



Florida Public Student Assistance Grant Program

What is the Florida Public Student Assistance Grant Program?

The Florida Public Student Assistance Grant Program, one of four financial assistance programs that comprise the Florida Student Assistance Grant Program, provides need-based financial aid to eligible full- and part-time degree-seeking students enrolled in institutions in the State University System (SUS) and Florida College System (FCS).¹ For the 2010-11 academic year, the minimum annual grant award is \$200 and the maximum is \$2,235.²

The program is administered by the SUS and FCS institutions in accordance with rules of the State Board of Education.³

What are the student eligibility criteria for a Florida Public Student Assistance Grant?

To be considered for a grant, a student:

- ❖ Must have resided in Florida for at least one year prior to receipt of the grant and must be a U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen.
- ❖ Must enroll as a student in an associate or baccalaureate degree program at a SUS or FCS institution for a minimum of 12 credit hours per term for a full-time award, nine credit hours per term for a three-quarter time award, or six hours per term for a half-time award.
- ❖ May not have previously received a bachelor's degree.
- ❖ Must apply for a Federal Pell Grant by completing the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA), which determines the amount of the student's estimated family contribution (EFC).⁴ The student's EFC may not exceed a maximum amount annually established by the Florida Department of Education (DOE). The maximum amount for the 2010-11 academic year is \$5,273.⁵
- ❖ Must demonstrate a minimum unmet financial need of \$200.
- ❖ May not owe a repayment or be in default on any state or federal grant, loan, or scholarship program unless satisfactory arrangements for repayment have been made.

¹ Section 1009.50(2)(a), F.S.

² Specific Appropriations 5, s. 1, and 68, s. 2, ch. 2010-152, L.O.F.

³ Section 1009.50(1), F.S.

⁴ A student is not required to receive a Pell Grant in order to be eligible for a Florida Public Student Assistance Grant award; however, the majority of students who receive the state grant award also receive a Pell Grant due to the fact that the state grant award process requires participating institutions to give priority to students with the lowest EFCs. Section 1009.50(2)(c), F.S.; see rule 6A-20.031, F.A.C.; telephone interview with the Director of the Bureau of Student Financial Assistance, Florida Department of Education (Sept. 23, 2010).

⁵ Email, Florida Department of Education, Director of the Bureau of Student Financial Assistance (Sept. 24, 2010).

- ❖ Must meet any application procedures and deadlines established by the participating institution.⁶

What are the renewal criteria for a Florida Public Student Assistance Grant?

A student's eligibility to renew the grant is determined at the end of the second semester or third quarter of each academic year. To be considered for renewal, a student must have earned a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale and 12 credit hours per term for a full-time award, nine credit hours per term for a three-quarter time award, or six credit hours per term for a half-time award. Credit hours earned during the previous summer may be counted toward the total number of credit hours required. The student must also annually complete the FAFSA and demonstrate unmet financial need.⁷

Students should consult with their postsecondary institutions for renewal application procedures and deadlines.⁸

How is a student's unmet financial need calculated?

A student's unmet financial need is determined by the institutional cost of attendance, less the EFC as determined by the FAFSA, and less aid from other sources such as federal grants, state grants, and institutional aid (excluding loans).⁹ A demonstrated unmet need of less than \$200 renders the student ineligible for a grant.¹⁰

<p>Cost of Attendance - Expected Family Contribution - <u>Other Aid (excluding loans)</u> = Unmet Financial Need</p>
--

How are grant recipients selected and award amounts determined?

Institutions in the SUS and FCS are required to determine the eligibility of each student applicant for an initial or renewal grant award and to calculate the award amount.¹¹ The award amount is

⁶ Sections 1009.40(1) and 1009.50(2), F.S.; rules 6A-10.444 and 6A-20.031, F.A.C.; Florida Department of Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance, *2010-2011 Florida Student Assistance Grant Program Fact Sheet*, <http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/ssfad/factsheets/FSAG.htm> (last visited Sept. 16, 2010) [hereinafter *FSAG Fact Sheet*].

⁷ Sections 1009.40(1)(b)1. and 1009.50(2), (3), and (4), F.S.; rule 6A-20.031, F.A.C.; *FSAG Fact Sheet*, *supra* note 6.

⁸ *FSAG Fact Sheet*, *supra* note 6.

⁹ Florida Department of Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance, *Annual Report to the Commissioner, 2008-09*, at 11 (Oct. 2009), *available at* <http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/SSFAD/pdf/annualreportcurrent.pdf>.

¹⁰ Section 1009.50(2)(a), F.S.

¹¹ See s. 1009.50(1), (2)(c), (3), and (4)(c), F.S. and rule 6A-20.031(6), F.A.C.; telephone interviews with the Director of the Bureau of Student Financial Assistance, Florida Department of Education (Sept. 23 and 28, 2010).

based on the eligible student's unmet financial need and must be between \$200 and the weighted average cost of tuition and other registration fees for 30 hours at state universities, unless a different maximum award amount is established in the General Appropriations Act (GAA).¹² The 2010-11 GAA establishes a maximum award amount of \$2,235 for the 2010-11 academic year.¹³ Grant awards are distributed by the SUS and FCS institutions to eligible students until program funding is depleted based on a selection process that prioritizes applicants with the lowest EFCs and highest unmet need.¹⁴

Where may a student use a Florida Public Student Assistance Grant?

The grant may be used at any of the 11 institutions in the SUS or 28 institutions in the FCS.¹⁵ A list of these institutions is available on the DOE's website.¹⁶

How is the Florida Public Student Assistance Grant Program funded?

The GAA annually establishes the total amount of funding available statewide for the program. These funds are distributed by the DOE among participating institutions in accordance with a formula approved by the State Board of Education.¹⁷

The 2009-10 GAA provided \$98,546,590 for the program and specified a maximum grant award amount of \$2,069.¹⁸ In that year, a total of 141,133 students were eligible for the grant statewide. Of this number, 86,940 students received grant awards with 46,918 students receiving initial grants and 40,022 students receiving renewal grants. The average grant award amount was \$1,172.71.¹⁹

The 2010-11 GAA provides \$100,350,612 for the program and specifies a maximum award amount of \$2,235.²⁰

¹² Section 1009.50(3), F.S.

¹³ Specific Appropriations 5, s. 1, and 68, s. 2, ch. 2010-152, L.O.F.

¹⁴ See s. 1009.50(1), (2)(c), (3), and (4)(c), F.S. and rule 6A-20.031(6), F.A.C.; telephone interviews with the Director of the Bureau of Student Financial Assistance, Florida Department of Education (Sept. 23 and 28, 2010).

¹⁵ Section 1009.50(2)(a), F.S.

¹⁶ Florida Department of Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance, *2010-11 Florida Student Assistance Grant Program Eligible Public Institutions*, https://www.floridastudentfinancialaidsg.org/admin/SAWELIGPSI_ByProg.asp?ByProg=FSAGpub (last visited Sept. 20, 2010).

¹⁷ Section 1009.50(4)(a), F.S.

¹⁸ Specific Appropriations 5, s. 1, and 67, s. 2, ch. 2009-81, L.O.F.

¹⁹ Florida Department of Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance, *End of Year Report 2009-2010 – Florida Student Assistance Grant Public*, (Sept. 1, 2010) available at https://www.floridastudentfinancialaidsg.org/pdf/EOY_Reports.asp?year=2009.

²⁰ Specific Appropriations 5, s. 1, and 68, s. 2, ch. 2010-152, L.O.F.

Where may I obtain additional information?

Florida Department of Education

Office of Student Financial Assistance

(850) 410-5160

Student Hotline: (888) 827-2004

<http://www.FloridaStudentFinancialAid.org>

Florida House of Representatives

Education Committee

(850) 488-7451

<http://www.myfloridahouse.gov>

