THE RHODE ISLAND STATE GRANT AND

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

Rules and Regulations

The following rules and regulations are established by the Rhode Island Higher Education Assistance Authority for the implementation of Chapters 56 and 57 of Title 16 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, 1956, as amended, concerning the awarding of need based Rhode Island State scholarships and grants beginning with the 1982-1983 academic year:

I. ELIGIBILITY

A. Residence and Citizenship

An applicant shall be eligible for consideration for a Rhode Island Higher Education Scholarship or Grant when it is determined that:

1. Either the applicant, if economically independent, (see I-C) or dependent, and the dependent applicant's parent has been a domiciled resident of the State of Rhode Island since January 31st prior to the academic year in which the applicant enrolls and in which he or she intends to employ either the scholarship or grant for which he or she applied.
2. The applicant is a citizen of the United States or has been granted permanent resident status, or is considered an eligible non-citizen as determined by the federal government in administering federal student financial aid.

B. Title IV Eligibility

The applicant must not owe a refund on a federal Title IV grant; must not be in default of a federal Title IV loan without having made satisfactory repayment arrangements with the holder of the loan to re-establish Title IV eligibility; and must meet Title IV eligibility requirements concerning drug convictions and registering with Selective Service.

C. Criteria for Independent Students

The Rhode Island Higher Education Assistance Authority will adopt the same definition of independence used by the federal government in administering federal student financial aid. In special circumstances, the student might be considered financially independent by his or her post-secondary institution of attendance and, therefore, by RIHEAA, due to the involuntary dissolution of the family, resulting in relinquishment of his or her parents' responsibility and control.

II. APPLICABILITY OF AWARDS

A. Full-Time and Half-Time Status

Successful applicants may use an award at an eligible post-secondary institution if enrolled as an undergraduate student on at least a half-time basis in a course of instruction leading to a diploma, certificate or a degree. Applicants possessing a bachelor's degree are not eligible to receive an award. Recipients must be classified as either a full-time or half-time student. The amount of an award may be modified on the basis of a student's changed attendance status.

1. Full-Time Status: In order to be considered full time, a student must be taking a minimum of twelve (12) credit hours per term for institutions which utilize semester, trimester or quarters; twenty four (24) credit hours or thirty-six (36) quarter hours per school year for institutions which measure progress in terms of credit hours but do not utilize semesters, trimesters, or quarters; and twenty-four (24) clock hours per week for schools which utilize clock hours to measure progress.
2. Half-Time Status: In order to be considered half-time, a student must be taking a minimum of six (6) credit hours per term for institutions which utilize semester, trimesters, and quarters; twelve (12) credit hours or eighteen (18) quarter hours per school year for institutions which measure progress in terms of credit hours but do not utilize semesters, trimesters, or quarters; and twelve (12) clock hours per week for schools which utilize clock hours to measure progress.

B. Qualified Institutions

A Rhode Island Higher Education Grant or Higher Education Scholarship may be applied at a postsecondary institution which:

1. Is located in the United States, its protectorates and trust territories, and contiguous republics.
2. Provides an organized course of instruction leading to a diploma, certificate or degree.
3. Is operated publicly or privately, is profit making or not for profit and is accredited by a national or regional accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education. Certification by the United States Department of Education of eligibility to participate in the Federal Pell Grant Program, the Federal Family Education Loan Program or Federal Campus Based Student Aid Programs is considered a suitable eligibility criterion.

Exceptions may be made in cases involving institutions which are located in foreign countries and whose ownership, administration, or operation is found to exist under

American auspices or other institutions whose program will be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the undergraduate degree granted by the institution to which the applicant was awarded a grant or scholarship. These and other exceptions must be approved by the Executive Director.

III. APPLICATION

A. Applicants to the Rhode Island Higher Education Grant and Higher Education Scholarship Programs must:

1. Obtain, complete, and submit to the appropriate processing center, a current year Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) no earlier than January 1st prior to the academic year for which application is made. The completed FAFSA must be received by the processing center no later than March 1st of the year of application or such other deadline as the Authority may establish and publish from time to time. Additional internal time allowances may be established to provide for mail and processing delays. FAFSA forms received after the deadline shall be placed on a waiting list and awards made to those students applying after the deadline only if sufficient funds are available after on-time applicants are awarded.

B. In addition to the above steps, all applicants for the Rhode Island Higher Education Scholarship Program (as distinct from the Grant Program) must register for and take the SAT or ACT.

1. Scholarship applicants must take the SAT or ACT test administered any time during their high school enrollment up to and including test dates in January of their senior year of high school.

C. Disqualification

1. All applicants who do not submit applications in accordance with the above criteria shall be disqualified.
2. Any information willingly and knowingly provided which misrepresents the applicant's financial and/or educational status shall constitute a condition for disqualification.
3. Failure to submit requested information on time for the purpose of award determination shall constitute a condition for disqualification.

IV. SELECTION OF FINALISTS

A. Basic Considerations

1. Eligibility Determination – each applicant to the Rhode Island Higher Education Grant and Higher Education Scholarship Programs first shall have their eligibility determined on the basis of the criteria enumerated in Section I: Eligibility, of these regulations. All applicants who meet such criteria shall be designated eligible for consideration. No person shall be denied eligibility for consideration of a Rhode Island Higher Education Grant or a Rhode Island Higher Education Scholarship because of race, color, sex, age, gender identity or expression, national origin, religion, handicap/disability status, veteran status or sexual orientation.

2. Financial Need Determination – the financial need of each eligible applicant shall be determined by the following formula:

   Financial Need = (Total Educational Costs) – (Available Resources) Where:

   a) Total Educational Costs =

      The sum of the cost for tuition and fees, room, board, books, supplies, transportation and personal expenses, as determined appropriate by the Authority in accord with Pell or other acceptable financial aid needs analysis practices.

   b) Available Resources =

      i The applicant's family contribution as determined by the federal methodology theory and computation procedures

      ii. The estimated Pell Grant calculated to be available to the student.

      iii Other resources determined appropriate by the Authority from time to time, taking into account financial aid practices currently in effect

B. Identification of Rhode Island Higher Education Scholarship Finalists (as distinct from grant finalists).

1. A composite SAT/ACT score shall be computed for each eligible applicant. The applicant's highest verbal and mathematics SAT scores or the highest ACT composite score converted to an SAT concordant score shall be used in composite score calculation.

2. Eligible scholarship applicants shall be rank ordered on the basis of their composite score. Applicants with the highest composite score shall be ranked first.

3. Financial Need shall be determined for each eligible applicant according to the principles enumerated in Section IV. A. 2., Financial Need Determination, of the regulations.

4 Each eligible scholarship applicant shall be assigned a preliminary award according to the award setting rules enumerated in Section V. B. 1., of these regulations.

5. Scholarship finalists shall be determined as follows:

a) A cut off shall be determined by the Authority by establishing the total number of scholarships to be granted, taking into account the satisfactory level of the composite score at the lowest end of the range selected.

b) All applicants who appear before the cut-off shall be designated as scholarship finalists.

c) All applicants falling below the cut-off for scholarship designation shall automatically be considered for grant awards.

d) All Scholarship finalists who are not assigned an award because of insufficient need shall be designated as honorary scholars (unfunded) and officially informed of the designation.

C. Identification of Rhode Island State Grant Finalists

1. Each eligible grant applicant shall be assigned a financial need on the basis of criteria as defined in Section IV. A. 2., Financial Need Determination, of these regulations.

2. Each eligible grant applicant shall be assigned a preliminary award according to the award setting rules enumerated in Section V. B. 1., of the regulations.

3. Non-finalists shall be identified and treated as follows:

a) Financially needy applicants applying after the application deadline shall be designated as Prospective Recipients.

b) Awards to Prospective Recipients shall be awarded in order of application receipt date as additional funds become available through the withdrawal of grant finalists or such other events as may result in additional uncommitted funds

V. ESTABLISHING AWARD SIZES

A. Limits of Monetary Awards

1. The award sizes for the Rhode Island Higher Education Grant and Scholarship Programs shall not be less than $250 and not greater than $2,000 and no recipient shall receive an award greater than a percentage of his or her determined need, which percentage shall be less than 100% of need, and which shall be established by the Authority from time to time depending on the availability of the funds and the assessed demands on the program.

2. Applicants to both the Rhode Island Higher Education Grant and Higher Education Scholarship Programs shall not be allowed to receive simultaneously awards from each program under the rules enumerated in Section IV.

VI. NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS

A. Notification

1. All applicants shall be notified of the disposition of their application for state student financial assistance either electronically or through paper notification.

B. Finalist Acceptance

1. All finalists will be asked to designate the postsecondary institution(s) to which they are considering attending.
2. In the event that any change in college choice or attendance status occurs from that which was initially listed on the FAFSA or reported on the acceptance form, the Authority reserves the right to adjust the finalist's award, should such change result in different financial need.

C. Income Verification

The Authority reserves the right to obtain the applicant's or applicant's parents' Federal Income Tax Return or Rhode Island Tax Return Information in substantiation of information supplied on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

VII. PAYMENT

A. Verification of Enrollment and Attendance Status

1. Verification Rosters – A roster displaying selected information on each finalist shall be sent electronically to the institutions designated by the finalists or, if no designation is made by the student, to all institutions listed on the finalist's FAFSA.
2. The appropriate official within the institution shall verify the matriculation of the students appearing on the roster, their enrollment status, dependency status, estimated family contribution, financial need, compliance with applicable regulations governing federal student financial aid, and, for an upper class recipient, certify satisfactory academic progress.

B. Payment to Institution

1. Payments of higher education grants and scholarships will be made directly to institutions upon receipt of an electronic request for payment from the institution. No

payment will be made directly to the recipients or to any agents designated by them other than their postsecondary institution.

2. Should a recipient's enrollment in postsecondary education be discontinued for any reason, academic or otherwise, any unused funds which have been provided for the current year's award are to be refunded to the Authority in accordance with the Authority's policy for making such refunds. Such policy shall be in keeping with refund requirements for Federal Title IV funds.

VIII RENEWALS

A. Each Rhode Island Higher Education Grant recipient shall be eligible for a renewal only upon receipt of the student's application in accordance with these regulations and upon the Authority's finding that:

1. The applicant has completed successfully the work of the preceding year;
2. The applicant continues to satisfy the residency requirements set forth in these regulations;
3. The applicant continues to comply with applicable regulations governing federal student financial aid; and
4. The applicant's financial situation continues to warrant receipt of a monetary award

B. Each Rhode Island Higher Education Scholarship recipient shall be eligible for renewal upon the student's application in accordance with these regulations and upon the Authority's finding that:

1. The applicant has completed successfully the work of the preceding year and has demonstrated continued scholarly achievement
2. The applicant continues to satisfy the residency requirements set forth in these regulations;
3. The applicant continues to comply with applicable regulations governing federal student financial aid; and
4. The applicant's financial situation continues to warrant receipt of a monetary award.

IX. FUNDING

A. Appropriations – shall be those made by the General Assembly as specified in Sec. 16-56-2 of the General Laws of Rhode Island.

B. Allocation of Appropriation

The sum appropriated shall be allocated in such manner deemed appropriate by the Rhode Island Higher Education Assistance Authority after having assessed the demand for both programs, after having considered the impact of alternative funding levels for both programs and after having identified the alternative which best meets the objectives of the program

X. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

Unusual circumstances that may impact on individual awards in the ordinary operation of the Rhode Island Higher Education Grant and Scholarship Programs that are not specifically guided by the regulations herein shall be ruled upon by the Executive Director. All appeals from decisions of the Executive Director shall be to a committee of the Authority. All rulings of the committee shall be final

The Executive Director shall be authorized to make exceptions in the application of these regulations in unusual circumstances.

RHODE ISLAND HIGHER EDUCATION ASSISTANCE AUTHORITY

By_____

William H. Hurry, Jr

Executive Director

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