

**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION  
MASSACHUSETTS HIGH DEMAND SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

**PURPOSE**

The Massachusetts High Demand Scholarship Program was created by the Massachusetts Legislature to support economic development in the Commonwealth by providing financial assistance to residents who are pursuing programs of study that will help address the Commonwealth's workforce needs. The program will provide scholarships to students to encourage enrollment and completion of training and degree programs identified by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development's annual reports on labor market conditions.

**DEFINITIONS**

***ELIGIBLE INSTITUTION:***

Any approved public or independent college, university, school of nursing or any other institution furnishing a program of higher education in high demand fields in the Commonwealth.

***ELIGIBLE PROGRAM:***

Any undergraduate degree or certificate program offered by an eligible institution and identified by the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development as a high-demand occupation.

**ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

To be eligible for the Massachusetts High Demand Scholarship Program, the student must:

- a) be enrolled in an eligible institution, as defined;
- b) 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 (BHE) policy;
- c) be a U.S. Citizen, lawful permanent resident, or non-citizen eligible under Title IV regulations; or have an approved eligibility status designated by the BHE pursuant to the Massachusetts Tuition Equity Law<sup>1</sup> or otherwise;

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<sup>1</sup> M.G.L. c. 15A, Section 9, as amended by Section 11 of Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2023, and further amended by Section 22 of Chapter 140 of the Act of 2024 For information on the Massachusetts Tuition Equity Law see here: <https://www.mass.edu/tuitionequity>

- d) declare a major or be currently pursuing a program of study offered and verifiable by the institution that is also designated as a high-demand profession by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development;
- e) complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the Massachusetts Application for State Financial Aid (MASFA) as applicable for eligible students under the Massachusetts Tuition Equity Law annually;
- f) comply with financial aid verification requirements;
- g) complete the High Demand Scholarship application and sign the program terms and conditions;
- h) enroll, as a matriculated student, on a full-time or part-time basis (minimum of 6 credits, or the equivalent) in an eligible undergraduate program of study;
- i) have not earned a bachelor's degree (or the equivalent);
- j) achieve and maintain a minimum college-level GPA of 3.0 annually and meet Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) according to institution's requirements and federal standards; and
- k) not be in default on any federal or state student loans for attendance at any institution, or owe a refund for any previous state financial aid program.

In rare and extenuating circumstances, the Commissioner or the Commissioner's designee may permit an exception to the above criteria and award the Massachusetts High Demand Scholarship. In such cases, supporting documentation must be provided by the student and maintained by the Office of Student Financial Assistance.

**STUDENT ELIGIBILITY BY ENROLLMENT INTENSITY AND DEGREE TYPE**

Eligible students may be awarded Massachusetts High Demand Scholarship Program funds as follows:

**Associate Degree**

- Full-time                      Maximum of 2 years, 4 semesters for full-time (minimum of 12 enrolled credits per academic term).
- Part-Time                      Maximum of 4 years, 8 semesters for part-time (minimum of 6 enrolled credits per academic term).

**Bachelor Degree**

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Full-time | Maximum of 4 years, 8 semesters for full-time (minimum of 12 enrolled credits per academic term). |
| Part-Time | Maximum of 6 years, 12 semesters for part-time (minimum of 6 enrolled credits per academic term). |

Students may receive an additional payment up to \$1,000 for summer study at a four-year institution, or \$500 at a community college, if funds are available after all academic year awards are disbursed. Summer awards are limited to a maximum of three terms (one per academic year) for any student attending a four-year or two-year college or university.

### **AWARD VALUE**

The following are maximum award values; final award values will be based on the Award Procedure, below. Awards for eligible applicants under this program may be used to support tuition, fees and related educational costs, and shall be based on the type of institution and the student's enrollment status as follows:

#### **Community College Students**

\$7,000 per year or \$3,500 per semester - Full-time enrollment (12 credits or more)  
 \$3,500 per year or \$1,750 per semester - Part-time enrollment (6-11 credits)

#### **State University Students**

\$11,500 per year or \$5,750 per semester - Full-time enrollment (12 credits or more)  
 \$5,750 per year or \$2,875 per semester - Part-time enrollment (6-11 credits)

#### **University of Massachusetts Students**

\$17,500 per year or \$8,750 per semester - Full-time enrollment (12 credits or more)  
 \$8,750 per year or \$4,375 per semester - Part-time enrollment (6-11 credits)

#### **Independent College or University Students**

\$17,500 per year or \$8,750 per semester - Full-time enrollment (12 credits or more)  
 \$8,750 per year or \$4,375 per semester - Part-time enrollment (6-11 credits)

The academic year and/or semester awards for this program may be reduced by the Department of Higher Education in accordance with the award procedure, below, and/or if the annual appropriation is not sufficient to meet the maximum scholarship award for the eligible pool of applicants.

The Department of Higher Education will annually review the tuition and fee charges at Massachusetts public colleges and universities and adjust the program award values, as it deems necessary.

## **AWARD PROCEDURE**

Scholarships under this program shall be awarded only to applicants who meet all program eligibility criteria, and may be prioritized based on one or more of the following:

- a) Awarded only to students who complete the High Demand Scholarship application and FAFSA, or alternative application by the published priority deadline
- b) Awarded in proportion to the regional labor and workforce demand for each discipline/profession, based on data provided by the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, as determined by the Department of Higher Education
- c) Awarded preferentially to first generation college students and traditionally underserved student populations
- d) Awarded based on demonstrated student potential for excellence in the discipline/profession including high academic achievement
- e) Awarded on the basis of demonstrated financial need, based on reported Student Aid Index (SAI), to promote access to scholarship funds by diverse populations within academic levels (year of study such as freshman, sophomore, junior, senior), as determined by the Department of Higher Education

Institutions are required to adjust a student's financial aid package, if the sum total of all financial aid, including the High Demand Scholarship, results in an "over award", as defined under Title IV regulations governing federal aid, and related state financial aid policies. The Board of Higher Education will annually review this scholarship program, and based upon its findings, may revise award procedures accordingly.

## **AWARD DISBURSEMENT**

Participating institutions must verify that each recipient is eligible in accordance with guidelines established for the High Demand Scholarship Program, and that the student is enrolled in an approved undergraduate program, as applicable.

Institutions are required to refund to the Department any funds that are deemed to have been improperly awarded and disbursed to recipients who are later determined to be ineligible for the High Demand Scholarship Program. In addition to completing the verification of enrollment

status (credits and GPA) for students each semester, institutions are also responsible for providing the Department of Higher Education and the Office of Student Financial Assistance with related data for scholarship recipients, as requested and required under the annual Institutional Participation Agreement for Massachusetts State Financial Aid.

## **ANNUAL REVIEW**

The Department of Higher Education is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of the Massachusetts High Demand Scholarship 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 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 Massachusetts High Demand Scholarship 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 Massachusetts High Demand Scholarship Program.
- b) The Commissioner shall require each college to furnish annually to the BHE a report detailing specific information regarding recipients of the Massachusetts High Demand Scholarship 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.