



NJ STARS Fact Sheet for 2019 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 2019 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, 2020 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 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, eligible non-citizens or eligible to file the New Jersey Alternative Financial Aid Application **and** be a New Jersey resident for a minimum of twelve consecutive months prior to high school graduation.

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- ◆ If you are **not** a US citizen or eligible non-citizen, you must meet all of the following criteria:
 - ◆ Attend a New Jersey high school for at least three (3) years
 - ◆ Graduated from a New Jersey high school
 - ◆ Registered for Selective Service (male students only)
 - ◆ Are able to file an affidavit stating that you have filed an application to legalize your immigration status or will file an application as soon as you are able to do so.
- ◆ 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.

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) or the New Jersey Alternative Financial Aid Application annually within established State deadlines.
 - ◆ After filing your application, logon to <https://njfams.hesaa.org/NJFAMS/login.aspx> to review and complete your State grant record.

2019-2020 HESAA's FAFSA Filing Deadlines:

- 2018-2019 TAG recipients - Renewal applicants----- **April 15, 2019**
- All other applicants - Non-renewal applicants for Fall 2019 and Spring 2020--- **September 15, 2019**
- All other applicants - Non-renewal applicants for Spring 2020 semester only--- **February 15, 2020**

- ◆ Meet the NJ State deadlines below for completing State grant records (State Tasks, State Verification, corrections, add a college, etc.):

2018-19 TAG recipients

Renewal applicants Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 ----- **November 1, 2019**
Spring 2020 only----- **March 1, 2020**

All other applicants

Non-renewal applicants Fall 2019 and Spring 2020----- **November 1, 2019**
Spring 2020 only----- **March 1, 2020**

- ◆ County colleges notify students of NJ STARS eligibility.

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Renewal Eligibility

- ◆ File the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or New Jersey Alternative Financial Aid Application 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. Currently, NJ STARS resources **are not** available to cover any summer payments. (This means that students will not receive NJ STARS awards for any summer courses.)

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.