OFFICE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

State Financial Aid Manual

Get Ready Student Success Scholarship

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About the Minnesota Office of Higher Education

The Minnesota Office of Higher Education is a cabinet-level state agency providing students with financial aid programs and information to help them gain access to postsecondary education. The agency also serves as the state's clearinghouse for data, research and analysis on postsecondary enrollment, financial aid, finance and trends.

The Minnesota State Grant Program is the largest financial aid program administered by the Office of Higher Education, awarding up to $224 million in need-based grants to Minnesota residents attending eligible colleges, universities and career schools in Minnesota. The agency oversees other state scholarship programs, tuition reciprocity programs, a student loan program, Minnesota's 529 College Savings Plan, licensing and early college awareness programs for youth.

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Introduction

This manual is written for Office of Higher Education (hereafter referred to as OHE) staff and college or university (hereafter referred to as institutional) staff for use in administering the Get Ready Student Success Scholarship. This manual is updated on a regular basis and subject to all subsequent changes in both federal and Minnesota state laws and regulations governing this program. Institutions are required to read all e-mail and written correspondence from OHE to keep informed of any changes in policy or guidance. Changes announced during the interim have the full force and effect of the State Financial Aid Manual.

Program Objective

The objective of the Get Ready Student Success Scholarship is to support Get Ready program participants' postsecondary pathways.

Program Overview

Get Ready helps students from low-income backgrounds, indigenous communities, and communities of color realize their aspirations through education and career advancement. Get Ready operates in middle and high schools across multiple districts in Minnesota.

Get Ready is funded primarily by the U.S. Department of Education through a federal GEAR UP grant (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs). The Program is administered by the Minnesota Office of Higher Education.

The federal GEAR UP program has two objectives: 1) student graduation from high school, and 2) student transition into college (includes all types of postsecondary institutions) upon high school graduation.

Definitions

Academic Year

An academic year is the period in which a full-time student is expected to complete the equivalent of at least two semesters, two trimesters or three quarters; or at least 30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours; or at least 900 clock hours. See the 'Common Definitions' chapter of this manual for more details.

Award Year

An award year is the period between July 1 and June 30. It can also be referred to as the state fiscal year.

Eligibility Requirements

Postsecondary Institution

Any postsecondary institution that is eligible to participate in the Minnesota State Grant program may participate in the Get Ready Student Success Scholarship Program. (See Minnesota Statutes 136A.101, Subd. 4 and Agency Rules 4830.0300.)

Student Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for the Get Ready Student Success Scholarship, students must apply using the Get Ready Student Success Scholarship application, located in the MNAid system. Recipients are selected using a blind review process, with priority given to first generation college students and black, Indigenous and people of color.

- Scholarship recipients will be seniors who graduate from Get Ready/GEAR UP high schools during the spring/summer of the previous academic year
- Eligible for Title IV funding as a citizen or eligible non-citizen
- Attending an eligible postsecondary institution
- Enrolled in at least 3 credits per term
- Meet Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) as defined in the 'Common Definitions' chapter of this manual on the date of disbursement
- Enrolled in an eligible program leading to a certificate, diploma, or degree at an eligible postsecondary institution (for definition of a "Certificate Program," see the 'Common Definitions' chapter of this manual)
- Not in default on a federal or state student loan or, if in default, has regained eligibility for federal or state student aid

Awards

Award Amounts

Award amounts are determined by Get Ready, based on the number of applications and the availability of funds.

For the 2026-2027 academic year, award amounts are as follows:

- $3,000/year, $1,500/term for students enrolled in a four-year program
- $1,000/year, $500/term for students enrolled in a two-year/certificate program

Awarding Period

Get Ready Student Success Scholarships are typically awarded for fall and spring terms. Terms may be adjusted based on the student's choice of institution.

Notification of Awards

Students are notified of their selection by Get Ready staff. Students accept the award through the MNAid Student Portal and communicate their intended institution.

Award Adjustments

Adjustments Based on Non-Attendance in Courses

Students are eligible to keep the entirety of their term GRSSS award if they attend at least one day of one course for the term. If it is determined that a student did not attend a single day in any of their courses, the term award must be returned to OHE in full.

Disbursement Process

Certification Roster

Institutions must use the **Certification Roster** module in MNAid to view a listing of awards pending certification.

The Office may add or remove awards at any time. As a result, it is important for institutions to regularly review the Certification Roster.

Institutions will receive a weekly email reminder from the Office beginning in the third week of August through the fourth week of June if there are eligible awards for the current academic year pending certification. Institutions themselves are always required to monitor certification information in MNAid; the weekly emails sent by the Office during a portion of an aid year are only friendly reminders.

For each term a student is awarded, institutions must verify the student's eligibility status on the Certification Roster before the Office may request payment to the institution.

Institutional student certification rosters are built based on recipients indicated institution. Certification rosters become available to institutions as follows:

Term	Dates
Fall	August 15th
Winter	October 1st
Spring	January 1st
Summer 2 (Trailer)	May 1st

Payment History

The Office schedules payment dates for each award indicated as eligible by the institution on the Certification Roster. Awards with a 'Paid' status are available to view on in MNAid through the Payment History menu.

In general, once an award has been certified by the institution, an institution should expect to receive the funds associated with the award within 2-4 weeks. Funds are transferred to the institution via EFT. Institutions can view and print the payment history providing supporting documentation for payment amounts to individual student accounts.

Disbursements to Student Accounts

Disbursements must be based on the student's status as of the date of disbursement or the institutions add/drop date for the semester or term, whichever is later.

Institutions may use institutional funds to disburse scholarship awards to student accounts before receiving funds from the Office. However, institutions are encouraged to do this after the student's eligibility for the award has been verified on the Certification Roster.

Institutions may not make a payment to a student for a payment period or term until the student has registered for classes during that payment period or term.

Institutions are liable for all funds disbursed to a registered student prior to the start of the enrollment period if that student fails to begin the enrollment period.

Institutions must reimburse program funds disbursed to a student prior to the start of the enrollment period if the institution cannot document the student began attending classes.

Refund Process

If a recipient fails to enroll or meet a program eligibility requirement, the entire scholarship must be returned to the Office within 30 days of the receipt of funds at the institution or when the recipient's ineligibility is determined whichever is later.

Refunds must be returned with written documentation that, at a minimum, indicates the student's name for which the refund is being made, the refund amount, the aid year and academic term for which the refund should be applied, and the reason for refund. The Office requests institutions mail refunds to OHE with the enclosed Refund Return Form for this purpose. https://ohe.mn.gov/refund-form

Reconciliation

Reconciling Get Ready Student Success Scholarship Disbursement Records

The financial aid office must reconcile its record of Get Ready Student Success Scholarship disbursements with the institution business office's records of disbursement throughout the fiscal year and reconcile with the Agency's records of Get Ready Student Success Scholarship disbursement at the end of each fiscal year.

Return of Excess Funds

The institution must return all excess funds to the Agency no later than August 31st after the close of the academic year using the top section of the Agency's Refund Return Form. Institutions must also honor any requests for return of excess cash balances sent by the Agency throughout the aid year and return the requested amount within 10 days of receiving the request.

Closeout

Institutions are responsible for closing out the Get Ready Student Success Scholarship by July 30 each year. They should review the Payment Roster (located under Reports in MNAid) and reconcile it with their Business Office. Once all accounts have been reconciled, institutions should email the Office's Program Administrator to confirm they are ready to close the program for the aid year.

Accounting and Audit Requirements

Each institution must designate an employee(s) as the institutional representative to perform or supervise all financial and accounting activities related to the Get Ready Student Success Scholarship program. Auditors from the Agency will periodically visit each participating institution to perform an audit. Institutions have the option of hiring a private auditing firm to conduct the audit of state aid programs in conjunction with an audit of federal financial aid programs. (See also 'Audits' under 'Common Definitions' chapter in State Financial Aid Manual [1]).

Each participating institution must establish a procedure by which an audit can be conducted by going to no more than three administrative offices within the institution. In most cases, these will be the financial aid office, the business office and the registrar's office, but that choice is made by the institution.

The institution must make available all pertinent books, documents, papers and records for audit and examination for three years after the last day of a fiscal year or until all audit exceptions for the period are resolved.

[1] https://ohe.mn.gov/sites/default/files/2025-09/State%20Financial%20Aid%20Mannual_Common%20Definitions_ADA.pdf

Upon request by the institution, the Agency will supply an updated Get Ready Student Success Scholarship program audit guide.

Documentation of Student Eligibility

All institutions must have written documentation that the student meets all the program eligibility requirements described in the 'Student Eligibility' section in this chapter, except for Get Ready/Gear Up high school attendance, which is maintained by the Office. With respect to written documentation of enrollment status, the actual documentation, such as a fee statement or transcript, need not be kept at the financial aid office but must be readily available at the registrar's office or other responsible department within the institution.

Documentation of Get Ready Student Success Scholarship Receipts, Disbursements and Refunds

All institutions must maintain an audit trail in the form of a general ledger by state fiscal year that tracks all the following transactions:

- The date and amount of Get Ready Student Success Scholarship funds sent by the Agency to the institution
- The date and amount of Get Ready Student Success Scholarship funds disbursed by the institution to students. The institution should keep supporting documentation for disbursement entries that identifies the amount of Get Ready Student Success Scholarship funds disbursed to the student by check or deposited in the student's institutional or bank account by student name and ID number. The institution must reconcile financial aid records to business office records regarding the amount of Get Ready Student Success Scholarship funds paid to each student.
- The date and amount of Get Ready Student Success Scholarship refunds or repayments from students deposited back into the institution's Get Ready Student Success Scholarship account on campus. The institution should keep supporting documentation for refund entries that identifies the amount of Get Ready Student Success Scholarship funds deposited back into the institution's Get Ready Student Success Scholarship account for each student-by-student name and ID number. The institution must also keep a copy of the refund calculation worksheet, or the institution's facsimile, used to calculate the Get Ready Student Success Scholarship refund.
- The date and amount of Get Ready Student Success Scholarship funds returned to the Agency by the institution at the end of each fiscal year.