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Minnesota's College Financial Aid Programs

Don't Spend a Fortune for School

Minnesota provides a full range of financial aid opportunities for its resident students. The Minnesota legislature understands that a well educated populace is one of the pillars of a thriving economy, and so has developed a number of scholarships, grants and loan forgiveness programs designed to help students achieve their college ambitions. These valuable financial aid programs are administered by the Minnesota Office of Higher Education (<http://www.ohe.state.mn.us/>) through its interactive Get Ready For College (<http://www.getreadyforcollege.org/>) website. Resident college-bound students in the North Star State will want to take advantage of the wide variety of financial aid programs available to them at the state level.

The FAFSA

Before beginning any search for college financial aid, students must first fill out and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>), or FAFSA. The information students supply on their FAFSA application is used to determine the level of Federal and state financial aid for which they are eligible. After the FAFSA has been submitted, students will receive their personalized Student Aid Report (<http://studentaid.ed.gov/fafsa/next-steps/student-aid-report>), which will outline the types and amounts of financial aid for which the student may apply. The FAFSA is required for all Federal and state financial aid programs. It is also used by most college, banks and independent scholarship and grant advisory boards to determine a student's eligibility for financial aid. The FAFSA should be every college-bound students first priority.



General Scholarships and Grants

Minnesota offers its residents a variety of general education scholarships and grants designed to help make college more accessible and more affordable. These programs are not linked to any particular course of study, and may take the form of merit-based scholarships or need-based grants. As with all state supported financial aid, programs are subject to change according to availability of funding, and at the discretion of the Minnesota Office of Higher Education.

The following general scholarships and grants are currently available to the resident college-bound students of Minnesota.

- The Minnesota Academic Excellence Scholarship (http://www.getreadyforcollege.org/gPg.cfm?pageID=150&1534-D83A_1933715A=755a57099a35e0ac5d8c18b370b19e5a7cd6eee9) is available to high school graduates who have demonstrated outstanding achievements in English, creative writing, fine arts, mathematics, science or the social sciences. To be eligible, students must be enrolled full time in a degree granting program at a Minnesota state college or university. The scholarship covers full tuition for one academic year, and is renewable for up to three years.
- The Minnesota State Grant (http://www.getreadyforcollege.org/gPg.cfm?pageID=138&1534-D83A_1933715A=b96ad79b55bac722635957292b5d819963169519) is designed to help low and middle income students pay for college. Applicants must be enrolled at least part time at a state college or university, must be at least 17 years of age, and must be able to demonstrate the requisite level of financial need. The minimum annual award is \$100. Average awards range from \$1500 to \$1800. Students may reapply for the grant each year that they meet the eligibility requirements.
- The Minnesota Indian Scholarship (http://www.getreadyforcollege.org/gPg.cfm?pageID=149&1534-D83A_1933715A=9b08466b44380a6e2fbba752b51c23fa39af9461) is available to resident students who can prove that they are at least one-fourth Native American. Applicants must also demonstrate the required level of financial need. Award amounts are based on need, and students may be eligible to receive up to \$4000 for undergraduate studies and up to \$6000 for graduate level courses.
- The Alliss Opportunity Grant Program for Adults Returning to College (http://www.getreadyforcollege.org/gPg.cfm?pageID=1458&1534-D83A_1933715A=bf5e91b13df18224435a40dc9e84f1ddd8967826) is available to adults who have been out of high school for more than seven years, and who have not received a bachelor's degree. Approved applicants can take one course, up to five credit hours, for free at a state community college.
- The Public Safety Officer's Survival Grant (http://www.getreadyforcollege.org/gPg.cfm?pageID=145&1534-D83A_1933715A=8cae44ce26b4a6c5723347686f4ae068b014c9eb) provides financial assistance to the dependent children and spouses of public safety officers who have been killed in the line of duty. To be eligible students must be enrolled in an undergraduate, graduate or certification program at a state college or university. The annual maximum awards are \$10,488 for a student enrolled at a 4 year college, and \$5,808 for students enrolled in a 2 year degree program.

Aid for Student with Special Circumstances

Minnesota's state government also makes provisions for students in special circumstances. These programs are designed to help students suffering specific hardship find the money they need to complete a college education.

The following programs offer financial assistance to students in special circumstances who may not otherwise be able to afford college.

- The Minnesota Veterans' Dependents Assistance Program (http://www.getreadyforcollege.org/gPg.cfm?pageID=159&1534-D83A_1933715A=667386d1871635b15c5401f128f25822a563dbcb) provides financial aid for college to the dependents of persons who have been designated as Missing In Action, or who are considered Prisoners of War. Eligible students must be enrolled at a state college or university. Maximum award amounts are \$250 per academic year.
- Minnesota Educational Assistance for War Orphans (http://www.getreadyforcollege.org/gPg.cfm?pageID=1302&1534-D83A_1933715A=8c766145624b232d54a029a30ab8911148264672) offers up to \$750 in annual grant funds to the dependent children of soldiers who have died due to military related injuries. Applicants must be enrolled at an accredited state college, university or vocational school.
- Education Vouchers for Former Youth in Care (http://www.getreadyforcollege.org/gPg.cfm?pageID=1385&1534-D83A_1933715A=f0a6ff45ef3230613a92244a61e25c02d3ac33c8) are available to students currently in, or recently released from, the Minnesota Foster Care System. Applicants must be under

the age of 21, and must be enrolled at an accredited state college or vocational school. The maximum annual award allowance is \$5000 per student.

- The Minnesota Child Care Grant (http://www.getreadyforcollege.org/gPg.cfm?pageID=140&1534-D83A_1933715A=18858ae0cf9a8de2710d7755942f5f277fae124d) provides financial assistance to low income college students who have dependent children under the age of 12. Strictly speaking this is not an education grant. The intention is to make it easier for students with children to remain in college and complete their degrees. The award amount is determined by the number of people in the student's household, the number of day care hours required to cover college attendance and work schedules, and the income of the applicant. The maximum award amount is \$2800 for each eligible child per academic year.
- The Public Safety Officer's Survival Grant (http://www.getreadyforcollege.org/gPg.cfm?pageID=145&1534-D83A_1933715A=8cae44ce26b4a6c5723347686f4ae068b014c9eb) provides financial assistance to the dependent children and spouses of public safety officers who have been killed in the line of duty. To be eligible, students must be enrolled in an undergraduate, graduate or certification program at a state college or university. The annual maximum awards are \$10,488 for a student enrolled at a 4 year university, and \$5,808 for students enrolled in a 2 year community college.

Specialized Studies Grants and Scholarships

In addition to scholarships and grants, Minnesota's state government also sponsors a variety of programs designed to provide financial assistance to students who are pursuing careers in specific high demand professions. While not strictly grants or scholarships, these award-for-service programs offer loan forgiveness to students who agree to take up positions within the state, working at their chosen profession, in designated critical shortage facilities and communities.

The following financial aid programs are available to resident students pursuing specific careers in the state of Minnesota.

- The Federal John R. Justice Student Loan Repayment Program (http://www.getreadyforcollege.org/gPg.cfm?pageID=1939&1534-D83A_1933715A=5b8137cac6e37c42e60a45144f17e4638653f007) is designed to address the state's need for full time public defenders and public criminal prosecutors. Law school graduates who have passed the state bar may be eligible to have a portion of their outstanding school loans paid by the state in exchange for an agreement to serve as a public defender or prosecutor within the state for a minimum of three years. The amount of repayment may not exceed \$4000 per year of the service agreement.
- The Minnesota Department of Health (<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/orhpc/funding/>) offers a variety of loan forgiveness programs and grants for state residents who are pursuing careers in certain high demand medical professions. These award-for-service programs offer substantial financial assistance to students who are pursuing careers as nurses, primary care physicians, pharmacists and nurse practitioners. In exchange for grant money, and/or loan repayment funds, students must agree to serve in a professional capacity at a designated critical need facility in either an urban or rural community. Award amounts are determined by financial need, course of study, professional certification and licensing, and term of service. Programs are available for the following healthcare professions:
 - Rural and urban Physicians
 - Nurse Practitioners
 - Nurses
 - Faculty Nurses and Nursing Administration
 - Pharmacists
 - Dentistry

Resident college-bound students in Minnesota have access to some of the most extensive, and valuable, financial aid programs in the country. Whether pursuing a general degree, or working towards certification in a high demand medical or legal profession, Minnesota's residents are well positioned to find the financial assistance they need to make their college dreams a reality. Minnesota residents are encouraged to visit the state's Get Ready for College (<http://www.getreadyforcollege.org/>) website for more information on financial aid programs, saving for college and navigating the state's higher education system. Students will also find valuable information on testing procedures and application processes at all of Minnesota's state colleges and universities.

NEW: Scholarship search engine (<https://www.collegescholarships.org/financial-aid/>): fast, free, no registration required. Try it today! (<https://www.collegescholarships.org/financial-aid/>).

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