

Community College Nursing Scholarship Program

Background:

The Community College Nursing Scholarship program is designed to attract, incentivize, and encourage a diverse population of students to enroll in and complete a postsecondary credential or degree in the Nursing profession at Massachusetts community colleges. The Program provides “last dollar” financial assistance to ensure that all eligible students have adequate resources to fully cover the direct costs of tuition, fees and books towards a certificate or associate degree at a public community college. This Scholarship program is intended to encourage more students to consider the Nursing Health Profession as a viable career path and thus enroll in an approved nursing discipline that will provide the credentials to contribute to the Commonwealth’s workforce.

Eligible Institution:

A community college within the Massachusetts public system of higher education under Section 5 of Chapter 15A of the General Laws.

Eligible Program:

An approved certificate or associate degree program offered at a Massachusetts community college, in the following areas, as well as other programs identified by the college as nursing or pre-nursing:

Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse
Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse Training
Nursing Assistant/Aide
Patient Care Assistant/Aide/Technician
Pre-Nursing Studies

CIP Codes for eligible certificate or degree programs include the following:

<i>513801</i>	<i>Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse</i>
<i>513901</i>	<i>Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse Training</i>
<i>513902</i>	<i>Nursing Assistant/Aide and Patient Care Assistant/Aide</i>
<i>511105</i>	<i>Pre-Nursing Studies</i>

Eligible Student:

To be eligible for the Community College Nursing Scholarship Program, an applicant must:

- physically reside in Massachusetts for at least one year, as of the start of the enrolled term, with an intent to remain in Massachusetts consistent with Board of Higher Education policy;
- be a U.S. Citizen, permanent legal resident, or non-citizen eligible under Title IV regulations; or have an approved eligibility status designated by the Board of Higher Education pursuant to Section 9 of Chapter 15A, as amended by Section 11 of Chapter 28 of the Acts of 2024;
- comply with all applicable Federal financial aid verification requirements;

- complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) annually for consideration of assistance by any designated deadline, as may be determined by the Department of Higher Education, or an alternative application designated by the Department;
- not be in default on any federal or state student loans for attendance at any institution, or owe a refund for any previous state financial aid program;
- has not earned a prior associate or baccalaureate degree, or the equivalent;
- enroll, as a matriculated student, on a full-time or part-time basis (minimum of 6 credits, or the equivalent) in an undergraduate program of study leading to a certificate or an associate degree, as defined;
- meet satisfactory academic progress (SAP) according to the institution's requirements and Federal standards; and
- have a remaining balance owed to the institution for the costs of tuition, fees, books and supplies after all other grant and scholarship aid has been accounted for.

Nursing Scholarship Conditions:

- Disbursement of funds: the Community College Nursing program funds are to be appropriated to participating institutions through a formula approved by the Commissioner of Higher Education.
- The institution is required to report recipient data to the Department of Higher Education upon request, and on an academic term basis.
- The institution should facilitate access to on campus support services to students who receive assistance under the Nursing Scholarship program, to promote persistence in and completion of their program of study.
- The institution is responsible for verifying student eligibility, to include accurate determination of prior education credentials earned.
- The Community College Nursing program funds may be awarded to support trailing summer Enrollment.
- The Community College Nursing program funds must be committed by institutions and expended by August 31 of each fiscal year.

Award Value:

Subject to appropriation, the Community College Nursing Scholarship assistance awarded to eligible students under this program shall not exceed the calculated cost of tuition, fees, books and supplies as published in the institution's annual Cost of Attendance (COA), for the academic term, during which the award is made.

Community College Nursing Scholarship funds may not be used to cover educational expenses that are not related to tuition and fees, books and supplies, unless otherwise approved or authorized by the Commissioner of Higher Education, or his designee.

Community College Nursing funds may be awarded to cover student expenses or activities related to the required program of study, such as internships or clinical placements, that are scheduled during the summer months. Eligible students may also receive funds to complete coursework during the summer (six-credit minimum).

Students may be awarded Community College Nursing Scholarship funds as follows:

Associate Degree

Full-Time: Maximum of 3 years, 6 semesters for full-time (12 enrolled credits per academic term). An additional year of assistance may be awarded based on extenuating circumstances, with approval of a written appeal.

Part-Time: Maximum of 5 years, 10 semesters for part-time (6 enrolled credits minimum per academic term). An additional year of assistance may be awarded based on extenuating circumstances, with approval of a written appeal.

Certificate Program

Full-Time: Maximum of three semesters (summer enrollment does not count toward the 3-semester maximum)

Part-Time: Maximum of six semesters (summer enrollment does not count toward the 5-semester maximum)

Award Disbursement:

Each participating institution must verify that the recipient is eligible in accordance with guidelines established for the Community College Nursing Program, and that the student is enrolled, or plans to enroll, in an approved certificate or associate degree program. Further, the institution is required to verify that the student has not earned a prior associate or bachelor's degree before funds are awarded and disbursed.

Institutions are required to refund any funds that are deemed to have been improperly awarded and disbursed to recipients who are later determined to be ineligible.

Participation Agreements:

All institutions receiving funds under the Community College Nursing Scholarship Program must have an active Massachusetts State Financial Aid Participation Agreement on file with the Massachusetts Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA).

Audit Requirements:

- a. It shall be the responsibility of each college and university to maintain documentation of a recipient student's eligibility for the Community College Nursing Program.

- b. The Commissioner shall require each campus to furnish annually to the Board of Higher Education a report detailing specific information regarding recipients of the Community College Nursing Program. OSFA will coordinate specification and procedures for this report.
- c. All financial books, records and documents pertaining to this program shall, at all times, be open to inspection, review, and audit by the Commissioner, the State Auditor or their authorized representatives who shall have access to the premises wherever such books, records, and documents are located. The institution shall retain such financial books, records, and documents for seven years. An institution may retain such records for a period of five years if approval is received from the Records Conservation Board in accordance with General Laws, Chapter 30, Section 42.