

Policy: The Degree Project Scholarship

Purpose: This document provides guidance to nonprofit colleges and universities in Wisconsin on how to award students The Degree Project scholarship.

Scope:

- 1.1 Initial Student Eligibility
- 1.2 Awarding Procedures
- 1.3 Disbursement Procedures
- 1.4 Continued Student Eligibility

Responsibilities:

Great Lakes Higher Education Corporation & Affiliates will fund the scholarships.

Great Lakes will make student eligibility determinations based upon data provided by Milwaukee Public Schools.

The Wisconsin Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB) will create and send lists of students deemed eligible by Great Lakes and who have completed the FAFSA to Wisconsin nonprofit colleges and universities.

Wisconsin nonprofit colleges and universities will determine the exact amount of the scholarship the student is eligible for (up to a lifetime maximum of \$12,000) and request that funding from HEAB, similar to how funds are requested and awarded for the Wisconsin Covenant Foundation Grants.

HEAB will transfer funds directly to each college and university, similar to how funds are transferred for the Wisconsin Covenant Foundation Grants.

Acronyms:

COA: Cost of Attendance
EFC: Expected Family Contribution
FAFSA®: Free Application for Federal Student Aid
Great Lakes: Great Lakes Higher Education Corporation & Affiliates
GPA: Grade Point Average
HEAB: Higher Educational Aids Board
MPS: Milwaukee Public Schools
SAP: Satisfactory Academic Progress

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1.1 Initial Student Eligibility

To be eligible for The Degree Project scholarship, selected students must meet the following requirements:

- Graduate on time (by August 30, 2015) from an eligible MPS high school with a regular diploma.
- Earn a cumulative GPA of 2.50 or higher at time of high school graduation.
- Earn a cumulative attendance record of 90% or higher at time of high school graduation.
- Complete the FAFSA.
- Attend any of 67 specified Wisconsin colleges or universities, at least half-time, by September 30, 2016.
- Have a financial aid package that falls short of their financial need based on college's cost of attendance and other gift aid.

Students were randomly selected to participate in The Degree Project in November of 2011. MPS has been tracking cumulative GPA, cumulative attendance records, and graduation. MPS will provide Great Lakes with a list of students who have met the eligibility requirements and therefore are eligible for the scholarship. HEAB will send colleges and universities the list of eligible students who completed the FAFSA and listed their college/university. This is the only way colleges/universities will know which students are eligible.

If a student contacts the college/university and thinks he/she is eligible but is not on the list of eligible students, have the student contact The Degree Project.

Students are eligible for funds starting August 30, 2015 through June 30, 2019. To be eligible however, students must attend an eligible college prior to September 30, 2016 (i.e., they may take a year off after high school).

List of eligible MPS high schools:

<https://www.degreeproject.com/degreestatic/forms/mps-schools.pdf>

List of eligible Wisconsin colleges:

<https://www.degreeproject.com/degreestatic/forms/eligible-colleges.pdf>

1.2 Awarding Procedures

The Degree Project is a need-based scholarship; therefore it should be awarded following the same federal rules as other need-based aid.

- Eligible students must have unmet need, before loans, equal to or greater than the scholarship amount.
 - a. Each college/university may decide on a case-by-case basis as to whether or not to replace Federal Work-study with The Degree Project Scholarship.
- Eligible students may receive up to \$6,000 per year, until the maximum \$12,000 is received.
 - 1. HEAB will track the amount received and will include this on the list of eligible students.
 - 2. The yearly amount is based on the students cost of attendance, EFC, and other gift aid received.
 - 3. Unless extenuating circumstances exist, the student should be awarded the full amount he/she is eligible for each year.
- Institutional aid should not be displaced by The Degree Project scholarship.
- If a student is eligible for any of the following grants, including a scholarship from The Degree Project, and does not have enough need to receive all four, they should be awarded in the following order*:
 - 1. Wisconsin Covenant Foundation Grant
 - 2. Wisconsin Covenant Scholars Grant
 - 3. Wisconsin Grant
 - 4. The Degree Project Scholarship

*Provided as a guideline. Colleges should award in the best interest of the student.

To assist with awarding, the following examples are provided:

| | Award Prior to Receiving The Degree Project Scholarship | Revised Award After Receiving The Degree Project Scholarship |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| COA | \$22,580 | \$22,580 |
| EFC | \$0 | \$0 |
| Need | \$22,580 | \$22,580 |
| Pell Grant | \$5,730 | \$5,730 |
| WI Covenant Foundation Grant | \$1,500 | \$1,500 |
| WI Covenant Scholars Grant | \$1,000 | \$1,000 |
| Wisconsin Grant | \$2,324 | \$2,324 |
| The Degree Project Scholarship | \$0 | \$6,000 |
| Unmet Need | \$12,026 | \$6,026 |

| | Award Prior to Receiving The Degree Project Scholarship | Revised Award After Receiving The Degree Project Scholarship |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| COA | \$12,700 | \$12,700 |
| EFC | \$0 | \$0 |
| Need | \$12,700 | \$12,700 |
| Pell Grant | \$5,730 | \$5,730 |
| WI Covenant Foundation Grant | \$1,500 | \$1,500 |
| WI Covenant Scholars Grant | \$1,000 | \$1,000 |
| Wisconsin Grant | \$1,084 | \$1,084 |
| The Degree Project Scholarship | \$0 | \$3,386 |
| Unmet Need | \$3,386 | \$0 |

| | Award Prior to Receiving The Degree Project Scholarship | Revised Award After Receiving The Degree Project Scholarship |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| COA | \$51,038 | \$51,038 |
| EFC | \$0 | \$0 |
| Need | \$51,038 | \$51,038 |
| Pell Grant | \$5,730 | \$5,730 |
| Institutional Scholarship | \$20,000 | \$20,000 |
| Institutional Grant | \$17,000 | \$17,000 |
| WI Covenant Foundation Grant | \$1,500 | \$1,500 |
| WI Covenant Scholars Grant | \$1,000 | \$1,000 |
| Wisconsin Grant | \$2,900 | \$2,900 |
| The Degree Project Scholarship | \$0 | \$2,908 |
| Unmet Need | \$2,908 | \$0 |

| | Award Prior to Receiving The Degree Project Scholarship | Revised Award After Receiving The Degree Project Scholarship |
|--|--|---|
| COA | \$12,700 | \$12,700 |
| EFC | \$3,500 | \$3,500 |
| Need | \$9,200 | \$9,200 |
| Pell Grant | \$2,280 | \$2,280 |
| WI Covenant Scholars Grant | \$1,000 | \$1,000 |
| Wisconsin Grant | \$675 | \$675 |
| Direct Subsidized Loan | \$3,500 | \$0 |
| The Degree Project Scholarship | \$0 | \$5,245 |
| Unmet Need (after all need-based aid) | \$1,745 | \$0 |
| Direct Unsubsidized Loan | \$2,000 | \$3,500 |

1.3 Disbursement Procedures

Great Lakes has contracted with HEAB to disburse funds and the process will be similar to the Wisconsin Covenant Foundation Grants.

- In late July and again in late August, HEAB will send colleges a notification list of eligible students.
- Colleges will determine the award amount and send a voucher request to HEAB.
- HEAB will then wire funds to the college.
- Withdrawals and refunds will be handled just like Wisconsin Covenant Foundation Grants. Although these funds are being disbursed via HEAB, they are private funds paid directly from Great Lakes – they are **NOT** state or federal funds.

1.4 Continued Student Eligibility

To remain eligible through June 30, 2019, students must:

- File the FAFSA each year.
- Maintain SAP, as determined by their college.
 - Students who fail to maintain SAP will lose eligibility; however, if they regain eligibility for federal aid by meeting SAP requirements again, they will regain eligibility for The Degree Project scholarship.
- Not have received the full \$12,000.
 - HEAB will monitor this and report it on the list of eligible students.
- Attend an eligible college or university.
 - The scholarship can transfer as long as students attend one of the 67 eligible colleges or universities.

The Degree Project scholarship is only for a degree up to a bachelor's degree. If a student graduates with an associate degree and still has remaining funds, he/she has until June 30, 2019 to use those funds at an eligible four year college or university.