FINANCE AUTHORITY OF MAINE

MAINE STATE GRANT PROGRAM 2026-2027

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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.

FAME's Online Processing System (EPIC)

FAME requires institutions to process the 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 EPIC. This is the only method FAME will accept for processing 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, and/or ACH Form by contacting FAME or visiting FAME's website at **FAMEmaine.com/epic**.

Notifications

Student Notifications - FAME does not 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.

Institution Notifications - FAME routinely notifies institutions using the email addresses provided on the EPIC Online Authorization Form submitted by the institution's designated administrator. Notifications 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 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 in the state of Maine. While there is no 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

To be eligible for MSGP funds, a student 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 – not 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;
- 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;
- File the 2026-2027 FAFSA by November 13, 2026 and have a valid Student Aid Index (SAI) within the range identified in the "Award Parameters" section of this guide.

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. Such applicant 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.

Student Aid Index (SAI)

FAME uses the results of the FAFSA SAI calculation to determine the highest need students. FAME imports the results of Maine student FAFSAs daily. In determining SAI range eligibility, FAME recognizes the valid primary SAI assigned to the student. FAME estimates the SAI range annually as close to December 1 as possible for the upcoming academic year. The SAI is contingent on the final state of Maine budget, including student financial assistance appropriations to FAME. Email notification of the final SAI is sent to all Maine and NEBHE EPIC users in late June or early July. The SAI cut off for 2026-2027 MSGP is 10,000.

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). 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 2026-2027

Award amounts are set annually as close to December 1 as possible for the upcoming academic year. FAME sets an annual SAI cutoff amount and determines the semester awards for the type and location of the institution based on available funding. For 2026-2027 the awards are:

MAINE INSTITUTIONS			
Enrollment Status	**Fall**	**Spring**	**Academic Year**
Full-Time	$1,250	$1,250	$2,500
Half or Three-Quarter Time	$625	$625	$1,250

NEBHE ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS - PUBLIC			
Enrollment Status	**Fall**	**Spring**	**Academic Year**
Full-Time	$1,250	$1,250	$2,500
Half or Three-Quarter Time	$625	$625	$1,250

CERTIFICATION AND DISBURSEMENTS

Certifications

Institutions are required to certify that the student's enrollment meets all program eligibility requirements each semester, including but not limited to dependency status, state residency, and that there is no conflicting information.

Disbursements

Institutions must 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 2026-2027, institutions may certify students in EPIC between July 27, 2026 and June 18, 2027. FAME will process payment requests between September 1, 2026 and June 18, 2027.

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 SAI
- 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 absence according to their institutional policies.

Institutions do not need to return funds immediately to FAME if a "wash" opportunity exists. See "Transfer of Funds (WASH)" below for more information. When returning funds 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. Process the refund request first and then submit the payment request second.

RECONCILIATION REQUIREMENTS

FAME requires institutions to 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 the second Tuesday in June annually. Institutions should confirm that EPIC and the institution's financial aid system agree on the number of students paid and total dollars disbursed. Any payments due to the institution or refunds due to FAME must be processed by the indicated reconciliation deadline. Institutions may download cumulative rosters via 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.

2026-2027 MAINE STATE GRANT TIMELINE

Date	Activity
December 2025	Estimate 2026-2027 SAI cap and award amounts announced
March 2026	2026-2027 student rosters available for viewing
May 2026	Official 2026-2027 SAI cap of 10000 and award amounts announced
July 27, 2026	EPIC open for: – Fall 2026 certification – Medical program payment requests
September 1, 2026	Weekly Tuesday processing of Fall 2026 payment requests begins
November 13, 2026	FAFSA filing deadline for MSGP eligibility
December 18, 2026	▪ Institutions complete reconciliation of Fall 2026 MSGP ▪ Payment processing is suspended
January 4, 2027	▪ Weekly Tuesday processing of Spring 2027 ▪ Additional Fall 2026 processing
June 11, 2027	Institutions complete reconciliation of Spring 2027 MSGP
June 18, 2027	Last date 2026-2027 payments processed
June 18, 2027	EPIC closed for 2026-2027

ANTICIPATED 2027-2028 TIMELINE

Date	Activity
December 2026	Estimate 2027-2028 SAI cap and award amounts announced
March 2027	2027-2028 student rosters available for viewing
June 2027	Official 2027-2028 SAI cap and award amounts announced
Late-July 2027	EPIC open for Fall 2027 certification and medical payment requests
1st Friday - September 2027	Weekly Friday processing of Fall 2027 payment requests begins
Mid-December 2027	▪ Institutions complete reconciliation of Fall 2027 MSGP ▪ Payment processing is suspended
1st Friday - January 2028	▪ Weekly Friday processing of Spring 2028 ▪ Additional Fall 2027 processing
Early June 2028	Institutions complete reconciliation of Spring 2028 MSGP
Mid-June 2028	Last date 2027-2028 payments processed
3rd Friday June 2028	EPIC closed for 2027-2028

CONTACT INFORMATION

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

We can also be reached by phone at: **1-800-228-3734, option 5.**

For all correspondence via mail:

Finance Authority of Maine
Attn: State Education Programs
PO Box 949
Augusta, ME 04332-0949

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