

FEDERAL PELL GRANT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Pell Grant?

The Pell Grant is the largest student aid program offered to undergraduates and is designed to assist students from low-income households.

Do I have to repay the Pell Grant?

A Pell Grant, unlike a loan, does not have to be repaid, except under certain circumstances.

Is there a limit to how much Pell Grant I can receive?

There is a maximum amount of Federal Pell Grant funds you can receive **over your lifetime**. You can receive the Pell Grant for no more than 12 terms or the equivalent (roughly six years).

When will it become available?

Under the Second Chance Pell Grant Experiment four colleges in Washington can currently award Pell Grants to students. The Pell Grant will be available to all eligible incarcerated individuals in July 2023.

Am I eligible?

To be eligible you cannot already have a bachelor's degree, must be a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident, can show you have exceptional financial need, and do not have previous student loans currently in default.

Is there anything I can do to address my student loans in default?

The U.S. Department of Education has a student loan rehabilitation program anyone can participate in. It's a nine-month program, requiring nine monthly payments of \$5. Since this program takes nine months, it's best to start the student loan rehab program as soon as possible.

After you've paid into the loan rehab program for six months, you can apply and may qualify for the Pell Grant.

At the end of the nine months, your loans will be back in good standing. Once your student loans are back in good standing, you can postpone monthly payments until you return to the community, or longer.

If you are interested in participating in the student loan rehab program or would like more information, please send a CePrison's message to your facility's Education Department requesting assistance.

If I'm undocumented can I still apply?

Undocumented individuals cannot receive the Pell Grant; however, they can receive the Washington College Grant. The Washington College Grant is a grant available to students in Washington State.

How do I apply?

Once the Pell Grant is available to incarcerated individuals, the Education Department at your facility will make an announcement on how to apply. You will complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

What kind of information do I need to provide?

- A valid Social Security Number (SSN) or Alien Number.
- If married, and you and your spouse filed your taxes jointly, you will need to provide certain tax information from the previous year.

What if I don't know my Social Security Number (SSN)?

If your SSN has been verified in DOC's OMNI database, we can provide that to you. If you think you know your social security but are unsure, we can verify it in the Social Security online database.

If Education staff is unable to verify your SSN, tracking down your SSN may not be possible while you are incarcerated.

What if I filed my taxes last year but don't know my tax information?

With the help of Education Staff, you can contact the IRS and request a tax transcript.

Please note that if you completed a tax document only to receive any or all of stimulus payments, you are considered a non-filer and do not need to provide information from that tax document.

Who do I contact if I have more questions or need assistance?

If you have questions or need help getting ready to apply, please contact your facility's Education Department, using CePrison's Education mailbox.