



NJ STARS Fact Sheet for 2015 High School Graduates

The New Jersey Student Tuition Assistance Reward Scholarship (NJ STARS) Program is an initiative created by the State of New Jersey that provides New Jersey's highest achieving students with free tuition at their home county college.

NJ STARS Benefits

The NJ STARS award covers the cost of tuition, less any State and/or Federal grants and scholarships, for up to five semesters. The award covers these charges for up to 18 credit hours per semester. Funding for NJ STARS awards is dependent upon annual State appropriations.

Student Eligibility

- ◆ New Jersey residents, who rank in the top 15.0% of their class at the end of **either** junior or senior year of high school are potentially eligible for the NJ STARS Program. Students must also complete a rigorous high school course of study and achieve the required score on a college placement test to determine college readiness may be eligible. (**Note:** All courses of study are considered "rigorous" for 2015 high school graduates.)
- ◆ Students who do not achieve the required score on the placement test will be able to take appropriate courses while still in high school to improve their skills or they can attend remedial courses at the county college while enrolled in high school.
- ◆ Students who graduate from high school and do not demonstrate college readiness will be given up to one year to gain the skills they need to become college ready. Students who do not demonstrate college readiness by September 1, 2016 are no longer NJ STARS eligible. **NJ STARS does not cover costs for remedial coursework.**
- ◆ All students must enroll in a full-time course of study no later than the fifth semester following high school graduation.
- ◆ Students must enroll full time in a degree program at their home county college, unless the student demonstrates that the home county college does not offer the desired program of study or the program is oversubscribed for at least one year.
- ◆ Students must take a minimum of 12 college-level credits per semester. NJ STARS covers up to 18 college-level credits per semester.
- ◆ Students must be legal New Jersey residents at the time of high school graduation and upon county college enrollment. A dependent student's residency is presumed to be that of his or her parent(s).
- ◆ Students must be U.S. citizens or eligible non-citizens **and** legal New Jersey residents for a minimum of twelve consecutive months prior to high school graduation.
- ◆ Students must apply for all forms of State and Federal need-based grants and merit scholarships and submit any requested documentation to complete and verify application data within established State deadlines.

NJ STARS Fact Sheet for 2015 High School Graduates (continued)

Application Process

- ◆ Apply for admission to your home county college.
- ◆ Meet all admission and application requirements established by the county college.
- ◆ File the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) annually within established State deadlines.
- ◆ After filing the FAFSA, logon to www.njgrants.org to review your State grant record.

2015-2016 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Filing Deadlines:

Students who did not receive a Tuition Aid Grant (TAG) during the 2014-2015 academic year:

October 1, 2015 - fall & spring terms

March 1, 2016 - spring term only

June 1, 2015 for students who received a TAG award during 2014-2015

- ◆ Meet the NJ State deadlines below for submission of additional information, such as:
 - Applicant Information Requests (AIR's)
 - Verification documents
 - College choice changes (Logon to www.njgrants.org to change college choice)
 - Corrections to ineligible conditions

2015-2016 State Deadlines for Submitting Additional Information:

November 15, 2015- Fall 2015

March 15, 2016 - Spring 2016

- ◆ County colleges notify students of NJ STARS eligibility.

Renewal Eligibility

- ◆ File the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) annually within established State deadlines.
- ◆ Students must attain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher at the start of the third semester of enrollment at the county college to remain an NJ STAR. Summer courses are included in determining the GPA.
- ◆ Students must maintain continuous full-time enrollment unless on a medical leave, approved by the county college, due to the illness of the student, a member of the student's immediate family, or a family emergency. The only other exception to continuous full-time enrollment applies to NJ STARS students called to partial or full mobilization for State or Federal active duty as a member of the National Guard or a Reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States.
- ◆ Students may take less than 12 credits in their final semester if the county college determines that the student needs less than 12 credits in that semester to complete the degree program.
- ◆ Students enrolled in a nursing or engineering program that regularly requires six semesters to complete may retain NJ STARS II eligibility. However, NJ STARS will not cover the cost of the sixth semester.
- ◆ Students may receive the scholarship for up to five semesters, including summer sessions. However, NJ STARS resources **are not** available to cover any summer payments.

NJ STARS II Program

- ◆ NJ STARS recipients who earn an associate degree from a county college with a cumulative GPA of 3.25 or higher, have a family income (taxable and untaxed income) less than \$250,000, **and** meet all other program eligibility requirements may be eligible to receive an NJ STARS II award to transfer to a New Jersey TAG participating college or university to earn a baccalaureate degree.

Additional Information

Contact the financial aid office at your home county college for additional information.