

Governor Phil Murphy

# ICYMI: Expanding College Access and Affordability for New Jersey Students, Higher Education Student Assistance Authority Board Increases Tuition Aid Grant Amounts for Academic Year 2022-2023

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**TRENTON** – The New Jersey Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA) Board unanimously approved across-the-board increases to the dollar values of Tuition Aid Grants (TAG) for Academic Year 2022-2023 at the Board's July 20, 2022 meeting. The Board's decision will implement the nearly \$478 million in TAG funding that Governor Murphy and the State Legislature provided in the FY23 budget. This action strengthens New Jersey's TAG program – which leads the nation as the most generous need-based state grant helping low- and moderate-income students pay for college – and complements several other HESAA initiatives funded in the FY23 budget.

"Improving college affordability is a key component of our state's efforts to address socioeconomic disparities among residents," said **Governor Phil Murphy**. "Expanding access to higher education by reducing financial barriers for students opens the door to countless opportunities they may not have otherwise had. The increased funding in this year's budget represents my administration's ongoing commitment to supporting equitable access to high-quality education for all New Jerseyans."

To distribute the TAG funding increase of \$5 million above the previous fiscal year's level, the HESAA Board adopted award schedules that not only boost award amounts by three (3) percent for students in each need category, but also adjust eligibility criteria to better target awards to students with significant financial need.

"The HESAA Board always welcomes the opportunity to support more students and benefit more families. The State's historic funding for the TAG program will create life-changing impacts by expanding access and affordability to students who face financial barriers to pursuing a post-secondary degree," said **Christy Van Horn, HESAA's Board Chair**.

"HESAA is fulfilling Governor Murphy's mission of a stronger and fairer New Jersey by helping students with today's improvements to TAG, the foundation of financial aid, as well as through our partnership to launch the New Jersey College Promise that now offers a debt-free pathway to a college degree," said **David J. Socolow, Executive Director of HESAA**. "We will effectively deploy the groundbreaking funding provided by Governor Murphy and the Legislature to strengthen TAG, implement the College Promise, and launch other initiatives to make college more affordable and help students close the funding gap to achieve their academic and career goals."

The FY23 budget also increases funding for New Jersey's Community College Opportunity Grant (CCOG) program by \$8 million to expand income eligibility. Students with Adjusted Gross Incomes (AGIs) between \$0 and \$65,000 will continue to be eligible for CCOG grants enabling them to attend community college tuition-free. Starting next month, students with AGIs between \$65,001 and \$80,000 will become eligible for CCOG grants that cover nearly half the cost of their tuition. An additional 7,000 students in the newly eligible income range are expected to receive a CCOG grant through this year's expansion, with a total of more than 20,000 students expected to receive awards under the program in Academic Year 2022-2023.

The expanded eligibility enabled by the increase in funding will bring the CCOG program in line with the Garden State Guarantee's eligibility thresholds. Together, these two programs form the New Jersey College Promise, which covers tuition and fees for eligible students throughout two years at a community college followed by their third and fourth years at a public, four-year institution.

Additional assistance for students in the FY23 budget includes an increase of \$150,000 in funding for the Governor's Urban Scholarship (GUS) program. HESAA will use this funding to expand eligibility to college-bound students who meet the program's merit- and need-based eligibility requirements and reside in one of 33 municipalities listed on the updated GUS fact sheet.

([https://urldefense.com/v3/\\_https://t.e2ma.net/click/nzzvph/nrddit/r2gmhy\\_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!JaCO7jWqjeUevKMah3mFxisol3WVcRGOWlmbK9Hb-D6hjFG55DFoOmQqFUGDhjdUM3I87OHAVF5YFiiAflWFKL\\_yNWq\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://t.e2ma.net/click/nzzvph/nrddit/r2gmhy_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!JaCO7jWqjeUevKMah3mFxisol3WVcRGOWlmbK9Hb-D6hjFG55DFoOmQqFUGDhjdUM3I87OHAVF5YFiiAflWFKL_yNWq$)) The GUS program offers \$1,000 annual scholarships to high school students from low-income families who achieve excellent academic performance and attend any New Jersey college or university.

A new \$1.5 million line item in the FY23 budget will also fund a pilot program at HESAA to offer tuition assistance to adult learners at Thomas Edison State University. Students at Thomas Edison typically do not qualify for traditional State financial aid grants that require full-time enrollment since the university is uniquely designed to meet the needs of working adult students juggling personal and professional responsibilities who generally enroll part-time.

"We look forward to working with Thomas Edison State University to develop effective and efficient need-based eligibility criteria and operational parameters for a pilot program to improve the state's support of adult students in overcoming financial barriers to their pursuit of postsecondary education," said **Socolow**.

HESAA also received \$4 million to start a new pilot program to provide tuition-free education to adult postsecondary students enrolled in certain career and technical education programs at county vocational schools.

To learn more about New Jersey's TAG program and other financial aid resources, visit HESAA's website ([https://urldefense.com/v3/\\_https://t.e2ma.net/click/nzzvph/nrddit/7uhmhy\\_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!JaCO7jWqjeUevKMah3mFxisol3WVcRGOWlmbK9Hb-D6hjFG55DFoOmQqFUGDhjdUM3I87OHAVF5YFiiAflWFKL1yva9\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://t.e2ma.net/click/nzzvph/nrddit/7uhmhy_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!JaCO7jWqjeUevKMah3mFxisol3WVcRGOWlmbK9Hb-D6hjFG55DFoOmQqFUGDhjdUM3I87OHAVF5YFiiAflWFKL1yva9$))

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