

Program Guidelines

Good Neighbor Program Guidelines



**Texas Higher
Education**
COORDINATING BOARD

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Good Neighbor 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 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 or rules for this program.

Program Authority and Purpose [\(TAC Section 21.634\)](#)

The Good Neighbor Program (GNP) is authorized by [TEC, Title 3, Chapter 54, Subchapter D](#). Rules establishing procedures to administer the subchapter can be found in [TAC, Title 19, Chapter 21, Subchapter U](#). The GNP provides tuition assistance to students from nations of the Western (American) Hemisphere other than Cuba and the United States. Academically talented students from these countries are encouraged to pursue higher education in the state of Texas, thus establishing beneficial relationships between the state of Texas and the students' home countries.

Eligible Institutions [\(TAC Section 21.636\)](#)

Texas public institutions, as defined in [TEC 61.003\(8\)](#), are eligible to participate in the GNP if the institution's governing board elects to do so.

Eligible Countries [\(TAC Section 21.635\)](#)

The following countries are eligible to participate in the GNP.

Eligible Countries of the Western (American) Hemisphere	
Antigua and Barbuda	Guyana
Argentina	Haiti
Bahamas	Honduras
Barbados	Jamaica
Belize (British Honduras)	Mexico
Bolivia	Nicaragua
Brazil	Panama
Canada	Paraguay
Chile	Peru
Colombia	Saint Kitts and Nevis
Costa Rica	Saint Lucia
Dominica	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Dominican Republic	Suriname
Ecuador	Trinidad and Tobago
El Salvador	Uruguay
Grenada	Venezuela
Guatemala	
<i>Cuba and the United States do not qualify as eligible countries for this program.</i>	

Program Eligibility

Eligibility Requirements ([TAC Section 21.637](#))

To qualify, a student must:	
✓	Be a native-born citizen and resident of an eligible country.
✓	Intend to return to the eligible country to live after completing the program of study.
✓	Have resided in the Western (American) Hemisphere for at least five years.
✓	Not be a member of the Communist Party.
✓	Demonstrate scholastic qualification for admission to the nominating institution.
✓	Be registered for Selective Service or be exempt (see Selective Service Statement).
✓	Be enrolled at an eligible institution that is willing to exempt the person's tuition.
✓	Be selected by the THECB for a tuition exemption based on the institution's recommendation.

Continuation of Eligibility ([TAC Section 21.640](#))

A student can continue to receive this exemption during the 12-month period if the student meets the institution's GPA requirement for financial aid.

A student who fails to meet the institutional GPA requirement may have the ability to regain eligibility for this exemption if he or she meets the GPA requirement during an upcoming term or semester in which the exemption was not received. The student may also be granted a hardship exception by the institution.

Discontinuation of Eligibility

A student may **not** continue to receive this exemption in a subsequent semester or term if the student has enrolled in undergraduate hours considered to be excessive under [TEC Section 54.2001\(a\)\(2\)](#).

At the start of a semester or term, if an undergraduate student is attempting hours considered to be excessive, the student may continue to receive this exemption if he or she is granted a hardship extension by the institution.

Hardship Provisions ([TAC Section 21.641](#))

Institutions must adopt a hardship policy that may grant a student an exception from meeting the institution's GPA requirement, or an extension of eligibility for excess undergraduate hours, when a student has a hardship or other good cause, including:

- A severe illness or other debilitating condition that could affect the student's academic performance.
- An indication that the student is responsible for the care of a sick, injured, or needy person and that the student's provision of care could affect the student's academic performance.
- The student's active duty or other service in the United States armed forces or the student's active duty in the Texas National Guard.
- Any other cause considered acceptable by the institution.

All hardship decisions must be documented in the student's record and be available for submission to the THECB, if requested.

Additional Information

Residency Requirements

The student must be classified by the institution as a nonresident for tuition purposes to qualify. Students classified as Texas residents by the institution do NOT qualify, but nonresidents receiving waivers of nonresident tuition MAY still qualify.

Visa Status

The GNP statute indicates an applicant must be a resident of a country of the Western Hemisphere (other than the United States or Cuba). F-1 and J-1 visa holders typically meet this qualification and nonresidents using other visas could as well.

Permanent Resident Status in the U.S.

Any student who has applied for permanent resident status in the U.S. is NOT eligible for an exemption through this program. Recipients of the Good Neighbor Program Exemption must plan to return to their home country when they complete their studies.

Child Support Arrearages

Per [Texas Family Code, Title 5, Subtitle D, Chapter 231, Subchapter A, Section 231.006](#), a student who is obligated to pay child support and is more than 30 days delinquent is not eligible to receive a state-funded grant or loan. Institutions determine how to best comply with this state requirement and should work with their legal counsel on questions related to this statutory mandate.

Selective Service Statement ([TAC Section 22.3](#))

Under [TEC Section 51.9095](#), an individual must file a statement of their Selective Service status with the institution confirming registration or exemption.

This statute applies to all state-funded financial aid, as well as “federal funds or gifts and grants accepted by this state.” The statement is required from students receiving federal aid or private donations that pass through the state Treasury or governor’s office (i.e., Governor’s Emergency Education Relief, or GEER), state-appropriated funds, or institutional funding, which includes programs funded by tuition set-asides, exemptions, and waivers.

Any of the following can be used to meet the statutory statement requirement:

- THECB Selective Service Statement of Registration Status ([English Statement](#) or [Spanish Statement](#))
- Printout from [SSS.gov](#) website
- Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR) if status is available*
- THECB Selective Service Statement of Registration Status embedded in the Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA)

*As of Fiscal Year 2023-24, registration status is no longer reported on the ISIR. Institutions can use any prior year ISIR that confirms registration to meet the statutory requirement for a student's status.

Institutions are **not** required to collect “proof” of registration or exemption from students or to verify the accuracy of the statement against external databases or other resources if conflicting information does not exist. See [Updated Guidance on Statutory Requirements that Impact Financial Aid Memo](#)).

Additional Information

Collection Method

The institution has flexibility to create an online, paper, or alternate method to collect the statement as long as it uses the content developed and required by the THECB.

Frequency of Collecting the Statement

If the student’s status will NOT change, the statement collected can be used for subsequent semesters at the same institution.

If the student is NOT registered for Selective Service, a statement must be collected each time they apply for financial aid or a student loan until the statement indicates registered or exempt.

Males Age 26 or Older

Individuals older than the maximum age at which an individual is required to be registered with the Selective Service System under federal law are not required to complete this status statement.

Retention Schedule

The status statement must be retained in the student’s record based on the retention schedule outlined in the institution’s Program Participation Agreement.

SELECTIVE SERVICE STATEMENT OF REGISTRATION STATUS

In accordance with [Texas Education Code, Section 51.9095](#), male students must file a Selective Service Statement of Registration Status with their institution or other entity granting financial assistance. For more information about the Selective Service System, visit [sss.gov](#).

Please mark **one** option below:

<input type="checkbox"/> I was born female and not required to register.	<input type="checkbox"/> I was born male and am EXEMPT from registration because: (please briefly explain why you are exempt in the box below.)
<input type="checkbox"/> I was born male and am under the age of 18 and not currently required to register.	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 60px; width: 100%;"></div>
<input type="checkbox"/> I was born male and am REGISTERED with the Selective Service.	
<input type="checkbox"/> I was born male and 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: _____

Complete and return to the Financial Aid Office at your institution of higher education.

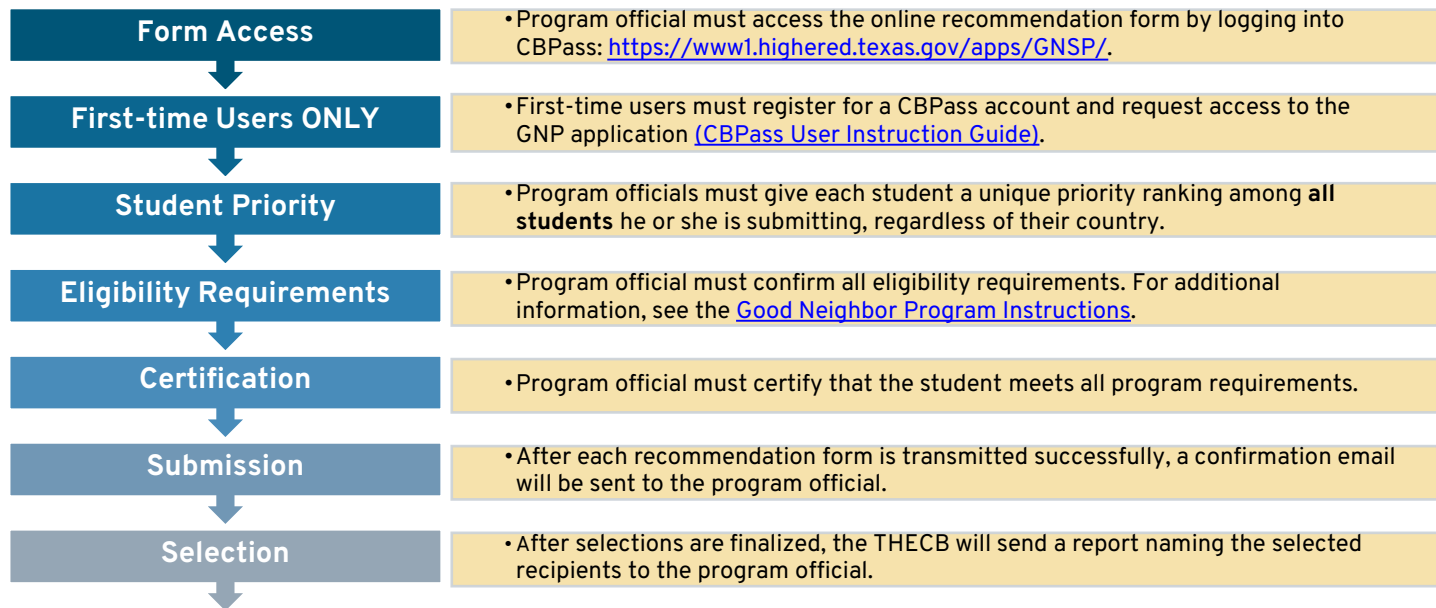
Selective Service Statement of Registration Status As of 09/28/2021

Exemption Processing

Online Student Recommendation Process

Participating institutions are required to use the **Online Recommendation Form** to submit recommendations for eligible applicants to the THECB. Student recommendations must be submitted to the THECB by **March 15** of each year.

Below is the process flow that occurs when an institution submits student recommendations:



Selection Process ([TAC Section 21.638](#))

The student selection process is completed on an annual basis. Institutions will assign each student a unique priority ranking among all students being submitted, regardless of their country. After participating institutions submit all eligible students, the THECB will determine the selected recipients. The total of the selections made by the THECB cannot exceed 235 in a year. The basic allotment consists of:

- Up to 10 students per eligible country, plus
- 35 students from a Latin American country designated by the United States Department of State, which the THECB identifies each year based on the country with the highest recommendation count, excluding Mexico.
- If any country fails to have 10 eligible students or if the designated country fails to have 35 eligible students to recommend, the THECB will give priority to students from Mexico for the unused slots, not exceed 235 in a year.

Note: Under no circumstances will special consideration be given to applicants who are related to employees of the THECB.

Exemption Amount ([TAC Section 21.639](#))

Students selected by the THECB will be exempted from paying tuition for the **12-month period** beginning with the fall semester after a student is selected as a recipient. The student must be recommended each year by a participating institution and be selected each year by the THECB to get a new 12-month exemption. Eligible courses are those for which an institution receives formula funding ([TEC Section 54.2002](#)).

Note: Formula funding is defined as the method used to allocate appropriated sources of funds among institutions of higher education. Formula-funded courses are those that do not depend solely on student tuition and fees to cover their costs.

Reporting

If a selected student does not start school in the fall semester or becomes ineligible for the exemption, the institution must notify the THECB by **October 15**, during the applicable award year, through [Contact Us](#) (select “Financial Aid Question” under Contact Reason). The next statewide alternate from that country will be selected by the THECB and the appropriate institution will be notified.

Students who were selected by the THECB for the GNP and who received an exemption must be reported in the Financial Aid Database (FAD) report for the applicable award year.

Appendix: Quick References

Contact Information	
By phone: (844) 792-2640	
Contact us by completing an online inquiry form and select “Financial Aid Question” as the Contact Reason.	
Other Institutional Resources	
General program information for institutions	Student Financial Aid Programs Information Webpage
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 using the Listserv Request Form.	GovDelivery
Instructions for institutions, including a secure method for submitting student recommendations to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.	Good Neighbor Program Instructions [PDF]
Form for adding, updating, or removing a user's access for state financial aid web portals	User Access Form [PDF]