
José Martí Scholarship Challenge Grant Fund

[Florida Statutes 1009.72](#)

[State Board of Education Rule 6A-20.023](#)

Program Description

The José Martí Scholarship Challenge Grant Fund is a need-based merit scholarship that provides financial assistance to eligible students of Hispanic origin who will attend Florida public or eligible private institutions.

Initial Eligibility Requirements

The student will:

- Complete and submit an error-free [Florida Financial Aid Application](#) by **April 1** (available **October 1**). Applicants will be ranked by their application submission date, if necessary.
- Be of Spanish culture, born in or having a natural parent who was born in either Mexico or a Hispanic country of the Caribbean, Central or South America, regardless of race. Students of the Portuguese culture of Brazil are not considered for evaluation of a scholarship.
- Have earned, by the end of the seventh semester, a minimum unweighted cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale based on subjects credible toward a high school diploma for an undergraduate scholarship, or a 3.0 institutional cumulative GPA for undergraduate college work if applying for a graduate level scholarship.
 - A prospective undergraduate student must apply during senior year of high school and ensure that either the high school principal or designee certifies online the student's 7th semester unweighted cumulative GPA to the Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA) by a date established by the Florida Department of Education (FDOE).
 - A prospective graduate student must ensure that an admissions office official at the postsecondary institution the applicant plans to attend certifies the student's institutional cumulative GPA online to OSFA by a date established by FDOE.
- Demonstrate a minimum of \$2,000 in financial need by completing and submitting the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid](#) (FAFSA) in time to be processed error-free by the U.S. Department of Education on or before **May 15**.

Requirements to Receive Funding

The student will:

- Be a Florida resident and a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen. A student's residency and citizenship status are determined by the postsecondary institution. Questions regarding such status should be directed to the financial aid office or admissions office of the institution the student plans to attend.
- Enroll as a degree-seeking student at an [eligible postsecondary institution](#) and enroll each academic term for a minimum of 12 credit hours for undergraduate study or 9 credit hours for graduate study.
- Not owe a repayment or be in default under any state or federal grant, loan, or scholarship program unless satisfactory arrangements to repay have been made.

Applying for an Award

- The online [Florida Financial Aid Application](#) must be completed error-free by **April 1** to be considered for an initial award (available **October 1**). Applicants will be ranked by their application submission date, if necessary.
 - Applicants for undergraduate study must apply during their senior year of high school.
 - Graduate students may apply; however, priority for the scholarship is given to graduating high school seniors.
- The online [Reinstatement/Restoration Application for Students](#) is available in **February** each year and must be completed by **April 1** to be considered for reinstatement or restoration.

Award Procedures

The annual award amount for the 2016-17 academic year is \$2,000. Applicants are ranked first by the highest need, which is determined by the FAFSA, then by GPA, and then by application submission date. Applicants will be evaluated and notified of eligibility determination mid-summer.

- First priority in the distribution of awards shall be given to eligible renewal applicants.
- Second priority for awards will be given to initial applicants.
- Third priority for awards will be given to reinstatement applicants.
- Fourth priority for awards will be given to restoration applicants.
- Fifth priority for awards will be given to initial graduate applicants.

Award Disbursement

The postsecondary institution will disburse awards to eligible students each term. Awards are not available for the summer term.

Terms of Eligibility

- An undergraduate student is eligible to receive an award for a maximum of eight semesters (12 quarters) over a period of no more than six consecutive years, or until receipt of a baccalaureate degree, whichever occurs first.
- However, an undergraduate student enrolled in a five-year undergraduate degree program is eligible to receive financial aid for a maximum of 10 semesters or 15 quarters.
- The eligible undergraduate student who enrolls in a 3/2 program ending in an advanced degree is no longer eligible to receive undergraduate funding when a degree-seeking student:
 - Receives a baccalaureate degree,
 - Has enrollment status changed from 'Undergraduate' to 'Graduate', or
 - Enrolls in 'Graduate' level courses.
- An eligible graduate student may receive a maximum of four semesters or six quarters of funding.

Student Award Renewal

- A renewal application is not required to renew the award. A recipient is automatically considered for a renewal award.
- Eligibility for renewal is determined at the end of the second semester, third quarter, or the equivalent of each academic year. Credit hours earned the previous summer can be counted toward the total number of credit hours required for renewal.
- Students must have earned a minimum unweighted institutional cumulative GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale.
- For undergraduate study, students must have earned 12 credit hours per term or the equivalent for which the award was received. For graduate study, students must have earned 9 credit hours per term or the equivalent for which the award was received.
- Students must demonstrate a minimum of \$2,000 in financial need. File the [FAFSA](#) each academic year in time to be processed error-free by the U.S. Department of Education on or before **May 15**.

Failure to Meet the Minimum Renewal Requirements

- An undergraduate or graduate student who does not meet the required credit hours shall be ineligible to continue in the program.
- A student who earned less than the minimum institutional cumulative 3.0 GPA may be granted a probationary award for no more than two semesters or three quarters, or the equivalent.
- To be eligible for renewal the following year after probation, the student must have earned the required credits hours and institutional cumulative GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale.
- The student who failed to meet the requirements for renewal during a probationary period will become ineligible for funding. However, the student is eligible to apply for restoration after one academic year. An institutional cumulative GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale must be earned at the end of the second semester or third quarter of the academic year proceeding the year the award is sought.

Student Award Reinstatement/Restoration

- A student who was eligible for an award but did not accept an award during the previous academic year may be eligible for reinstatement.
- The student may be eligible for restoration if an institutional cumulative GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale is earned at the end of the second semester or third quarter of the academic year for which the student was ineligible.
- The online Reinstatement/Restoration Application for Students is available in **February** each year and must be completed by **April 1** to be considered for reinstatement or restoration.
 - A student who applies for reinstatement/restoration must also complete a FAFSA in time to be processed error-free by **May 15**.

Appeal Process

An applicant who believes financial aid has been wrongly denied has certain rights to appeal.

An applicant may appeal if he or she believes the FDOE erred in determining eligibility or failed to transfer an award. An FDOE appeal is to be filed in writing within 30 days of the date of the notice of ineligibility.

If aid is denied for failure to meet satisfactory academic progress requirements, an applicant may appeal the denial to the institution by providing proof of illness or other emergency beyond the applicant's control. An institutional academic progress appeal is to be filed in writing within 30 days of the denial letter or by the date established by the institution's financial aid office, whichever is later.

Updating Information

A recipient must notify OSFA of any change in name, address, or institution attended.

A student may update information by contacting OSFA toll-free at 1-888-827-2004 or online:

www.FloridaStudentFinancialAid.org

- ✓ Select **State Grants, Scholarships & Applications**
- ✓ Select **Update My Demographics**

Transferring from one institution to another could affect an applicant's award.

Use of an Applicant's Social Security Number/Non-discrimination Statement

The Privacy Act of 1974 requires state agencies to inform applicants of the reasons for requesting their Social Security Numbers (SSN). The FDOE requests an SSN on all applications for student financial assistance in order to correctly identify applicants, match each applicant's financial aid record with the student record at the postsecondary institution the applicant attends, and help coordinate state student aid programs with federal student aid programs.

An applicant will not be denied financial assistance for failure to disclose the SSN. Without an SSN, correct identification of an applicant's record cannot be assured and may result in an error in the award amount or a delay in the disbursement of an award.

Pursuant to Section 1000.05, Florida Statutes, state student financial assistance is provided to eligible applicants without discriminating on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, disability, or marital status. Minority status will be considered when required by law as a condition of eligibility or selection.

Contact Information

Address:

Florida Department of Education
Office of Student Financial Assistance
State Scholarship and Grant Programs
Suite 1314
325 West Gaines Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400

Phone:

1-888-827-2004

E-mail:

OSFA@fldoe.org