

Title 10: Education Institutions and Agencies

Part 623 Chapter 1: State Representative Bill Kinkade Fostering Access and Inspiring True Hope (FAITH) Scholarship Rules and Regulations

Rule 1.1 State Representative Bill Kinkade Fostering Access and Inspiring True Hope (FAITH) Scholarship Rules and Regulations. These Rules and Regulations are subject to change by the Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board.

I. GENERAL ELIGIBILITY

- A. The applicant must be a current legal resident of Mississippi. Resident status for purposes of receiving FAITH under this act shall be determined in the same manner as resident status for tuition purposes as set forth in Sections 37-103-1 through 37-103-29, of Ms. Code Ann., with the exception of Section 37-103-17.
- B. The applicant must complete the required applications for state and federal financial aid by the established deadlines.
- C. The applicant must meet the established age requirement and meet at least one of the qualifying foster care criteria.
- D. The applicant must enroll at least part-time (minimum of 6 hours unless excepted by the institution) at an eligible Mississippi postsecondary institution and pursue an undergraduate certificate or degree within the allowable time period.

II. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- A. First-time applicants must:
 - 1. Complete an initial application for state student financial aid online at www.msfinancialaid.org on or before September 15 during the fall of the aid year for which the student is seeking assistance.
 - 2. Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), including the verification process if the student is selected for verification, and accept all available federal grant aid. The state of residency indicated on the FAFSA will be used to verify the applicant's residency status.
 - 3. Apply through the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services for an Educational and Training Voucher if eligible to apply.
 - 4. Be younger than twenty-five (25) years of age by October 1 of the aid year for which the applicant makes application for the FAITH Scholarship, unless the applicant was on active-duty status in the United States Armed Forces for any time before the applicant reached twenty-five (25) years of

age. The number of months served on active-duty status in the United States Armed Forces shall be rounded up to the next higher year to determine the maximum extension of age eligibility allowed.

5. Meet at least one of the following criteria as certified by the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services or the qualified residential childcare facility:
 - a. Was placed in the legal custody of the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services by a youth court or through other legal means and who was in the legal custody of the department at any time on or after attaining thirteen (13) years of age.
 - b. Was placed in a qualified residential childcare facility by a parent, legal guardian, court of competent jurisdiction, or other person or entity acting in the best interest of the individual and who did reside in a qualified residential childcare facility at any time on or after attaining thirteen (13) years of age. A qualified residential childcare facility is an entity that provides a home for children and was licensed by the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services at the time the applicant was housed by the agency.
 - c. Was adopted from the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services' legal custody or adopted while residing at a qualified residential childcare facility at any time on or after attaining thirteen (13) years of age.
6. Enroll at least part-time (minimum 6 hours unless excepted by the institution) at one (1) eligible Mississippi postsecondary institution and pursue an undergraduate credential or degree. Evidence of enrollment will be automatically provided to the Board by the attending institution.
7. If a continuing college student, the recipient must not be on financial aid suspension for failure to meet the attending institution's satisfactory academic progress (SAP) requirements.

B. Renewal Applicants Must:

1. Complete a renewal application online at www.msfinancialaid.org on or before September 15 during the fall of the aid year for which the student is seeking assistance.
2. Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) annually, including the verification process if the student is selected for verification, and continue to accept all available federal grant aid.

3. Apply through the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services annually for an Educational and Training Voucher if eligible to apply.
4. Be younger than thirty (30) years of age by October 1 of the aid year for which the applicant makes application for the FAITH Scholarship, unless the applicant was on active-duty status in the United States Armed Forces for any time before the applicant reached twenty-five (25) years of age. The number of months served on active-duty status in the United States Armed Forces shall be rounded up to the next higher year to determine the maximum extension of age eligibility allowed.
5. Make satisfactory academic progress toward the completion of a certificate or degree with a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale, as certified by the registrar, based on the attending institution's calculation at the end of each semester, trimester, or term for which the applicant is enrolled.
6. Enroll at least part-time (minimum of 6 hours unless excepted by the institution) at one (1) eligible postsecondary institution in the State of Mississippi as an undergraduate student in pursuit of a certificate or degree. Evidence of enrollment will be automatically provided to the Board by the attending institution.

III. LENGTH AND AMOUNT OF AWARD

- A. For students attending a Mississippi public institution, the annual award amount of the FAITH Scholarship will be equal to the student's total Cost of Attendance (COA) less all other grant aid. FAITH awards will not be increased to cover unusual or unnecessary costs of attendance, such as those associated with study abroad or other programs outside the scope of a student's usual course of study. The housing amount recognized shall be the lesser of the student's actual housing cost or the applicable housing allowance included in the institution's published COA for the student's housing status for the applicable term. If the student's actual housing cost exceeds the applicable COA housing allowance, the institution may submit a written request for the Board to recognize a higher housing amount. The request must explain the circumstances supporting the higher cost, including lack of available campus housing, documented disability, medical, or mental health accommodations, or other unusual circumstances beyond the student's control. The Board may approve a higher housing amount if it determines the cost is reasonable and necessary based on the circumstances provided by the institution. For students attending a Mississippi non-public four-year institution, the annual award amount of the FAITH Scholarship will be equal to the average of the prior year's published undergraduate COA of all public institutions less all other grant aid.

- B. The FAITH Scholarship can be combined with any other state, federal, institutional, or private grant aid. No other grant aid should be reduced or supplanted by the FAITH scholarship. However, in no case shall the FAITH scholarship be combined with other grant aid to exceed the student's allowable COA. If an overaward occurs, the FAITH Scholarship will be reduced.
- C. The FAITH scholarship will also include any costs associated with room and board during institutional holidays at the student's institution if such accommodations are available.
- D. A maximum cumulative award amount is not established; however, a recipient may receive the FAITH scholarship for a maximum of five (5) calendar years, unless the applicant experiences a break in enrollment to serve on active-duty status in the United States Armed Forces. The number of months served on active-duty status in the United States Armed Forces shall be rounded up to the next higher year to determine the maximum length of eligibility extension allowed.
- E. FAITH Scholarships will be paid for no more than seventy-two (72) credit hours at a community college or one hundred forty-four (144) credit hours at a four-year college.
- F. All awards are dependent upon the availability of funds. Selection of recipients shall be based on a first-come, first-served basis of all eligible applicants; however, priority consideration shall be given to persons previously receiving awards under the FAITH Scholarship program.
- G. Payment of FAITH awards shall be disbursed directly to the educational institutions.
- H. If a recipient transfers from one eligible Mississippi institution to another, the award will be transferable, provided the student meets all continuing eligibility requirements.

IV. LOSS OF ELIGIBILITY

- A. Failure to maintain a minimum 2.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale will result in cancellation of the recipient's eligibility for the FAITH Scholarship until academic eligibility can be reestablished. Exception for cause will not be considered.
- B. Placement on financial aid suspension due to failure to meet the attending institution's SAP requirements will result in cancellation of the recipient's eligibility for the FAITH Scholarship. Students should follow the attending institution's SAP appeal process to re-establish eligibility.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann.* § 37-106-75.