



Frequently Asked Questions: the Alaska Performance Scholarship

Q. When will Alaska performance scholarships be available?

A. They will first be available for the high school graduating Class of 2011 for attendance at eligible postsecondary institutions for the 2011-2012 academic year.

Q. How much are the scholarship awards?

A. There are three award levels: \$4,755 a year, \$3,566 a year, and \$2,378 a year. Alaska performance scholars may remain eligible for up to eight semesters of enrollment.

Q. What determines the level of scholarship earned?

A. The student's high school grade-point average **and** his or her score on a college-entrance or career-ready examination. For students at schools that do not award grades, the Department of Education & Early Development will develop requirements that are substantially similar.

Q. Where can the scholarships be used?

A. At any public or private regionally-accredited college or university in Alaska, or at any career and technical program in Alaska that has been approved for Alaska performance scholarships by the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development. The scholarships will be disbursed directly to the postsecondary institution.

Q. What can the scholarship be used for?

A. Scholars may use the funds for costs of attendance certified by the postsecondary institution. These costs may include tuition, fees, books, supplies, room, board and transportation in accordance with the standard budgets published by the institution. However, scholars must apply

for and use any other non-loan aid they receive, such as state or federal grants or other scholarships before they may apply an Alaska performance scholarship to their remaining costs. The scholar will not receive an Alaska performance scholarship amount that is more than the remaining costs of attendance.

Q. Must scholars be enrolled full time in the postsecondary institution?

A. No. Part-time students enrolled at least half time or for at least six credits can receive scholarships. Half-time graduate students enrolled in at least five semester credits and half-time career and technical students enrolled in programs meeting at least 30 hours a week for at least six weeks may also qualify. The scholarship award amount will be reduced accordingly.

Q. Does the scholarship expire?

A. Yes. They must be used within six years of graduating high school unless the scholar qualifies for an extension, such as for military service. Allowable extensions will be set in regulation by the State Board of Education & Early Development in a public process.

Q. Who is eligible for an Alaska Performance Scholarship?

A. Alaska residents who graduate from an Alaska high school on or after January 1, 2011. This includes graduates from public schools and private schools, and home school students who have taken the required courses. Students who hold GEDs are not eligible.

Q. What must students do to earn a scholarship?

A. For all three levels of scholarship, students must complete a specified core curriculum in high school. For each level of scholarship, students must meet a minimum grade-point average **and** a minimum score on a college-entrance or career-ready assessment.

Q. What are the specific requirements for curriculum?

A. There are two pathways students may take:

- Four years of math, four years of English, four years of science, and four years of social studies. However, the student could take three years of social studies and one year of foreign language, Alaska Native language, fine arts, or cultural heritage.
- Three years of math, four years of English, three years of science, four years of social studies, and two years of the same foreign language or Alaska Native language.

Important note: The curriculum requirements will be phased in for the high school graduating classes of 2011 and 2012.

Eligible students in the Class of 2011 will be required to have at least three years of science or three years of math, or two-and-a-half years of both science and math, in addition to four years of English, three years of social studies, and one year of health/physical education.

Students who are independently home schooled will provide information about their courses and grades to the Department of Education & Early Development.

Q. What are the specific requirements for grade-point-average?

A.

For the first level (\$4,755 a year) a GPA of 3.5 or higher.

For the second level (\$3,566 a year) a GPA of 3.0 to 3.49.

For the third level (\$2,378 a year) a GPA of 2.5 to 2.99.

Q. What are the specific requirements for examinations?

A. The approved exams are the ACT and the SAT for college-bound students, and WorkKeys for students who will attend a certificate career or technical program.

Q. What if a student has a grade-point average qualifying for a first-level award but an examination score that qualifies for a lower award level?

A. A student will be eligible for the highest award level for which he or she satisfies all eligibility requirements. In the situation described in the question, the student would qualify for the lower award level.

Q. What can families do now?

A. You should encourage your student to take challenging courses and do well in school. A higher grade point average and/or assessment score may make your student eligible for a higher level of Alaska Performance Scholarship -- and that difference can be worth several thousand dollars more over a student's postsecondary years.

When your student chooses courses for the following year in high school, you should consult with your school counselors on academic courses that will prepare your student to earn an Alaska Performance Scholarship.

Your student should plan to take the SAT or ACT exams if he or she intends to use the scholarship for a postsecondary program that grants a degree, such as an associate's degree or bachelor's degree. Your student should plan to take the WorkKeys exam if he or she intends to

use the scholarship for a career or technical program that grants a certificate. However, students seeking a certificate may use the ACT or SATs to demonstrate eligibility, as well.

Plan to complete the FAFSA – the Free Application for Federal Student Aid – between January 1 and April 15 in your student’s senior year. The FAFSA is the method by which the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education and postsecondary institutions will be able to determine your student’s eligibility for other non-loan financial aid, as well as your student’s intention to attend an Alaska postsecondary institution.

If your student is in middle school, you should talk to him or her about career and postsecondary education goals, and help your student choose freshman classes wisely. Students who want to earn an Alaska Performance Scholarship should be prepared to take a challenging curriculum for all four years of high school.

Q. How can I keep up-to-date on the Alaska performance scholarships?

A. Please see the following web page:

http://akadvantage.alaska.gov/Grants_and_Scholarships/Alaska_Scholarship.aspx.