

Community College Nursing Scholarship

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Massachusetts Office of Student Financial Assistance

PURPOSE

The Community College Nursing Scholarship program is designed to attract, incentivize, and encourage a diverse population of students to enroll in and complete a postsecondary credential or degree in the Nursing profession at Massachusetts community colleges. The Program provides “last dollar” financial assistance to ensure that all eligible students have adequate resources to fully cover the direct costs of tuition, fees and books towards a certificate or associate degree at a public community college. This Scholarship program is intended to encourage more students to consider the Nursing Health Profession as a viable career path and thus enroll in an approved nursing discipline that will provide the credentials to contribute to the Commonwealth’s workforce.

DEFINITIONS

- **Eligible Institution:**

A community college within the Massachusetts public system of higher education under Section 5 of Chapter 15A of the General Laws

- **Eligible Program:**

An approved certificate or associate degree program offered at a Massachusetts community college, in the following areas, as well as other programs identified by the college as nursing or pre-nursing:

- Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse
- Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse Training
- Nursing Assistant/Aide
- Patient Care Assistant/Aide/Technician
- Pre-Nursing Studies

CIP Codes for eligible certificate or degree programs include the following:

513801	Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse
513901	Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse Training
513902	Nursing Assistant/Aide and Patient Care Assistant/Aide
511105	Pre-Nursing Studies

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

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for the Community College Nursing Scholarship program, the student must:

- a) be enrolled at 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) annually;
- 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 programs;
- f) not have earned a prior associate or baccalaureate degree, or the equivalent
- g) enroll, as a matriculated student, on a full-time or part-time basis (minimum of 6 credits, or the equivalent) in an undergraduate program of study leading to a certificate or an associate degree, as defined;
- h) meet satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) according to institution's requirements and federal standards; and
- i) have a balance owed to the institution for the costs of tuition, fees, books and supplies after all other non-loan grant and scholarship aid has been accounted for.

NURSING SCHOLARSHIP CONDITIONS

- Disbursement of funds: the Community College Nursing program funds are to be appropriated to participating institutions through a formula approved by the Commissioner of Higher Education.

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

- The institution is required to report recipient data to the Department of Higher Education upon request, and on an academic term basis.
- The institution should facilitate access to on campus support services to students who receive assistance under the Nursing Scholarship program, to promote persistence in and completion of their program of study.
- The institution is responsible for verifying student eligibility, to include accurate determination of prior education credentials earned.
- The Community College Nursing program funds may be awarded to support trailing summer enrollment.
- The Community College Nursing program funds must be committed by institutions and expended by August 31 of each fiscal year.

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY BY ENROLLMENT INTENSITY AND DEGREE TYPE

Eligible students may be awarded Community College Nursing Scholarship funds as follows:

Associate Degree

Full-Time	Maximum of 3 years, 6 semesters for full-time (12 enrolled credits per academic term). An additional year of assistance may be awarded based on extenuating circumstances, with approval of a written appeal.
Part-Time	Maximum of 5 years, 10 semesters for part-time (6 enrolled credits minimum per academic term). An additional year of assistance may be awarded based on extenuating circumstances, with approval of a written appeal.

Certificate Program

Full-Time	Maximum of three semesters (summer enrollment does not count toward the 3- semester maximum)
Part-Time	Maximum of six semesters (summer enrollment does not count toward the semester maximum)

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

AWARD VALUE

Subject to appropriation, the Community College Nursing Scholarship assistance awarded to eligible students under this program shall not exceed the calculated cost of tuition, fees, books and supplies as published in the institution's annual Cost of Attendance (COA), for the academic term, during which the award is made.

Community College Nursing Scholarship funds may not be used to cover educational expenses that are not related to tuition and fees, books and supplies, unless otherwise approved or authorized by the Commissioner of Higher Education, or his designee.

Community College Nursing funds may be awarded to cover student expenses or activities related to the required program of study, such as internships or clinical placements, that are scheduled during the summer months. Eligible students may also receive funds to complete coursework during the summer (six-credit minimum).

AWARD CALCULATION

An eligible student enrolled in an undergraduate program of study leading to a certificate or associate degree may receive a Community College Nursing Scholarship award to cover Financial Unmet Need for costs associated with tuition and fees, books and supplies for the corresponding academic term or year.

The Financial Unmet Need calculation for an eligible student is as follows:

Community College Nursing Scholarship Award = Tuition, Fees, books and supplies
(minus) all other Non-Loan aid

AWARD DISBURSEMENT

Each participating institution must verify that the recipient is eligible in accordance with guidelines established for the Community College Nursing Program, and that the student is enrolled, or plans to enroll, in an approved certificate or associate degree program. Further, the institution is required to verify that the student has not earned a prior associate or bachelor's degree before funds are awarded and disbursed.

Institutions are required to refund any funds deemed to have been improperly awarded and disbursed to recipients who are later determined to be ineligible.

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

ANNUAL REVIEW

The Department of Higher Education (DHE) is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of the Community College Nursing 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 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 processed, such as disbursement of funds.

PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

All institutions receiving funds under the Community College Nursing Scholarship 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 Community College Nursing Scholarship.
- b) The Commissioner shall require each college to furnish annually to the BHE a report detailing specific information regarding recipients of the Community College Nursing Scholarship. 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.