

Activity 10: Grant Programs

Federal Pell Grant

A Federal Pell Grant, unlike a loan, does not have to be repaid. Pell Grants are awarded usually only to undergraduate students who have not earned a bachelor's or a professional degree. Pell Grants are considered a foundation of federal financial aid, to which aid from other federal and nonfederal sources might be added.

How much can I get?

The maximum Pell Grant award changes each award year depending on program funding. The maximum award for the 2007-08 award year (July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009) is \$4,731. The amount you get depends not only on your financial need, but also on your costs to attend school, your status as a full-time or part-time student, and your plans to attend school for a full academic year or less.

If I am eligible, how will I get the Pell Grant money?

Your school can apply Pell Grant funds to your school costs, pay you directly (usually by check), or combine these methods. The school must tell you in writing how much your award will be and how and when you'll be paid. Schools must disburse funds at least once per term (semester, trimester, or quarter). Schools that do not use semesters, trimesters, or quarters must disburse funds at least twice per academic year.

Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)

The Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG) program is for undergraduates with exceptional financial need. Pell Grant recipients with the lowest expected family contributions (EFCs) will be considered first for a FSEOG. Just like Pell Grants, the FSEOG does not have to be repaid.

How much can I get?

You can receive between \$100 and \$4,000 a year, depending on when you apply, your financial need, the funding at the school you're attending, and the policies of the financial aid office at your school.

If I am eligible, how will I get the FSEOG money?

If you are eligible, your school will credit your account, pay you directly (usually by check), or combine these methods. Your school must pay you at least once per term (semester, trimester, or quarter). Schools that do not use semesters, trimesters, or quarters must disburse funds at least twice per academic year.

Academic Competitiveness Grant

The Academic Competitiveness Grant was made available for the first time for the 2006-2007 school year for first year college students who graduated from high school after January 1, 2006, and for second year college students who graduated from high school after January 1, 2005. The Academic Competitiveness Grant award is in addition to the student's Pell Grant award.

How Much Can A Student Receive?

An Academic Competitiveness Grant will provide up to \$750 for the first year of undergraduate study and up to \$1,300 for the second year of undergraduate study to full-time students who are eligible for a Federal Pell Grant and who had successfully completed a rigorous high school program, as determined by the state or local education agency and recognized by the Secretary of Education. Second year students must maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0.

The National Science & Mathematics Access to Retain Talent Grant (National SMART Grant)

The National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent Grant, also known as the National SMART Grant is available during the third and fourth years of undergraduate study to full-time students who are eligible for the Federal Pell Grant and who are majoring in physical, life, or computer sciences, mathematics, technology, or engineering or in a foreign language determined critical to national security. The student must also have maintained a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 in coursework required for the major. The National SMART Grant award is in addition to the student's Pell Grant award.

How Much Can A Student Receive?

A National SMART Grant will provide up to \$4,000 for each of the third and fourth years of undergraduate study to full-time students who are eligible for a Federal Pell Grant and who are majoring in physical, life, or computer sciences, mathematics, technology, or engineering or in a foreign language determined critical to national security.

Institutional Grants

Colleges provide institutional grants to help make up the difference between college costs and what a family can be expected to contribute through income, savings, loans, and student earnings.

Other institutional grants, known as merit awards or merit scholarships, are awarded on the basis of academic achievement. Some merit awards are offered only to students whose families demonstrate financial need; others are awarded without regard to a family's finances.

Some grants come with special privileges or obligations. You'll want to find out about the types of grants awarded by each college you are considering.