

2025 - 2026

Program Guidelines

| Texas First Scholarship



**Texas Higher
Education**
COORDINATING BOARD

Table of Contents

Program Authority and Purpose.....	1
State Priority Deadline	1
Eligible Institutions	1
Program Eligibility.....	2
Eligibility Requirements.....	2
Discontinuation of Eligibility.....	2
Child Support Arrearages	2
Selective Service Statement	3
Packaging	4
Scholarship Amount.....	4
Institutional Rosters.....	4
Processing Funds.....	4

Appendices

Appendix 1: Frequently Asked Questions.....	5
Appendix 2: Quick References	6


Texas First 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 Texas Administrative Code (TAC). When administering this program, institutions should always refer to the relevant statutes and rules. The information in this document is to be used solely as a resource and does not override the statute or rules for this program.

Program Authority and Purpose ([TAC Section 22.550](#))

The Texas First Scholarship Program is authorized by [TEC, Title 3, Chapter 56, Subchapter K-1](#). Rules for administering the scholarship can be found in [TAC, Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 22, Subchapter T](#). The program is funded by appropriations from the Texas Legislature and from any gifts and grants to the program. The purpose of the Texas First Scholarship Program is to allow public high school students demonstrating college readiness to graduate early with the Distinguished Level of Achievement and receive a scholarship, as a *state credit*, to attend any eligible public institution of higher education (as defined in [TEC Section 61.003](#)).

State Priority Deadline ([TEC Section 56.008](#) and [TAC Section 22.6](#))

 **ALERT:** The THECB extended the 2025-26 (Fiscal Year 2026) state financial aid application priority deadline to **February 15, 2025**, due to exigent circumstances related to federal aid development, as authorized under [TAC Section 22.6\(a\)\(3\)](#).

The THECB sets the same priority deadline for all applications that qualify for state-funded financial aid in an academic year. General Academic Teaching Institutions (GATIs) in Texas (*including* Lamar State College Orange and Lamar State College Port Arthur), as defined in [TEC Section 61.003\(3\)](#), must publicize and use **January 15** as the state priority deadline for identifying eligible students to be given priority in receiving offers through the state financial aid programs.

Institutions may define how their students must meet the priority deadline and are encouraged to adopt a policy describing the actions they must take to meet the deadline. The priority deadline is neither a guarantee to receive funding if a student applies by the applicable date for the academic year, nor is it a restriction to those that apply beyond the date. It is a mechanism that is used to evaluate similarly situated students to prioritize limited funding and to encourage students to complete their application timely to increase the likelihood of receiving state funding.

Eligible Institutions ([TAC Section 22.552](#))

All public institutions of higher education, as defined in [TEC Section 61.003](#), are required to participate in the Texas First Scholarship program.

Program Eligibility

Eligibility Requirements ([TAC Section 22.553](#))

To receive a scholarship as a state credit, a student must:

1. Be enrolled at an eligible institution.
2. Be a Texas resident.
3. Be registered with Selective Service or be exempt (see [Selective Service Statement](#)).
4. Have graduated early from high school under the Texas First Early High School Completion Program.*
5. Comply with the high school graduation requirements, as outlined in [TEC Section 28.0256](#).

*See [TAC Section 21.52\(b\)](#).

Texas First Scholarship Program Process Flow Chart

The chart below clarifies who is responsible for verifying the eligibility requirements for students. While the Texas First Early High School Completion and Texas First Scholarship programs are independent of one another, these programs work together to help eligible recipients access this scholarship opportunity.



*Institutions must verify that the student graduated with the Texas First diploma by reviewing the high school transcript.

Discontinuation of Eligibility ([TAC Section 22.554](#))

A state credit offered to an eligible student expires at the end of the first academic year following the student's graduation from high school.

Child Support Arrearages

Per [Texas Family Code, Title 5, 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.

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, 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](#).

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 under the age of 18 and not currently required to register. <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.	<input type="checkbox"/> I was born male and am EXEMPT from registration because: (please briefly explain why you are exempt in the box below.) <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 60px; margin-top: 5px;"></div>
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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

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.

Packaging

The THECB will issue a certificate to eligible students indicating the amount of state credit a student has available if enrolled at an eligible public institution. To receive a certificate, the student’s high school counselor (or administrator) must verify a student’s eligibility for items 4 and 5 (see [Eligibility Requirements](#)).

Scholarship Amount ([TAC Section 22.555](#))

The amount of state credit offered to the student is contingent on how many semesters early the student graduates and a percentage of the maximum annual (two semester) Toward EXcellence, Access, and Success (TEXAS) Grant amount for the applicable academic year, which is determined by the THECB.

Number of Semesters Student Graduates Early	TEXAS Grant Maximum Fiscal Year 2026 (2025-26)	
Graduates high school <i>two or more</i> semesters early	<i>Total amount</i> of a maximum annual (two semester) TEXAS Grant.	\$10,858
Graduates high school <i>less than two</i> semesters early	<i>Half</i> of the total amount of a maximum annual (two semester) TEXAS Grant.	\$5,429
Note: The amount of state credit offered to a student is calculated based on the value of the TEXAS Grant for the first academic year that begins following the student's graduation from high school (see TAC Section 22.555(a)(1)).		

Upon enrollment of an eligible Texas First Early High School graduate, the institution must apply an amount of the state credit to the student’s charges that is equal to the **lesser of** one of the following:

- The amount of the state credit available to the student
- The student’s actual tuition, mandatory fees, and other costs of attendance at the institution

Remaining state credit may be applied to subsequent semesters prior to the end of the first academic year that begins following the student's graduation from high school. Prior to applying a state credit, institutions must confirm the student is listed on the program roster provided by the THECB.

The amount of state credit offered to a student may **NOT** be considered in the calculation of any state or institutional need-based aid awards or the calculation of the student’s overall financial need, unless the combination of the credit and other federal, state, and institutional financial aid (excluding work-study and loan programs) exceeds the student’s estimated total cost of attendance.

Institutional Rosters

Program rosters containing a list of students who have been issued a scholarship certificate can be accessed via the institution’s Grant_Output folder in [MOVEit DMZ](#). Roster updates will be made available once new students are added; otherwise, any previous roster upload will remain in place. MOVEit DMZ does not generate a "file upload" notification, so institutions should determine their file retrieval frequency.

Processing Funds

The THECB will reimburse each eligible institution the amount of state credit applied to an eligible student’s account during the preceding academic year. The institution's annual Financial Aid Database (FAD) submission will be used to calculate the reimbursement amount (see [TAC Section 22.556](#)).

Appendix 1: Frequently Asked Questions

1. Are students who complete the Texas First Early High School Completion Program eligible for automatic admission to one of the participating institutions?

No. The Texas First Diploma does not guarantee automatic admission for students. Students should ask their high school counselor if their GPA at graduation qualifies them for automatic admission under the state's Top 10 Percent Law.

2. Can a student take a gap year and still use the scholarship?

No. The scholarship offer will expire at the end of the first academic year following a student's graduation, so students are encouraged to attend college directly after high school.

3. At which schools can the scholarship be used?

Students who graduated early with the Texas First Diploma can access the Texas First Scholarship at any Texas public college or university where they have been admitted.

4. Are students required to graduate from high school under the Texas First Early High School Graduation Program prior to receiving a state scholarship certificate?

Yes. Students are required to graduate under the Texas First Early High School Graduation Program before the THECB can issue a state scholarship certificate.

5. If a student wants to transfer in the middle of the award year can the scholarship be used at the new school?

Yes. If a student has been offered a scholarship for two semesters and decides to transfer to another institution for the second semester, they can transfer any remaining amount of the scholarship to the new institution.

Appendix 2: Quick References

Contact Information	
By phone: (844) 792-2640	
Program Rules and Statutes	
Texas Program Statutes	Texas Education Code TEC, Chapter 56, Subchapter K-1
Texas First Program Rules	Texas Administrative Code TAC, Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 22, Subchapter A TAC, Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 21, Subchapter D TAC, Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 22, Subchapter T
Websites, Portals, and Guides	
General program information for institutions	Student Financial Aid Programs Information Webpage
General college enrollment and financial aid information for students	My Texas Future
Grant and Aid Processing Platform (GAPP) - Institutions can log into the GAPP to access certain state financial aid programs	GAPP Login GAPP Help Desk GAPP Account Creation Instructions [PDF]
Secure file transfer and processing portal	MOVEit DMZ Portal MOVEit DMZ User Access Guide [PDF]
Forms and Instructions	
Form for adding, updating, or removing a user's access for state financial aid web portals	User Access Form [PDF]
Instructions for returning funds electronically	Electronic Funds Transfer Information [PDF]