

2020-21 Program Guidelines Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program (TASSP)



Student Financial Aid Programs
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

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TEXAS ARMED SERVICES SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Program Guidelines are intended to support institutions by highlighting requirements that appear in the Texas Education Code (TEC) and Title 19 of the Texas Administrative Code (TAC). When administering this program, institutions should always refer to the applicable statutes and rules. The information provided in this document is to be used solely as a resource and does not supersede the statute and/or rules for this program.

PROGRAM AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE

The Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program (TASSP) is authorized by [TEC, Chapter 61, Subchapter A, Section 61.9771](#). Rules establishing procedures to administer the subchapter can be found in [Title 19 of the TAC, Chapter 22, Subchapter I](#). The purpose of the TASSP is to encourage students to complete a baccalaureate degree and become members of the Texas Army National Guard, Texas Air National Guard, Texas State Guard, United States Coast Guard, or United States Merchant Marine, or to become commissioned officers in any branch of the armed services of the United States.

ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS

Public institutions of higher education, as defined in [TEC, Section 61.003\(8\)](#), and private or independent institutions of higher education, as defined in [TEC, Section 61.003\(15\)](#), can participate.

ELIGIBILITY

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

This year the governor, lieutenant governor, state senators, and state representatives have until **August 31, 2020** to appoint initial TASSP candidates.

The governor and the lieutenant governor may each appoint two students and two alternates. Each state senator and state representative may appoint one student and one alternate.

TO RECEIVE AN APPOINTMENT, A STUDENT MUST MEET TWO OF THESE FOUR CRITERIA:

- ✓ Be on track to graduate or have graduated high school with the Distinguished Achievement Program (DAP), the distinguished level of achievement under the Foundation High School program, or the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program
- ✓ Have a high school grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale
- ✓ Have achieved a college readiness score on the SAT (1070) or ACT (23)
- ✓ Be ranked in the top one-third of the prospective high school graduating class

TO RECEIVE A SCHOLARSHIP, AN APPOINTED STUDENT MUST:

- ✓ Be registered with Selective Service, or be exempt
- ✓ Be enrolled and in good standing in a Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) program or another undergraduate officer commissioning program as certified by the institution
- ✓ Maintain satisfactory academic progress (SAP) as indicated by the financial aid office at the recipient's institution of higher education
- ✓ Enter into a written agreement with the THECB

 **STOP:** If a student fails to meet the requirements to initially receive a scholarship or fails to complete the application process by **October 15**, the student forfeits the scholarship. The THECB will notify the legislative office of their nominee's change in eligibility so that the legislator can submit an alternate student.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

TASSP APPLICATION PROCESS

- Students can identify a legislator by visiting [Who Represents Me](#).
- Interested students submit a [Texas Armed Services Scholarship Appointment Application](#) to the governor's office, or call (512) 463-1828.
- To contact the lieutenant governor's office, call (512) 463-0001.

If selected, the student will receive a Notice of Selection letter.



CERTIFICATION PROCESS

1. Once the student is enrolled in an eligible institution and ROTC program, the student must provide their Notice of Selection letter to the financial aid office.
2. The financial aid office will certify the student's program eligibility with the THECB.
3. Once the THECB receives the institution's eligibility certification, the student will complete the TASSP application online.



APPLICATION DEADLINE

Students must complete their TASSP online application by **October 15, 2020**.



SELECTIVE SERVICE STATEMENT

Male students must be registered with or exempt from Selective Service (SS) in order to be eligible to receive federal or state financial assistance. In accordance with [TEC, Section 51.9095](#), male students must file the required **Selective Service Statement of Registration Status** (found below) with their institution or other entity granting or guaranteeing financial assistance. This includes grants, scholarships, loans, or other assistance funded by state revenue, including federal funds or gifts and grants accepted by the state.

When is the statement NOT Required?

- **When the SS registration is confirmed through the Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR):** The ISIR confirmation serves as the student’s official, signed statement because the Department of Education validates registration directly with the Selective Service System (SSS).
- **NEW** **When the SS registration is confirmed through the [SSS.gov website](#):** The institution can save the confirmation directly from the website to serve as the student’s official, signed statement on record.
- **NEW** **When the ISIR confirms that a student is under the age of 18:** No statement or documentation is needed for the applicable award year, even if the student turns 18 during that year.

When is the statement REQUIRED, including all supporting documentation?

- When the student completes a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) but is flagged “not registered” on the ISIR and SS status **cannot** be confirmed on the [SSS.gov website](#).
- **NEW** **When the student completes a Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA):** The required statement is embedded in the 2020-21 TASFA and must be completed by the student.
- **NEW** **When the student does not complete a FAFSA or TASFA but applies for state financial aid, such as through exemptions or waivers, and SS status cannot** be confirmed on the [SSS.gov website](#).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FREQUENCY COLLECTING THE STATEMENT

If the student’s status will NOT change, the statement and supporting documentation can be used for subsequent semesters. (Example: The student entered the U.S. after the eligible age to register.)

If the student’s status is temporary, the statement must be collected each academic year until the student is registered or determined exempt. (Example: Student is under age 18 but did not complete a FAFSA or TASFA.)

RETENTION SCHEDULE

The status statement and all documentation must be retained in the student’s record for 7 years after the date of completion of the award period ([TEC, Section 441.1855](#)).

REPROCESSED ISIRS

If the student’s most recent ISIR transaction has been reprocessed by the Central Processing System (CPS) and the registration with the SSS was confirmed, the institution does not need to collect the status statement or any documentation.

Institutions may collect the required status statement and documentation either electronically or on paper.

[\(English Statement\)](#) or [\(Spanish Statement\)](#)

SELECTIVE SERVICE STATEMENT OF REGISTRATION STATUS	
Male students must verify their current Selective Service registration status by marking one of the statements below and providing proof of their registration status to their current institution. Failure to do so may result in the loss of eligibility for state financial aid.	
<input type="checkbox"/> I am under the age of 18 and not currently required to register.	
<input type="checkbox"/> I am REGISTERED with the Selective Service and, <i>Check the following box that applies:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> I have already submitted proof of registration to my current institution. <input type="checkbox"/> Proof of registration is included with this statement. <input type="checkbox"/> I will submit proof of my registration. NOTE: Proof is required to be considered eligible for financial aid.	<input type="checkbox"/> I am EXEMPT from registration and, <i>Check the following box that applies:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> I have already submitted proof of my exemption to my current institution. <input type="checkbox"/> Proof of my exemption is included with this statement. <input type="checkbox"/> I will submit proof of my exemption. NOTE: Proof is required to be considered eligible for financial aid.
<input type="checkbox"/> I am over the age of 18. I am not registered with Selective Service and I am not exempt from registration with Selective Service.	
I, _____, hereby certify that the Selective Service status statement provided above is true and accurate.	
Student ID: _____	Signature: _____
Date: _____	

PROMISSORY NOTE

The THECB requires a scholarship recipient to sign a promissory note acknowledging the conditional nature of the scholarship and promising to repay the amount of the scholarship plus applicable interest, late charges, and any collection costs, including attorneys' fees, if the recipient fails to meet certain conditions of the scholarship.

Recipients agree to:

- Complete four years of ROTC training or the equivalent of four years of ROTC training if the institution of higher education awards ROTC credit for prior service in any branch of the U.S. Armed Services or the Texas Army National Guard, Texas Air National Guard, Texas State Guard, United States Coast Guard, or United States Merchant Marine, or another undergraduate officer commissioning program;
- Graduate no later than six years after the date the student first enrolls in an institution of higher education after having received a high school diploma or a General Educational Diploma or its equivalent;
- After graduation, enter into and provide the THECB with verification of:
 - A four-year commitment to be a member of the Texas Army National Guard, Texas Air National Guard, Texas State Guard, United States Coast Guard, or United States Merchant Marine; **or**
 - A contract to serve as a commissioned officer in any branch of the armed services of the United States;
- Meet the physical examination requirements and all other prescreening requirements of the Texas Army National Guard, Texas Air National Guard, Texas State Guard, United States Coast Guard, or United States Merchant Marine, or the branch of the armed services with which the student enters into a contract; and
- Repay the scholarship according to the terms of the promissory note if the student fails to meet the requirements in the [Conversion of a Scholarship to a Loan](#) section.

DISCONTINUATION OF ELIGIBILITY

A student may not receive a scholarship after having earned a baccalaureate degree or a cumulative total of 150 credit hours, including transferred hours that have been verified by the student's institution.



ALERT

REPLACEMENT SCHOLARSHIPS

If a recipient's scholarship converts to a loan prior to graduation:

Beginning with the academic year following that determination, the appointing official may appoint another eligible student to receive any available funds designated for the initial recipient who no longer meets the requirements for the scholarship.

The THECB will contact the nominating official who initially appointed the scholarship recipient and request a replacement recipient. The appointed replacement recipient will be notified of their scholarship by the THECB. The replacement recipient has **60 days** to notify their institution of their eligibility and complete their scholarship application; otherwise the scholarship will be forfeited.

AWARDING

The TASSP maximum is determined and announced annually by the THECB. A student cannot receive a scholarship for more than:

- **four of the six years** that are allowed for a student to graduate if the student is enrolled in a degree program of **four years or less**; OR
- **five of the six years** allowed for graduation, if enrolled in a degree program of **more than four years**.

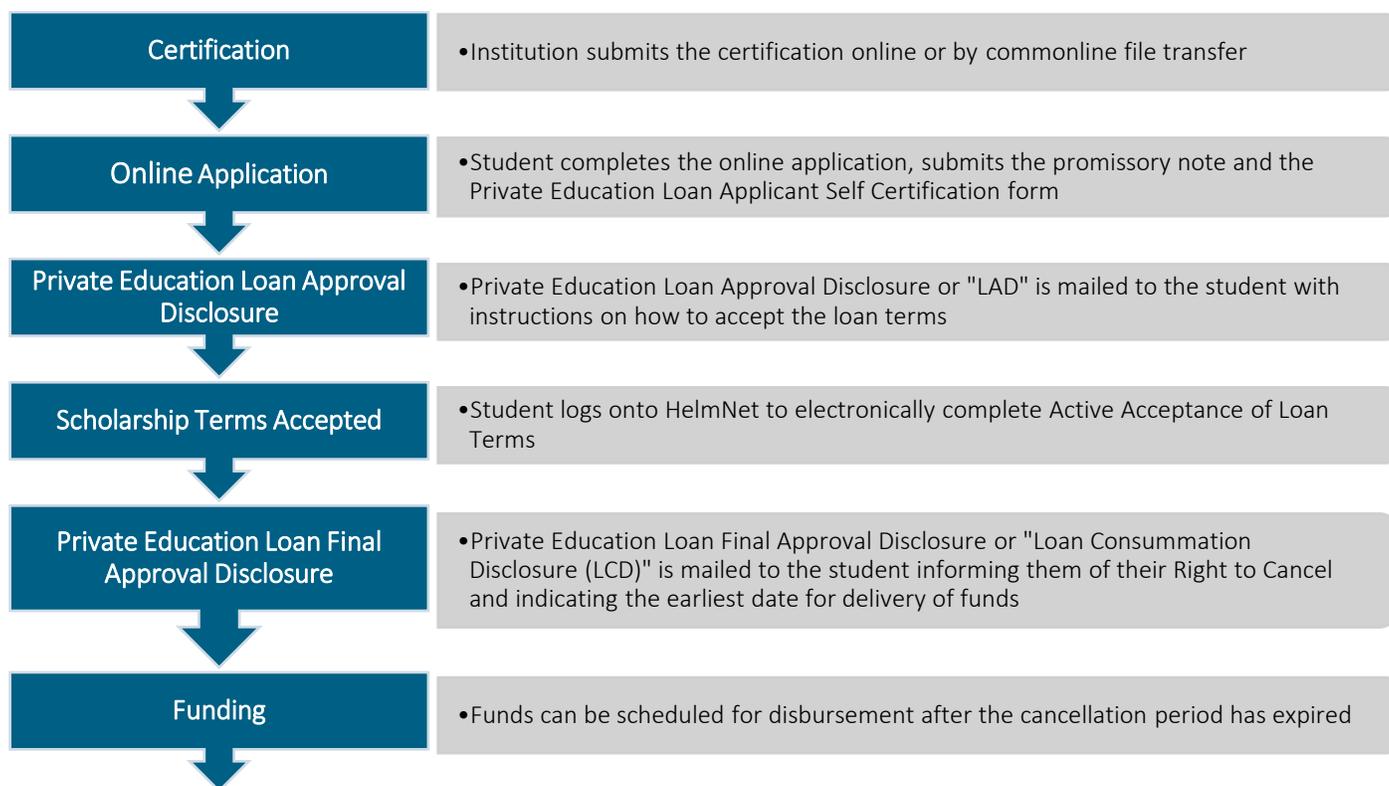
Institution Type	2020-21 Scholarship Maximum
Public and Private Institutions	\$10,000

The scholarship must be reduced by the amount paid to the student for being under contract with one of the branches of the armed services if the combined total exceeds the student’s total cost of attendance (COA) for that academic year.

PROCESSING FUNDS

SCHOLARSHIP PROCESS FLOW

Below is the scholarship process flow that occurs when a student completes a TASSP application:



The earliest that funds can be disbursed is 11 business days after the LCD is mailed to borrower.



CERTIFYING FUNDS

Institutions have until **October 1, 2020** to certify TASSP. Funds will not be disbursed until the promissory note is signed by the student. Financial Aid Administrators can certify TASSP applications using one of these two methods:

- Certify the scholarship through the [HelmNet portal](#); OR
- Submit a Commonline Certification File using the [MOVEit DMZ](#) secure file transfer portal.

RETURNING PROGRAM FUNDS

A [Return of Funds Form \(RFF\)](#) must be submitted before any funds are returned to the THECB. This form is available on the Student Financial Aid Programs Information Webpage under **Online Resources**.

TIMELY DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS

Institutions **must** follow these requirements when processing program funds (see [19 TAC, Section 22.2](#)):

- Institutions have **3** business days after receiving the funds to apply the funds to a student’s account.
- Institutions have **6** business days after receiving the funds to return undisbursed funds.
- Institutions have **45** calendar days from the date a student becomes ineligible to return disbursed funds.
- Institutions have **120** calendar days to return funds after a student has notified the institution of a decision to cancel the award.

REQUESTING SCHOLARSHIP CHANGES

ALERT: REQUIRED CONTACT US INQUIRY INFORMATION

To ensure inquiries are routed correctly, the following steps must be completed:

- **Received From:** Select Institution
- **Institution:** Enter the Institution’s Full Name
- **Contact Reason:** Select **Financial Aid Question** (regardless of the inquiry reason)

Enter the following information in the Description box:

- HelmNet portal ID
- Commonline Unique ID #: (16 Characters)
- Student’s first name, last name, and middle initial
- Last four digits of the student’s SSN

Provide a detailed explanation of the change needed:

Give as many details pertaining to your request as possible, for example:

- **Unclear request:** “Please update scholarship disbursement to 10-01-2020.”
- **Clear request:** “Please update scholarship disbursement #1 from 09-15-2020 to 10-01-2020.”

Student Financial Aid Programs Information (SFAP) Webpage

INSTITUTIONAL TOLL-FREE NUMBER: 1-844-792-2640

ONLINE INQUIRIES: **CONTACT US** (select "Financial Aid Question" option under contact reason)

The Financial Aid Services Department is unavailable every third Thursday in the morning to allow for a monthly staff meeting.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

- The FAD Reporting Cycle One is available for submissions as of **February 11, 2019**.
- The Annual Opt In/Out form is due **February 28, 2019** and is available under the applicable memos through the Stay Connected page.
- The Good Neighbor Scholarships recommendations must be submitted by **March 15, 2019** through CRPass.
- The 2019 Communitas School Award

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Contact Us

An asterisk * by the field indicates a required field!

Received From* INSTITUTION

Institution College of Higher Educations

Contact Reason* *Financial Aid Question

Description* 3740 characters left

HelmNet ID: 00XXXXX00LastAA

Commonline unique ID #: 123456123456123

Student, Student, S

SSN:0011

Student was initially enrolled in 4hr for spring currently enrolled for 12hr

Please do NOT include your full Social Security Number inside the issue description. If you have a question about the status of a new loan application, accounts in repayment, or deferrals, please use the last four digits of your SSN instead.

REPAYMENT

CONVERSION OF A SCHOLARSHIP TO A LOAN

A scholarship will become a loan if the recipient:

- Fails to maintain SAP;
- Withdraws from the scholarship program, as indicated through withdrawal or removal from the institution or that institution’s ROTC program or other undergraduate officer commissioning program, without subsequent enrollment in another institution of higher education and that subsequent institution’s ROTC program or other undergraduate officer commissioning program;
- Fails to fulfill one of the following:
 - A four-year commitment to be a member of the Texas Army National Guard, Texas Air National Guard, Texas State Guard, United States Coast Guard, or United States Merchant Marine; or
 - The minimum active service requirement included in a contract to serve as a commissioned officer in any branch of the armed services of the United States; honorable discharge is considered demonstration of fulfilling the minimum active service requirement.
- Does not submit documentation of the contract or commitment to the THECB within twelve months of graduation with a baccalaureate degree. Subsequently filing documentation will revert the loan back to a scholarship.

If a scholarship is converted to a loan, the student:

- Cannot regain scholarship eligibility in a subsequent academic year; and
- Loses eligibility to receive any future scholarships through the program.

LOAN REPAYMENT REQUIREMENTS

Once the scholarship is converted to a loan, the repayment requirements include:

- The student will have a 6-month grace after the scholarship becomes a loan before repayment begins; however, interest begins to accrue on the date the scholarship is converted to a loan.
- The TASSP loan has a 15-year repayment period, and a required minimum monthly payment of \$100, or an amount required to repay the loan within 15 years, whichever is greater.
- The TASSP interest rate will be the same rate charged for a College Access Loan at the time the funds were disbursed.
- If a past due payment amount is not received within 20 days of the scheduled due date, a past due penalty of 5 percent of the scheduled monthly payment or five dollars, whichever is less, will be charged.

NOTE: Students experiencing a medical disability or any type of financial hardship can apply for postponed or reduced payments and cancellation (medical disability only) of their TASSP loan either verbally or by submitting a [General Postponement Request](#) to the THECB.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

SCHOLARSHIP CONVERSION EXCEPTION

The THECB may grant an exception to not convert the scholarship to a loan if a student requires a temporary leave of absence from the institution, the ROTC program, or other undergraduate officer commissioning program for:

- personal reasons; OR
- to provide service for the Texas Army National Guard, Texas Air National Guard, Texas State Guard, United States Coast Guard, or United States Merchant Marine for fewer than twelve months.

NOTE: If a student is required to provide more than twelve months of service, the THECB can grant that student additional time to meet the graduation and service requirements specified in the TASSP agreement.

DEFERMENTS

An education deferment is available to any recipient whose loan is not in a default status and who provides the THECB documentation of enrollment as at least a half-time student.

APPENDIX 1: QUICK REFERENCES

CONTACT FINANCIAL AID SERVICES	
By phone: (844) 792-2640	
Contact us by completing an online inquiry form and select “Financial Aid Question” as the Contact Reason.	
OTHER RESOURCES FOR INSTITUTIONS	
General program information for institutions	Student Financial Aid Programs Information Webpage
General loan information	HHloans
Texas Program Statutes	Texas Education Code
Texas Program Rules	Texas Administrative Code
First-time users will be required to create an account for CBPass and then request access to the online Grant Payment application.	CBPass CBPass User Instruction Guide
AVAILABLE FORMS	
Directors of Financial Aid must submit a form to add, update, or remove a user’s access to state financial aid web portals through the THECB.	System Authorization Form
A form is required when returning funds for all state grant, scholarship, Educational Aide Exemption, and loan program funds.	Special Programs Online Return of Funds Form Loan Programs Online Return of Funds Form
The THECB accepts funds electronically as an Automated Clearing House (ACH) or wire transfer.	Electronic Funds Transfer Information