

Student Financial Assistance Information 2025-2026

Oakton College is pleased to provide you with the enclosed Financial Assistance Decision and Notification letter. We hope that the assistance offered will help you reach your educational goals.

AWARD DECISION and NOTIFICATION

Identifiers

Your name and student ID number are listed on your letter. If they are **not** correct, you **must** provide the Enrollment Center with the correct information.

*If you change your name, address, or phone numbers during the semester, please notify the Enrollment Center. If you change your name, the College will need to use the name that is listed on your Social Security card. Please refer to name and address information listed in the section, **Disbursement of Aid**.*

Award Programs

Please refer to the program descriptions below for further information. Read this section carefully to make certain you understand the type of aid you are being offered and to determine if you are able to comply with the requirements of receiving the aid. Most program names are abbreviated. *If you are uncertain about the types of aid offered or about program requirements, contact the Office. Amounts listed are usually based on full-time enrollment.*

Total Awards

The maximum award total for each term is based on **full-time enrollment (generally at least 12 credit hours in 100 level coursework or higher)**. *The actual term total received may differ based on your enrollment, the type of aid, and funding guidelines. Disbursement information also is provided in this document.*

Sessions

Students must register for classes by the following dates to be considered for financial assistance:

Fall 2025: October 5, 2025

Spring 2026: March 8, 2026

Summer 2026: June 28, 2026

Financial assistance will not be available to students who register for classes after these deadlines.

PROGRAMS

Grants

Grants are a form of gift aid that need not be repaid.

- **Federal Pell Grant:** A federal grant for eligible students who do not already have a bachelor's degree or its equivalent. This grant is available for developmental courses (classes under the 100 level).
- **Federal SEOG:** A federal grant for eligible students who demonstrate exceptional financial need. Funding is limited.
- **State of IL MAP Grant (Est):** An Illinois grant for eligible students who demonstrate financial need. This grant is available for developmental courses. Awards are based on 15 credit hours. Enrollment of less than 15 credit hours results in a reduction of the grant.

By applying for financial aid and agreeing to share that information with the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) you have been considered for the State of Illinois (IL) Monetary Award Program (MAP) Grant. All MAP-approved institutions are required by the State of Illinois to announce MAP Grant awards to students who are enrolled or intending to enroll at their institution. An award amount is included in your financial aid package if you have met the eligibility criteria.

The MAP Grant award amount is an estimate made by the financial aid office and is identified as a "State of IL MAP Grant (Est)." **Please be aware that the number of available MAP Grants is limited by funding levels approved by the Illinois General Assembly and the Governor, and reductions to estimated or actual MAP Grants are possible.**

There are also limitations to how long you can continue to receive a MAP Grant. Usage is tracked by the number of credit hours for which you've received MAP benefits and is referred to as MAP Paid Credit Hours (MPCHs). The maximum number of MPCHs that can be received is 135, which is equivalent to approximately four and a half years of full-time enrollment. For your reference, and to learn more about MPCH limitations, you may access a record of your MPCHs, as well as other student resources, through the ISAC Student Portal at studentportal.isac.org.

Eligibility for the need-based MAP Grant award may indicate that you are eligible for assistance with expenses such as food, housing, or child care for dependent children. If you have dependent care expenses, ask the financial aid office about the federal dependent care allowance. For eligibility and application information about the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Child Care Assistance Program, contact the Illinois Department of Human Services at 800-843-6154 or www.dhs.state.il.us. Contact the Illinois Hunger Coalition Hunger Hotline at 800-359-2163 or www.ilhunger.org.

Important note for transfer students: any MAP Paid Credit Hours at another institution are counted towards the 135-hour limit, even if you do not have your academic transcript sent for course evaluation. If you exceed the 135-hour limit after your fall semester, the office cannot disburse a spring semester MAP Grant, even if the amount was listed on your Financial Assistance Decision and Notification letter. Transfer-bound students have the option of not using a MAP Grant at Oakton and preserving MAP eligibility for a four-year college or university. You may cancel your MAP Grant by providing written authorization to the Office.

- **SGA Legacy Grant:** Provided by the Student Government Association, this grant assists students who would not be able to attend Oakton without some financial support. Grant recipients must comply with all general eligibility and academic standards required for federal student aid and maintain a 2.0 grade point average. The grant will pay up to \$90 per credit hour, not to

exceed financial need and the amount on your Financial Assistance Decision and Notification letter. Funding is limited and not available for laboratory fees. Students who are awarded this grant in combination with other financial aid are not eligible for a book voucher. No refunds are available for students receiving this grant.

- **Illinois Veteran's Grant (IVG):** This State of Illinois grant, providing for tuition and approved fees, is for qualified Illinois veterans. **Veterans must complete a Military Benefits Request form before the mid term of each semester that assistance is desired.**
- **Other Grants, Scholarships, etc.:** Your Financial Assistance Decision and Notification letter could indicate grants offered to you by other agencies and/or through special scholarship programs. Some examples include: Excellence Scholarship, Illinois National Guard, Private Scholarships. If the college becomes aware of this financial assistance after your first Financial Assistance Decision and Notification letter, the office may be required to reduce or eliminate a type(s) of financial assistance previously offered.

Loans

Direct Loans: Educational loans are serious financial and legal obligations. **They are debts and must be repaid.** Loans assist with the cost of tuition and fees. The loan obligations are described in more detail in a separate handout. If a loan is listed on your Financial Assistance Decision and Notification letter, you may want to continue the student loan application process. Please read all loan documents carefully before accepting the loan. Loan applications cannot be certified after a semester has ended. **Friday, March 27, 2026, is the deadline to apply for a loan.**

If a Direct loan is not included in your Financial Assistance Decision and Notification letter, you are not eligible for the loan at Oakton College. If you are still interested in a student loan, you may request one at the Enrollment Center by typing a letter of explanation about the need for a student loan and completing a loan budget worksheet.

PLUS Loans: These are loans available to parents of Oakton students. At Oakton, PLUS loans generally help families who are paying out of district tuition. To be considered for a PLUS loan, you must file for financial assistance and meet the Academic Standards for Financial Aid Recipients policy; the parent must complete a *2025-2026 PLUS Loan Request* form.

Alternative Loans: Interest rates, terms, and conditions are set by the bank/lender.

Employment

Federal Work Study (FWS): Students work on or off campus and are paid every two weeks. Your Financial Assistance Decision and Notification letter indicates the maximum amount that can be earned each semester. The Career and Transfer Center has information about working on campus. *The Enrollment Center has information about employment as a reading tutor in a local elementary school. These are especially desirable positions.*

Book Vouchers

Federal Pell Grant recipients whose financial aid exceeds tuition and fees may request a book voucher. The Enrollment Center provides these vouchers in the first and second week each semester. All vouchers must be requested with the Enrollment Center each semester: August 4, 2025 (fall 2025); and December 1, 2025 (Spring 2026). Book vouchers can only be used to purchase textbooks and required educational supplies at Oakton's bookstores. Vouchers also may be requested by students who have a scholarship that may be used for books and/or supplies.

Disbursement of Aid

The dollar amounts indicated on the Financial Assistance Decision and Notification letter are usually based on full time enrollment.

The disbursed financial aid amount is based on credit hour enrollment, course level, academic progress, attendance, funding, and program regulations. If you drop, withdraw, fail, or do not attend courses, your awards will be adjusted or canceled. You will be liable for any overpayment that you receive. Noncredit courses are not eligible for financial assistance. Audit courses will not be included in the credit hours when calculating payment eligibility. However, these classes will count towards the evaluation of your academic progress. Please refer to the Standards of Academic Progress for Financial Aid Recipients policy for further information.

Award amounts are reviewed after attendance information has been recorded by the College. Financial Aid funds from these programs—Estimated Federal Pell, State of IL MAP Grant-Est, Estimated Federal SEOG, and SGA Legacy Grant—are credited directly to your account and applied to your Oakton College charges. Financial assistance may appear on your Oakton tuition bill as "Financial Aid Applied."

Students who fail to attend class(es) are responsible for repaying financial aid awards immediately. Students who owe \$200 or more must pay the amount owed in full before registering for future classes at Oakton. Failure to attend class(es) also affects a student's ability to maintain the academic standards required to receive financial assistance.

Students who register for classes after the deadlines listed on the first page of this handout are not eligible to receive additional financial aid for these classes.

A correct permanent address is critical. Address information is updated in the Enrollment Center. If you live in an apartment, your name must be on the mailbox in order for the post office to deliver mail. Undeliverable checks are returned to the college, and a second mailing attempt is made if a different address is on file. Checks returned a second time are cancelled and the program funds are returned to the Government. If a student fails to cash a check within 90 days of issue, the college will cancel the check and the program funds are returned to the Government. Once funds are returned, it may not be possible to recover or reinstate the lost financial assistance.

The three major disbursement dates* for the 2025-2026 academic year are:

Fall Semester: October 2025

Spring Semester: March 2026

Summer Semester: July 2026

**Dates are subject to change without notice.*

STANDARDS OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS

This policy ensures successful completion of the student's academic program. The following standards apply to students seeking federal or state financial assistance. Recipients must:

- enroll in an eligible Oakton associate degree or certificate program that is at least 16 credit hours;
- maintain a cumulative 2.0 grade point average;
- complete 66²/₃ percent of the cumulative college credits attempted; and
- complete the program within 150 percent of credit hours required for the degree/certificate.

Students who have failed to maintain academic progress are not eligible to receive financial assistance. A detailed copy of the requirements is available at the Enrollment Center and is enclosed with your Financial Assistance Decision and Notification letter.

FEDERAL TITLE IV FINANCIAL AID REFUND POLICY

Students who receive financial assistance are expected to complete their coursework successfully with passing grades of "C" or above. In accordance with federal regulation, when a Title IV recipient withdraws from all courses during a semester, the college must review the student's financial assistance. If a refund of Title IV financial aid is required, the funds will be returned to the appropriate financial aid program. Determination of refunds is based on current federal regulation that requires financial assistance to be adjusted to percentage of time attended. A recalculation is required when a student's semester grades are **all "F", "FR", non-attendance, withdrawal, or any combination of these grades**. If it is determined that you are ineligible for your financial assistance or your assistance must be reduced, you must repay the financial assistance immediately. Federal Pell Grants, Supplemental Grants, Student Loans, and Oakton College scholarships generally must be repaid.

This refund policy does not apply to students who withdraw from individual classes.

FINANCIAL AID PAYMENT PLAN

Deferment of Tuition

All financial aid recipients must enroll in the Financial Aid EZ Pay payment plan. Every semester the plan will appear as a payment option in the student's myOakton account once an Oakton financial aid advisor has determined the student's eligibility for a grant, scholarship, veteran's benefit, or student loan; and presented the student with an Oakton Financial Assistance Decision and Notification letter at least one week prior to the tuition payment due date. Financial aid recipients are responsible for submitting

their financial aid applications and meeting their payment obligations within the deadlines.

YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Rights

- You have the right to privacy. All records and data submitted as part of your financial aid application will be treated with the strictest confidence.
- You have the right to know what financial aid programs are available at Oakton College.
- You have a right to a complete explanation of the award process. This includes deadlines for submitting applications, the amount of aid you may receive, the types of programs included in your financial aid package, and how aid is disbursed.
- You have the right to contact the FSA Ombudsman Group to help resolve any student loan issues. The Ombudsman Customer Service Line is 1-800-433-3243.

Responsibilities

- Read and understand all forms and agreements for the funds that you receive. Follow all directions carefully. Ask questions when more information is needed.
- Submit honest and accurate information regarding your financial aid circumstances.
- Be aware of college policies as they pertain to you and your financial aid. These include, but are not limited to, college refund policies, criteria for satisfactory academic progress, and policies regarding withdrawal from classes. This information may be found in the Oakton College catalog.
- Sign a Master Promissory Note if you are seeking a loan.
- Resubmit your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) each academic year.
- Inform the Enrollment Center of any changes in your family circumstances or resources that might affect your financial aid award.
- Inform the Enrollment Center of any name, Social Security number, permanent address, email, or phone number changes.

TECHNOLOGY

The Enrollment Center uses various new technologies to improve the services offered to students. Occasionally the office experiences disruptions in the technical services provided and apologizes in advance for any confusion or frustration that this may cause during the year. The office works to keep these interruptions to a minimum and truly appreciates your patience.

QUESTIONS

Email: financialaid@oakton.edu or visit www.oakton.edu.

Office Hours: Mon. - Fri., 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. (*summer hours vary*)
Des Plaines - Room 1740, 847-635-1700
Skokie - Room A100

