

**STATE OF MAINE GRANT PROGRAM
2010-2011**



**STATE OF MAINE GRANT PROGRAM
(SMGP)**

**Guidelines & Procedures
for
Participating Institutions**

**Academic Year
2010-2011**

Version 2011.0

STATE OF MAINE GRANT PROGRAM 2010-2011

Table of Contents

GENERAL INFORMATION	3
FAME’S ONLINE PROCESSING SYSTEM (EPIC)	3
NOTIFICATIONS	3
PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY	4
MAINE RESIDENT	4
INSTITUTION	4
PROGRAM OF STUDY	4
ENROLLMENT STATUS	4
QUALIFIED STUDENT	5
EXPECTED FAMILY CONTRIBUTION	5
AWARD PARAMETERS	6
AWARD POINTS/MAXIMUM AWARD PERIODS	6
AWARD AMOUNTS FOR 2010/2011	6
CERTIFICATION AND DISBURSEMENTS	7
CERTIFICATION	7
DISBURSEMENTS	7
AWARD ADJUSTMENTS	7
PARTIAL ELIGIBILITY	7
REFUND PROCESSING	7
TRANSFER OF FUNDS (WASH)	8
RECONCILIATION REQUIREMENTS	8
AUDIT REQUIREMENTS	8
ACADEMIC YEAR TIMELINE	9
CONTACT INFORMATION	9

IMPORTANT NOTE:

The grant assistance programs which comprise the State of Maine Grant Program are governed by Maine state law and rules of the Finance Authority of Maine. To the extent that any provision herein is inconsistent with such law or rules, the law and rules will govern. This guide is intended for use by participating Institutions, is subject to change, and should not be relied upon by applicants for or recipients of the benefits described herein.

STATE OF MAINE GRANT PROGRAM

2010-2011

GENERAL INFORMATION

The State of Maine Grant Program (SMGP) is a combination of grant assistance programs administered by the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME) and funded through a variety of sources. The funding includes Maine State Grant funds and NextGen® Grant funds. The SMGP provides need-based financial assistance to undergraduate students who are Maine residents and who are enrolled in an approved institution of higher education, pursuing an eligible degree program. The SMGP provides financial assistance to Maine's students who demonstrate the greatest financial aid need.

FAME's ONLINE Processing System (EPIC)

FAME requires Institutions to process SMGP through FAME's online system, EPIC (Education Portal Information Center). Students who list Maine as their legal state of residency on the FAFSA will be downloaded into our EPIC system. This is the only method FAME will accept for processing for SMGP funds.

To use EPIC, Institutions must sign a Participation Agreement and assign an individual to act as the Institution's designated administrator. The designated administrator is responsible for keeping FAME up to date on eligible users at their Institution and assuring that valid users at the Institution understand the program eligibility requirements. Sharing of user ID's and passwords is not allowed. Schools can obtain a copy of the Participation Agreement, EPIC Online Authorization Form, or view the EPIC user guide by contacting FAME or visiting FAME's website at http://www.famemaine.com/files/Pages/education/aid_administrators/Education_Finance_Login.aspx.

Notifications

Student Notifications: FAME does not currently notify students of their eligibility or ineligibility status. Information on the application process and eligibility requirements is available via FAME's website at www.famemaine.com and various publications and presentations. Students are informed in these media that their Institution will confirm final eligibility and notify students if determined to be eligible for SMGP funding.

Institutional Notifications: FAME routinely notifies Institutions using the email addresses provided on the EPIC Online Authorization Form submitted by the Institution's designated administrator. Notification types include but are not limited to:

- System Upgrades
- Policy Clarification
- Process Reminders

STATE OF MAINE GRANT PROGRAM

2010-2011

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

Maine Resident

A Maine resident is:

1. An independent student who has been a domiciled resident of Maine for at least one calendar year prior to the date of attendance at the Institution
OR
2. A dependent student whose parent or legal guardian has been a domiciled resident of Maine at least one calendar year prior to the date of attendance at the Institution

A residence established in Maine while attending an educational Institution is not sufficient to establish a domiciled residence in Maine. When an applicant ceases to maintain a domiciled residence in Maine, as when the parents of a minor applicant move from Maine, the applicant will ordinarily thereafter be classified as a nonresident of Maine, but may be eligible to obtain a grant in the first year after leaving Maine provided the applicant is ineligible to obtain financial aid provided by any other state.

Members of the armed forces on active duty in Maine and their dependents are deemed residents of Maine for eligibility purposes, notwithstanding the date residency is established, provided that the applicant is not eligible to receive financial aid provided by any other state.

Institution

An eligible Institution is a State-approved public, private, independent, for profit or nonprofit Institution authorized to offer undergraduate degrees, certificates or diploma programs and that is also approved by the U.S. Department of Education to administer Title IV programs. Institutions must be located in Maine or within another state with which Maine has a reciprocal agreement for portability. Currently these states are New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Vermont, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia. In addition, Institutions must agree to and sign FAME's Participation Agreement.

Program of Study

An eligible program of study is a degree or certificate/diploma program of at least one academic year in length offered by the Institution leading to a Certificate, Associate's, or Bachelor's Degree.

Enrollment Status

Traditional Semester Institutions: Minimum of 12 credits hours per semester is required for full time status. Half time status is defined as at least 6 credit hours per semester.

Mod Institutions: FAME acknowledges that Mods are the division of a traditional semester into two equal parts during each of which a student takes not less than 3 credit hours and during both of which a student takes not less than 12 credit hours for full time status and 6 credit hours to be considered at least half time.

STATE OF MAINE GRANT PROGRAM

2010-2011

Clock Hour Institutions: For programs administered using clock hours, FAME uses the following conversion to establish full time student eligibility:

- a. Complete a minimum of 24 clock hours per week
AND
- b. Complete a minimum of 320 hours during the period of July 1 – December 31 to be considered full time and receive a fall disbursement
AND/OR
- c. Complete a minimum of 320 hours during the period of January 1 – June 30 to be considered full time and receive a spring disbursement

Qualified Student

A qualified student must be enrolled in an eligible program at an eligible Institution and:

- a. Be a permanent legal resident of Maine for a least one year prior to the start of the academic year for purposes other than education;
- b. Be eligible for Title IV financial aid – is not in default or does not owe a refund on federal/state aid and is meeting the Institution’s Satisfactory Academic Progress standards;
- c. Be enrolled at least half time as an undergraduate student and has not previously earned a Bachelor’s Degree or its equivalent;
- d. File the 2010-2011 FAFSA by May 1, 2010 and have a valid Expected Family Contribution within the ranges identified in the Awarding Parameters section of this guide;
- e. Have not exceeded the maximum of 12 full-time semesters. FAME uses points to track maximum award eligibility as outlined in the Awarding Parameters section of this guide.

Expected Family Contribution

FAME uses the results of the FAFSA’s Expected Family Contribution (EFC) calculation to determine the highest need students. FAME imports the results of Maine student FAFSA’s daily whenever possible beginning as soon after January 1 as possible. In determining EFC range eligibility, FAME recognizes the valid Primary Expected Family Contribution assigned to the student. FAME sets the EFC range annually as close to March 1 as possible for the upcoming academic year.

STATE OF MAINE GRANT PROGRAM 2010-2011

AWARD PARAMETERS

Award Points/Maximum Award Periods

Students are assigned points based on enrollment status for the period for which they are receiving a disbursement. The maximum number of points a student may earn is 24 points (the equivalent of 12 full time semester awards). Points are tracked in the EPIC system on individual student records or a report can be downloaded using the cumulative roster function in EPIC. Points are assigned as follows:

Enrollment Status	Points Assigned
Full Time	2
Half & Three Quarter Time	1

Award Amounts for 2010/2011

Award amounts are set annually as close to March 1 as possible for the upcoming academic year. FAME sets an annual EFC cutoff amount and determines the semester awards for the type and location of the Institution based on available funding.

For 2010/2011 the EFC cutoff is \$4000 and the awards are as follows:

MAINE INSTITUTIONS – PUBLIC			
Enrollment Status	Fall	Spring	Academic Year
Full Time	\$500	\$500	\$1000
Half or Three Quarter Time	\$250	\$250	\$ 500

MAINE INSTITUTIONS – PRIVATE			
Enrollment Status	Fall	Spring	Academic Year
Full Time	\$625	\$625	\$1250
Half or Three Quarter Time	\$313	\$312	\$ 625

CT, DC, MA, NH, PA, RI, VT INSTITUTIONS – PUBLIC			
Enrollment Status	Fall	Spring	Academic Year
Full Time	\$250	\$250	\$ 500
Half or Three Quarter Time	\$125	\$125	\$ 250

CT, DC, MA, NH, PA, RI, VT INSTITUTIONS – PRIVATE			
Enrollment Status	Fall	Spring	Academic Year
Full Time	\$500	\$500	\$1000
Half or Three Quarter Time	\$250	\$250	\$ 500

STATE OF MAINE GRANT PROGRAM

2010-2011

CERTIFICATION AND DISBURSEMENTS

FAME recognizes two enrollment periods for processing of SMGP funds: Fall and Spring semesters. Currently FAME does not allow payment for summer enrollment.

Certification

Institutions are required to certify that the student's enrollment meets all program eligibility requirements each semester. See the Academic Year Timeline section for more information on specific functionality dates.

Disbursements

Institutions can request payments for eligible certified students. Checks and payment rosters are mailed directly to Institutions at the address indicated by the designated administrator. Funds must be applied to the awarded student's account. FAME generally processes disbursement requests on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

AWARD ADJUSTMENTS

Partial Eligibility

Institutions may make partial awards if making a full award would exceed the student's maximum need. State of Maine Grant funds may not replace previously awarded Institutional aid.

Refund Processing

Refunds may occur for a variety of reasons including:

- Changes to ISIR data related to the calculation of the EFC
- Changes to a student's budget or other financial aid funds
- Changes to enrollment status
- Withdrawal or approved leave of absences

FAME requires that Institutions calculate refunds due to withdrawals and approved leaves of absence according to their Institutional policies.

Institutions do not necessarily need to return refund funds immediately to FAME if a "wash" opportunity exists. See "Transfer of Funds (WASH)" below for more information. If returning a refund check to FAME, please:

- Process the request(s) in EPIC
- Include the name(s) of the student(s) that the check is refunding with the check
- Make check payable to "Finance Authority of Maine"
- Mail check to:

FAME
Attn: Education Grant Refunds
PO Box 949
Augusta, ME 04332-0949

STATE OF MAINE GRANT PROGRAM

2010-2011

Transfer of Funds (WASH)

If an Institution has processed a change resulting in a refund, the funds may be held at the Institution if additional students may be paid. The EPIC system will automatically move the funds to the next student that is certified and eligible for payment. Note that funds can only be transferred to another eligible student within this program. Funds are not transferrable to other FAME-administered programs.

If the amount refunded equals the amount to be paid, a wash report will be created for the Institution to update the students' accounts under the disbursement history once the Institution approves the "wash" when processing payment request. See the EPIC manual for additional information.

If the amount refunded is only a partial payment to be paid towards the next student, funds will still show as applied to the new eligible student on the regular payment roster when the balance of the funds is requested. See the EPIC manual for additional information.

RECONCILIATION REQUIREMENTS

FAME requires that Institutions ensure that the financial information in EPIC is reconciled with the Institutions' records by the end of each academic year. All corrections must be entered by the deadline indicated in the Academic Year Timeline section. Institutions should confirm that both EPIC and the Institution's financial aid system agree on both the number of students paid and total dollars disbursed. Any payments due the Institution or refunds due FAME must be processed by the indicated reconciliation deadline. Institutions may download cumulative rosters in the EPIC system for assistance with this process.

AUDIT REQUIREMENTS

FAME may periodically conduct a review of an Institution's participation in the program and may offer technical assistance to the Institution. Institutions must maintain and retain documents as outlined by the applicable federal financial aid guidelines.

STATE OF MAINE GRANT PROGRAM 2010-2011

ACADEMIC YEAR TIMELINE

ACTIVITY	ACADEMIC YEAR 2010-2011	ACADEMIC YEAR 2011-2012 TENTATIVE
Maximum EFC & Award Amounts Announced	N/A	March 15, 2011
System Opened for viewing of eligible students	NOW OPEN	March 15, 2011
Fall Certification and Payment Requesting Opened	August 30, 2010	August 29, 2011
Fall Payment Processing Closed for Year End Processing (Institutions may still certify students)	December 1, 2010	December 2, 2011
Fall/Spring Certification/Payment Processing Opened	January 3, 2011	January 3, 2012
Begin Reconciliation/Final Adjust Processing	April 1, 2011	April 2, 2012
Complete Reconciliation Process and Finalize Adjustments (Payments/Refunds) System Closed except for viewing.	May 27, 2011	May 25, 2012

CONTACT INFORMATION

Institutions are encouraged to contact one of our Education Team Members with any questions or comments. FAME maintains a financial aid administrator's email box that is monitored throughout the day to ensure quick responses.

The email address is: faadmin@famemaine.com

The team can also be reached by phone at: 1-800-228-3734, option 1

For all correspondence via mail:

Finance Authority of Maine
Att: State Education Programs
5 Community Drive
PO Box 949
Augusta, ME 04332

FAME'S STATE EDUCATION PROCESSING TEAM:

Lisa Bongiovanni	Manager	lbongiovanni@famemaine.com	Ext. 3547
Claude Roy	Education Services Officer	croy@famemaine.com	Ext. 3507
Jen Lanphear	Team Leader, Customer Support	janphear@famemaine.com	Ext. 3548
Robin Miller	Team Leader, Program Processing	rmiller@famemaine.com	Ext. 3533
Tracey Martin	Customer Support Associate	tmartin@famemaine.com	Ext. 3553
Cheryl Wilkinson	Customer Support Associate	cwilkinson@famemaine.com	Ext. 3554