

2018-19 Program Guidelines Top Ten Percent Scholarship (Top 10%)



Student Financial Aid Programs
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

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TOP TEN PERCENT 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 ([19 TAC, SECTION 22.196](#))

The Top Ten Percent (Top 10%) Scholarship program was originally authorized by the 80th Texas Legislature to encourage outstanding high school students who graduate within the top 10 percent of their high school graduating class to attend a public college or university in Texas. The General Appropriations Act passed by the 85th Texas Legislature (Article III, p. 45 and Rider 27) authorizes renewal awards for state Fiscal Year 2019. Rules establishing procedures to administer the program can be found in [Title 19 of the TAC, Chapter 22, Subchapter K](#). The program is funded through state General Revenue appropriations.

STATE PRIORITY DEADLINE ([TEC, SECTION 56.008](#) AND [19 TAC, SECTION 22.6](#))

The THECB provides a uniform priority deadline for applications that qualify for financial assistance in an academic year. General Academic Teaching Institutions (GATIs) in Texas **must** publicize and use **March 15** as the state priority deadline for identifying eligible students to be given priority in receiving awards through the state financial aid programs. All other public institutions are encouraged to use this state priority deadline. Institutions may define how their students must meet the priority deadline. Institutions are encouraged to adopt a policy and procedure to ensure consistency in making awards through this program.

⚠️ ALERT NEW: Beginning with the 2019-20 academic year and all years thereafter, all General Academic Teaching Institutions (GATIs) in Texas must publicize and use **January 15** as the state priority deadline. All other public and private/independent institutions are encouraged to use this deadline.


NOTE: The 2019-20 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA) will use **January 15, 2019** as the state priority deadline date.

ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS ([19 TAC, SECTION 22.198](#))

All public institutions of higher education, as defined in [TEC, Section 61.003](#), are eligible to make renewal awards only under the Top 10% Scholarship program.

ELIGIBILITY

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS ([19 TAC, SECTION 22.199](#))

 **STOP:** Beginning with the 2015-16 academic year, renewal awards **only** are authorized for the Top 10% Scholarship Program.

TO RECEIVE A RENEWAL YEAR AWARD, A STUDENT MUST:

- ✓ Be an undergraduate baccalaureate student who previously received an award
- ✓ Be classified by the institution as a Texas resident
- ✓ Be registered with Selective Service, or be exempt
- ✓ Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA)
- ✓ Have unmet financial need, as determined by the following formula:
 - cost of attendance (COA) minus the expected family contribution (EFC), minus Pell grant eligibility (remainder must be greater than zero)
- ✓ Be enrolled full-time (at least 12 semester credit hours) as of the census date
- ✓ Maintain program satisfactory academic progress requirements

DISCONTINUATION OF ELIGIBILITY ([19 TAC, SECTION 22.201](#))

Unless an extension of eligibility (due to a hardship circumstance) is granted, a student's eligibility ends if any of the following maximums have been met:

| TIME LIMIT | DEGREE OBTAINED | NUMBER OF AWARDS |
|---------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| 4 Consecutive Years | Baccalaureate (No hardship allowed) | 4 Awards (No hardship allowed) |

HARDSHIP PROVISIONS ([19 TAC, SECTION 22.201](#))

A student who is ineligible based on the requirements for the GPA, completion rate, and/or number of completed hours for satisfactory academic progress, may be deemed eligible under a hardship provision. Participating institutions must adopt a hardship policy and have the policy available for public review upon request. All hardship decisions must be documented in the student's record and be available for submission to the THECB, if requested.

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP) ([19 TAC, SECTION 22.201](#))

A student's SAP eligibility is determined at the end of each academic year. Students must complete 30 semester credit hours (SCH), have a completion rate of 75%, and maintain a 3.25 cumulative GPA on a 4-point scale.

| END OF EACH ACADEMIC YEAR | SAP REQUIREMENTS | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|
| | 30 SCH in an academic year | 75% completion rate in an academic year | 3.25 cumulative GPA on a 4-point scale |

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

CALCULATE AN AWARD

Top 10% Scholarship recipients can receive the maximum award amount even if the amount exceeds the calculated need. An applicant is determined eligible if the following is true:

$$\text{Need} = \text{COA} - \text{EFC} - \text{Pell} > \$0$$

$$\text{Ex: } \$20,000 - \$19,999 - 0 = \$1$$

In this example, although the recipient has only \$1 of need, the student is eligible to receive up to the maximum award amount.

EXTENSION OF ELIGIBILITY

An extension of eligibility can be issued beyond 4 consecutive years with an approved hardship, as long as the student has not received more than 4 awards.

FOR EXAMPLE:

A student received an initial award in fall 2013 and did not attend college again until fall 2018. Since the student only received one award, the student may be eligible for an award with an extension of eligibility due to an undue hardship, if all other eligibility requirements are met.

SELECTIVE SERVICE STATEMENT ([19 TAC, SECTION 22.3](#))

! ALERT NEW: STUDENT COMPLIANCE WITH SELECTIVE SERVICE

A male student cannot receive a grant, scholarship, loan or other financial assistance funded by state revenue, unless a statement of the individual's selective service status is completed with the institution or other entity granting or guaranteeing the financial assistance. This requirement also includes federal funds or gifts and grants accepted by this state and any loans guaranteed by the state of Texas (See [TEC, 51.9095](#)).

Typically, a student's selective service status is confirmed through the online FAFSA process which validates registration directly with the Selective Service Administration. If a student's selective service status is confirmed on the Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR), no statement needs to be collected by the institution.

The statement below **must** be collected for all male applicants, each academic year, in the following situations:

- A FAFSA that that is flagged "not registered" must be reviewed by the institution to determine if the student is exempt and may be eligible for federal or state financial aid programs. If the student is **exempt**, additional documentation should be collected by the institution to verify the circumstances. The institution can determine what additional documentation to collect for this verification.
- For a student that does not complete a FAFSA, the required statement and back-up documentation must be collected by the institution to verify the current selective service status if the individual is applying for any state financial aid.

NOTE: The institution has discretion to determine how to collect this required statement, which can be done electronically or on paper (e.g. online form, signed award letter, etc.). The statement and all documentation must be retained in the student's record and be made available if requested during a program review or audit. Each statement collected must be retained with the student's records for 7 years after the date of completion for the applicable award period (See [TAC, Section 22.4\(a\)\(2\)\(A\)](#)).

Required Statement of Selective Service Status

Are you currently registered for Selective Service, as required by federal law?

Registered (Proof of registration required) Not Registered Exempt (Documentation required)

I, _____, hereby certify that the selective service status provided is true and correct. I understand that I must provide documentation if requested by my institution that I may be required to complete a new statement for each academic year for continued eligibility.

Student Signature

Date

AWARDING

In determining eligibility, renewal recipients must be classified as a **Priority 1** or **Priority 2** applicant.
(See [19 TAC, Section 22.200](#))

Recipients are classified as **Priority 1** if the following was completed by the March 15, 2018 state priority deadline:

- FAFSA was submitted in time to generate the Central Processing System (CPS) results in a non-rejected status
- TASFA was submitted to the financial aid office

All other eligible recipients are classified as **Priority 2**.

TOP 10% SCHOLARSHIP 2018-19 AWARD MAXIMUMS

| INSTITUTION TYPE | AWARD TYPE | AWARD MAX/YEAR |
|---------------------|------------|----------------|
| PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS | Priority 1 | \$2,000 |
| | Priority 2 | \$2,000 |


Both **Priority 1** and **Priority 2** recipients must be included in the Top 10% Scholarship Funds Requests File. While only **Priority 1** recipients can initially receive funds, **Priority 2** recipients will be reviewed and processed if funding is available.

PROCESSING FUNDS

REQUESTING PROGRAM FUNDS ([19 TAC, SECTION 22.202](#))

Funds for Top 10% Scholarship students will not be disbursed until the institution submits a file through the secure file transfer portal called [MOVEit DMZ](#).

The Top 10% Scholarship Funds Requests File Instructions are available on the [Student Financial Aid Programs Information Webpage](#). Files can be submitted to THECB no later than October 1, 2018. Information included in the file will be used by THECB to confirm and approve funding for eligible students.

 **STOP:** If funds are disbursed for a student who is later determined to be ineligible, the award must be returned to the THECB. Top 10% Scholarship funds are issued on a student-by-student basis and cannot be transferred to another eligible student.

RETURNING PROGRAM FUNDS

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

STOP: TIMELY DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS ([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

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 |
| Information concerning programs, procedures, allocations, and other topics will be communicated to institutions through the GovDelivery system. To receive these communications, interested individuals must subscribe. | GovDelivery |
| Federal Selective Service Requirement Guide | Who Must Register Chart |

AVAILABLE FORMS & INSTRUCTIONS

| | |
|---|--|
| Top 10% Scholarship | Funds Request File Instructions |
| A form is required when returning funds for all state grant, scholarship, Educational Aide Exemption, and loan program funds. | Grants and Special Programs Online Return of Funds Form Loan Programs Online Return of Funds Form |

CALENDAR

[Institutional Calendar](#)