



## New York's Promise to Students: Ever Upward

### *The Excelsior Scholarship, Making College Possible*

This year, Governor Cuomo and the New York State Legislature enacted the nation's first tuition-free degree program, the Excelsior Scholarship. The Scholarship is making college possible for hundreds of thousands of students across the state and helping to alleviate the crushing burden of student debt. A college education is increasingly necessary to secure the jobs of tomorrow, and the Excelsior Scholarship ensures New York's students have access to a quality education and the skills they need to succeed.

#### **KEY POINTS:**

By 2024, 3.5 million jobs in New York State will require an Associate's Degree or higher – roughly 420,000 more jobs than in 2014.

Even as higher education becomes more necessary for an individual to succeed, the cost to attain a college degree is rising beyond what most families can afford.

To make college possible for everyone, Governor Cuomo's Excelsior Scholarship program will provide more than 940,000 eligible families and individuals making up to \$125,000 per year the opportunity to attend college tuition-free at SUNY or CUNY schools.

Tuition-free college will begin immediately for students whose families make up to \$100,000 annually and extend to those making \$125,000 annually by 2019.

#### **ELIGIBILITY:**

In order to apply, students must:

- Be residents of New York State
- Plan to attend a SUNY or CUNY two- or four-year degree program
- Take 30 credits per year and make progress towards graduation
- Maintain good academic standing
- Be on track to graduate on time with an Associate's Degree in two years or a Bachelor's Degree in four years

#### **HOW ITWORKS:**

When fully implemented, the Excelsior Scholarship, in combination with other aid programs, will allow 200,000 students — 52 percent of resident full-time students—to attend a SUNY or CUNY college tuition-free.

New York already operates a generous \$1 billion Tuition Assistance Program. The Excelsior Scholarship is intended to supplement all current aid programs, including but not limited to TAP, PELL, and SUNY/CUNY Tuition Credit programs.

The Excelsior Scholarship then provides assistance to students to cover any tuition gaps and make college tuition free at New York's prized public universities.

The total cost of the program is approximately \$163 million.

#### **LEARN MORE:**

To learn more about how to apply, visit [www.HESC.ny.gov](http://www.HESC.ny.gov) or text COLLEGE to 81336.



## The Excelsior Scholarship

*Making public college tuition-free.*

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### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### **Will I be able to attend college at SUNY or CUNY tuition free?**

Yes. If you are a NYS resident whose family household adjusted gross income (as filed on your 2015 federal tax returns) does not exceed \$100,000 for the 2017-18 academic year and you complete 30 credits per year, you will be able to attend a SUNY or CUNY college tuition free.

#### **What does it mean to be a "NYS resident" for purposes of receiving this award?**

To be considered a NYS resident for purposes of receiving this award, you must have resided in the State for 12 continuous months prior to the term for which the award is being sought.

#### **How much can I receive from the Excelsior Scholarship?**

An Excelsior Scholarship recipient can receive up to \$5,500 from the Excelsior Scholarship, minus any amounts received for TAP, Pell or other scholarships. The remainder of your tuition charge will be covered through a tuition credit paid through SUNY or CUNY.

#### **Will I be able to get an award for the fall?**

Yes. Eligible students will receive awards to attend a SUNY or CUNY college tuition free this fall.

#### **When will I be able to apply for the award?**

It is anticipated that the Excelsior Scholarship application will be available on June 7th.

## Excelsior Scholarship Alert

**Sign up to be notified when you can apply at:**

[www.hesc.ny.gov/excelsior](http://www.hesc.ny.gov/excelsior)

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **How much income can my family earn to be eligible for an award?**

For the 2017-18 academic year, your federal household adjusted gross income can total up to \$100,000 to be eligible. For 2018-19, that amount increases to \$110,000, and beginning in 2019-20 and beyond, your family's adjusted gross income can total up to \$125,000.

## **Can I get an award if I'm currently going to a public college?**

Yes. Students who are currently attending college are eligible to receive an award, provided they are currently on track to complete their degree on time.

## **How long can I get the award?**

You are eligible to get an award for up to two years for students pursuing an associate's degree and up to four years for students pursuing a bachelor's degree. Students in an undergraduate program of study normally requiring five years are eligible to receive the award for five years.

## **Do I need a certain grade point average to get or keep the award?**

Award recipients need to earn a passing grade to maintain their Excelsior Scholarship awards, provided they earn a total of 30 credits over the course of a year. Recipients should keep in mind that they may have other awards which also carry academic standards that differ from those required for the Excelsior Scholarship.

## **Can I get an award if I'm a transfer student?**

A student who transferred between colleges is eligible for an Excelsior Scholarship if they are on track to complete on time based on the number of credits accepted by their current college.

## **Once I receive the scholarship, is it possible to lose it?**

You can lose the scholarship if you do not continue to meet all eligibility requirements. For example, you must enroll in at least 12 credits per term and complete 30 credits per year to continue to receive the scholarship.

## **If I completed my associate's degree, can I receive this award to get my bachelor's degree?**

Yes, provided the college that you are attending accepted all of the credits you earned in completing your associate's degree, and meet all other requirements for the Excelsior Scholarship.

## **Are there any other requirements that I must meet after I complete my degree?**

Yes. You must live in New York State for the number of years equal to awards you received. For example, if you received four Excelsior Scholarship awards while getting your bachelor's degree, you must live in New York State for four years after college. In addition, if you are working during those years, you must work in New York State. Failure to meet these requirements will result in the conversion of your award to a loan.



## New York State Student Financial Aid Programs

<b>Excelsior Scholarship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covers full tuition for eligible SUNY and CUNY students</li> <li>• Up to \$5,500, minus amounts received for TAP, Pell or other awards. A credit from the SUNY/CUNY school will cover the difference</li> <li>• For Fall 2017, eligible families include those who earn up to \$100,000</li> <li>• Recipients agree to live in NYS for the number of years equal to awards received</li> </ul>
<b>Enhanced Tuition Awards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For NYS students attending private not-for-profit colleges in NYS</li> <li>• Up to \$6,000 through a combination of TAP, Enhanced Tuition Award and a match from the private college</li> <li>• Recipients agree to live in NYS for the number of years equal to awards received</li> </ul>
<b>Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New York's largest grant program</li> <li>• Up to \$5,165</li> <li>• Based on the student's and family's NYS taxable income</li> </ul>
<b>New York State Part-Time Scholarship Award Program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For NYS students attending at a SUNY or CUNY Community College part-time</li> <li>• Up to \$1,500 per semester for up to 2 years</li> </ul>
<b>NYS Get on Your Feet Loan Forgiveness Program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides up to 24 months of federal student loan debt relief to recent NYS college graduates</li> <li>• For NYS students who attended a public or private college or university in NYS</li> </ul>
<b>NYS STEM Incentive Program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full SUNY or CUNY tuition scholarship for the top 10 percent of students in each NYS high school if pursuing a STEM degree</li> <li>• Associates or bachelors degree program</li> <li>• Recipients agree to work in a STEM field in NYS for five years after graduation</li> </ul>
<b>Veterans Tuition Awards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For eligible combat veterans studying full-or part-time at an undergraduate or graduate degree-granting institution or in an approved vocational training program</li> <li>• Up to the full cost of SUNY undergraduate tuition</li> </ul>

Visit [www.hesc.ny.gov/faprograms](http://www.hesc.ny.gov/faprograms) for more information.