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College Funding From The State Of Massachusetts

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The State of Massachusetts boasts a rich educational tradition with a public college and university system comprised of: The University of Massachusetts – with campuses in Boston, Amherst (<http://www.umass.edu/>), Lowell, Dartmouth and Worcester, State University campuses like Bridgewater (<http://www.bridgew.edu/>), Fitchburg, Salem and Westfield, and dozens of community colleges across the state.

The Massachusetts Department of Higher Education (<http://www.mass.edu/>) administers state-funded grants and scholarships designed to increase access to higher education for Massachusetts students. Several initiatives offer various forms, and levels, of aid that address the needs of particular student groups.



Massachusetts Programs for College Students

Massachusetts commitment to education is apparent in efforts like The Vision Project (<http://www.mass.edu/visionproject/timetolead.asp>), which puts a spot light on state higher education. A recent report from the Project, *Time to Lead*, compares Massachusetts higher education outcomes with other states' and strives to outline ways to improve educational opportunities for state college students.

Achieving The Dream (<http://www.achievingthedream.org/>) is a national effort aimed at increasing educational access among under-represented student groups. In Massachusetts, four Community Colleges participate in the program, which puts forth these goals:

- Help under-served students complete courses
- Move remedial students into classes that earn degree credits
- Foster completion of 'gatekeeper' courses
- Facilitate continuous enrollment
- Increase the number of students within the state earning degrees and certificates

Participating State Community Colleges: Bunker Hill, [Northern Essex \(http://www.necc.mass.edu/\)](http://www.necc.mass.edu/), Roxbury, and [Springfield Technical \(http://www.stcc.edu/\)](http://www.stcc.edu/). Funding for the program is supplemented by local benefactors, including the Boston and Davis Foundations.

The [College Access Challenge Grant \(http://www.mass.edu/currentinit/currentinitcacg.asp\)](http://www.mass.edu/currentinit/currentinitcacg.asp) is a federally funded initiative conceived to stimulate partnerships between educational agencies at all levels of government and philanthropic organizations dedicated to educational causes. Working with federal-backing, partners target significant financial hardship, providing college funding for those at, or below, the poverty level.

[Commonwealth Dual Enrollment Program \(http://www.mass.edu/currentinit/currentinitdualenrollment.asp\)](http://www.mass.edu/currentinit/currentinitdualenrollment.asp) is a unique Massachusetts initiative that allows state high school students to take college courses, free of charge. Credits apply to each student's high school and college course requirements. Program participants typically enjoy an 80% completion rate and carry GPAs in excess of 3.0.

The [Performance Bonus Grant \(http://www.osfa.mass.edu/default.asp?page=performanceBonus\)](http://www.osfa.mass.edu/default.asp?page=performanceBonus) is designed to increase access for Massachusetts' students who would not otherwise be financially prepared to pursue higher education. Eligible students are the most economically challenged, but also exhibit academic motivation.

Funding for this program is currently suspended. This listing is maintained as a historical reference, in case the State of Massachusetts re-launches the initiative.

[MASSGrant \(http://www.osfa.mass.edu/default.asp?page=massGrant\)](http://www.osfa.mass.edu/default.asp?page=massGrant) is the state's flagship need-based award program. Students who are state residents enrolled in undergraduate education, including four-year, two-year and technical/certificate programs, are eligible for MASSGrants. Additional eligibility requirements for MassGrant applicants:

- Expected Family Contribution below \$5000
- United States citizen
- Massachusetts resident
- Full-time student
- Have not earned a bachelor's degree previously
- Registered with Selective Service
- Not in default on any prior student loans
- Exhibit financial need, based on FAFSA data
- Maintain satisfactory academic progress while receiving aid

Award amounts vary according to each applicant's EFC and the financial requirements present at the school of attendance; however, qualified applicants may receive up to \$2300 per academic year.

Recognizing demographic shifts, and college enrollment trends that have more students than ever attending part-time, the State of Massachusetts administers a grant program that specifically targets the needs of working adults and part-time, non-traditional students. [The Massachusetts Part-Time Grant Program \(http://www.osfa.mass.edu/default.asp?page=partTimeGrant\)](http://www.osfa.mass.edu/default.asp?page=partTimeGrant) is a less-than-full-time alternative to MASSGrants, which carries many of the same eligibility requirements. The need-based program uses FAFSA data to award amounts dependent on the type of college and program each candidate is enrolled in.

As colleges and universities craft financial aid packages for their neediest applicants, they draw on an important Massachusetts resource called [Need-Based Tuition Waivers \(http://www.osfa.mass.edu/default.asp?page=needbasedwaiver\)](http://www.osfa.mass.edu/default.asp?page=needbasedwaiver). Qualified applicants benefit from a program committed to an even playing field for Massachusetts college students. The program strives to keep financial aid opportunities on pace with rising college costs, and works with individual campuses to provide supplemental funding to the students who need it most.

A unique state initiative, The [Paul Tsongas Scholarship \(http://www.osfa.mass.edu/default.asp?page=tsongasscholarship\)](http://www.osfa.mass.edu/default.asp?page=tsongasscholarship), provides assistance for the cream of the academic crop. Massachusetts students who graduate high school in 3 years, with 3.75 GPAs and top SAT scores qualify for waivers of tuition and fees at

state universities. Few students manage this feat, but the accomplishment is rewarded with full tuition abatement at fine Massachusetts state colleges and universities.

Class valedictorians listen up: You may qualify for scholarships that cover full tuition costs at public colleges and universities in Massachusetts. Use your class ranking to land valuable recognition from the Valedictorian Program Tuition Waiver (<http://www.osfa.mass.edu/default.asp?page=valedictorianWaiver>).

The Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarships (<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/idadesbyrd/index.html>) awards federally-backed scholarships to the most academically talented applicants. These highly visible annual honors offer \$1500 each, to hundreds of students from every state. Eligibility is based on class rank, GPA and ACT/SAT scores. Students must be enrolled in four-year college or university programs, with the exception of military academy programs.

Outstanding junior and senior high school students with an aptitude for Math or English may be eligible for either the Stanley Koplick Certificate of Mastery Tuition Waiver (<http://www.osfa.mass.edu/default.asp?page=koplikwaiver>) or the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship. Rural applicants qualify for Agnes M. Lindsay Scholarships.

Veterans, minorities, senior citizens and other socially and financially disadvantaged/non-traditional students qualify for tuition waivers through the Categorical Tuition Waiver Program (<http://www.osfa.mass.edu/default.asp?page=categoricalWaiver>). Qualified applicants must be enrolling at public institutions.

Dependents of Law Enforcement personnel, Firefighters, Public Safety Officers and other eligible public servants killed while performing in official capacities, may qualify for state tuition waivers through the Public Service Grant Program (<http://www.osfa.mass.edu/default.asp?page=publicServiceGrant>). Qualified applicants must be enrolled at Massachusetts public institutions.

The Foster Child Grant Program (<http://www.osfa.mass.edu/default.asp?page=fosterchild>) is funded by Massachusetts State Government to support students who have participated in the state's foster care system for a certain length of time. Applicants with appropriate financial need qualify for as much as \$6000 each, per academic year.

Specialized Studies Programs

Special incentives reward students for choosing particular educational paths. Professions like nursing and teaching need well-trained college graduates to fill their ranks, so financial aid is offered to those who enroll in appropriate college programs.

The Commonwealth Futures Grant Program (<http://www.osfa.mass.edu/default.asp?page=commonwealthFutures>) was designed to encourage students to major in "subject shortage areas," such as engineering, math, science and other tech-heavy disciplines. Unfortunately, this program is no longer funded.

Nurses are at critical shortage levels in some areas of the country, so state-funded scholarships, grants and loan forgiveness programs are in place to assist students who complete degree programs and work in designated facilities. Massachusetts Gilbert Matching Student Grant Program (<http://www.osfa.mass.edu/default.asp?page=gilbert>) provides for nursing majors at certain state schools.

A recent addition to the scope of Massachusetts' teacher incentive programs, the Paraprofessional Teacher Preparation Grant (<http://www.osfa.mass.edu/default.asp?page=paraprofessional>) supports individuals who have been serving in support/instructional capacities at public schools, but have lacked financial resources necessary to continue on to four-year teaching degree and certification programs.

The Tomorrow's Teachers Scholarship Program (<http://www.osfa.mass.edu/default.asp?page=tomTeachersScholarship>) awards scholarships to academically talented high school graduates who are pursuing teaching credentials. Successful applicants are enrolled in four-year college and university programs in Massachusetts, and stand willing to exchange tuition concessions for service following graduation. In addition, childcare professionals pursuing degrees in Early Childhood Education are eligible to apply for assistance provided through the Early Childhood Educators' Scholarship Program (<http://www.osfa.mass.edu/default.asp?page=ecscholarship>).

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