



BUSINESS & EDUCATION at work for Maine

Academic Competitiveness Grants (ACG)

- Background
- Award amounts
- Eligibility criteria
- Rigorous secondary school program of study
- How students apply
- What counselors can do
- Future status of ACG
- Resources

- One of two grant programs created by The Higher Education Reconciliation Act of 2005 (HERA)
 - National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent or SMART Grants for third and fourth year students
- Encourage students to be academically prepared for college
- Help maintain U.S. competitiveness in global economy

- \$750 for first year students
- \$1,300 for second year students

- Federal Pell Grant recipient for same award year
- First or second year student in:
 - A two or four year degree program; or
 - A one or two year certificate program offered at a two or four-year degree granting institution (this piece is new as of Fall 2009)
- Completion of a rigorous secondary school program

- Updates to ACG criteria as of Fall 2009
 - Eligible noncitizens are now eligible for ACG
 - Students enrolled at least half-time are now eligible for ACG

- First Year Students
 - Not previously enrolled as a degree seeking student in an undergraduate program while enrolled in high school and below the age of compulsory attendance
 - Completed secondary program of study after January 1, 2006

- Second Year Students
 - Completed secondary program of study after January 1, 2005
 - Has at least a 3.0 GPA in an eligible program at the end of the first year of college
 - GPA checked only once at the end of the first year



Rigorous Secondary School Program

- State designated programs
- Coursework designated by the Secretary
- AP/IB

- Least restrictive option for students graduating from secondary school in Maine:
 - **Maine Course Work Program Number Two**
 - Four credits of English
 - Three credits of math (including Algebra 1, Algebra II, and geometry)
 - Two credits of laboratory science
 - Two years of social studies

- 4 years of English
- 3 years of mathematics (Algebra I and higher)
- 3 years of science (biology, chemistry, physics)
- 3 years of social studies
- 1 year of a foreign language

- Successful completion of any secondary school program for a student who completes at least two courses with a minimum passing test score on the exams in those courses
- Score of at least 3 for Advanced Placement
- Score of at least 4 for International Baccalaureate

- All states have at least one designated rigorous program
- Students from every state have at least three ways to meet rigorous program requirement

- Colleges required to collect and retain documentation that a student meets at least one of the options
- Colleges may document the program option that is the most efficient for them
- Students may eligible under more than one definition of rigorous program

- FAFSA on the Web
 - Submit FAFSA
 - If data indicates possible eligibility, students are prompted to answer questions

- Paper FAFSA
 - Student Aid Report (SAR) indicates possible eligibility
 - Instructed to call Federal Student Aid Center at 1-800-4FEDAID (1-800-433-3243) to answer questions about eligibility

- Self identify to financial aid office at college
 - In person or in writing
 - Will need to submit documentation

- Encourage students to take rigorous courses
- Provide documentation of completion of rigorous program
 - In a timely manner
 - To students or directly to colleges
- Tell students about the program

- The end is almost here for ACG
- 2010-2011 is the final year of program funding

BUSINESS & EDUCATION
at work for Maine





Contact Information

BUSINESS & EDUCATION
at work for Maine

Mila Tappan
Finance Authority of Maine
5 Community Drive, P.O. Box 949
Augusta, ME 04332
1-800-228-3734
www.famemaine.com
mtappan@famemaine.com