

**NEVADA SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION
PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES MANUAL**

CHAPTER 11

FINANCIAL AID

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Section 1. Regents' Service Program

Title 4, Chapter 18 of the *Board of Regents' Handbook* establishes the Regents' Service Program so that NSHE students can make a contribution to the critical needs of the community. The following procedures outline the program's structure.

1. Intent

Institutional models previously entitled Regents' Award Program shall be renamed to Regents' Service Program. Programs must include:

- a. An overall focus that will make a contribution to the State of Nevada, the surrounding community, or the institution.
- b. Literacy programs that meet the needs of students in K-12 shall receive first priority. Recipients may be placed as off-campus tutors or coordinators for these programs.
- c. All awards must have an on- or off-campus service/work obligation that provides the student clear responsibility and an opportunity to develop a record of accomplishment.
- d. Institutions shall have the flexibility to design work, stipend, scholarship or graduate assistantship programs that meet the needs of their students.
- e. Positions may not be used to supplant personnel needs on campus, or used in the same general way as work-study positions.
- f. Positions may not provide class instruction.
- g. If graduate assistantships are funded, the function of these positions must be different from other state-funded graduate assistants, and recipients of this program may not be employed as teaching assistants.
- h. Non-resident graduate assistants under this program shall not be charged tuition in accordance with NSHE *Board of Regents' Handbook* Title 4, Chapter 15, Section 3, Number 3.

2. Eligibility

Awards must be made pursuant to the Board-established guidelines for student access (Title 4, Chapter 18) providing that at least 80 percent of funds shall be used for need-based programs. The remaining funds will go toward access-oriented programs. For the purposes of this program, federal government methodology criteria for determining need shall be replaced with the following:

- a. Enrolled in a degree or certificate program, in at least six credits of academic work at the institution for which they will participate in the Regents' Service Program.

- b. Meet at least one of the following criteria:
 - i. Head of Household;
 - ii. Single Parent;
 - iii. Age 22 or over and have never attended college or have had a break in enrollment of two or more years;
 - iv. No support from parents or family;
 - v. Unusual family or financial circumstances; or
 - vi. First generation college-bound.
- c. Students who meet multiple criteria shall be given priority in the program.
- d. Priority shall be given to eligible Nevada residents.
- e. International students may be employed under this program provided they meet other institutional and federal employment requirements.
- f. If and when an institution meets all demonstrated eligibility based on these criteria for its student population and for those students who apply for the Regents' Service Program, this ratio may be relaxed. Remaining funds from the 80percent category may be applied to "access-oriented" student financial assistance.
- g. For the remaining access-oriented programs (no more than 20 percent), students must demonstrate an ability and willingness to work in a service program approved by the institution.
- h. Each institution must establish a minimum grade point average (GPA) or good standing requirement to be applied to all students participating in the program. This requirement cannot be less stringent than current practice for other student employment programs, although it may be more restrictive if the institution deems it appropriate.

3. Program Development

Each institution must develop a plan for use of the positions.

- a. At least one individual must have oversight over the program.
- b. Summer programs are allowed in which students may work as much as full-time without being enrolled; however, this is limited to continuing students who were enrolled at the institution in six credits either the prior spring or are enrolled in six credits the following fall.
- c. Positions must:
 - i. Be consistent with the student's career objective, service objective, or academic area of interest.
 - ii. Make a contribution to the state of Nevada, the community, and/or the institution.
 - iii. Be designated as on- or off-campus. Off-campus employers must sign a participation agreement or contract, as determined by the institution.
 - iv. Reflect a high level of skill or knowledge needed for service programs. Examples include: tutor, mentor, literacy programs assistant, public policy research assistant, graduate intern, peer advisor.

4. Payment

Institutions are appropriated Regents' Service Program funds as a line item in the state budget.

- a. 100 percent of the funding for each position will be from state funds including benefits (workers' compensation, alternative retirement, etc).
- b. At no time may the institution require an employer match, even for off-campus positions.
- c. These positions should not supplant work-study funds that do require a match.
- d. Fringe benefits for student employment positions in literacy programs may be paid from these funds.
- e. Work schedules and rate of pay will be determined by the nature of the service required, and may be established as a separate category in the institution's student employment wage classification document.
- f. Funds may be used for tuition assistance.
- g. The institution may choose to pay resident fees for assistantships from these funds if it is deemed appropriate.

5. Administrative Costs

Each institution may allocate a portion of the funds from the Regents' Service Program to fund personnel, associated fringe, travel, and operating expenses incurred in the administration of the program.

- a. Institutions may allocate up to 9percent of the total budgeted funds for administrative costs.
- b. The administrative cost allowance must be used to administer the Regents' Service Program and may not be allocated elsewhere in the institution.

6. Reporting

A report will be submitted no less than annually by each institution to the NSHE System Administration Office. Reports will be collected as part of the annual financial aid report, as well as an individual Regents' Service Program report.

On an annual basis, the Board of Regents' Academic, Research and Student Affairs Committee (ARSA) will review these reports and may provide recommendations if deemed appropriate.

(Added 11/06; A. 10/09, 9/10, 3/16)

Section 2. Silver State Opportunity Grant Program

Title 4, Chapter 18 of the *Board of Regents' Handbook* directs the Chancellor to establish procedures and guidelines to comply with the requirements of the Silver State Opportunity Grant Program codified under Chapter 396 of *Nevada Revised Statutes*.

1. Eligible Institutions. Eligible institutions include each NSHE community college and state college that shall award grants under the SSOG Program according to procedures established herein.
2. Apportionment of Funds between Eligible Institutions.
 - a. State funding for the SSOG program will be allocated to each community college and state college annually, and shall be based on the proportion of cost for fully funding all eligible students during the prior year. Institutional allocations shall be reviewed and approved by the Chancellor.
 - b. Institutions shall not award funds exceeding the amount allocated pursuant to this Section.
 - c. Dollars that are in jeopardy of not being awarded and disbursed at the institution where originally allocated shall be divided among the remaining eligible institutions based on the proportion of cost for unawarded SSOG eligible students.
3. Eligibility Requirements.
 - a. To be eligible for the SSOG Program, a student must:
 - i. Except as otherwise provided, enroll in at least 12 credit hours each semester of award at a community college or state college;
 - ii. Be enrolled in a program of study leading to an undergraduate degree or certificate;
 - iii. Be placed into college-level English and mathematics courses in accordance with Title 4, Chapter 16, Section 1;
 - iv. Be classified as a resident in accordance with Title 4, Chapter 15;
 - v. Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA); and
 - vi. Meet institutional Title IV financial aid satisfactory academic progress requirements.
 - b. A student who enrolls in fewer than 12 credit hours to complete their program of study in their final semester prior to graduation is eligible to be funded at a lower enrollment level contingent upon available funding.
 - c. A student who loses eligibility for SSOG may reinstate during a subsequent semester by regaining financial aid satisfactory academic progress. Subject to available funds, this student would be eligible to receive SSOG in future semesters, provided all eligibility requirements for the program are met.
 - d. Each institution shall utilize its existing federal Title IV satisfactory academic progress appeals process to allow SSOG recipients who are not making satisfactory academic progress to appeal their status. A student who is approved through the institutional appeals process to receive Title IV aid may also receive SSOG during the semester for which an appeal is approved, providing the eligibility requirements set forth under this Section are met. Although students with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status do not qualify to receive Title IV aid, such students who are not making satisfactory academic progress may appeal their status under an institutional appeals process for the purpose of the SSOG award.

4. Amount of the SSOG Award

- a. Grant awards are subject to the limit of the funds available for the SSOG Program and are intended to pay for a portion of the Cost of Attendance at a community college or state college.
- b. Maximum SSOG Award. The maximum annual amount of the grant each student is eligible to receive shall be equal to the Cost of Attendance established for the purpose of the SSOG program minus the amounts determined for the student contribution, family contribution, and federal contribution, as defined and calculated pursuant to this Section.

For an academic year, the award amount shall not exceed:

- i. \$5,500 for a student enrolled in 15 or more credits per semester; and
 - ii. \$4,400 for a student enrolled in at least 12 but less than 15 credits per semester.
- c. Minimum SSOG Award. A student who is not eligible to receive an annual SSOG award of at least \$200 for an academic year based on the SSOG award calculation shall not receive the grant.
 - d. Awards will be prorated according to enrollment level for a student who is enrolled in less than 12 credits in their final semester prior to graduation. The prorated amount shall be determined based on the individual student's calculated annual award, up to the program maximum of \$5,500, divided by 30, and multiplied by the number of credits in which the student is enrolled.

5. Cost of Attendance

- a. For purposes of calculating SSOG awards, the annual Cost of Attendance (COA) for all eligible institutions for Academic Year 2020-21 shall be:
 - i. \$22,801 for students living off-campus and not with a parent;
 - ii. \$15,296 for students living with a parent; and
 - iii. \$18,692 for students living on campus.
- b. The institution may pro-rate the COA in cases where a student enrolls for a single semester.
- c. Under no circumstances shall the grant received under the SSOG Program, along with other financial assistance received, exceed institutional COA.

6. Student Contribution

- a. A standard student contribution that will be used by each community college and state college in the calculation of all grants awarded under the SSOG Program will be calculated by determining what a student could earn by working at minimum wage a reasonable number of hours during the school year and over the summer. This calculation should in no way be construed as requiring a student to seek or obtain employment as a condition of eligibility for the SSOG Program.
- b. For purposes of calculating SSOG awards, the student contribution shall be set at \$5,500 for an academic year. The institution shall pro-rate the student contribution in cases where a single semester cost of attendance is utilized.

- c. The student contribution may be covered by, but is not limited to, the following:
 - i. Student earnings or savings;
 - ii. Private, institutional, state or federal scholarships, including the Governor Guinn Millennium Scholarship;
 - iii. Grants not listed under Subsection 6 of this Section;
 - iv. Veterans education benefits;
 - v. Student loans; and
 - vi. Financial assistance from family or friends.
7. Family Contribution. The family contribution shall be equivalent to the federal nine-month Estimated Family Contribution (EFC), as calculated by the U.S. Department of Education based on FAFSA data and reported on the Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR). The EFC may be prorated for an award period of less than nine months.
8. Federal Contribution
 - a. The federal contribution shall be equivalent to the total of federal grant aid a student is awarded during the same award year from the following programs only:
 - i. Federal Pell Grant;
 - ii. Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG); and
 - iii. Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant.
 - b. Under no circumstances shall the federal contribution include the amount the student is awarded in student loans.
9. Guidelines for Awarding and Disbursing SSOG funds
 - a. Only students who are enrolled in 12 or more credits that count toward their program of study are eligible to receive an SSOG disbursement.
 - b. A student who previously earned a bachelor's degree is not eligible to receive the SSOG award.
 - c. A student with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status may be eligible for the SSOG award. Such students must complete the FAFSA and identify themselves to the institutional financial aid office as having DACA status. DACA students must provide documentation they have been granted Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals before they can be awarded an SSOG grant.
 - d. A student placed into remedial math or English pursuant to Title 4, Chapter 16, Section 1 of the *Handbook* is not eligible for SSOG until all such remedial coursework is completed. However, enrollment in corequisite coursework where academic support is provided to students while enrolled in college gateway courses shall be considered college level courses for purposes of SSOG eligibility.
 - e. SSOG funds to eligible students will be awarded by ascending EFC up to 8500 and in the following priority tiers until available funds are exhausted.
 - i. Tier 1: eligible students who are enrolled in at least 15 credit hours per semester;
 - ii. Tier 2: eligible students who are enrolled in less than 15 credit hours in their final semester prior to graduation who self-identify to the Financial Aid Office and previously received the award; and

- iii. Tier 3: eligible students who are enrolled in at least 12 but less than 15 credit hours per semester.

A tier must be fully awarded at all institutions before subsequent tiers may be funded, at the direction of the System Office. This order shall apply each time SSOG funds are awarded and applies only to the population of students meeting all eligibility requirements as of the date awarding is carried out until all available funds are exhausted. If available funds are not exhausted by the 100 percent refund period for the spring semester, the Chancellor may expand the EFC range for eligible students.

10. Guidelines for Enrollment Changes.

- a. Changes in student enrollment levels shall be treated as follows:
 - i. An award shall be cancelled for a student whose enrollment drops below the tier in which they were awarded (i.e. 15 credits, 12 credits, or number of credits required to graduate at end of term) at any point through the add/drop period. A student may be eligible for an award in a different credit-level tier, contingent upon available funding and according to awarding protocol established in Subsection 9 of this Section.
 - ii. A student whose enrollment increases above the tier in which they were initially awarded (i.e. from less than 15 to 15 or more) may be eligible for a higher award amount, contingent upon available funding and according to awarding protocol established in Subsection 9 of this Section.
- b. The add/drop period may vary by institution. For enrollment changes that result in a course being removed from the student's academic record, the institution shall cancel the award if the change results in the student's enrollment level falling below the tier in which they were awarded. In cases where the student withdraws from a course and receives a "W" grade, the enrollment level does not change and therefore the award remains.

11. Award Date. For Academic Year 2020-21, institutions shall make initial SSOG awards no earlier than July 15, 2020, and no later than July 31, 2020. Future award dates shall be set by the Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs in consultation with institutional financial aid offices.

12. Course Availability to Meet the 12-Credit per Semester Requirement

- a. Each community college and state college shall ensure that adequate courses are offered each semester so that a student otherwise eligible for the grant and desirous of enrolling in 12 or more credits is able to do so. If situations arise where such a student is, due to course availability, unable to enroll in 12 or more credits that count toward the student's program of study, the institution shall consider feasible alternatives, including, but not limited to:
 - i. Course substitutions;
 - ii. Adjustment of a student's academic plan; and
 - iii. Opening a new course section.

- b. Credits taken at another eligible institution to meet degree requirements at the student's home institution shall count towards the eligibility requirement of Subsection 1(a). In order to take advantage of this provision, a student must complete the NSHE SSOG Co-Enrollment form by the end of the semester for which he or she is requesting funding. For purposes of this Subsection, "home institution" means the institution at which the student is enrolled in a program of study leading to a recognized degree or certificate and, if eligible, is receiving Title IV Federal Student Aid.
 - c. Each community college and state college shall ensure advisors are available to assist SSOG students who experience difficulty in registering for 12 or more credits that count toward their program of study.
13. Reporting Requirements. On an annual basis, the Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs shall request from institutions data necessary to evaluate the success of the SSOG program.
14. Communications Strategies. Institutions shall establish strategies to communicate the availability of the SSOG to students, including the priority of awarding established in Subsection 9.e. Type and method of communications may vary by institution; however, all institutions in jeopardy of not expending all allocated funds must send targeted communications to students in an effort to encourage more students to become eligible by taking action (e.g. adding a class, taking the placement test, completing the FAFSA).
15. Definitions. The following definitions apply for purposes of this Section:
- a. Award – The SSOG amount offered to a student on their Financial Aid Award letter. In order to receive the funds offered, a student must meet all eligibility requirements at time of disbursement.
 - b. Disbursement – The SSOG amount actually paid by the institution to a student account.
 - c. Semester – "Semester" includes Fall, Spring and Summer terms subject to available funds. Students who expended their maximum award for the academic year in the prior fall and spring terms are not eligible to receive an award for the summer term(s).

(Added 6/15; A. 9/15, 3/16, 6/16, 3/17, 6/17, 4/18, 6/18, 9/18, 6/19, 9/19, 6/20, 7/20)

Section 3. Nevada Promise Scholarship Program

Title 4, Chapter 18, Section 11 of the *Board of Regents' Handbook* directs the Chancellor to establish procedures and guidelines to comply with the requirements of the Nevada Promise Scholarship Program codified under Chapter 396 of the Nevada Revised Statutes.

1. Deadlines.

To be eligible to receive a Nevada Promise Scholarship, a student must meet the following deadline requirements:

- a. Application: A student must complete the Nevada Promise Scholarship Application on or before October 31st of the year prior to the student's first fall semester of

enrollment. (Ex: A student planning to enroll for their first semester in Fall 2020 must complete the Application on or before October 31, 2019.)

- b. Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA): A student must complete the FAFSA on or before March 1st prior to each academic year. A student who is prohibited by law from completing the FAFSA must complete the acknowledgement form, as defined in Subsection 3 of this Section, on or before March 1st prior to each academic year.
- c. Training: A student must participate in one training meeting related to financial aid, the FAFSA, and College Orientation on or before March 1st in the year of the student's first fall semester of enrollment.
- d. Community Service: A student must complete at least 8 hours of eligible community service as defined in Title 4, Chapter 18, Section 11 of the *Board of Regents' Handbook* on or before July 1st in the year of the student's first fall semester of enrollment. To maintain eligibility, a student must complete at least 8 hours of eligible community service on or before January 1st for fall semester and on or before July 1st for spring semester.
- e. Meeting with a Mentor: A student must have met at least once with a mentor assigned to them, in accordance with Subsection 5 of this Section, on or before July 1st in the year of the student's first fall semester of enrollment. To maintain eligibility, a student must meet at least once with their assigned mentor on or before January 1st for fall semester and on or before July 1st for spring semester while enrolled and receiving the scholarship.
- f. Gift Aid Eligibility Documentation: A student must submit all information deemed necessary by the community college to determine the student's eligibility for gift aid on or before July 1st prior to each academic year.
- g. Leaves of Absence: A leave of absence must be requested before or during the first semester in which said leave of absence would commence.

2. Common Application.

There shall be a single, web-based application for the scholarship that is utilized by all four community colleges. The application shall be created and maintained by the Vice Chancellor for Community Colleges, with input from the community colleges. The information collected shall be available to each community college for their respective applicants.

3. Acknowledgement Form.

Students who are prohibited by law from completing a FAFSA must complete the Nevada Promise Scholarship Non-FAFSA Filer Affirmation form affirming said prohibition. This form shall be a single form utilized by all community colleges for this purpose and shall be created and maintained by the Vice Chancellor for Community Colleges, with input from the community colleges.

4. Reporting on Appeals and Leaves of Absence

In addition to the requirements of Title 4, Chapter 18, Section 11 of the Board of *Regents' Handbook*, each community college shall track and report on an annual basis to the Vice Chancellor for Community Colleges:

- a. The number of appeals received;
- b. The number of appeals granted;
- c. The number of appeals denied;
- d. The reasons provided by students for appeal;
- e. The number of requests for Leaves of Absence received; and
- f. The number of Leaves of Absence granted.

The community college shall maintain all necessary information on appeals and leaves of absence granted for each student.

5. Mentoring Program

- a. Each community college shall create and maintain a Nevada Promise Scholarship mentoring program for the purpose of students gaining and maintaining eligibility in accordance with Title 4, Chapter 18, Section 11 of the *Board of Regents' Handbook*.
- b. Each community college shall pair a Nevada Promise Scholarship applicant (mentee) directly with an eligible mentor who shall serve as that student's mentor for the duration of their enrollment in the program, unless a request is made by the student or mentor for reassignment. The community college shall provide the mentee and parent/guardian with the name and contact information for the assigned mentor. The community college shall also provide the mentor with the name and contact information for each assigned mentee as well as their parent/guardian. Each mentor shall include the parent/guardian in any initial communication. Each community college may require a parental consent form for mentees to participate in the mentoring program.
- c. Mentors shall meet with mentees in either a public setting or at a time and place established by the community college, for example a meet-and-greet session at the community college. A mentor may conduct a meeting over the phone if a personal meeting is unreasonably burdensome.
- d. Each mentor shall be assigned no more than ten (10) mentees at any one time.
- e. An eligible mentor shall:
 - i. Be 21 years old or older;
 - ii. Pass a comprehensive background check, including but not limited to a criminal background check, at least once every three years;
 - iii. Complete a training offered by the community college that includes but is not limited to:
 - a. Nevada Promise Scholarship eligibility requirements;
 - b. FAFSA and Financial Aid;
 - c. How to effectively communicate and work with prospective and new college students;
 - d. Guidelines for safely meeting individually with students; and
 - e. Contact information for a staff member at the community college who can answer questions from mentors or mentees.

6. Students with Disabilities

Students who have a documented temporary or permanent physical or mental disability or who were previously subject to an individualized education program (IEP) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1400 et seq., or a plan under Title V of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. §§ 791 et seq. are to be determined by the community college to be exempt from the following NPS eligibility criteria:

- a. The minimum number of credits required for eligibility; and
- b. The limitation on the number of academic years a student may receive the scholarship.

To receive funding under a reduced credit load, students must submit to the community college's disability resource center (DRC) the Nevada Promise Scholarship Students with Documented Disabilities form by the end of the semester for which they are seeking funding. The completed form will be sent directly from the DRC to the financial aid office, where the scholarship award will be processed.

Should the student begin the semester under regular funding criteria and then submit the form after receiving the scholarship, funding may be reduced and the student's full refund (if applicable) will be returned to the Nevada Promise Scholarship account. If it is determined that circumstances leading to changes in a student's documented disability require that they reduce their credit load after the Nevada Promise Scholarship Students with Documented Disabilities form is submitted for the current semester, the student may request a revision to be done on a case-by-case basis provided this determination is made before the end of the semester.

7. Refunds.

All money from a Nevada Promise Scholarship awarded to a student that is refunded in whole or in part for any reason shall be refunded to the Nevada Promise Scholarship account and not the student. In the event a Nevada Promise Scholarship recipient is due a refund that is less than 100%, and said student has also received funds from the Governor Guinn Millennium Scholarship (GGMS), the refunded amount shall be divided and returned to these two programs based on the proportionality between these two programs of the original award, up to the amount originally awarded from each scholarship. This proportional approach applies only after any Pell Grant or other Title IV aid, if any, is returned to the federal government according to the Return To Title IV (R2T4) calculation.

For example:

- 1) A student's entire bill was paid using a combination of GGMS and NPS and is due a partial refund of 50%:

Total bill of \$1,000.

GGMS paid \$250 (25% of total)

NPS paid \$750 (75% of total)

Refund due is 50% (\$500)

GGMS receives \$125 (.25*500)

NPS receives \$375 (.75*500)

- 2) A student's entire bill was paid using a combination of Pell, GGMS and NPS and is due a partial refund that is less than R2T4:

Total bill of \$1,800

Pell paid \$473

GGMS paid \$480

NPS paid \$847

Refund due is \$350

R2T4 results in a return of \$400 (which exceeds refunded amount)

GGMS receives \$0

NPS receives \$0

- 3) A student's entire bill was paid using a combination of Pell, GGMS and NPS and is due a partial refund that is greater than R2T4:

Total bill of \$1,800

Pell paid \$473

GGMS paid \$480 (36.2% of GGMS+NPS Total)

NPS paid \$847 (63.8% of GGMS+NPS Total)

Refund due is \$350

R2T4 results in a return of \$200

GGMS receives \$54.30 ($.362 * 150$)

NPS receives \$95.70 ($.638 * 150$)

(Added 12/19; A. 5/20)