



Access to Better Learning and Education (ABLE) Grant Program

What is the Access to Better Learning and Education Grant Program?

The Access to Better Learning and Education Grant Program provides non-need-based tuition assistance to eligible full-time students enrolled in baccalaureate degree programs at certain private colleges and universities in Florida.¹ For the 2010-11 academic year, the maximum award amount is \$945.²

The program is administered by the Florida Department of Education (DOE) pursuant to rules adopted by the State Board of Education.³

What are the student eligibility criteria for the ABLE Grant?

To be eligible for an ABLE Grant, a student:

- ❖ Must have resided in Florida for at least one year prior to receipt of an ABLE Grant and must be a United States citizen or eligible non-citizen.
- ❖ Must enroll as a full-time student in a baccalaureate degree program at an eligible institution for a minimum of 12 credit hours per term.
- ❖ May not be enrolled in a program of study that leads to a degree in theology or divinity.
- ❖ May not have previously received a bachelor's degree.
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ Must meet any application procedures and deadlines established by the participating institution.⁴

Where may a student use the ABLE Grant?

The ABLE Grant may be used at:

- ❖ For-profit colleges and universities that are located in and chartered by the state and accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges.
- ❖ Nonprofit colleges and universities that are chartered out-of-state, have been located in Florida for 10 years or more, and are accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the Middle States Association of Colleges

¹ Section 1009.891(1), (3), and (4), F.S.

² Specific Appropriation 57, s. 2, ch.2010-152, L.O.F.

³ Section 1009.891(2), F.S.

⁴ Sections 1009.40(1) and 1009.891(4), F.S.; rule 6A-10.444, F.A.C.; Florida Department of Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance, *2010-2011 Access to Better Learning and Education Grant Program Fact Sheet*, <http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/SSFAD/factsheets/ABLE.htm> (last visited Sept. 14, 2010) [hereinafter *ABLE Fact Sheet*].

and Schools, the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, or the New England Association of Colleges and Schools.⁵

These institutions must grant baccalaureate degrees and have a secular purpose. The ABLE Grant may not be used at institutions within the State University System or Florida College System.⁶

Thirteen institutions are eligible to participate in the program for the 2010-11 academic year. A list of participating institutions is available on the DOE's website.⁷

What are the renewal criteria for the ABLE Grant?

A student's eligibility to renew an ABLE Grant is determined at the end of the second semester or third quarter of each academic year. To renew, the student must have earned a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale and 12 credit hours for each term a grant was received. Credit hours earned during the previous summer may be counted toward the total number of credit hours required.⁸

A student should consult his or her postsecondary institution for additional renewal requirements established by the institution.⁹

What is the award amount?

The amount of the ABLE Grant is specified each year in the General Appropriations Act (GAA). The 2010-11 GAA provides \$4,053,105 for the ABLE Grant Program and indicates that these funds will provide an estimated 4,289 students with an award amount of \$945. If more than the estimated 4,289 students are deemed eligible, the Office of Student Financial Assistance within the DOE may prorate the award and provide a lesser amount in the second term.¹⁰

In the 2009-10 academic year, 5,278 students received ABLE Grants with an average award amount of \$740.26.¹¹

⁵ Section 1009.891(3), F.S.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ Florida Department of Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance, *2010-2011 Access to Better Learning and Education Grant Eligible Institutions*, https://www.floridastudentfinancialaidsg.org/admin/SAWELIGPSI_ByProg.asp?ByProg=ABLE (last visited Sept. 14, 2010).

⁸ Sections 1009.40(1)(b)1. and 1009.891(4)(a), F.S.; *ABLE Fact Sheet*, *supra* note 4.

⁹ *ABLE Fact Sheet*, *supra* note 4.

¹⁰ Specific Appropriation 57, s. 2, ch.2010-152, L.O.F.

¹¹ Florida Department of Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance, *End of Year Report 2009-2010 -- ABLE*, (Sept. 1, 2010) available at https://www.floridastudentfinancialaidsg.org/EOY_Reports.asp?year=2009.

Where may I obtain additional information?

Florida Department of Education

Office of Student Financial Assistance

1-888-827-2004

(850) 410-5200

<http://www.fldoe.org>

<http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org>

Florida House of Representatives

Education Committee

(850) 488-7451

<http://www.myfloridahouse.gov>