



FAME

FINANCE AUTHORITY OF MAINE

**STATE OF MAINE
GRANT PROGRAM**

2017-2018

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Overview

The State of Maine Grant Program (SMGP) is a need-based grant assistance program administered by the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME) and funded through state appropriations. 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 residence on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) will be added to 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 ensuring that valid users at the institution understand the program eligibility requirements. Sharing of user IDs 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://EPIC.FAMEmaine.com>.

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 FAMEmaine.com and various publications and presentations.

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

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 for 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. Eligible

institutions must be located in the state of Maine only. Reciprocity for out-of-state schools has been eliminated; however, if a student is enrolled in an approved degree program in the New England Board of Higher Education's (NEBHE) Tuition Break program, the student may be considered eligible for the grant. 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, or bachelor's degree.

Enrollment Status

Traditional Semester Institutions - A minimum of 12 credit 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.

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

A student must complete a minimum of 24 clock hours per week; and

- ✓ 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
- ✓ Complete a minimum of 320 hours during the period of January 1 – June 30 to be considered full time and receive a spring disbursement

Students that complete less than 24 clock hours per week; and

- ✓ Complete a minimum of 160 hours during the period of July 1 - December 31 will be considered part time and receive a fall disbursement; and/or
- ✓ Complete a minimum of 160 hours during the period of January 1 - June 30 will be considered part time and receive a spring disbursement.

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Eligible Student

An eligible student must be enrolled in an eligible program at an eligible institution and must:

- ✓ Be a permanent legal resident of Maine, for purposes other than education, for at least one calendar year prior to the start of the academic year;
- ✓ Have graduated from an approved secondary school (or matriculated at an approved post-secondary school prior to high school graduation) or successfully completed a general education development examination or its equivalent;
- ✓ Be eligible for Title IV financial aid – and not be in default or owe a refund on federal/state aid, and meet the institution’s Satisfactory Academic Progress standards;
- ✓ Be enrolled at least half time as an undergraduate student and not have previously earned a bachelor’s degree or its equivalent;
- ✓ File the 2017-2018 FAFSA by May 1, 2017 and have a valid Expected Family Contribution (EFC) within the ranges identified in the “Award Parameters” section of this guide;
- ✓ Have not exceeded the maximum of 10 full-time semesters. FAME uses points to track maximum award eligibility as outlined in the “Award Parameters” section of this guide.

Expected Family Contribution

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

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 20 points (the equivalent of 10 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 or Three-Quarter Time	1

Award Amounts for 2017-2018

Award amounts are set annually as close to December 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 2017-2018 the EFC cutoff is 3,600 and the awards are as follows:

MAINE INSTITUTIONS - PUBLIC & PRIVATE			
Enrollment Status	Fall	Spring	Academic Year
Full Time	\$750	\$750	\$1,500
Half or Three-Quarter Time	\$375	\$375	\$750

NEHBE ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS - PUBLIC			
Enrollment Status	Fall	Spring	Academic Year
Full Time	\$750	\$750	\$1,500
Half or Three-Quarter Time	\$375	\$375	\$750

CERTIFICATION AND DISBURSEMENTS

Certifications

Institutions are required to certify that the student's enrollment meets all program eligibility requirements each semester.

Disbursements

Institutions can request payments for eligible certified students. FAME shall provide funds using the electronic funds transfer process to the institution for credit to the account of eligible recipients. The institution shall make payment to students by crediting the student's account or by utilizing other procedures as determined by the institution. Please note that institutions must print their own student rosters. Funds must be applied to the awarded student's account. FAME generally processes disbursement requests on a weekly basis. For 2017-2018, institutions may request payments in EPIC between September 5, 2017 and June 15, 2018.

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 absence

FAME requires that institutions calculate refunds due to withdrawals and approved leaves of

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absence according to their institutional policies.

Institutions do not necessarily need to return 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 and term for each refunded student associated 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

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 transferable 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 June 30 annually. 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.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Institutions are encouraged to contact one of our Customer Service Team Members listed below with any questions or comments. FAME maintains a dedicated financial aid administrator's email account, **FAadmin@FAMEmaine.com**, that is monitored throughout the day to ensure quick responses.

We can also be reached by phone at: **1-800-228-3734, option 1**

For all correspondence via mail:
Finance Authority of Maine
Attn: State Education Programs
5 Community Drive
PO Box 949
Augusta, ME 04332

FAME's Customer Service Team

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