



MAINE STATE GRANT PROGRAM

2020-2021

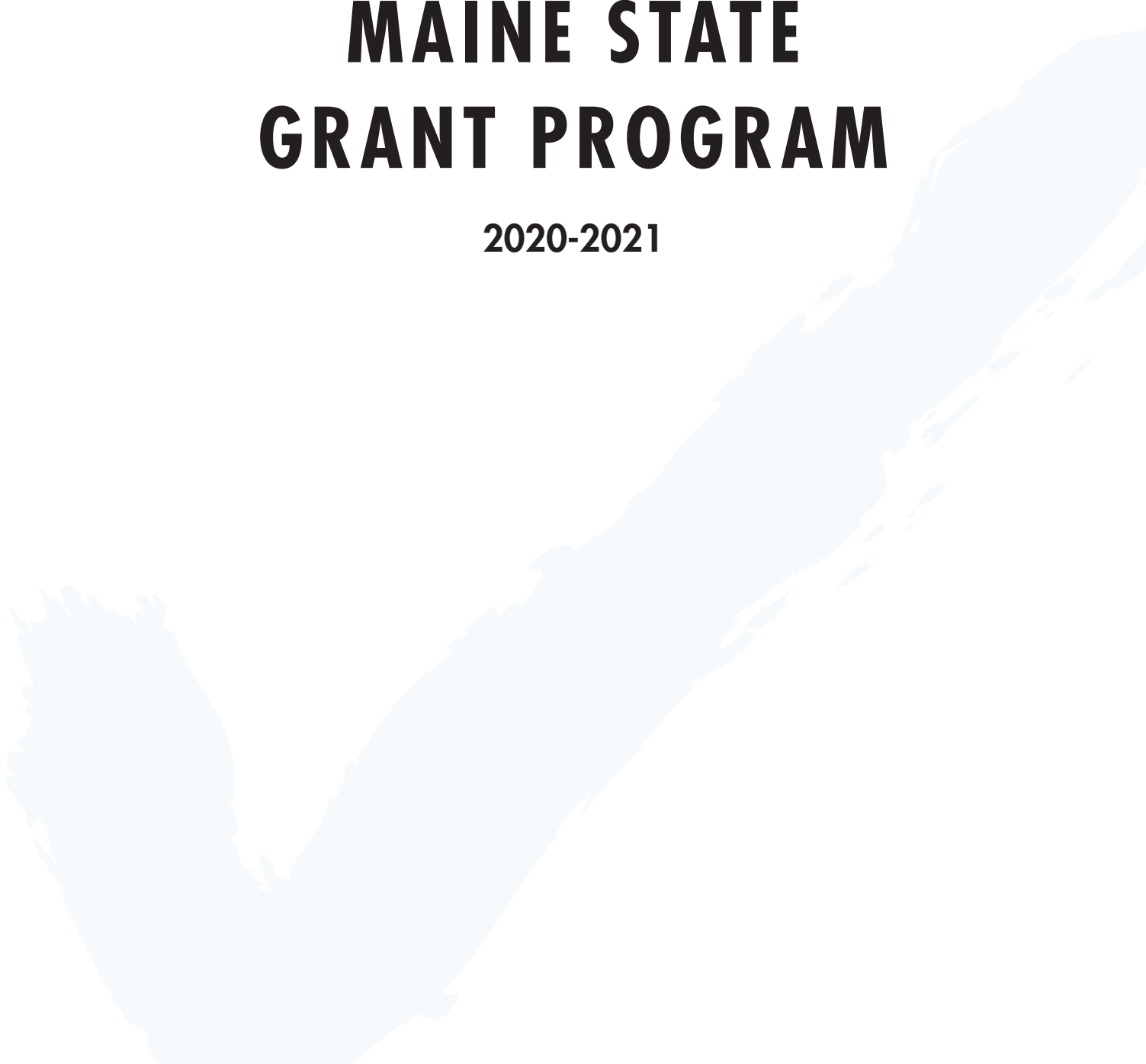


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GENERAL INFORMATION

Overview

The Maine State Grant Program (MSGP) is a need-based grant assistance program administered by the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME) and funded through state appropriations. The MSGP 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 MSGP provides financial assistance to Maine students who demonstrate the greatest financial aid need.

In 2020-2021, the Maine State Grant Program includes an opportunity for Adult Learners—the Maine State Grant Program for Adult Learners (MSG-P). Please see page 11 for special eligibility and other criteria that apply to this component.

FAME's Online Processing System (EPIC)

FAME requires institutions to process MSGP 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 MSGP 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. Each user is assigned a unique user ID. The user sets their own password. Sharing of user IDs and passwords is prohibited. 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 [EPIC.FAMEmaine.com](https://www.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](https://www.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

Eligible 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. An institution must have a federal school code for its location. Eligible institutions must be located in the state of Maine only. While there is no longer reciprocity for out-of-state schools; if a student is participating in the New England Board of Higher Education's (NEBHE) New England Regional Student Program, is eligible for the Tuition Break, and is enrolled in an approved major or degree program, the student may be considered eligible for the grant. Institutions must agree to and sign FAME's Participation Agreement.

Eligible Student

An eligible student must be enrolled at least half-time 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;
- Be a U.S. Citizen or an eligible noncitizen as defined in Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965;
- 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 2020-2021 FAFSA by May 1, 2020 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 equivalent semesters. FAME uses points to track maximum award eligibility as outlined in the "Expected Family Contribution" section of this guide (see exceptions for Adult Learners on page 10).

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.

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 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 estimates the EFC range annually as close to December 1 as possible for the upcoming academic year. The EFC is confirmed after the May 1 deadline and is contingent on the final state of Maine budget including a student financial assistance appropriations to FAME. Email notification of the final EFC is sent to all Maine and NEBHE EPIC users historically in late June or early July.

The EFC cut off for 2020-2021 MSGP and MSGP-A is 10,000. The estimated EFC cut off for 2021-2022 MSGP and MSGP-A is 7,000.

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.

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), unless they are an MSGP-A recipient. 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 2020-2021

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 2020-2021 the awards are:

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

NEBHE 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 and the dependency status is as shown on the FAFSA and that it is has no conflicting information.

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 no later than the reconciliation date set by FAME annually. FAME generally processes disbursement requests on a weekly basis every Tuesday for payment on Wednesday. For 2020-2021, institutions may certify students in EPIC between July 15, 2020 and June 14, 2021. FAME will process payment requests between September 1, 2020 and June 15, 2021.

AWARD ADJUSTMENTS

Partial Eligibility

Institutions may make partial awards if making a full award would exceed the student's maximum need. Maine State 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 institutions calculate refunds due to withdrawals and approved leaves of 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.

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.

Note: In order to “wash,” the payment and refund must be processed in the same “request payment” transaction.

RECONCILIATION REQUIREMENTS

FAME requires institutions ensure that the financial information in EPIC is reconciled with the institutions’ records before the end of each academic year. All corrections must be entered by June 15 annually. Institutions should confirm 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.

2020-2021 MAINE STATE GRANT TIMELINE

Date	Activity
December 2019	Estimated 2020-2021 maximum EFC and award amounts announced by FAME
March 2020	2020-2021 student rosters available for viewing
June 4, 2020	Official 2020-2021 maximum EFC and award amounts announced by FAME
July 15, 2020	EPIC open for Fall 2020 certification and payment requests
September 1, 2020	Weekly Tuesday processing of Fall 2020 payment requests begins
December 15, 2020	Institutions complete reconciliation of Fall 2019 MSGP. Payment processing is suspended.
January 5, 2021	Weekly Tuesday processing of Spring 2021 and additional Fall 2020 payment requests begins.
June 14, 2021	Institutions complete reconciliation of Spring 2021 MSGP
June 15, 2021	Last date 2020-2021 payments processed
June 22, 2021	EPIC closed for 2020-2021

ANTICIPATED 2021-2022 MAINE STATE GRANT TIMELINE

Date	Activity
Early December 2020	Estimated 2021-2022 maximum EFC and award amounts announced by FAME
Mid-March 2021	2021-2022 student rosters available for viewing
Mid-June 2021	Official 2021-2022 maximum EFC and award amounts announced by FAME—could be delayed due to new appropriation for new biennium
Early to mid-July 2021	EPIC open for Fall 2021 certification and payment requests
First Tuesday September 2021	Weekly Tuesday processing of Fall 2021 payment requests begins
Mid December 2021	Institutions complete reconciliation of Fall 2021 MSGP. Payment processing is suspended.
First Tuesday January 2022	Weekly Tuesday processing of Spring 2022 and additional Fall 2021 payment requests begins.
Early June 2022	Institutions complete reconciliation of Spring 2022 MSGP
Second Tuesday June 2022	Last date 2021-2022 payments processed
Third Tuesday June 2022	EPIC closed for 2021-2022

2020-2021 MAINE STATE GRANT FOR ADULT LEARNERS TIMELINE

Date	Activity
December 2019	Estimated 2020-2021 maximum EFC and award amounts announced by FAME
March 2020	2020-2021 student rosters available for viewing
June 4, 2020	Official 2020-2021 maximum EFC and award amounts announced by FAME
July 15, 2020	EPIC open for Fall 2020 certification and payment requests
September 1, 2020	Weekly Tuesday processing of Fall 2020 payment requests begins
December 15, 2020	Institutions complete reconciliation of Fall 2019 MSGP-A. Payment processing is suspended.
January 5, 2021	Weekly Tuesday processing of Spring 2021 and additional Fall 2020 payment requests begins.
February 28, 2021	Institutions complete early reconciliation of Spring 2021 MSGP-A. Funding is first come, first served.
June 14, 2021	Institutions complete final reconciliation of Spring 2021 MSGP-A
June 15, 2021	Last date 2020-2021 payments processed
June 22, 2021	EPIC closed for 2020-2021

ANTICIPATED 2021-2022 MAINE STATE GRANT FOR ADULT LEARNERS TIMELINE

Date	Activity
Early December 2020	Estimated 2021-2022 maximum EFC and award amounts announced by FAME
Mid-March 2021	2021-2022 student rosters available for viewing
Mid-June 2021	Official 2021-2022 maximum EFC and award amounts announced by FAME—could be delayed due to new appropriation for new biennium
Early to mid-July 2021	EPIC open for Fall 2021 certification and payment requests
First Tuesday September 2021	Weekly Tuesday processing of Fall 2021 payment requests begins
Mid December 2021	Institutions complete reconciliation of Fall 2021 MSGP. Payment processing is suspended.
First Tuesday January 2022	Weekly Tuesday processing of Spring 2022 and additional Fall 2021 payment requests begins.
Early June 2022	Institutions complete reconciliation of Spring 2022 MSGP
Second Tuesday June 2022	Last date 2021-2022 payments processed
Third Tuesday June 2022	EPIC closed for 2021-2022

MAINE STATE GRANT PROGRAM – ADULT LEARNERS

Maine State Grant Program for Adult Learners (MSGP-A) is a sub-program under Maine State Grant Program (MSGP).

Eligibility

MSGP-A is a one-time grant for adult learners who missed the May 1, 2020 Maine State Grant FAFSA deadline. The following criteria must be met:

- 2020-2021 FAFSA must yield a valid maximum EFC of 10,000.
- 2020-2021 FAFSA filed on or after May 2, 2020. Funding is available to eligible students on a first come, first served basis as long as funds are available.
- Date of birth on or before 01/01/1997
- Not a recipient of Maine State Grant within the three previous award years of 2017-2018; 2018-2019; 2019-2020
- Meet **all other** Maine State Grant eligibility criteria

Award Parameters

- Students are assigned points based on enrollment status for the period for which they are receiving a disbursement. Two (2) points are assigned for full time enrollment status and one (1) point is assigned for half or three-quarter time enrollment status.
- Award amounts are the same as the Maine State Grant Program.
- Maine State Grant Program for Adult Learners may be awarded for one academic year only. If a student received MSGP-A in academic year 2019-2020, they are not eligible for MSGP-A in academic year 2020-2021.
- The maximum number of points a student may earn is 24 points (12 full-time semester equivalent) of Maine State Grant and Maine State Grant for Adult Learners combined.

Certification and Payment

- The program will be run and managed out of EPIC.
- EPIC ready for school certification before 9/3/2020
- First payment request processed no earlier than 9/3/2020

Communication Plan for 2020-2021

Notifications will be mailed to those identified in EPIC as possibly eligible at the end of August.

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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