

MAINE  
DEPARTMENT OF  
LABOR



**MAINE**

**Competitive Skills Scholarship**

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*Investing in earning and learning*

**Applicant Program Introduction**

# Program Overview

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The Competitive Skills Scholarship Program (CSSP) provides funding and support services for eligible Maine residents to pursue two and four-year degree programs or employer recognized credentials leading to high-wage, in-demand jobs in Maine.

# Background

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- The **Competitive Skills Scholarship Program (CSSP)** was enacted to provide access to post-secondary education for Mainers at or below 200% of the poverty level to assist with the educational costs that will allow them to work in well-paid, high-demand occupations.
- CSSP received wide support from business groups and worker advocates and was signed into law in June 2007.

# Basic Eligibility

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*You may qualify for CSSP if you:*

- Are at least 18 years old or have graduated from high school and live in Maine
- Are legally eligible to work in the United States
- Are seeking education or training for a job in a high wage, in-demand occupation
- Don't already have a marketable post-secondary degree
- Have household income of less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level
- Possess the ability to undertake & complete the education or training program

# Occupation Criteria

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- Your training must lead to a career in a high-wage, in-demand occupation
- Your training must be on the state's approved provider list or must be accredited by a regional/national accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education
- The training institution must offer degrees, licenses or industry recognized certifications OR similar credentials that are universally recognized

# Participant Responsibilities

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- Demonstrate satisfactory progress in your educational training program
- Participate in year-round training as classes are available
- Mandatory monthly contact with Case Manager to share progress
- Submit grades to case manager at the end of each semester
- Provide a copy of Diploma/Certification upon completion of training

# Financial Information

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- CSSP Participants must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) application and release aid information to their CSSP Case Manager
- CSSP funds are available **only after all other federal, state and campus-based sources of financial aid have been considered**
- CSSP pays for required (as opposed to recommended) books, supplies, tools, equipment, services, uniforms
- CSSP participants must submit documentation such as class schedule and required book list to their Case Manager every semester

# 4-Week Income Guidelines



## *Four-Week Maximum (2021)*

<b>Household Size</b>	<b>May be eligible for CSSP Program 200% or less*</b>	<b>May be eligible for Training Stipend 125% or less*</b>
1	\$1,982.00	\$1,238.00
2	\$2,680.00	\$1,675.00
3	\$3,378.00	\$2,112.00
4	\$4,077.00	\$2,548.00
5	\$4,775.00	\$2,985.00
6	\$5,474.00	\$3,421.00
7	\$6,172.00	\$3,858.00

*\*based on Federal Poverty Level (FPL)*



# Annual Income Guidelines



## *Annual Maximum (2021)*

Household Size	200% or less*	125% or less*
1	\$25,760.00	\$16,100.00
2	\$34,840.00	\$21,775.00
3	\$43,920.00	\$27,450.00
4	\$53,000.00	\$33,125.00
5	\$62,080.00	\$38,800.00
6	\$71,160.00	\$44,475.00
7	\$80,240.00	\$50,150.00

*\*based on Federal Poverty Level (FPL)*

Household Size	200%* hourly wage**
1	\$12.38
2	\$16.75
3	\$21.12
4	\$25.48
5	\$29.85
6	\$34.21
7	\$38.58

*\*\*based on 40 hours per week*

# Support Services

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## *You may be eligible for:*

- Childcare
- Transportation
  - Mileage (\$.45 per mile)
  - Some auto repairs
- Required books, supplies, tools etc.
- Computers (up to \$600, one-time only purchase)
- Other Needs/Emergency Funds, to include Dental Care
  - (up to \$2,000, during the entire enrollment)

# Maximum Benefits

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- Maximum benefits per year, per participant
  - \$6,000 per year – full time student
  - \$3,000 per year – half time student
- Maximum time to complete training; 6 years for 4-year degree; 3 years for 2-year degree.
- Maximum of up to 1 year of funding support for developmental studies in preparation for approved training.
- After training goal is completed, up to \$1,000 for travel to and from interviews, eyecare required for employment, dental and relocation assistance (please be aware, this amount is included in the \$6,000 maximum)

# Training Stipend

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## *You may be eligible if:*

- You're a full-time student
- You're not living in a dorm on campus
- Your income is 125% of poverty level or less

## *Requirements:*

- Verification of last four (4) weeks of income
- Stipend eligibility reviewed every school term, or no less than every six months, or any time household income changes bring income above or below 125% of poverty level
- Monthly stipend currently \$439 per month (1/5 of maximum weekly Unemployment Insurance for full-time students)

***Participants eligible for DWB, Unemployment Compensation, or TRA benefits are not eligible for the CSSP training stipend***

For more information, visit:  
[www.mainecareercenter.gov/cssp.shtml](http://www.mainecareercenter.gov/cssp.shtml)



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Competitive Skills Scholarship Program

# Program Referrals



*As part of your enrollment, we may refer you to some of the following resources:*

MaineCare

Earned Income Tax  
Credit

Food Supplement  
(SNAP)

Temporary  
Assistance for  
Needy Families  
(TANF)

Higher Opportunity  
for Pathways to  
Employment  
(HOPE)

Workforce  
Innovation and  
Opportunity Act  
(WIOA)

Dislocated Worker  
Benefit (DWB)

Childcare

Financial Aid

Parents as Scholars

# Additional Resources

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- [Maine Adult Education](#)
- [Job Corps](#)
- [Maine Apprenticeship Program](#)
- [Senior Community Service Employment Program](#) (SCSEP)
- [Higher Opportunity for Pathways to Employment](#) (HOPE)
- [Maine's Parents as Scholars](#) (PaS)
- [Bureau of Rehabilitation Service](#)
  - (Vocational Rehabilitation; Division of Blind and Visually Impaired; Deaf, Hard of Hearing & Late Deafened)
- [Maine Veterans Services](#)
- [Workforce Solutions](#)
- [Eastern Maine Development Corporation](#) (EMDC)
- [Aroostook County Action Program](#) (ACAP)



# Questions?



Call the CareerCenter Hotline 1-207-623-7981 or e-mail your local CareerCenter:



**Augusta Area:**

[augusta.careercenter@maine.gov](mailto:augusta.careercenter@maine.gov)

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**Greater Portland:**

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**Presque Isle Area:**

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**Rockland Area:**

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**Springvale (York County):**

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**Wilton Area:**

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