

Senior Citizen Tuition Waiver Policy Research

Policies and Practice in Other States

Senior Citizen tuition waivers codified in 21 states and the District of Columbia:

Alaska, Arkansas, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Texas, Vermont, and Virginia.

Primary Policy Issues

- Age: The age requirement that establishes a resident as a “senior citizen” varies between 60-65 years of age. For those states with an authorized waiver program, by age 65 all seniors qualify.
- Fees: Though not always explicitly addressed, virtually all states require any special course fees to be paid by the recipient.
- Audit vs. Degree: Some states allow tuition waivers on the condition that the recipient will not complete the course for any credit towards a degree program.
- Space: Some states require space to be open in a course before they will allow a tuition waiver recipient admission to the course.

California State University System - “Over 60 Program”

California residents 60 years of age and over who wish to take classes or pursue a degree may have their tuition fees waived. A nominal university fee of \$4 per quarter will still apply, plus any required course fees.

Washington Community College System

Community colleges may waive tuition (operating and building fees) and services and activities fees for students sixty years or older who are enrolled for credit. For students enrolled on an audit basis, a nominal fee, not to exceed five dollars per quarter, is to be charged. Students enrolling under this waiver shall register for no more than two courses per quarter. Students shall be enrolled on a space available basis and must be Washington state residents. These students are not to be included in state enrollment counting.

Texas Higher Education

Texas residents aged 65 or older may receive up to 6 credit hours per semester waived after presentation of a valid birth certificate.

Oregon Higher Education

Oregon senior citizens who are neither seeking academic credit nor working toward a degree may attend classes if space is available. Charges may be made for any special materials. Incidental fee services are not provided.

Massachusetts Higher Education

Members of the Massachusetts Commonwealth over 60 years of age are eligible for a full tuition waiver, not including special course fees depending on the space availability of the particular course.

Prior Board Action

On June 17, 2011, the Board suspended the Senior Citizen waiver program. The suspended policy is as follows (*Title 4, Chapter 17, Section 11*):

In-state residents 62 years of age or older shall be permitted to register for credit or as auditors in any course without registration or application or admission fees except as otherwise provided in this section. A person must reach 62 years of age on the first day

of the first scheduled class meeting to be eligible. If the individual registers for more than one class within a semester or term, the earliest scheduled class meeting will determine eligibility. The consent of the course instructor may be required for all such registration.

- a. This policy is effective during the fall and spring terms only and is applicable to those courses where space is available.*
- b. Such registration shall not entitle a person to any privileges usually associated with registration; e.g., student association membership, health service, intercollegiate athletic tickets.*
- c. Registration fees associated with the William S. Boyd School of Law, the University of Nevada School of Medicine, and the UNLV School of Dental Medicine are not eligible under this policy.*
- d. Academic credit courses that lead to a degree or certificate, including state-supported distance education course, independent learning, and continuing education courses, are eligible for the fee waiver. Non-state-supported courses are not eligible for waiver under this policy.*

Policy considerations for the Board of Regents

The Board may wish to consider the following issues as it deliberates the matter of a course fee waiver for certain senior citizens:

1. **Nominal Course Fee** – authorize the institutions to charge a nominal course fee, in some states, as previously noted fees are less than \$10 per course.
2. **Special Course Fees** – exclude special course fees from the waiver provision. Under the Board policy that is currently suspended, students were required by institutions to pay special fees, including the technology fee and lab fees.
3. **Credit Limitation** – limit the number of credits that a senior citizen may take under the waiver program. Some states have established limits of six credits per semester.
4. **Audit Course Only** – limit the policy to senior citizens auditing courses only. Under the suspended policy a senior citizen could take a course for credit or audit.
5. **Non-Degree Seeking Student** – limit the waiver program to non-degree seeking students only.
6. **Nevada Residents Only** – limit the waiver to senior citizens who are Nevada residents. Under the suspended policy non-resident senior citizens received the waiver for registration fees only, but had to pay non-resident tuition.
7. **Limiting to Space Available** – including a limitation on space availability will require a manual administrative effort by the institution unless they choose to develop a modification for PeopleSoft. Some states have allowed senior citizens to register with a fee waiver on a date after other degree-seeking students have begun the registration process.