Program Authorization and Purpose

The Top 10 Percent Scholarship Program is authorized in the General Appropriations Act. Rules establishing procedures to administer the program can be found in Chapter 22, Subchapter K of the Texas Administrative Code. The program is funded through appropriations by the Texas Legislature from various revenues. The purpose of the Top 10 Percent Scholarship Program is to encourage outstanding high school students who graduate within the top 10 percent of their high school graduating classes to attend a public college or university in Texas.

Priority Deadline

March 15 is the priority deadline for students to establish eligibility for an award through the Top 10 Percent Scholarship Program. In order to meet the priority deadline, an applicant must submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) in time to generate the Central Processing System (CPS) results in a non-rejected status by March 15, or submit the Texas application for State Financial aid (TASFA) to the financial aid office by March 15. Eligible students meeting the priority deadline will be considered in the priority 1 group. Eligible students not meeting the deadline will be considered in the priority 2 group. Because of limited funding, priority 2 group students will not be considered for awards for the 2013-2014 academic year (see section Award Amounts below).

Funding

Allocations are not made at the institutional level. The statewide aggregate of funds is awarded to eligible students on a priority basis as determined annually by the Coordinating Board.

Initial Eligibility Requirements

To receive an initial award through the Top 10 Percent Scholarship Program, a student must:
1. Be a Texas resident;
2. Graduate from an accredited public or private high school in Texas (home-based private high schools are not currently accredited by TEA or one of TEA's accrediting agencies);
3. Complete the Recommended or Distinguished Achievement curriculum (or the equivalent) at an accredited public high school in Texas, or the equivalent at an accredited private high school in Texas (see the section Texas Private High School Certification below);
4. Rank in the top 10 percent of the HS graduating class as of the 7th semester, or the 6th semester if the college uses that semester to determine admission to the institution;
5. Submit the 2013-2014 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) in time to generate the CPS results in a non-rejected status by March 15, 2013, or submit the 2013-2014 Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA) to the financial aid office by March 15, 2013;
6. Register with Selective Service, or be exempt;
7. Enroll full-time in the fall 2013 semester in a Texas public 2-year or 4-year college or university after graduation from high school in 2012-13 and maintain full-time enrollment through the census date of the semester; and
8. Demonstrate financial need (see the section Need Determination below).

Renewal Eligibility Requirements

To receive a renewal award through the Top 10 Percent Scholarship Program, a student must:
1. Receive an initial year Top 10 Percent Scholarship in a previous year;
2. Submit the 2013-2014 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) in time to generate the CPS results in a non-rejected status by March 15, 2013, or submit the 2013-2014 Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA) to the financial aid office by March 15, 2013;
3. Demonstrate financial need (see the section Need Determination below);
4. Enroll full-time in the fall 2013 semester in a Texas public 2-year or 4-year college or university and maintain full-time enrollment through the census date of the semester;
5. Successfully complete at least 30 SCH in the previous year;
6. Successfully complete at least 75% of the hours attempted in the previous year; and
7. Maintain a cumulative 3.25 GPA*.

* If a student has taken courses at another institution which are not included in the institution’s cumulative GPA calculation, the student has the right to ask to have the transcripts from the other institution(s) be assessed counting all classes and grade points earned to meet the GPA requirements for the program.

**Bonus Award Eligibility Requirements**

**BONUS AWARDS WILL NOT BE FUNDED IN FY2014 DUE TO BUDGET RESTRICTIONS**

Prior year bonus recipients may still be eligible for a renewal award if they meet the renewal eligibility requirements listed above.

**Award Amounts**

Award amounts for FY14 are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award Type</th>
<th>Max Award</th>
<th>Priority 1</th>
<th>Priority 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial Year (IY)</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No Award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renewal Year (RY)</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No Award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce Bonus</td>
<td>No Award</td>
<td>No Award</td>
<td>No Award</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All awards through this program are for the fall semester only and must be included on the institution’s award notification to the student.

**Need Determination**

Though the Top 10 Percent Scholarship Program has a need component, it is not a true need-based program since it is not limited by the student’s calculated need (COA – EFC – Other Resources = Calculated Need). An applicant is determined to meet the need component of the program if the following is true: COA – EFC – Pell > $0. If this need component is met (and the student is otherwise eligible), the student can receive up to the maximum award amount even though the award may exceed the student’s calculated need and COA.

Please note: If the Top 10 Percent Scholarship award is packaged with true need-based programs (e.g., TEXAS Grant, TEOG, FSEOG, Subsidized Loan, etc.) or other program which is limited to the calculated need or COA, the Top 10 Percent Scholarship award amount and/or the award amount for the other program(s) may be affected due to the limitation of the calculated need or COA requirement for the program.

**Texas Private High School Certification**

For determining eligibility of students graduating from a private high school in Texas, the private high school must submit a certification that the student has completed the equivalent of the required Recommended High School Curriculum. The certification is located at [http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=B70D4020-D326-326A-475000FF55560470](http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=B70D4020-D326-326A-475000FF55560470) on the Coordinating Board website.

**Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Codes for Critical Workforce Shortage Areas**

**CIP CODE TABLE NOT PROVIDED SINCE BONUS AWARDS WILL NOT BE FUNDED IN FY2014 DUE TO BUDGET RESTRICTIONS**
**Maximum Time Frame**

Unless granted a hardship extension (see below), a student’s eligibility ends four years from the start of the semester or term in which the student received his/her initial Top 10 Percent award, or upon completion of a bachelor’s degree, whichever comes first.

**Hardship Provisions**

In the event of a hardship or for other good cause as determined by the institution, an otherwise eligible student may be allowed to receive a renewal award while the student’s GPA, completion rate, or number of completed hours falls below the eligibility requirements. Such conditions may include, but are not limited to:

- a severe illness or other debilitating condition that may affect the student’s performance,
- an indication that the student is responsible for the care of a sick, injured, or needy person and the provision of care is affecting the student’s performance, or
- fewer than twelve hours to complete the student’s degree plan (applicable if the student is transferring from a 2-year institution to a 4 year institution after receiving an associate’s degree).

A hardship provision may not be granted to allow an award for less than full time enrollment or for an extension of the four-year award limitation (see the section Maximum Time Frame above). However, a hardship provision may be granted to allow for a break within the four-year award period, extending the period of time for the four awards. Documentation justifying the break extending the student’s eligibility beyond the original four year time period must be kept in the student’s record. The institution must identify students who are granted an extension and the length of the extension so that the Coordinating Board can appropriately monitor each student’s period of eligibility.

Each institution must adopt a hardship policy and have it available for public review upon request. All hardship decisions must be documented in the student’s record and be available for submission to the Coordinating Board if requested.

**Requesting Funds**

**File of Top 10 Percent Eligible Recipients**

Institutions will be required to submit a file of all eligible recipients for the fall 2013 semester to THECB no earlier than August 1, 2013, and **no later than October 1, 2013**. Information included in this file will be used by THECB to confirm and approve funding for eligible students. Instructions concerning the creation and submission of these files will be provided under separate cover.

THECB will process payment requests for all unduplicated eligible students reported (Unduplicated = students not included on other institutions’ files.) A funding report will be provided to each institution indicating the students currently funded and the students who could not be funded due to duplicate information at another institution. In order for an institution to receive funding for enrolled students designated as duplicates, the institution must work with the other institution(s) to determine where the student is actually attending. Enrollment confirmation must be reported to THECB by **October 1, 2013** for these students to receive funding.

Students who were selected for verification and have not yet completed the process will be designated as eligible pending verification. Funding will not be processed for these students until the institution notifies the Coordinating Board that verification is complete and the student is still eligible to receive funding. Verification and eligibility confirmation must be reported to THECB by **October 1, 2013** for these students to receive funding.

Funds received by the institution as a result of this request file process must be disbursed to the approved eligible recipients or applied to the approved recipients’ accounts within five business days of receipt of the funds by the institution’s fiduciary institution.

**Refunding Program Monies**

Funds received and not disbursed to the approved eligible recipients within 5 business days of receipt must be returned to the Coordinating Board.

THECB
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Retroactive or Late Disbursements
Funds that are disbursed after the end of an approved eligible recipient’s period of enrollment must either be used to pay the student’s outstanding balance from his/her period of enrollment at the institution, or to make a payment against an outstanding loan received during that period of enrollment. Under no circumstances should funds be released directly to the student in this situation.

Program Schedule

If the specified date falls on a weekend, the first business day thereafter is the due date.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 1, 2013</td>
<td>The earliest date institutions may submit 2013-2014 reports of eligible recipients to THECB for payment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1, 2013</td>
<td>First day of the fiscal year – the earliest date the CB can submit vouchers to the State Comptroller’s Office for payments to institutions for the new year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1, 2013</td>
<td>Deadline to clean up duplicates and to complete verification for eligible reported students. Deadline for submitting 2013-2014 reports of eligible students to the THECB for payment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 15, 2014</td>
<td>Earliest date to submit Year-End Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1, 2014</td>
<td>Financial Aid Database Report due - includes student-by-student data to be reconciled to the year-end report data.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Program Information

Distribution List: Information concerning program processing, procedures, allocations, etc. will be communicated to institutions through the G&SP distribution list. To subscribe, go to http://lists.state.tx.us/mailman/listinfo/txgnsp-l.

Contact Information: Grants and Special Programs 512-427-6340 (Austin metro) Topten@thecb.state.tx.us 1-800-242-3062 (outside Austin metro)

GSP Information Website: https://www1.thecb.state.tx.us/apps/SpecialPrograms/

Texas Education Code (Statute): http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/