

Guidelines: Good Neighbor Program (GNP)



**Student Financial Aid Programs
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 Title 21 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 21.634](#))

The Good Neighbor Program (GNP) is authorized by [TEC, Chapter 54, Subchapter D, Section 54.331](#). Rules establishing procedures to administer the subchapter can be found in [Title 19 of the TAC, 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 ([19 TAC, SECTION 21.636](#))

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

ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES ([19 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	

Cuba and the United States do not qualify as eligible countries for this program.

ELIGIBILITY

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS ([19 TAC, SECTION 21.637](#))

TO QUALIFY, A STUDENT MUST:

- ✓ Be a bona fide native-born citizen and resident of an eligible country.
- ✓ Intend to return to the eligible country to live after completing the program of study.
- ✓ Not be a dual citizen of an eligible country and the United States of America.
- ✓ 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 Requirements](#)).
- ✓ 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 ([19 TAC, SECTION 21.640](#))

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

ALERT: CONTINUING STUDENTS WITH COUNTRY MISMATCH

If a student received an award through the Good Neighbor Program in a prior year and has a mismatch between countries, their application will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the THECB.

NOTE: 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 awarded. 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\(a\)\(2\)](#).

NOTE: 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 ([19 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 showing of a hardship or other good cause, including:

- A showing of 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; **or**
- 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 in order to qualify. Students classified as Texas residents by the institution do NOT qualify, but nonresidents awarded waivers of nonresident tuition MAY still qualify.

VISA STATUS

The GNP program 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. or who has dual citizenship that includes the U.S. is NOT eligible for an exemption through this program. Recipients of the Good Neighbor Exemption must plan to return to their home country when they complete their studies.



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.	
_____ I am under the age of 18 and not currently required to register.	
_____ 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.	_____ 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.
_____ 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: _____

AWARDING

SELECTION PROCESS ([19 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 his or her 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:

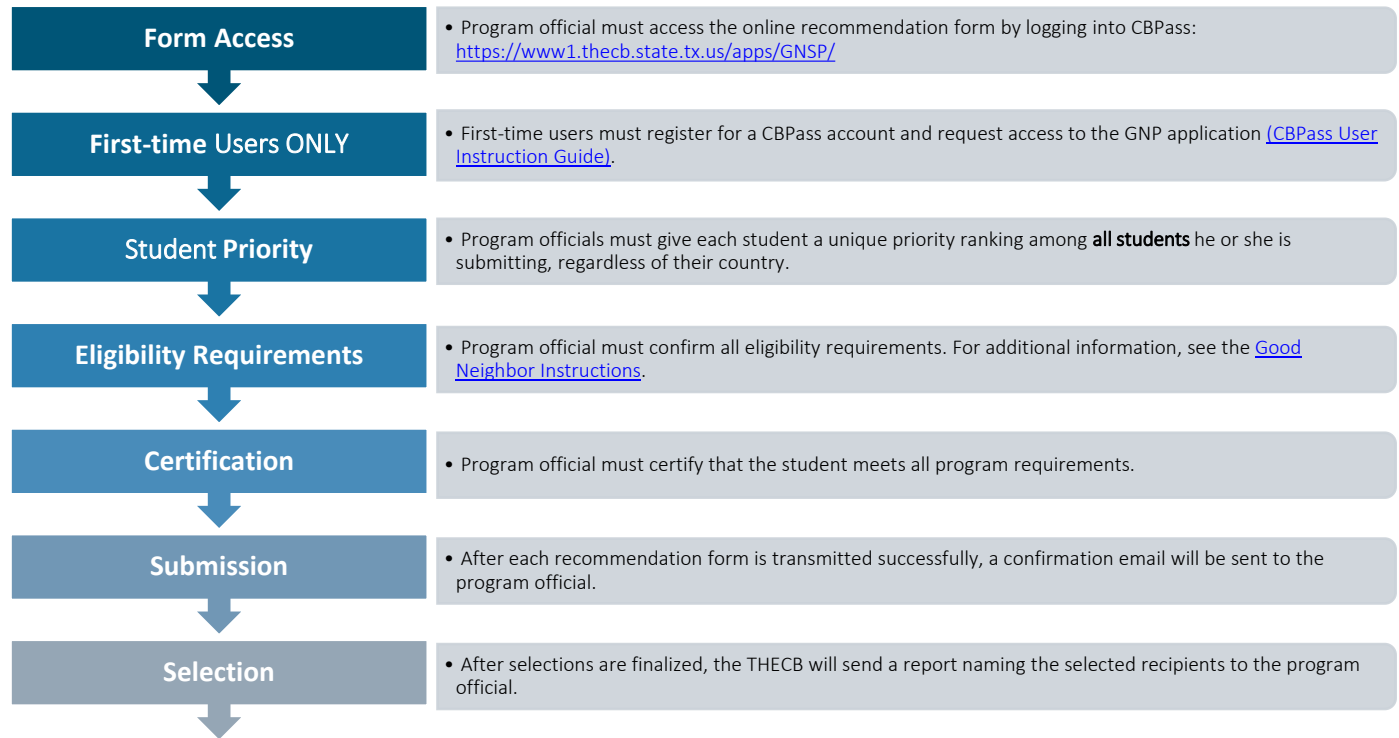
- Up to 10 students per eligible country, plus
- 35 students from a Latin American country designated by the United States Department of State.

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

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:



AWARD AMOUNT ([19 TAC, SECTION 21.639](#))

Students selected by the THECB will be exempted from the payment of 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 award. 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.

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
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