

Georgia Public Safety Memorial Grant

REGULATIONS

2008 - 2009 Award Year



Effective Date - July 1, 2008



**Georgia Student Finance Commission
2082 East Exchange Place
Tucker, Georgia 30084**

2008- 2009 AWARD YEAR
GEORGIA PUBLIC SAFETY MEMORIAL GRANT REGULATIONS

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GEORGIA PUBLIC SAFETY MEMORIAL GRANT

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Georgia Public Safety Memorial (GPSM) Grant program was created to provide educational grant assistance for the cost of attending public Eligible Postsecondary Institutions in Georgia to the dependent children of Georgia Public Safety Officers permanently disabled or killed in the line of duty. The GPSM Grant is funded by the Georgia Lottery and administered by the Georgia Student Finance Commission (Commission). The program was established beginning with the Fall Term of 1994 (FY 1995).

The Georgia General Assembly establishes the GPSM award amount received by the students and the total amount of funds appropriated for the program each year during the preceding legislative session. The grant covers a student's total Cost of Attendance that is not covered by other student financial aid.

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I. STUDENT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

1. CITIZENSHIP

A student must be a United States citizen or an Eligible Non-Citizen, according to Federal Title IV requirements, for 12 consecutive months immediately preceding the first day of classes of the school term for which the GPSM Grant is sought. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution a student is attending cannot waive the requirements of this section.

2. GEORGIA RESIDENCY

A student must be a resident of Georgia, in accordance with the *Georgia Residency Requirements for State Programs Regulations*, for a minimum of 12 consecutive months immediately preceding the first day of classes of the school term for which the GPSM Grant is sought.

3. SELECTIVE SERVICE REGISTRATION

A student must comply with United States Selective Service System requirements for registration, if such requirements are applicable, prior to the application deadline, in order to receive payment for that school term.

4. ENROLLMENT STATUS

- a. A student must be a Full-Time Undergraduate student in a Matriculated status at a public Eligible Postsecondary Institution.
- b. A student in Full-Time attendance may be enrolled in learning support (remedial) courses undertaken to remove entrance conditions. If such learning support (remedial) course work is required or recommended by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution as part of the regular instructional program for that student, he or she may be considered eligible for GPSM Grant payment. Non-credit courses taken entirely on a personal or voluntary basis by the student shall not be included in determining Full-Time status of the student.
- c. Full-time enrollment is required during the final school term in the same manner as any other school term, even if the student needs less than a full program in order to complete graduation requirements.

5. SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

A student must maintain satisfactory academic progress in a course of study in accordance with the standards and practices used for Federal Title IV Programs by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution at which the student is enrolled. To determine student eligibility, the institution must apply the same satisfactory progress policy as used for Federal Title IV Programs.

6. DEFAULT AND REFUND

A student must not be in default on a Federal Title IV or State of Georgia educational loan, nor owe a refund on a Federal Title IV or State of Georgia student financial aid program, nor in any other way be in violation of Federal Title IV Regulations or State of Georgia student financial aid program regulations. If such student has repaid the defaulted loan or refund due in full, or resolved the default status, then he or she may be eligible to receive ED Scholarship funds beginning with the school term in which repayment was made in full, but not retroactively for previous school terms. A student's default status can be resolved by one of three ways: 1) complete an acceptable rehabilitation plan, 2) having the loan repurchased by the original lender and the default status reversed, 3) by consolidating the loan out of a default status.

7. DRUG-FREE ACT

A student is ineligible if, in accordance with the Drug-Free Postsecondary Education Act of 1990, he or she has been convicted for committing certain felony offenses involving marijuana, controlled substances, or dangerous drugs. A student is ineligible to receive a GPSM Grant from the date of conviction to the completion of the next academic term.

8. MATRICULATED STATUS OF ELIGIBLE STUDENTS

To be eligible:

1. The student must not have already earned a baccalaureate degree.
2. The student must be in a "matriculated status" in an organized program of study leading to a degree, diploma, or certificate approved for that award. The student is considered "matriculated" when he or she is fully accepted by the institution and enrolled in courses fully recognized at that time as contributing toward requirements for completion of the program. The student, who may be required to complete certain courses to make up for deficiencies in background or training and yet is recognized by the institution as a degree, certificate, or diploma candidate, is not considered to be fully matriculated by the Commission and would not be eligible for a GPSM Grant if credit toward the degree, certificate, or diploma is conditional upon satisfactory completion of certain special requirements. Retroactive matriculation will not establish retroactive eligibility for a GPSM Grant.

9. STUDY ABROAD AND OUT-OF-STATE PROGRAMS

Students enrolled full-time in a matriculating status at eligible Georgia institutions are eligible for grant payment, even though they may not be physically present in Georgia during all or part of the term. The student's institution must approve for credit the study abroad/out-of-state program. The student's award must be owed or paid through the home institution. Those who meet all of the above requirements are

eligible to receive payment for a maximum of two semesters or three quarters while studying outside of the State of Georgia.

10. ACADEMIC LEVELS OF ELIGIBLE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

The student receiving the GPSM Grant is eligible for a maximum of four academic years (8 semesters or 12 quarters) of aid under the GPSM program. The student receiving the GPSM Grant who is enrolled in a program of study designed to extend for a period of five academic years is eligible for a maximum of five years (10 semesters or 15 quarters) of aid under the GPSM Grant program.

11. JOINT ENROLLMENT AND EARLY ADMISSION STUDENTS

A student meeting all of the eligibility requirements of these regulations, who is enrolled in a secondary educational institution (high school) and who is then permitted to enroll in an eligible postsecondary educational institution on a joint-enrollment or an early admission basis, is eligible to receive a grant award provided he or she meets the matriculated status criterion of these regulations and meets all other eligibility requirements, including full-time status.

12. AUDIT AND TRANSIENT STUDENTS

The “special” or “irregular” student is not eligible for assistance. Examples of the special student include the audit student, the transient student, and any student deemed by the postsecondary educational institution not to be in a “matriculated status.”

13. PARENT KILLED OR DISABLED

To be eligible for a GPSM Grant:

1. A student applicant must be the natural or adopted child of a law enforcement officer, firefighter, Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), or corrections officer/prison guard who has been permanently disabled or killed in the line of duty, or while performing the duties to which he or she was assigned in the normal course of employment.
2. For a student who is the adopted child of any such law enforcement officer, firefighter, Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), or corrections officer/prison guard, any final order of adoption must have been issued prior to the date of the event or accident causing the death or permanent disability of such parent.
3. A student’s parent who is a deceased or permanently disabled law enforcement officer, firefighter, Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), or corrections officer/prison guard must have been an employee, either full or part-time, or an officer or official, whether elected or appointed by the State of Georgia, of any

county, municipality, department, board, bureau, branch, agency, commission, authority, or political subdivision of the state on the date of the accident or event from which death or permanent disability resulted.

II. ELIGIBLE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

1. PUBLIC COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

All public colleges and universities, which are a branch of the University System of Georgia, are eligible to participate in the GPSM Grant program.

2. PUBLIC TECHNICAL COLLEGES

All public technical colleges, which are a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia, are eligible to participate in the GPSM Grant program.

III. GPSM APPLICATION PROCEDURES

1. The student or other family member shall complete a Preliminary Information and Documentation Report provided by the Commission.
2. The Commission shall request documentation of the circumstances surrounding the death or claim to permanent disability of the parent while in the line of duty from the sources named by the family on the Preliminary Information and Documentation Report. The Commission shall also request information directly from the Georgia Board of Public Safety to obtain any documentation already on file.
3. The Commission shall review the completed file to verify and determine the eligibility of the claim of the student applicant for a GPSM Grant and notify the student or family of the determination.
4. If the student meets the eligibility requirements, the Commission shall provide the student with a Georgia Public Safety Memorial Grant Application. After the student completes the application, it is forwarded to the institution for certification. The institution then forwards the application to the Commission.
5. The student shall also submit a photocopy of his or her certificate of live birth.
6. A student must file the application online or in the institution's financial aid office on or before the last day of the academic term (semester or quarter) or the student's withdrawal date, whichever occurs first, in order to be paid for that academic term. The last day of the academic term is the last day of classes or exams for the institution, whichever occurs later. Supplemental documentation required by the institution or the Commission to support or verify a student's application information may be submitted after the deadline without jeopardizing the student's eligibility.

7. The student and institution will receive a notice of award from the Commission.

IV. MAINTAINING ELIGIBILITY

1. The student must continue to make satisfactory academic progress and meet all of the other eligibility requirements set forth in *Section I* of these regulations.
2. The student must submit a renewal application to the Commission for subsequent periods of study at such times as designated by the Commission.

V. GPSM AWARD AMOUNTS

The award amount will be the total cost of attendance for each academic year as determined by the public college or university, or public technical college in which the student is enrolled that are not covered by other student financial aid, including the Law Enforcement Personnel Dependents (LEPD) Grant (i.e., if a student is also eligible for the Law Enforcement Personnel Dependents (LEPD) Grant, the LEPD Grant would be applied first to the student's total cost of attendance prior to applying a student's GPSM Grant).

GRANT LIMITATIONS

The maximum grant assistance for which a student is eligible shall not exceed 12 quarters or 8 semesters of study. For students enrolled in undergraduate programs designed to extend for a period of five academic years, the maximum grant assistance is 15 quarters or 10 semesters of study.

VI. PAYMENT OF GPSM AWARDS BY THE COMMISSION

1. The student's award is prorated according to the number of quarters or semesters of attendance during the academic year, as follows:
 - a. **QUARTER SYSTEM:** Students enrolled in schools employing the quarter system will receive each school term one third (1/3) of the student's maximum entitlement for the regular academic year.
 - b. **SEMESTER SYSTEM:** Students enrolled in schools employing the semester system will receive each school term one-half (1/2) of the student's maximum entitlement for the regular academic year.
2. GPSM awards are payable to student recipients on a school-term basis. Individual student checks for each school term award amount are mailed to the eligible institution for disbursement to the student recipients during the school term registration process.
3. The educational institution must return undisbursed checks to the Commission within 45 days following the school term registration process, or within 45 days after receipt of the checks if the school term is in progress.

VII. EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION HANDLING OF GPSM CHECKS

1. LOSS OF GPSM AWARD CHECK

In the event a GPSM check is lost, either by the school, through the mail, or by the student, the procedures described below should be followed:

1. The appropriate school official must contact the Commission and request a replacement check.
1. After following normal verification procedures that the lost check has not been cashed, the Commission will place a "Stop Payment" order on the original check. A replacement check will then be issued to the school for delivery to the student.
2. If the original check should subsequently be found, it should be voided and returned to the Commission.

2. UNCLAIMED OR UNCASHED CHECKS

1. Any checks issued on behalf of a student who fails to claim his or her check within the 45-day period allowed after registration day, or after receipt of the check, whichever is later, must be returned to the Commission immediately at the close of the 45-day period.
2. Students who fail to cash their checks within the 90-day period indicated on the face of the check lose the right to receive awards for the term in question.

VIII. GPSM REFUND POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. If a student officially withdraws, drops, drops hours, or is expelled and is entitled to a refund, such refund may need to be returned to the Commission.
2. The institution must follow its own refund policy. A school's refund to the student is the amount paid by financial aid and/or cash payments for institutional charges for a school term, minus the amount retained by the institution for the portion of the school term the student was actually enrolled. The amount retained by the institution for the student's actual period of enrollment is calculated according to the school's refund policy.

3. REMITTANCE OF REFUND

The institution must have a procedure in place to ensure that the GPSM funds do not go to an unintended third party (i.e. State, institution).

IX. RECORDS RETENTION

- a. An Eligible Postsecondary Institution shall maintain accurate records, books, documents and other evidence concerning the GPSM Grant Program, including, but not limited to individual student files for the later of three years after the Award Year

in which the aid was awarded; or for such other period as required by an applicable statute, rule, or regulation; or such other time as requested in writing by the Commission.

- b. Documentation contained within an individual student file or record, which supports the original determination of a student's eligibility must be retained by the institution and available for review by the Commission on the institution's campus, located within the State of Georgia, for at least three calendar years after the most recent Award Year for which the student received GPSM funds. Institutions are permitted to maintain these documents in an imaged media format. The imaged media format must be capable of reproducing an accurate, legible, and complete copy of the original document.
- c. Such documentation may include, but is not limited to, copies of Permanent Resident Alien Cards, Georgia State Income Tax Returns, student financial aid applications and academic transcripts from previous institutions. Documentation regarding a student's eligibility is not limited to files, records, and other information received and maintained by the institution's student financial aid office. Documentation supporting a student's eligibility that is received and maintained by the institution's admissions office, registrars office, business office, and other administrative operations of the institution must be available to the Commission for review. It is the institution's responsibility to resolve any inconsistencies or conflicting information within a student's records, prior to awarding or disbursing GPSM funds to the student.
- d. An institution may be required to retain student records involved in a program review, audit, or investigation for more than the three-year retention period described above. If the three-year retention period expires before the issue in question is resolved, the institution must continue to retain all associated records until resolution is reached.

X. DEFINITIONS

As used in these regulations, and unless the context requires a different meaning:

“Academic Year” means a period of time, usually eight or nine months, during which a full-time student would normally be expected to complete the equivalent of two semesters or three quarters of instruction.

“Application Deadline Date” means the last date on which a student can file an application for a grant.

“Audit Student” means a student who enrolls in a course for personal development and who does not earn college credit or a grade for the course.

“Award Year” means four consecutive quarters or three consecutive semesters, beginning with the summer term and ending with the spring term.

“Certificate” means a credential indicating satisfactory completion of training in an organized technical program of study offered by a public, postsecondary educational institution, which is not an associate or baccalaureate degree.

“Commission” means Georgia Student Finance Commission the agency responsible for administering certain postsecondary educational student financial aid programs offered by the State of Georgia, and other programs for which funds may be appropriated or assigned to it by the State Legislature, or from other sources, from time to time.

“Cost of Attendance” means the expenses, both direct and indirect, incurred by a student and the student’s family to finance the cost of receiving a postsecondary education. These expenses include tuition, fees, room, meals, books, supplies, transportation, and personal expenses.

“Degree” means a two-year associate degree or four-year bachelor’s degree conferred on students by a public, postsecondary educational institution upon completion of an organized program of study at the undergraduate level.

“Diploma” means a credential indicating satisfactory completion of training in an organized technical program of study offered by a public, postsecondary educational institution, which is not an associate or baccalaureate degree.

“Early Admissions” means a program in which a high school student enrolls as a full-time postsecondary student and pursues a postsecondary degree in lieu of a high school diploma or simultaneously fulfills requirements for obtaining a high school diploma.

“Eligible Non-Citizen” means a person who, in accordance with the Federal Title IV Regulations, is a United States permanent resident with a Permanent Resident Alien Card (I-551); or a conditional permanent resident (I-551C); or the holder of an Arrival-

Departure Record (I-94) from the Department of Homeland Security showing any one of the following designations: “Refugee”, “Asylum Granted”, “Parolee” (I-94 confirms paroled for a minimum of one year and status has not expired); or “Cuban-Haitian Entrant”. Victims of human trafficking, in accordance with the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act, may also be considered Eligible Non-Citizens. Persons with an F1 or F2 student visa, a J1 or J2 exchange visitor visa, or a G series visa are not Eligible Non-Citizens.

“Eligible Postsecondary Institution” means any unit of the University System of Georgia or any unit of the Technical College System of Georgia.

“Eligible Student” means a legal resident of Georgia who is attending an approved public, postsecondary educational institution in Georgia and who meets all of the other eligibility requirements of these regulations.

“Federal Title IV Programs” means student financial aid programs administered by the U.S. Department of Education that are authorized by Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

“Full-Time Student” means a matriculated student attending an eligible public, postsecondary educational institution who is enrolled for the equivalent of at least 12 quarter or semester hours, or a minimum of 25 clock hours per week for those institutions not utilizing the quarter or semester systems, and meeting all of the other full-time student requirements outlined in these regulations.

“Joint Enrollment” means an arrangement between a high school and a postsecondary institution wherein a student enrolls in postsecondary classes and earns Carnegie units of credit that count toward high school graduation requirements and hours of postsecondary credit.

“Georgia Board of Public Safety” means the board that establishes the general policies to be followed by the Georgia Department of Public Safety. The board membership includes representatives from the Governor’s Office, the Department of Corrections, the Georgia Sheriffs Association, the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police, the District Attorneys Association, the Georgia State Fireman’s Association and three members from the State-at-Large.

“Georgia Public Safety Memorial Grant” or “GPSM Grant” means a State program of non-repayable grants to Georgia residents who are dependent children of law enforcement officers, firefighters, Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT’s), corrections officers/prison guards who were permanently disabled or killed in the line of duty.

“Law Enforcement Personnel Dependents Grant” or “LEPD Grant” means a State program of non-repayable grants to Georgia residents who are dependent children of law enforcement officers, firefighters, or corrections officers/prison guards who were permanently disabled or killed in the line of duty.

“Matriculated Status” means the student is a recognized candidate for an appropriate degree, diploma or certificate at eligible public, postsecondary educational institutions as outlined in these regulations.

“Parent” means the natural mother or father, adoptive parent, and/or legal guardian whom a court has directed to provide financial support to the student.

“Public Safety Officer” means a law enforcement officer, firefighter, Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), or corrections officer/prison guard as defined by the Georgia Board of Public Safety and the Commission.

“Resident of Georgia” means a United States citizen or Eligible Non-Citizen who is domiciled in the State of Georgia and meets all of the other residency requirements outlined in the *Georgia Residency Requirements for State Programs Regulations and Section I* of these regulations.

“Satisfactory Academic Progress” means the academic standards required of students by their postsecondary institutions in order to be eligible to receive payment from Federal Title IV Programs, in accordance with Federal Title IV Regulations. The standards must include a qualitative component, such as grades, and a quantitative component with a maximum time frame for completion of a student’s program of study (no longer than 150% of the length of the program).

“Transient Student” means a visiting student enrolled in another institution who is granted temporary admission for the purpose of completing work to transfer back to the home institution; one who expects to return to the institution in which he or she was previously enrolled.

“Tuition” means the charges to a student for instruction without regard to other fees such as technology, lab, activity, athletic, health, book and supplies, etc.

“Undergraduate Student” means a student who is in attendance at an eligible postsecondary institution and who is in the process of obtaining an associate degree, a bachelor’s degree, a diploma, or a certificate.

“Withdrawal Date” means the date the student withdraws, as determined by the institution. The institution must determine the withdrawal date in accordance with the procedures set forth for determining withdrawal date under the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended.