



STATE GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS (SGS) GUIDANCE MEMO

REFERENCE: **SGS 10-006**
TOPIC: **OHIO COLLEGE OPPORTUNITY GRANT (OCOG)**
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RELEVANT STATUTE: **OHIO REVISED CODE, SECTION 3333.122**

Last year, based on projections of additional eligible students and the real prospect of less funding, we began designing a re-structure of the Ohio College Opportunity Grant (OCOG) Program to begin with the 2009-2010 academic year. Our work culminated in a recommendation that included a requirement to apply Pell/EFC first toward the state cost of attendance (tuition, general fees, books and transportation) before applying OCOG and also included the concept of providing need-based block grants to private, non-profit and private, for-profit institutions for use in awarding aid to need-based students. This recommendation was accepted as part of the Governor's Executive Budget unveiled last February which recommended an initial appropriation of \$395 million over the next biennium to fund the program.

However, on Monday, July 13, 2009, a revised compromise version of the biennial budget was passed out of the Conference Committee and approved by a majority of members in both the Ohio House of Representatives and Ohio Senate. This compromise version awaits the final signature of Governor Strickland. Following are details about the OCOG program for the 2009-2010 academic year that should prove helpful to financial aid personnel.

Budget

The final version of the budget reduced the initial recommended appropriation for OCOG from \$395 million to \$171 million—a decrease of \$224 million over the biennium.

State Cost of Attendance

Although the goal of the OCOG re-structure was to recognize expenses for books and transportation in addition to tuition and general fees, with the dramatic decrease in funding, this goal will not be possible for 2009-2010. However, the updated statute maintains the requirement that a student's Pell grant and EFC must be applied toward tuition/general fees before the OCOG award can be determined.

Tuition and General Fees

For all public institutions, the tuition and general fees are based on full-time, undergraduate charges at each institution and do not include additional tuition charges for those students who register for more than the standard number of full-time credits. In essence, there is no professional judgment discretion available to financial aid personnel to increase tuition charges for students taking additional credits. Additionally, the OCOG awards for 2009-2010 will be based on institutional tuition and general fees as charged in 2008-2009 and will not be adjusted mid-year in the event of institutional tuition increases. Since we have these figures available, OCOG amounts have been determined and will be presented in an award table format. Financial aid professionals will not need to compute OCOG eligibility for individual students.

Award Amounts--Public

Based upon the tuition and general fees as described above, for the 2009-2010 academic year, an OCOG eligible student's Pell/EFC combination should cover tuition and general fees at all community colleges and regional campuses. Therefore, no OCOG awards will be available to students attending these institutions. This scenario applies also to

students attending Central State University resulting in no OCOG awards. For students attending Shawnee State University, a maximum OCOG award of \$480 will be available. For OCOG eligible students (those with an EFC of 2190 or less *and* maximum household income of \$75,000) enrolled at all other university main campuses, a maximum OCOG award of \$1,008 (full-time enrollment) will be available.

Foster Youth

In the House passed version of the budget bill, there was a provision inserted that applied to qualified foster youth attending a community college. Specifically, the provision requires that for these students, their living expenses are to be included in their state cost of attendance in order to determine eligibility for OCOG. Until the budget is officially signed by the Governor, we will not have final details on the impact of this provision. Once more details are determined, further guidance will be issued.

Award Amounts—Private, Non-Profit

The block grant recommendation was not accepted in the final version of the budget; therefore, students at private, non-profit institutions will continue to be eligible for OCOG (those with an EFC of 2190 or less *and* maximum household income of \$75,000). The Pell/EFC first requirement applies to this sector as well, but a higher tuition and general fees structure results in maximum OCOG awards at all institutions. For OCOG eligible students enrolled at private, non-profit institutions, a maximum OCOG award of \$2,256 (full-time enrollment) will be available.

Award Amounts—Private, For-Profit

The final version of the biennial budget did **not** eliminate OCOG **eligibility** for private, for-profit institutions; however, the budget **did** eliminate OCOG **funding** for the proprietary sector. Therefore, regardless of OCOG eligibility, for students enrolled at private, for-profit institutions, no OCOG awards will be available.

Flattened OCOG

Since inception, OCOG has operated inversely to EFC—as EFC increases, OCOG award amounts decrease. With the advent of the Pell/EFC first formula, OCOG will now operate in a flattened scale. In essence, the OCOG award amount at any given institution (or perhaps in any given sector) will be the same for all eligible students regardless of EFC (assuming EFC remains at or below 2190).

OCOG Rosters

Due to the re-structure of OCOG, and due to the fact the final version was just determined earlier this week, our folks will need several weeks to update the HEI system and load hundreds of thousands of ISIR records for determination of OCOG eligibility. Therefore, OCOG rosters for 2009-2010 will not be available until later this summer. This means there will be some risk involved on the part of schools to determine OCOG eligibility based upon Ohio residency, EFC and household income. Confirming this eligibility against OBR rosters will not be possible immediately. Any discrepancies that surface once the rosters are available can be evaluated with assistance from the OCOG Program Administrator.

Prior Ohio Instructional Grant (OIG) Recipients

With the phase-out of OIG complete, prior OIG recipients **who are otherwise OCOG eligible (based on guidance contained in this memo)** can receive OCOG funds provided they have additional units of state, need-based aid available. Students are limited to 10 semesters or 15 quarters of state, need-based aid which includes a combination of both OIG and OCOG. The OCOG eligibility rosters will indicate the number of remaining available units incorporating any OIG units that have been used. Until the 2009-2010 OCOG rosters are available, financial aid personnel can refer to the **2008-2009 OIG rosters** for the most current data regarding remaining units of state, need-based aid eligibility.

Delay in Summer Payment Requests

Until the OCOG eligibility rosters are available, OCOG payment requests cannot be accepted. As such, schools should plan on summer OCOG payments being delayed. Rest assured that additional HEI extensions will be offered beyond summer payment submission deadlines for OCOG to accommodate this delay. The goal is to have eligibility rosters and payment requests available and functional by the early part of the autumn term.

Performance Based and At-Risk Components

New statutory language contained in the final version of the budget allows for the Chancellor to further re-structure OCOG in the future to direct funds toward any number of at-risk student populations, introduce a performance-based component to the program and/or require institutional matching funds to supplement OCOG awards. The financial aid community will be kept informed of further details as they emerge, but these factors are not expected to affect the award amounts and administration of the OCOG program detailed throughout this guidance for the duration of the 2009-2010 academic year.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

There had been some discussion to require OCOG recipients to meet federal satisfactory academic progress (SAP) guidelines in order to maintain OCOG eligibility. That will not be in force for the 2009-2010 academic year. According to continued statute, OCOG recipients must meet the academic progress standards set by their respective institution (whether that is the federal SAP guidelines or a more lenient standard) in order to maintain OCOG eligibility.

Ohio Administrative Code

With final budget passage, changes to statute (the Ohio Revised Code) regarding OCOG are complete. However, throughout Ohio Revised Code, there are several references to the Chancellor establishing rules for various aspects of the program. These rules are the Ohio Administrative Code and will not be filed and approved legislatively until later this summer or early in the fall. Although some items in this memo are not official until the rules are approved, this guidance is being provided with the intention of solidifying it administratively at the appropriate time.

Refunds

Note the OCOG refund policy continues to be valid. Since OCOG will remain tuition and general fees specific for 2009-2010, a portion of OCOG must be refunded if a student drops a class or withdraws entirely and is refunded all or a portion of tuition/general fees. However, if a student receives no refund of all or a portion of tuition/general fees, no OCOG refund is necessary.

Award Chart (**official award tables will be created and approved as part of administrative code**)

Ohio residents in a degree or nurse diploma program with an EFC of 2190 or less and a maximum household income of \$75,000:

Enrolled:	Community Colleges	Regional Campuses	Central State	Shawnee State	All Other Main Campuses	Private, Non-Profit	Private, For-Profit	PA*
Full-time	0	0	0	480	1008	2256	0	600 or 800
3/4 Time	0	0	0	360	756	1692	0	300 or 400
1/2 Time	0	0	0	240	504	1128	0	300 or 400
1/4 Time	0	0	0	120	252	564	0	0

- ▶ All amounts reflect annual awards. Appropriate annual award amount should be divided by two for semesters or three for quarters.
- ▶ Eligible students continuously enrolled may receive an additional 1/2 or 1/3 of their respective award amount in their third semester or fourth quarter.
- ▶ Students are limited to 10 semesters or 15 quarters of state, need-based grant aid (including combination of OCOG and OIG).

*Amounts for Ohio residents attending eligible Pennsylvania institutions--\$800/\$400 figures apply to veterans and \$600/\$300 figures to non-veterans.

Financial aid personnel should direct questions to the Ohio College Opportunity Grant Program Administrator, Tamika Braswell, 614.728.8862, tbraswell@regents.state.oh.us.