scholarship that covers the applicant's full cost of attendance at the community college.

Q3. How do I remain eligible for the Promise Scholarship?

Once awarded, a student must maintain eligibility by:

- Submitting the FAFSA or Separate Maryland State Financial Aid Application (MSFAA) for students' ineligible to receive federal aid but eligible for in-state tuition by March 1;
- Applying annually online through their MDCAPS account by the established deadline;
- Submitting all required documentation by the established deadline;
- Remaining eligible for in-state tuition;
- Completing at least 12 credits per semester at the community college;
- Maintaining a cumulative GPA of at least 2.5;
- Maintaining satisfactory academic progress toward a credit-bearing vocational certificate, credit-bearing certificate, or associate degree; and
- Continuing to meet the income requirements.

Q4. How many years am I eligible to receive the Promise Scholarship?

Students can receive the scholarship for up to three years at the community college, as long as they continue to meet the eligibility requirements for renewing the award.

Q5. If I am already enrolled at a community college can I still apply for the Promise Scholarship?

Yes, as long as the student is within two years of graduating from high school or receiving a GED and meet all other eligibility requirements.

Q6. Can homeschool students apply for the Promise Scholarship?

Yes. A homeschooled student must provide documentation indicating graduation from: (1) a public high school, (2) an MSDE-approved nonpublic school, (3) a religiously exempt school, or (4) an institution or other entity supervising home-school instruction. See

<http://marylandpublicschools.org/about/pages/dee/npsa/index.aspx>.

Alternatively, the applicant may demonstrate successful completion of a GED.

Q7. Who will verify that I meet the in-state tuition requirements?

The community college the student is attending will confirm in-state tuition requirements and eligibility for the Promise Scholarship. For additional information regarding documentation may be required, contact the community college in which you are planning to attend directly.

Application Details

Q1. How do I apply for the Promise Scholarship?

To apply for the Promise Scholarship for the 2019-2020 academic year, students must:

- Complete either the FAFSA or MSFAA application
 - a. You are eligible to complete the FAFSA at <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa> if you are a:
 - 1. Permanent Resident
 - 2. Eligible non-citizen
 - 3. T Visa holder
 - b. You are eligible to complete the MSFAA if you are:
 - 1. Undocumented
 - 2. Meet the non-resident exemption as described under §15-106.8. of the MD Education Article.

The MSFAA is available online through the MDCAPS student portal.

- Complete the Promise Scholarship Application online through the MDCAPS student portal

Note: the Promise Scholarship Application will not be available for the 2019-2020 academic year until after April 1, 2019.

- After completing the FAFSA or MSFAA and Promise Scholarship Application, students may be required to submit additional documentation and therefore should check their "To Do List" online in their MDCAPS student portal.

Q2. Is there a deadline to complete the Promise Scholarship Application and submit required documentation?

Yes, applicants must apply and submit all required documentation for the Promise Scholarship by the deadline date as established by the Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA).

Documentation received after the deadline will not be accepted.

Q3. Is there a certain passing score I must receive on the GED to apply for the Promise Scholarship?

No, applicants are not required to have a certain passing score on the GED. Applicants are only required to have successfully completed a GED in the State to be eligible for the scholarship.

Q4. Does the Promise Scholarship consider “weighted” GPA for the high school GPA requirement?

No. The *unweighted* cumulative high school GPA is used to determine qualification for the award.

Q5. If I apply for the Promise Scholarship and submit all required documentation on-time, am I guaranteed to receive the scholarship

Students who meet the eligibility requirements and apply by the deadline will be considered for the scholarship. Scholarships are contingent upon available State funding.

Award Details

Q1. What is the award amount for the Promise Scholarship?

The annual award amount is \$5,000 per recipient, or actual tuition (after all non-loan aid is applied), whichever is less.

The minimum award amount is \$200 annually (\$100 per semester).

Q2. Will awards be prioritized?

Yes. Since the 2019-2020 academic year, is the initial year for the scholarship, eligible applicants will be prioritized based on greatest demonstrated need.

Q3. Does the Promise Scholarship cover all community college cost?

No. The Promise Scholarship helps pay for community college tuition (after all other non-loan aid has been applied). The Promise Scholarship does not cover other cost such as books, room, and board.

Q4. Are students’ who are dual enrolled in high school and the community college university eligible for the Promise Scholarship?

No, a dually enrolled student is ineligible for the Promise Scholarship while enrolled in high school. However, once the student graduates from high school they can apply for the scholarship.

Q5. How will I be notified if I received the award?

Students will be notified by email that is indicated on their MDCAPS account if they have been awarded the Promise Scholarship. Also, students can monitor the status of their application online through their MDCAPS portal.

Q6. When will awarding occur for the 2019-2020 academic year?

Awarding for the 2019-2020 award year will occur after September 1, 2019. Applicants should continue to monitor their MDCAPS account for updates.

Information for Undocumented Students

Q1. Are undocumented students eligible for the Promise Scholarship?

Yes, if they qualify for in-state tuition. Students must meet all eligibility requirements for the scholarship and qualify for in-state tuition under §15-106.8 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

Undocumented students must complete the Maryland State Financial Aid Application (MSFAA) (instead of the FAFSA) and complete the Promise Scholarship application online through the MDCAPS portal.

Q2. Where can I find more information on the eligibility requirements for in-state tuition requirements for undocumented students?

The requirements are set forth in §15-106.8 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, available here:

<http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/frmStatutesText.aspx?article=ged§ion=15-106.8&ext=html&session=2019RS&tab=subject5>

You should consult your institution with questions.

Q3. How do I complete the MSFAA?

You may complete the MSFAA online through the Maryland College Aid Processing System (MDCAPS) at

<https://mdcaps.mhec.state.md.us/MDCAPS/login.aspx?c=-8586522852886551316&ReturnUrl=/MDCAPS/int/FinAid/index.aspx>

*****SERVICE OBLIGATION REQUIREMENTS*****

Q1. What is the service requirement for the Promise Scholarship?

The service requirement for the Promise Scholarships requires students to work full-time in the State within one year after earning the credit-bearing vocational certificate, credit-bearing certificate, or associate degree.

Q2. Why do I need to sign a Promissory Note and Service Obligation Agreement before my award can be disbursed to the community college?

Once a student is awarded the Promise Scholarship, the disbursement of the award is contingent upon the recipient signing both the Promissory Note and Service Obligation Agreement.

An award recipient must sign the promissory note and service obligation agreement, agreeing to work in the State of MD within one year after earning the credit-bearing vocational certificate, credit-bearing certificate, or associate degree.

If the recipient fails to sign the Promissory Note and Service Obligation Agreement agreeing to the requirements of the scholarship they are *ineligible* for the award.

Q3. If I receive the Promise Scholarship award and transfer to another college/university before earning either a credit-bearing Vocational Certificate, credit-bearing Certificate, or Associate Degree; will my scholarship award convert into a loan?

Yes, an award recipient of the Promise Scholarship that transfers to another college or university before earning a credit-bearing Vocational Certificate, credit-bearing Certificate, or Associate Degree; will have the scholarship converted into a loan that must be repayable to the State of Maryland.