

## COLORADO COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM PRESIDENT'S PROCEDURES

### COLLEGE OPPORTUNITY FUND

SP 4-23

APPROVED: September 12, 2007  
EFFECTIVE: September 12, 2007  
REVISED: June 24, 2009

REFERENCES: C.R.S. 23-18-101, *et seq.* C.R.S. 23-7-103; 23-7-105; C.R.S. 23-7-109

ISSUED BY:  
Nancy J. McCallin, System President

#### Application

The procedure applies to the state system of community colleges.

#### Basis

The Colorado Community Colleges System (CCCS) College Opportunity Fund (COF) procedure sets practice in compliance with Colorado Revised Statute.

#### Procedure

The stipend award is not automatic for eligible students – the student must apply for the benefit to receive it.

#### Student Eligibility

The following students are eligible to receive the COF stipend:

- Students “enrolled at a state institution and ... classified as an in-state student for tuition purposes” (C.R.S. 23-18-102(5) (a)).
- Students who have applied and been accepted into the COF program (C.R.S. 23-18-202(5) (a)).
- Students who have requested that a payment from the COF is made on their behalf to the institution(s) they are attending (C.R.S. 23-18-202(5) (a)).
- Students who are classified as undergraduate students and have not exceeded their lifetime-credit-hour limitation (145 hours) or have already completed their baccalaureate degree and are eligible to receive stipend payments for an additional 30 undergraduate credit hours (C.R.S. 23-18-202(5)(c)(I)).
- Students enrolled in the concurrent enrollment or ASCENT programs. Concurrent enrollment or ASCENT courses taken with COF stipends *will* count against a student’s 145 credit hour limitation. However, in the event the student exceeds this limit, the student may request a one-year waiver of the lifetime credit hour limitation from the institution attended when the student reaches the limit.

- Students enrolled in Basic Skills courses. Basic Skills courses taken with COF stipends will *not* count against the student's 145 credit hour limit.
- Students receiving institutional scholarships granted to a special group of students, such as employees or employees' dependents, are eligible to receive the COF stipend if the following criteria are met:
  - the eligible employee or dependent must pay the tuition and fees when registering for the course, AND
  - there is a published application process under which recipients qualify and receive reimbursement.
- Children and grandchildren of the displaced Auraria residents who are granted free tuition and Native-American students attending Fort Lewis College under its statutory role and mission are eligible for COF stipends.
- U.S. Military personnel or their dependents, and Olympic trainees, whose out-of-state tuition is waived under C.R.S. 23-7-103 and 23-7-105, respectively, are eligible for COF stipends.
- Students participating in the Colorado Education Exchange Program (CEEP) are eligible for COF stipends (Note: No student may participate in CEEP for more than one year).
- Pursuant to statute, C.R.S. 23-7-109, employees and their dependent children who have been transferred to Colorado within the last 12 months by their companies, as part of a state or local economic development incentive, or have been hired as faculty at a Colorado public institution of higher education may be eligible to receive in-state tuition and COF.

### Lifetime Credit Hour Limitation Waiver

As mentioned above, each eligible student is limited to 145 credit hours of COF stipends. If a student exceeds this limit prior to meeting his/her academic goals, he/she is responsible for the total tuition (student share of tuition plus the COF stipend). However, he/she may apply for a waiver from the lifetime credit hour limitation. There are two types of waivers: waivers granted by the institution and waivers granted by the DHE.

#### *Institutional Waivers*

The institutional waiver will always precede the DHE waiver. In other words, students may only apply for a waiver from the DHE after receiving an institutional waiver, or if a waiver is not available from their respective institution (presumably because the institution already granted waivers to five percent of credit hours converted to student FTE). An institution's waiver application must inform students of the availability of waivers from the DHE.

- A state institution of higher education may annually grant a one-year waiver of the lifetime credit hour limitation for up to five percent of the eligible undergraduate students enrolled in the state institution of higher education.

- Institutions will grant these waivers each fiscal year.
- An eligible student may only receive one waiver from an institution.
- Institutions must calculate their five percent limit based on the previous fiscal year's credit hours converted to student FTE.
- At their discretion, institutions may establish their own waiver policy to meet the needs of the institution, as long as this policy complies with statute and the institution does not bill for more than five percent of the previous fiscal year's credit hours converted to student FTE each year.
- Beginning fiscal year 2006-07, institutional waiver priority will be given to students who exceeded the limit and used COF stipends for courses taken while participating in the PSEO or the Fast Track programs. The institution shall grant the waiver, if needed and requested, only if the student exceeds the lifetime credit hour limitation (rescinded at the end of fiscal year 2008-2009 and revised below).
- Effective fiscal year 2009-10, institutional waiver priority will be given to students who exceeded the limit and used COF stipends for courses taken while participating in the concurrent enrollment and ASCENT program. The institution shall grant the waiver, if needed and requested, only if the student exceeds the lifetime credit hour limitation.

### *DHE Waivers*

The COF statute is very specific in defining the criteria that must be met in order for a student to qualify for a DHE waiver from the lifetime credit hour limitation. According to C.R.S. 23-18-202(5) (e), the DHE may grant a waiver in the following situations:

- The student has extenuating circumstances that exist related to his/her health or physical ability to complete the degree program within the lifetime credit hour limitation.
- The student's degree program requires more than 120 credit hours to complete and the DHE has approved this program.
- While the eligible undergraduate student was enrolled in a specific degree program, the DHE approved and the institution implemented an alteration of degree requirements or standards for the specific degree.
- Requiring the eligible undergraduate student to pay the full amount of total tuition for credit hours that exceed the limitation would cause substantial economic hardship on the student and/or the student's family.

A student may apply once to the DHE for a waiver using the application found on the DHE's website. However, if extenuating circumstances occur after the waiver is denied which significantly affect the student's need and/or eligibility for the waiver, a student may reapply to the DHE for a waiver. The DHE's decision shall be final. The DHE will notify the student whether the waiver request is granted or denied within 30 days of the receipt of the application. The DHE will also notify the student's institution and CSLP (Colorado Student Loan Program) of its decision to grant or deny the waiver at this time.

The DHE shall accept waiver applications throughout the year as needed. If granted, the waiver shall only be valid for courses needed to meet the requirements for the degree program in which the student is enrolled at the time he/she applied for the waiver. As part of the waiver application process, a student will be required to meet with an academic advisor to determine the specific courses required to graduate or to complete their enrolled program. The waiver will be valid for the specific number of credit hours, and it is the student's responsibility to ensure he/she enrolls in the appropriate courses. For example, if a student is granted a waiver for four specific three credit courses, DHE will notify the institution and (CSLP) that the student has been granted a waiver for twelve credit hours.