

Dear Neighbor,

While a higher education is a valuable tool for competing in today's workforce, the decision to go to college often leaves students and their families wondering how they'll cover the costs. That's why the New York State Assembly has made student financial aid a top priority.



This brochure contains helpful information on state and federal financial aid programs available to help students meet the costs of college.

For more information on any of these programs, students should contact their college financial aid office or their high school guidance counselor. If you have questions on this or any other matter, feel free to contact my office. I wish you the best of luck in the college program you choose.

Sincerely,

Aileen M. Gunther  
Member of Assembly

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Courtesy of Assemblywoman  
Aileen M. Gunther

## Paying for college



New York State Assembly  
Albany, New York 12248

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## Federal aid and tuition savings programs

**Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).** A FAFSA form, either paper or electronic, must be completed by a high school student in order to apply for federal student aid. Once a student is enrolled in college, they must file a renewal FAFSA for every year of attendance. College financial aid offices use information from the FAFSA to determine student eligibility for federal grants, loans and work-study programs as well as for state aid and opportunity programs. It is important for all students to submit a FAFSA, even if the student believes he or she will not qualify for financial aid. Visit [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) to learn more or to complete a FAFSA. If you have questions on how to complete the FAFSA or about the financial aid process, call the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 800-433-3243.

**Federal Pell Grants.** Federal Pell Grants are given to students who have not yet earned a bachelor's degree or who are enrolled in certain post-baccalaureate teacher certification programs. Pell Grants are awarded based on financial need and applicants can receive up to \$5,920 for the 2017-2018 award year.

**Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG).** The FSEOG is for undergraduates with exceptional financial need. Students who receive Federal Pell Grants have priority. FSEOGs are awarded by college financial aid offices. Grants range from \$100 to \$4,000 per year.

**Federal Stafford Loan (Subsidized and Unsubsidized).** This loan program helps cover the cost of an undergraduate and graduate education by allowing a student to take out subsidized and unsubsidized loans that are guaranteed by the NYS Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC).

**Federal Perkins Loan.** A Federal Perkins Loan is a low-interest loan for both undergraduate and graduate students. The school acts as the lender, and the amount of the loan depends on exceptional financial need, other aid and the availability of funds at the school. The borrower must repay the loan to the school.

**Federal Direct PLUS Loans.** The Federal Direct PLUS Loan program helps parents and guardians pay the education expenses of a dependent undergraduate student enrolled at least half-time. Direct PLUS Loan funds can be used to pay for tuition, fees, supplies, housing and more.

**Federal Graduate/Professional Student PLUS Loan.** The federal Graduate/Professional Student PLUS Loan program helps qualifying students pay the difference between the financial aid they have already received and the cost of attendance.

**Federal Tax Credits.** There are two types of tax credits available to help offset the expense of higher education. They are the American Opportunity Credit ([www.irs.gov/uac/American-Opportunity-Tax-Credit](http://www.irs.gov/uac/American-Opportunity-Tax-Credit)) and the Lifetime Learning Credit ([www.irs.gov/Individuals/LLC](http://www.irs.gov/Individuals/LLC)). Both may be limited by your income and the amount of taxes you paid.

**Student Loan Interest Deduction.** This deduction allows students or their families to take a tax deduction for interest paid during the year for repayment on student loans, even if you don't itemize.

**Federal Work-Study (FWS).** The Federal Work-Study Program provides jobs for undergraduate and graduate students with financial need. FWS is administered by college financial aid offices.

**The Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant.** TEACH provides grants of up to \$4,000 per year to students who intend to teach in a public or private school that serves students from low-income families. It is dependent upon federal funding renewal for 2017-2018.

**Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant.** The Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant is for undergraduate students who are not eligible for a Pell Grant, but whose parent or guardian was a member of the U.S. Armed Forces and died as a result of service performed in Iraq or Afghanistan after September 11, 2001. The maximum grant award is \$5,920 for 2016-2017 and dependent upon federal funding renewal for 2017-2018.

For more information about federal aid programs, visit [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov) or [www.hesc.ny.gov](http://www.hesc.ny.gov)

## A number of state programs make pursuing higher education affordable for New York students

**Excelsior Scholarship.** This year's state budget provided funding to establish the Excelsior Scholarship, a groundbreaking, first-of-its-kind initiative to make SUNY schools tuition-free for New Yorkers who earn less than \$100,000 annually and meet certain other qualifications. This income threshold will rise to \$125,000 by 2019. For more information, please visit <https://www.hesc.ny.gov/excelsior/>.

**The Tuition Assistance Program (TAP).** TAP is New York's largest grant program, which helps eligible New York undergraduate students attending approved schools pay for tuition. TAP helps keep college accessible and affordable for students who would otherwise not be able to attend. Award amounts are determined by net taxable income (up to \$80,000) and financial status (independent or dependent). Depending on income, TAP awards can range from: (1) \$500 to \$5,165 for dependent students; and (2) \$500-\$3,025 for independent students, with lower income students receiving larger awards. To learn more, visit [www.hesc.ny.gov](http://www.hesc.ny.gov) and click on "TAP."

**New York's 529 College Savings Program.** This program provides a flexible, convenient and low-cost way to save for college. It features a wide range of investment choices and tax-free withdrawals when used for qualified expenses and contributions that are state tax-deductible up to \$5,000 annually for individuals, and \$10,000 for jointly filing New York State residents. Individuals may also deposit all or a portion of their New York State income tax refund, with a minimum deposit of \$25, to a College Savings Program account. Visit [www.nysaves.org](http://www.nysaves.org).

**Part-Time TAP.** This helps eligible New York residents attending in-state postsecondary institutions on a part-time basis pay for tuition. This is a grant. Students must already have 24 consecutive credits, be taking at least 6 but fewer than 12 credits per semester and maintain a C average.

**Aid for Part-Time Study.** The Aid for Part-Time Study (APTS) program provides grant assistance for income-eligible part-time students enrolled in approved undergraduate studies. Awards provide up to \$2,000 per year for study at participating institutions in New York State. Visit [www.hesc.ny.gov/pay-for-college/financial-aid/types-of-financial-aid/nys-grants-scholarships-awards/aid-for-part-time-study.html](http://www.hesc.ny.gov/pay-for-college/financial-aid/types-of-financial-aid/nys-grants-scholarships-awards/aid-for-part-time-study.html).

**Veterans Tuition Awards.** These awards apply to full-time study and part-time study for eligible veterans enrolled in either an undergraduate degree, graduate degree or diploma and certificate programs at degree-granting institutions or noncredit vocational training programs of at least 320 clock hours specifically approved by the New York State Education Department. For the 2016-2017 academic year, awards were \$6,495 or cost of tuition, whichever was less. Visit [www.hesc.ny.gov](http://www.hesc.ny.gov) and go to the "Pay" tab.

**Loan Forgiveness Programs.** If you go into a certain career that performs a specific qualifying service for a defined period of time, you may have all or part of your education loans forgiven or canceled. Although you don't have to repay the part of your loan that is forgiven or canceled, you may owe taxes on the forgiven/canceled amount in cases where the forgiven/canceled amount is considered income. Visit [www.hesc.ny.gov](http://www.hesc.ny.gov) and click "Repay" and "Loan Forgiveness, Cancellation and Discharge" to learn more about qualifying services and eligibility requirements.

**Other sources of New York State assistance.** Qualifying information on scholarships can be found by going to [www.hesc.ny.gov](http://www.hesc.ny.gov). Click the "Pay" link and click on "Other NYS Grants, Scholarships & Loans" to find out more.

## Need Help?

**Federal Student Aid Information Center**  
800-433-3243

**NYS Higher Education Services Corporation**  
888-NYS-HESC (697-4372)

## Opportunity Programs

New York has been a national leader in providing opportunity programs to educationally and economically disadvantaged students, underrepresented groups and at-risk youth. Through counseling, remedial coursework, financial assistance, drop-out prevention and skills training, opportunity programs are dedicated not only to encouraging enrollment in college, but also to helping ensure success in the postsecondary academic environment. For students to be considered for opportunity programs, they must first complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). New York's opportunity programs include:

**Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP)** provides access programs for educationally and economically disadvantaged students who attend independent institutions of higher education. HEOP is offered through 56 programs that include pre-freshman summer programs, remedial and developmental courses, tutoring and counseling. Visit [www.highered.nysed.gov/kiap/colldev/HEOP](http://www.highered.nysed.gov/kiap/colldev/HEOP) for more information on HEOP.

**Educational Opportunity Program (EOP)** provides access programs for educationally and economically disadvantaged students who attend participating SUNY and community college campuses. EOP support programs include special tutoring and academic, career and personal counseling. Visit [www.suny.edu/attend/academics/eop](http://www.suny.edu/attend/academics/eop) for more information on EOP.

**Search for Education, Elevation, and Knowledge (SEEK) and College Discovery** provide access programs for educationally and economically disadvantaged students who attend CUNY two-year and four-year colleges. These programs are designed to assist students in meeting the challenges of college and provide a supportive environment through instructional, financial and counseling support

services. Visit [www2.cuny.edu/academics/academic-programs/seek-college-discovery/seek-overview](http://www2.cuny.edu/academics/academic-programs/seek-college-discovery/seek-overview) for more information.

**Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program (CSTEP)** grants are available for participating New York State colleges. This grant program provides academic enrichment, test preparation and career development to underrepresented and economically disadvantaged resident students who are pursuing professional licensure and careers in mathematics, science, technology and health-related fields. Visit [www.highered.nysed.gov](http://www.highered.nysed.gov) and go to the "scholarships and grants" tab for more information.

