



ACG GRANT
Frequently Asked Questions!

The Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG)

What is an ACG grant?

The Higher Education Reconciliation Act of 2006 (HERA) created a new federal grant program for students who are attending degree-granting institutions and who are also eligible for a Federal Pell Grant. The U.S. Congress has funded this grant program to award eligible students beginning July 1, 2006 and ending June 30, 2011.

This new program is called the Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG). Starting with 2006-2007 academic year, the ACG is available for first-year students who graduated from high school after January 1, 2006, and for second-year students who graduated from high school after January 1, 2005. This grant is in addition to the student's Federal Pell Grant.

Who is eligible?

To receive the ACG in a student's first or second-year, a student must meet the following conditions:

- Enrolled at least half-time
- Be a U. S. citizen or eligible non-citizen
- Federal Pell Grant eligible during the same award year
- Completion of a rigorous secondary program of study recognized by the U.S. Department of Education
- Be a first or second year undergraduate student or a student in a certificate program of at least one year in a degree program at a 2 or 4 year degree granting institution
- If a first-year student, have completed secondary school after 1/2006 and have not previously enrolled in an undergraduate program
- If a second-year student, have completed secondary school after 1/2005 and have at least a 3.0 GPA at end of first academic year

How do I apply?

A student can apply for the ACG grant by completing and submitting the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Upon receipt of your FAFSA each year, Providence College will verify with the U.S. Department of Education whether or not you meet all of the eligibility requirements. If eligible, the Office of Financial Aid at Providence College will add the grant to your Financial Aid Notice.

How much can I receive?

The ACG will provide up to \$750 for the first year of undergraduate study and up to \$1,300 for the second year of undergraduate study for students who enroll fulltime. Award amounts will be prorated accordingly for students who enroll less than fulltime. Second-year students must maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0.

The amount of the student's ACG, in combination with the student's Federal Pell Grant, other resources, and estimated financial assistance, may not exceed the student's financial need (cost of attendance minus the Expected Family Contribution [EFC] equals financial need). A student may not receive more than one ACG award in each academic year for which the student is eligible.

All annual award amounts for an academic year may be reduced by the Department of Education if sufficient funds are not available to all eligible students nationally in an award year.

How do I know if the state program I participated in is an approved rigorous program of study?

The U.S. Department of Education currently recognizes all existing Advanced or Honors diploma programs as rigorous secondary school programs of study. A list by state of the Advanced or Honors programs that are currently recognized by the U.S. Department of Education can be found at <http://www.ed.gov/admins/finaid/about/ac-smart/state-programs.html>.

What if I didn't participate in or my state does not have an approved rigorous program? Can I still qualify?

If the state in which you went to high school does not have an approved rigorous program of study or you did not participate in the program you still may qualify for an ACG grant if you have completed **one** of the following sets of criteria:

- A set of courses similar to The State Scholars Initiative (*passing grades in the following*)
 - 4 years of English
 - 3 years of Math
 - (Including Algebra I and a higher level course such as Algebra II, Geometry, or Data Analysis and Statistics)
 - 3 years of Science
 - (Including at least two courses from biology, chemistry or physics)
 - 3 years of Social Studies
 - (If a high school or an admissions department categorizes the class as social studies, then it is also categorized as social studies for the purpose of ACG. These classes can vary, and they include, but are not limited to: History, Geography, Sociology, Civics, Economics, and Humanities)
 - 1 year of language of foreign language

- Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses and test scores

Requires students to have taken a minimum of two AP or IB courses in high school and a minimum passing Score on the exams for those classes. Students must score a 3 or higher on AP exams and a 4 or higher on IB exams.

If I have more questions about the ACG grant program, where can I go?

The U.S. Department of Education provides additional guidance on this grant at www.studentaid.ed.gov!