

HELP

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GRANT



HIGHER EDUCATION
LEGISLATIVE PLAN



FREE

COLLEGE TUITION

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATING SENIORS



Be a legal resident of the State of Mississippi for one year



Have a high school GPA of 2.50 or greater



Score a minimum of 20 on the ACT (can be a Superscore)



Complete the College Prep Curriculum (CPC)



Complete the FAFSA & be Pell-eligible



Be accepted and enroll in at least 15 hours each semester at an approved postsecondary institution in Mississippi



Must be pursuing first certificate, first Associate degree, or first Bachelor's degree



Meet income requirements

For official HELP guidelines and to apply go to



www.msfinancialaid.org

Send your documents by mail, email, or fax.



Mississippi Office of
Student Financial Aid
3825 Ridgewood Road
Jackson, MS 39211



Scan & email
documents to
sfa@mississippi.edu



601.432.6527
NOTE: Do not fax copies of
a driver's license as copies
are often illegible

ABOUT HELP GRANT



WHAT IS THE HELP GRANT?

The HELP grant is a grant from the state which pays full tuition and fees to qualified students.



AWARD AMOUNTS & DEADLINES

- Covers full tuition and required fees at public universities in Mississippi + 15 public community colleges.
- Participants attending a private university in Mississippi will receive an award amount equal to the average amount of tuition and fees at Mississippi public universities.
- Maximum 8 semesters or a bachelor's degree completion, whichever comes first.
- Online application due by March 31.
- Supporting documents due April 30.



INCOME REQUIREMENTS

The combined income for student and parents must be \$39,500 annually or less. The average adjusted gross income (AGI) increases by \$5,000 for each additional sibling in the household under age 21.

1

\$44,500

2

\$49,500

3

\$54,500

4

\$59,500

5

\$64,500

AGI for each additional sibling

REQUIREMENTS TO MAINTAIN ELIGIBILITY

- Reapply every year by March 31
- Submit supporting documents by April 30
- Complete and pass 15 hours each semester
- Have a minimum 2.5 college GPA
- Continue to meet income requirements and remain Pell-eligible



Classes needed for college admissions (18 units)

The College Preparatory Curriculum (CPC)

4
UNITS

ENGLISH

All must require substantial communication skills (i.e. reading, writing, listening, and speaking). Compensatory Reading and Writing may not be included.

4
UNITS

MATHEMATICS

CPC-APPROVED MATH (1 unit)
ALGEBRA I
or equivalent

MATH HIGHER THAN ALGEBRA I
(2 units)

3
UNITS

SCIENCE

BIOLOGY I
or equivalent

SCIENCE HIGHER THAN BIOLOGY I
(2 units)

3
UNITS

SOCIAL STUDIES

Units must include integrated courses of social sciences and humanities promoting civic competence.



Note this change

As of 2023, only 3 social studies units are required.

1
UNIT

ARTS

Includes any one Carnegie unit (or two ½ units) of visual and performing arts course(s) meeting the requirements for high school graduation.

2
UNITS

ADVANCED ELECTIVES

Option 1: Foreign Language I and II

Option 2: Foreign Language I & one Unit from Option 3

Option 3: (1) Any combination of advanced electives above the required Carnegie units as noted in the Office of Academic and Student Affairs CPC Manual and/or any Advanced Placement (AP), Academic or Career and Technical Dual Credit (DC), International Baccalaureate (IB), or Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) course. (2) Completion of any two-year Career and Technical course may count as one unit. Example: completion of both Health Sciences I & II will count as an advanced elective.

1
UNIT

TECHNOLOGY OR COMPUTER SCIENCE COURSE

A technology course is defined as one that emphasizes the use of technology as a productivity tool. Instruction should include utilizing various forms of technology to create, collaborate, organize, and publish information. The application of technology as a productivity tool, rather than specific hardware and/or software packages should be the focus of the course.

To learn more about IHL admission and CPC requirements, scan the QR code below!



Psst...
Scan me!

MEETING DEADLINES

STEP 1

Complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) at fafsa.gov.

STEP 2

Complete the online Mississippi Aid Application by March 31 every year at msfinancialaid.org.

STEP 3

Submit the required residency documents.

New applicants and some renewal applicants with a break in enrollment will be required to submit two forms of residency documentation. The FAFSA will serve as one form. The preferred second form is a parent's Mississippi driver's license, which can be submitted electronically during the online application. The following alternate residency documents will be accepted in lieu of the driver's license:

State Tax Return (NOT federal) for the current tax filing year

Homestead Exemption

Voter Registration

Vehicle Registration

STEP 4

If requested, submit all supporting documents.

These must be received by the April 30 deadline.

- Only submit what is requested.
- Write applicant's full name, birthday, and last four digits of their Social Security number on each document.
- Keep confirmation of documents sent.
- Allow two weeks for processing.
- Check student portal (MAAPP Dashboard) to confirm receipt of documents.

STEP 5

Certification of academic eligibility

High school counselors typically submit this academic certification, however, the student is responsible for all missing documents and meeting deadlines.

- Certification of completion of specific high school core curriculum
- High school GPA
- ACT Score

IMPORTANT!

To receive any state assistance, you must take and pass at least 15 hours each semester (fall/spring)



FAQ'S

01

I do not yet have a 20 on the ACT. Can I continue to take the ACT to increase my score?

Yes, you can test through the July ACT test date following high school graduation. You must score a minimum of 20 prior to enrolling as a first-time college student.

02

Do I need to reapply for HELP every year?

Yes. File the renewal application by March 31. Submit supporting documents by the April 30 deadline.

03

Is my grade point average (GPA) checked at the end of each semester or at the end of the academic year? Besides my GPA, what else is checked?

The cumulative grade point average of HELP recipients will be reviewed at the end of each semester/trimester to confirm eligibility. HELP recipients will also be monitored for continuous full-time enrollment at the end of each semester/trimester.

04

What if I drop below full-time enrollment or sit out during a term?

A student must maintain continuous full-time enrollment. If a student drops below full-time status during the semester or trimester or sits out a term, that student is ineligible to receive funds during the next semester or trimester of full-time enrollment.

05

I have lost eligibility for HELP. How can I regain eligibility?

If a student loses HELP eligibility due to less than 15 credit hours, that student must attend and pay for, without the benefit of HELP funds, one full semester or trimester during a regular academic year before regaining eligibility unless an exception for cause has been granted. If a student loses HELP eligibility due to having less than a 2.5 GPA, that student will regain eligibility when the cumulative GPA is 2.5 or higher.

06

Is HELP available to me for summer school?

No. HELP is available during the regular academic year only.

07

If I qualify for HELP, MTAG, & MESH, can I receive all three?

No. State aid cannot be stacked. The state will award the grant with the highest value, so you would receive only the HELP grant.

08

I met all the requirements for HELP out of high school but missed the deadline. Can I get HELP my 2nd year of college?

Yes. If you are within one year of high school graduation you may have eligibility for the HELP grant. You must complete the application by March 31.