

**Community College Opportunity Grant  
Policies and Procedures for Academic Year 2020-2021  
Last modified July 28, 2020**

**Purpose and Scope**

This document will provide the policies and procedures for participation in the Community College Opportunity Grant (CCOG) program administered by the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority in conjunction with the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education. These grants shall be awarded to eligible students enrolled for a minimum of six credits per semester at a New Jersey county college. The purpose of these grants is to increase the total number of students attending county college state-wide by removing the financial barriers to attendance.

**Definitions**

The following words and terms, when used in this document, shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

“AGI” means adjusted gross income reported to the United States Internal Revenue Service on an income tax return.

"Approved educational fees" means general fees; student service/activity fees; technology fees; and required course fees, not to exceed \$1,500.00 per semester per student. Lists of approved educational fees as well as fees that are excluded from CCOG coverage are attached as Appendix A.

"Authority" means the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority established pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:71A-3.

“CCOG” means the Community College Opportunity Grant funded through Public Law 2019, chapter 150.

“County college” means a New Jersey county college established pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:64A-1 et seq.

“FAFSA” means the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

“Home county college” means the county college that serves a student’s county of residence.

“Minimum Level of Academic Success” means either:

- i. That a student meets the standards for academic performance and satisfactory academic progress that an institution adopts to determine eligibility for Federal student aid programs under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, and its implementing regulations and rules; or

- ii. To provide an opportunity for returning students to re-engage in postsecondary education, that a student earns a minimum grade point average of 1.8 in the semester immediately prior to receiving an award.

“Out-of-county college” means a county college that does not serve a student’s county of residence.

"Remedial or developmental curriculum" means a non-credit course or a course for which credits earned are not applicable to minimum credit requirements leading to a degree or certificate.

## **General Provisions**

General provisions for the Tuition Aid Grant and Garden State Scholarship Programs that pertain to undergraduate enrollment and eligible institutions set forth in N.J.A.C.9A:9-2.1, residency set forth in N.J.A.C. 9A:9-2.2, noncitizens and resident aliens set forth in N.J.A.C. 9A:9-2.3, eligibility and repayments set forth in N.J.A.C. 9A:9-2.4, dependent/independent student set forth in N.J.A.C. 9A:9-2.6, verification of family income set forth in N.J.A.C. 9A:9-2.7, payments set forth in N.J.A.C. 9A:9-2.11, award adjustments, refunds and collections set forth in N.J.A.C. 9A:9-2.12, check endorsements set forth in N.J.A.C. 9A:9-2.14, and accounting and auditing standards set forth in N.J.A.C. 9A:9-2.16 shall be in effect for CCOG.

## **Eligibility Requirements**

(a) In order to qualify for a CCOG award a student must meet the following eligibility requirements:

1. All renewal and new students must apply for all other available forms of federal and state need-based grants and merit scholarships by completing and filing either the FAFSA or New Jersey Alternate Application and satisfying all requirements of the application process within established state deadlines;
2. Enroll in a county college for a minimum of 6 credits per semester;
3. Achieve the Minimum Level of Success; and
4. Have an AGI of no less than \$0 and no more than \$65,000:
  - i. for a dependent student AGI refers to parental AGI as reported on the financial aid application.
  - ii. for an independent student AGI refers to the AGI reported on the financial aid application for the student and, if applicable, the student’s spouse.

(b) A student may be eligible to receive a CCOG award for the fall 2020 and/or spring 2021 semesters.

(c) County colleges participating in the CCOG program may not impose additional eligibility requirements, other than the requirements set forth in this section, for students to receive CCOG awards.

### **Verification of enrollment and academic performance**

(a) Before payment may be made to an eligible student, the institution shall have satisfactory evidence that the student is eligible for state grant and/or scholarship assistance, has registered for a minimum of six credits per semester, and that the student has achieved the minimum level of academic success.

(b) The institution shall share with the Authority any material findings or audit exceptions related to the determination of academic progress at any time they are revealed in the course of an audit or program review.

### **Amount of scholarship**

A grant under CCOG shall cover up to the combined cost of tuition and approved educational fees for up to 18 credit hours per semester. The maximum CCOG award amount for each county college shall be capped at an amount no more than two percent greater than the equivalent amounts of tuition and fees the institution charged in Academic Year 2018-2019. The CCOG award amount for each eligible student shall not exceed the award cap for the institution the student is attending as calculated by the Authority. The full amount of state, federal, institutional, and community aid received by the student for tuition and approved educational fees shall be applied to the tuition and approved educational fee charges first to reduce the amount of the CCOG award. A student enrolled in fewer than 12 credits per semester shall be eligible for a maximum CCOG award amount that is pro-rated from the full-time tuition award amount based on the number of credits for which that student is enrolled.

In determining a student's award amount, emergency grants made to students for expenses other than tuition and approved fees pursuant to Public Law No: 116-136, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (the "CARES Act") shall be excluded from the definition of federal student aid that must be applied to the tuition and approved educational fee charges to reduce the amount of the CCOG award. The following emergency grants authorized by the CARES Act shall be excluded from the CCOG award calculation:

- (a) Any emergency Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants made to students pursuant to Section 3504(c) of the CARES Act for non-tuition or approved educational fee expenses, or
- (b) Any emergency financial aid grants made to students pursuant to Section 18004(c) of the CARES Act for non-tuition or approved educational fee expenses, including but not limited to food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, and child care.

### **Out-of-county students**

In cases where a student enrolls at an out-of-county college and meets all eligibility requirements for a CCOG award, the student's CCOG award amount shall be computed based upon the in-county tuition rate for the student's home county college. CCOG awards do not cover additional tuition charges attributable to the difference between the tuition rate charged by a student's home county college tuition and the out-of-county college tuition rate charged when that student enrolls at an out-of-county college.

**Student notification**

The New Jersey county college the student attends shall notify the student of eligibility. Such notification by the county college will include the amount of the scholarship.

**Appeals**

If, for any reason a student, his or her family, or an institution feels that the application of these policies results in an unfair determination of eligibility, an appeal shall be filed with the Authority within 60 days of initial notification of eligibility or ineligibility for the CCOG award. All appeals shall be in writing, and if appropriate shall include any supporting documentation. Appeals shall be addressed to the Director of Grants and Scholarships in the Authority, PO Box 540, Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0540 or submitted electronically, and shall contain the student's full name, NJHESAA ID number, college of attendance, and a description of the basis for the appeal. The Director of Grants and Scholarship will respond with the Authority's final determination of the appeal within 30 days of the Authority's receipt of the appeal.

## Appendix A

### Community College Opportunity Grant

#### Covered Fees for Academic Year 2020-2021

Listed below are the categories of educational fees approved for payment under the Community College Opportunity Grant, and the types of non-educational fees that are not eligible for Community College Opportunity Grant payment.

#### Approved Educational Fees:

- General Fees
- Registration Fees
- Facility Fees
- Technology Fees
- Lab Fees
- Program/Course Fees, including fees for coursework in nursing, culinary, and other career and technical education programs
- Student Activity Fees
- Online access fees

#### Non-Educational Fees that are not covered by CCOG

- Books (purchase or rental)
- Equipment/Supplies/Uniforms (purchase or rental)
- Insurance/Health Fees
- Application Fees
- Library Fees
- Late Fees or Fines
- Testing/Portfolio/Audit Fees
- Licensing/Certification Fees
- Criminal Background Check Fees
- Parking Fees
- Gym/Fitness Fees
- Aviation/Flight Time Fees
- Change Fees
- Graduation/Diploma Fees
- Transcript Fees
- International Fees
- Out-of-state Fees
- Curriculum Review Fees
- Payment Plan Fees