

**THE RHODE ISLAND HIGHER EDUCATION ASSISTANCE AUTHORITY**  
**CollegeBoundfund**  
**ACADEMIC PROMISE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

**Rules and Regulations**

The following rules and regulations are adopted by the Rhode Island Higher Education Assistance Authority pursuant to Chapter 57 of Title 16 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, 1956, as amended, for the establishment and implementation of The CollegeBoundfund Academic Promise Scholarship Program, beginning with the 2002-2003 academic year:

**I. ELIGIBILITY**

**A. Residence and Citizenship**

An applicant shall be eligible for consideration for a CollegeBoundfund Academic Promise Scholarship 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 31<sup>st</sup> prior to the academic year in which the applicant enrolls in a qualified institution and in which he or she intends to employ the scholarship for which he or she applied.
2. The applicant is a citizen of the United States or has been granted permanent resident status.

**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 adopts the same definition of independence used by the federal government in administering the Pell Grant Program. In special circumstances, the student may 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 First Year Status

Successful applicants may use an award at any eligible post-secondary institution if enrolled as an undergraduate student on a full time basis in a course of instruction leading to a diploma, certificate or a degree. For the purposes of initial selection the applicant must also be entering postsecondary education as a First Year first time student. Applicants possessing a bachelor's degree or who are considered by their institution to be other than an undergraduate student are not eligible to receive an award. A recipient must be classified as a full-time student. Failure to maintain full-time status throughout each academic period for the purposes of this program will result in cancellation of the scholarship.

1. Full-Time Status: The Authority shall accept the definition of full time status as established by the US Department of Education by regulation, or any subsequent advisory letters or amended regulations.
2. Fifth-Year Students: Student who, in their fifth year of study, are enrolled in a bona fide five-year undergraduate program will be eligible for a fifth year of funding subject to the availability of funds and continued compliance with other eligibility requirements stated within these regulations.

### B. Qualified Institutions

A CollegeBound*fund* Academic Promise 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 are considered suitable eligibility criteria, subject to any amendments to Title IV eligibility established in regulation, or advisory letters issued by the Department.

Exceptions may be made in cases involving institutions that 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 scholarship. The Executive Director must approve these and other exceptions.

### III. APPLICATION

A. Applicants to the CollegeBound*fund* Academic Promise Scholarship Program 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 1<sup>st</sup> prior to the academic year for which application is made. The completed FAFSA must be received by the processing center no later than March 1<sup>st</sup> of the year of application or such other deadline as the Authority may establish 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 only if sufficient funds are available after on-time applicants are awarded.

B. In addition to the above steps, all applicants for the CollegeBound*fund* Academic Promise Scholarships 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.
2. In the event that the applicant has taken the ACT test, an adjusted figure will be substituted for the SAT score in figuring the selection index.
3. To the extent practicable the Rhode Island Higher Education Assistance Authority will work with Rhode Island Guidance Officials to assist with waivers for the SAT/ACT in extraordinary circumstances where the applicant would otherwise be unable to take the required test for financial reasons.
4. The Authority may from time to time determine that a standardized test other than the SAT or ACT will be more appropriate as a means of establishing the academic criteria of the selection index.

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 acceptance shall constitute a condition for disqualification.

4. Failure to maintain the necessary Grade Point Average or equivalent as may be established from time to time by the Authority shall constitute a condition of disqualification.
5. In the event that a student is disqualified for academic reasons, for reasons of financial aid eligibility, for reasons of dismissal or for reasons of withdrawal from school, a student in the original cohort of students may be considered for reinstatement in subsequent years should they re-establish eligibility, and subject to the availability of space in the program and the availability of funds.
6. A student seeking reinstatement on the basis of re-established eligibility must do so within the original cohort of four years.

#### IV. **SELECTION OF FINALISTS**

##### A. **Basic Considerations**

1. **Eligibility Determination** – Each applicant for the CollegeBound*fund* Academic Promise Scholarship 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 and have an estimated family contribution equal to or less than the approved Pell Grant award level, or other figure as shall be established from time to time by the Authority shall be designated eligible for consideration. No person shall be denied eligibility for consideration of a CollegeBound*fund* Academic Promise 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 using the estimated family contribution determined by the FAFSA review process and reported to the Authority.  
  
For the purposes of preliminary award determination, the assumption shall be that the applicant will be enrolled on a full-time basis.

##### B. **Identification of CollegeBound*fund* Academic Promise Scholarship Finalists.**

1. The highest SAT-I Verbal and Math score or adjusted ACT score for the applicant shall be used in combined score calculation.
2. A need-based ranking number shall be used which shall be calculated by the following formula: (Maximum Pell Grant Award) minus (EFC), the result to be divided by 10.  
  
The Authority may establish a new formula, from time to time based on changes in the Federal calculations or on other acceptable financial aid needs analysis practices.

3. Eligible scholarship applicants shall be rank ordered on the basis of their combined SAT score or adjusted ACT score plus the need based ranking number, which shall be used to establish the applicant's selection index. Applicants with the highest selection index score shall be ranked first.
4. 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.
5. Each eligible scholarship applicant shall be assigned a preliminary award according to the award setting rules enumerated in Section IV. B. 1-4., of these Regulations.
6. Scholarship finalists shall be determined as follows:
  - a) A cut off shall be determined annually by the Authority by establishing the total number of scholarships to be granted and the funds to be committed.
  - b) All applicants who are ranked above the cut-off shall be designated as scholarship finalists.
  - c) To the extent funds become available, eligible applicants who were not initially designated as scholarship finalists may be considered for an award. At the discretion of the Authority, unexpended, available funds initially designated for one cohort of students may be used to award eligible applicants in a different cohort year.

V. **ESTABLISHING AWARD SIZES**

A. Limits of Monetary Awards

1. The individual aggregate award limit for the CollegeBound*fund* Academic Promise Scholarship Program shall be \$10,000 over four years, with awards in any given academic year to be not less than \$250 and not greater than \$2,500. No recipient shall receive an award greater than his or her determined need. All awards shall be rounded to the nearest dollar. The individual aggregate award limits, annual award amounts, and number of awards may be re-established from time to time by the Authority depending on the availability of funds and the assessed demands on the program.
2. Applicants to both the CollegeBound*fund* Academic Promise Scholarship Program and the Rhode Island State Grant Program shall not be allowed to receive simultaneous awards from each program. Academic Promise applicants selected for a scholarship will have the option to choose either the Academic Promise Scholarship or the Rhode Island State Grant, but not both.

## VI. **NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS**

### A. **Notification**

1. All Academic Promise Scholarship finalists shall be notified of their award either electronically or through paper notification.

### B. **Finalist Acceptance**

1. All finalists will be asked to designate the one postsecondary institution to which they wish to carry the CollegeBound*fund* Academic Promise Scholarship.
2. In the event that any change in college choice, attendance status, or financial need occurs, the Authority reserves the right to adjust and or cancel the finalist's award if such change results in a different financial need.

### C. **Income Verification**

The Authority reserves the right to obtain the applicant's or dependent applicant's parents' federal or state Income Tax Return in order to verify 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 finalist, 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 regulations governing federal student financial aid, and, for an upper class recipient, certify satisfactory academic progress as it relates to the requirements of the Academic Promise Scholarship Program.

### B. **Payment to Institution**

1. Payments of Academic Promise Scholarships will be made directly to institutions upon receipt of an electronic request for payment from the institution. In certain circumstances, and consistent with provisions of Section 529 of the Internal Revenue Code as amended from time to time and any applicable regulations or rulings issued by

the Internal Revenue Service, payments may be made directly to the recipients or to any agents designated by them other than their postsecondary institution.

2. Payments to the institution shall be applied solely toward any expenses consistent with the provisions of Section 529 of the Internal Revenue Code as amended from time to time and any applicable regulations or rulings issued by the Internal Revenue Service.
3. Payments to the institution shall be conditional to the extent that the institution as a condition of acceptance of the funds, shall agree that an Academic Promise Scholarship will not be used to displace institutional gift aid.
4. 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 directly 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 CollegeBound*fund* Academic Promise 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 by securing the established minimum GPA or greater,
  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 approved by the Authority on the basis of fees paid to the Rhode Island Higher Education Savings Trust, and provided for in the Rhode Island Higher Education Savings Trust document and Program Rules and Regulations.

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 impact of the program, after having considered the impact of funding level for the program and after having identified the availability of funds which best meet the objectives of the program.

X. **EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**

Unusual circumstances that may impact on individual awards in the ordinary operation of the CollegeBound*fund* Academic Promise Scholarship Program 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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