

COMPLETERS

GRANT



Louisiana Office Of Student Financial Assistance
A Program of the Board of Regents

The Completers Grant provides financial aid to students who are near completion in any degree program, with **priority given to students in healthcare, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) fields and teacher education.** The grant is available to students **within 30 hours of completing a degree** at a Louisiana public two- or four-year postsecondary institution. The Completers Grant also incentivizes enrollment in and completion of short-term credential programs at two-year institutions. The maximum a student can receive is the total of the tuition, fees, and books as set forth on their fee bill. Funds can only be used towards tuition, fees and books.

The grant will not provide more than two consecutive semesters of funding and each academic institution will determine award amount. The Completers Grant is funded through one-time Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) dollars, available through September 30, 2022.

ELIGIBILITY:

- 1 Be a Louisiana resident.
- 2 File a FAFSA for the academic year during which the award will be received.
- 3 Students that are within 30 hours of degree completion in an initial certificate, diploma, associate or bachelor's degree.
- 4 Credit Programs - meet the enrolling institution's Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) policy for receipt of Title IV aid.
- 5 Non-credit Programs - successfully complete course(s) sufficient to continue in their program of study as determined by the institution.
- 6 Be enrolled through the 14th class day.

"Louisiana cannot afford to have students defer their higher education dreams. [The] Completers Grant will help those who have graduation within sight but may have run out of the funds needed to cross the finish line. The pandemic has certainly impacted the plans of many near-completers. These funds can help get students back on track, aiding them to finish what they started and become graduates."

Dr. Kim Hunter Reed

Commissioner of Higher Education



COMPLETERS GRANT

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. What is the Completers Grant?

The Completers Grant, funded by the Louisiana Board of Regents, is designed to incentivize near-completers in high demand fields (healthcare, and other Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) fields and teacher education) at Louisiana's public two- and four-year institutions to earn their undergraduate degree and to incentivize enrollment in and completion of short-term credential programs at two-year institutions. Although priority is given to healthcare and other STEM fields and teacher education, all programs are eligible for funding.

2. What are the eligibility requirements?

You must:

- Be a Louisiana resident; and
- File a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for the academic year during which the award will be received; and
- Meet one of the priority criteria listed in question 3; and
- Be enrolled through the 14th class day; and
- For credit programs, students shall meet the enrolling institution's Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) policy for receipt of Title IV aid; or
- For non-credit programs, students shall successfully complete course(s) sufficient to continue in their program of student as determined by the institution.

3. How do I qualify for the Completers Grant?

You must meet one of the criteria listed below:

- Expect to complete your program of study/graduating in the Fall 2021 and have significantly depleted or have no other sources of financial aid, or
- Are expected to complete your program of study/graduate in Spring 2022 and have significantly depleted or have no other sources of financial aid, or
- Are expected to complete your program of study/graduate in the Summer 2022 and have significantly depleted or have no other sources of financial aid.

4. Who determines if I am eligible?

Your school will determine if you meet the eligibility criteria and whether you will receive a Completers Grant.

5. How much am I eligible to receive from the Completers Grant?

Awards shall be limited to tuition, fees, and books as set forth on the student's fee bill. Institutions **shall not** award the maximum amount set for the program of study if that amount would exceed the student's cost of attendance as defined in the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended. The suggested minimum award amount should not be less than \$100.

6. Who determines how much I will receive?

Your school will determine how much you will receive.

7. How much is available for the Completers Grant?

The State allocation amount for this program is \$13.3 million dollars across the four Louisiana public college systems.

8. If I receive a Completers Grant in the fall of 2021, am I guaranteed to receive it for the spring of 2022?

If you received the grant in Fall 2021, you **could** receive the grant in Spring 2022 IF:

- You are within 30 hours of receiving your initial associate's or bachelor's degree when you first receive the grant, AND
- You meet the eligibility requirements in the answer to question 2

Note that you are not necessarily guaranteed to receive the same amount in both semesters.

9. How many semesters may I receive Completers Grant?

You may receive Completers Grant for a maximum of two consecutive semesters. For example, if you receive Completers Grant for the first time in the Fall of 2021, you **could** be eligible to receive one more payment in the following Spring of 2022 provided you meet all eligibility requirements.

10. What schools are participating in the Completers Grant program?

All public institutions in the state are participating in the program. This includes all schools who are part of the LSU system, the SU system, the UL system, and the LCTC system.

11. When does the Completers Grant start?

Awards for the Completers Grant will be made starting the Fall 2021 semester.

12. When does the Completers Grant end?

The allocation amount for this program is \$13.3 million dollars. The Completers Grant will be available until all funding is exhausted, or September 30, 2022, whichever is later.

13. Can Completers Funds be used to pay previous student debt?

Schools have the ability to award students who are eligible for the Fall 2021 (1S2022) under the changes in the revised framework. For example, if a student received a federal subsidized/unsubsidized loan for Fall 2021, the school has the option to return loan funds and award the Completers Grant in the amount not to include a refund that a student may have received.

14. Are students pursuing a second bachelor's degree eligible for the Completers Grant?

Students pursuing an initial associate's or bachelor's degree are eligible. Students pursuing a bachelor's degree after having received an associate's degree are eligible. Students pursuing a second associate's degree, or a second bachelor's degree are not eligible.

15. Are there procedures for identification of transfer and/or re-entering students which ensure such students receive awards on the same basis as continuing students?"

If you have a student transferring from one of your system colleges to another and the student was awarded the Completers Grant at their previous school, they should be granted the opportunity for the Completers Grant at the new college.

16. In the webinar, it was stated that students had to have completed federal financial aid verification. Since some students may still need to be verified for various reasons, can LOSFA clarify the response.

LOSFA is following the guidance of USDE regarding verification. We do not require a student to complete verification in order to be awarded the Completers Grant.

However, completing verification may allow a student to become eligible for Title IV aid, allowing the school to expand the use of their Completers Grant to other eligible students not yet awarded.

17. How do we handle over-award situations for a student who received the Completers grant but then was awarded an additional fund? Would we reduce the Spring award in case of a Fall over-award?

There should be no instances where a student receives a refund from the Completers Grant. In cases of an over-award, the Completers Grant should be reduced to allow for the other financial aid (other than loans). Completers Grant awards should be viewed semester by semester and not on the academic year because these students may not be enrolled the entire academic year.

18. Are students who are in default eligible for the Completers Grant? The student may not have exhausted all of their Title IV eligibility but cannot access due to default.

Students who are in default and have made satisfactory payment arrangements and are now Title IV eligible are also eligible for Completers Grant. The student must provide the school with proof of Title IV eligibility. The school must maintain documentation that the student was eligible for Title IV aid when the funds are awarded.

19. If I pay my tuition, fees and books with a personal credit card or use funds from my START account, am I eligible for the Completers Grant?

No. If you used resources such as a credit card or START funds to cover your entire cost of tuition, fees and books as stated on your fee bill, you will not be eligible for the Completers Grant.

For more information on the Completers Grant, go to www.mylosfa.com/CompletersGrant or email completers@la.gov