

HELP GRANT

HIGHER EDUCATION LEGISLATIVE PLAN

FREE COLLEGE TUITION

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATING SENIORS

- Be a legal resident of MS for one year prior to application deadline
- High school GPA of 2.50
- Score a minimum of a 20 on the National ACT or equivalent score on the SAT
- Complete the College Prep Curriculum (CPC) plus one advanced elective
- Complete the FAFSA & meet income requirements
- Be accepted and enroll in at least 15 hours each semester at an approved postsecondary institution in Mississippi
- Must be pursuing first certificate, first Associate's degree, or first Bachelor's degree
- Be Pell eligible

**APPLY FOR THE HELP GRANT AT
MSFINANCIALAID.ORG**

WHAT IS THE HELP GRANT?

Created by the Mississippi Legislature, this program is designed to provide tuition assistance to qualified students whose financial need, as demonstrated by federal student aid eligibility, will not be met with gift aid from other sources. The Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid will check your grades and hours to confirm eligibility at the end of every term.

AWARD AMOUNT & DEADLINES

- Covers full tuition and required fees at a public university in Mississippi.
- Participants attending a private university in Mississippi will receive an award amount equal to the award of a student attending the nearest Mississippi public university.
- Maximum 8 semesters or a bachelor's degree completion, whichever comes first

Online Application due by March 31 and supporting documents (including certified HELP Core Curriculum) are due April 30

INCOME REQUIREMENTS

The combined income for student and parents must be \$39,500 annually or less. The average adjusted gross income (AGI) increases by \$5,000 for each additional sibling in the household under age 21.

AGI for each additional sibling:

- 1 - \$44,500
- 2 - \$49,500
- 3 - \$54,500
- 4 - \$59,500
- 5 - \$64,500

REQUIREMENTS TO MAINTAIN ELIGIBILITY

- Reapply every year by March 31
- Submit supporting documents by April 30
- Continue to meet need-based eligibility requirements
- Successfully complete 15 hours each semester
- Have a minimum 2.5 college GPA



For official HELP guidelines go to mississippi.edu/financialaid

TAKE THE CPC + 1

THE COLLEGE PREPARATORY CURRICULUM (CPC)

Successful completion of sixteen and one-half (16½) units of high school coursework is required for admission into a state university. To get the HELP Grant, an additional advanced elective unit is required to equal seventeen and one-half (17½) units.

4
UNITS

ENGLISH

ENGLISH I
or equivalent

ENGLISH II
or equivalent

All must require substantial communications skills (i.e. reading, writing, listening, and speaking). Compensatory Reading and Writing may not be included.

3
UNITS

MATHEMATICS

ALGEBRA I
or equivalent

MATH HIGHER THAN ALGEBRA I
(2 units)

3
UNITS

SCIENCE

BIOLOGY I
or equivalent

SCIENCE HIGHER THAN BIOLOGY I
(2 units)

3
UNITS

SOCIAL STUDIES

US HISTORY

WORLD HISTORY

US GOVERNMENT
(½ unit)

ECONOMICS (½ unit) **OR INTRODUCTION TO WORLD GEOGRAPHY** (½ unit)

1
UNIT

ARTS

Includes any one Carnegie unit (or two ½ units) of visual and performing arts course(s) meeting the requirements for high school graduation.

3*
UNITS

ADVANCED ELECTIVES

***Two advanced electives are included in the CPC and one additional is required for the HELP Grant.**

Option 1: Foreign Language I and II

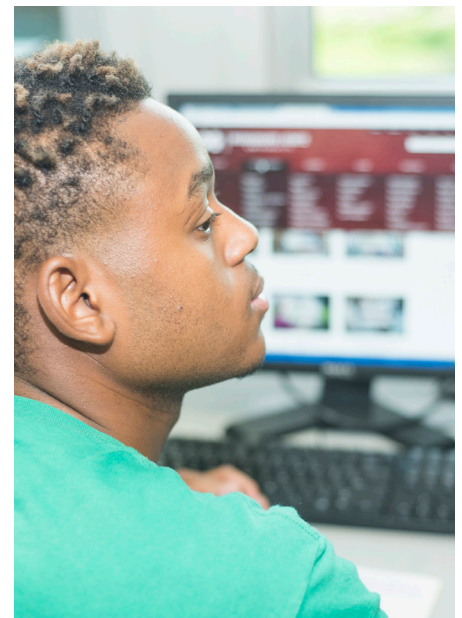
Option 2: Foreign Language I & Advanced World Geography

Option 3: Any combination of English, Mathematics higher than Algebra I, Science higher than Biology I, Advanced Elective category, any AP course, any IB course.

1/2
UNIT

TECHNOLOGY

A course that emphasizes the use of technology as a productivity tool. Instruction should include utilizing various forms of technology to create, collaborate, organize, and publish information. The application of technology as a productivity tool, rather than specific hardware and/or software packages should be the focus of the course.



MEETING DEADLINES

HELP APPLICANTS:

STEP 1 Complete the **FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)** at fafsa.gov

STEP 2 Complete the **online Mississippi Financial Aid application** by March 31 every year at msfinancialaid.org

STEP 3 **Submit the required residency documents**
New applicants and some renewal applicants with a break in enrollment will be required to submit two forms of residency documentation. The FAFSA will serve as one form. The preferred second form is a parent's Mississippi driver's license, which can be submitted electronically during the online application. The following alternate residency documents will be accepted in lieu of the driver's license:

- **State Tax Return (NOT Federal) for the current tax filing year.**
- **Homestead Exemption**
- **Voter Registration**
- **Vehicle Registration**

STEP 4 **If requested, submit all supporting documents. These must be received by the April 30 deadline**

- Only submit what is requested
- Write applicant's full name and last four digits of their Social Security Number on each document
- Track and keep confirmation of documents sent
- Allow two weeks for processing

STEP 5 **Certification of academic eligibility**

- Certification of completion of specific high school core curriculum
- High school GPA
- ACT Score

High school counselors typically submit this academic certification, however the student is responsible for meeting all document deadlines.

Send documents by:

Mail

Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid
3825 Ridgewood Road
Jackson, MS 39211

Email

Scan and email documents to sfa@mississippi.edu

or Fax

601.432.6527

NOTE: Do not fax copies of a driver's license as copies are often illegible.



FAQ'S

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE HELP GRANT



1. I do not yet have a 20 on the ACT. Can I continue to take the ACT to increase my score?

Yes, you can test through the July ACT test date following high school graduation. You must score a minimum of 20 prior to enrolling as a first-time college student.

2. Must I reapply for HELP every year?

Yes. File the renewal application by March 31. Submit supporting documents by the April 30 deadline.

3. Is my grade point average (GPA) checked at the end of each semester or at the end of the academic year? Besides my GPA, what else is checked?

The grade point average of HELP recipients will be reviewed at the end of each semester/trimester to confirm eligibility. HELP recipients will also be monitored for continuous full-time enrollment (15 credit hours) at the end of each semester/trimester.

4. What if I drop below full-time enrollment during the semester?

A student must maintain full time enrollment. If a student drops below full-time status during the semester or trimester of the academic year, that student is ineligible to receive funds during the next semester or trimester of full-time enrollment of a regular academic year.

5. I have lost eligibility for HELP. How can I regain eligibility?

If a student loses HELP eligibility due to less than full-time enrollment status (15 credit hours), that student must attend and pay for, without the benefit of HELP funds, one full-time semester or trimester during a regular academic year before regaining eligibility unless an exception for cause has been granted. If a student loses HELP eligibility due to having less than a 2.5 GPA that student will regain eligibility when the cumulative GPA is improved to the required minimum.



6. Is HELP available to me for summer school?

No. HELP is available during the regular academic year only.

7. If I qualify for HELP, MTAG, & MESG, can I receive all three?

No. State aid cannot be stacked. The state will award the grant with the highest value, so you would receive only the HELP grant.

8. I met all the requirements for HELP out of high school but missed the deadline. Can I get HELP my 2nd year of college?

Yes. If you are within one year of high school graduation you may have eligibility for the HELP grant.