

2015-2016 Updates on the Access College Early (ACE) Scholarship Criteria & Deadlines

First, the State lost a significant source of funding for ACE. For the past few years ACE has been funded by state funds and by almost \$200,000 in federal funds through the College Access Challenge Grant (CACG). Unfortunately Congress decided not to reauthorize CACG. While the Legislature's Appropriations Committee and the Governor did approve an additional \$50,000 for ACE, which we are very thankful for, it will still leave us short in funding for what we have used previously. Therefore, the decision was made that for the 2015-16 academic year **students will be limited to ACE Scholarship funding for a maximum of two classes per term (semester) for the coming year.** Below are some different scenarios on how this may be implemented:

- If a student is registered for one or two classes at College A in the same term (semester), no change from previous years...the student can receive the scholarship for each course.
- If a student is registered for one class at College A and one class at College B in the same term (semester), again, no change from previous years, the student can receive the scholarship for each course.
- If a student is registered *for more than two classes at College A in the same term (semester)* the student *can only receive the scholarship for two of the courses*; the **student will be responsible for the cost of the additional course(s).**
- If a student is registered *for more than two classes at multiple colleges in the same term only two courses can receive funding* and **the student will be responsible for the cost of the additional course(s).**
- **If a student takes two classes in the fall term and two classes in the spring term the scholarship is available (provided the State does not run out of funds, which is has by March 1st-15th in past years) for all four courses...the limit is per term, not per year.**

As a recap the Limited ACE Scholarship Funding for 15-16: For those students that qualify for ACE based on SNAP/free/reduced/etc. there is no change from previous years except for the two-course limit for each term (semester). Students can apply just as they have in the past.

Second, there is a **new criterion** students can meet to be eligible for the ACE Scholarship. A student whose family income is at or below 200% of the federal poverty level and who is **enrolled in a career program of study** can apply for an ACE Scholarship. **Career program of study means a sequence of at least three high school courses that:**

1. Are part of a **career pathway program of study aligned with:**
 - a. The rules and regulations of the Nebraska Department of Education (<http://cestandards.education.ne.gov/>),
 - b. A professional certification requirement, or
 - c. The requirements for a postsecondary certification or diploma; and
2. **Have a least one local member of business or industry partnering as an official advisor to the program.**

Students applying under this criteria will mark it on the application and will be required to provide a copy of their parent's 2014 1040 tax form. The State will do the calculation to make sure they meet the income guideline. By the counselor approving the ACE application the counselor is certifying that the student meets the career program of study guidelines listed above. The amount of the scholarship will be the amount the college is charging for the course or \$250, whichever is less. **NOTE: Under these criteria the student is limited to a maximum scholarship amount of \$250 per term.** Additionally, the **law states that students applying under the other six ACE Scholarship criteria are to be given priority when applying for the scholarship;** therefore, the State is changing the application and deadline dates.

As a recap the new Career Pathway Program Criteria: The student whose family income is at 186% - 200% of the poverty rate **AND** is enrolled in a course that has been approved by NDE as part of a career plan of study, who could never apply for ACE because they wouldn't have qualified for free/reduced (it's capped at 185% of poverty).

Students/Parents can go to <http://www.education.ne.gov/ns/forms/nslpforms/freereducedapp.html> to see the income for free/reduced. By taking the free meal annual salary, dividing by 130% and then multiplying by 200%, the family will get the income amount to show if they qualify for the ACE scholarship under the new Career Program of Study Criteria.

For example: a household size of four's annual income of \$31,525 would be divided by 1.3 to equal \$24,250, which would then be multiplied by 2 to equal \$48,500. So, a family with an income at or below \$48,500, would be eligible to apply under the criteria for taking a course under the Career Plan of Study Program for up to \$250 per term (semester) **as long as funding is available and not taken away from a needy student on the free/reduced program** taking college courses.

Below is the *Eligibility Guidelines* for free/reduced lunch.

**NUTRITION SERVICES
INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES**

JULY 1, 2015 - JUNE 30, 2016

Household Size	Free Meals					Reduced Price Meals				
	Annual	Monthly	Twice per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly	Annual	Monthly	Twice per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
1	15,301	1,276	638	589	295	21,775	1,815	908	838	419
2	20,709	1,726	863	797	399	29,471	2,456	1,228	1,134	567
3	26,117	2,177	1,089	1,005	503	37,167	3,098	1,549	1,430	715
4	31,525	2,628	1,314	1,213	607	44,863	3,739	1,870	1,726	863
5	36,933	3,078	1,539	1,421	711	52,559	4,380	2,190	2,022	1,011
6	42,341	3,529	1,765	1,629	815	60,255	5,022	2,511	2,318	1,159
7	47,749	3,980	1,990	1,837	919	67,951	5,663	2,832	2,614	1,307
8	53,157	4,430	2,215	2,045	1,023	75,647	6,304	3,152	2,910	1,455
For each additional family member add:	5,408	451	226	208	104	7,696	642	321	296	148

If households report multiple frequencies of pay, total income must be calculated on an annual basis. Use the following conversions:
Annual Income Conversion: Weekly X 52; Every 2 Weeks X 26; Twice a Month X 24; Monthly X 12

Nebraska Department of Education
Nutrition Services - NS-402-G

2015-2016 ACE Scholarship Term (Semester) Deadlines

IMPORTANT NOTE: Term (Semester) Deadlines for having ALL documents submitted & approved are listed below. Students who wait until the Deadline date to submit their criteria, may NOT receive funding approval since counselors require a 24-hour turnaround to respond to student submissions on the website. **Students are cautioned to apply early and provide documents well before any term's (semester's) deadline.**

- For 2015 Summer classes which have a start date of July 1 or later - application can be submitted starting April 1

(July 15 for Career Program of Study); deadline September 15

- For Fall term classes - application can be submitted starting August 1

(October 15 for Career Program of Study); deadline December 15

- For Winter term classes - application can be submitted November 1

(January 15 for Career Program of Study); deadline March 31

- For Spring term classes - application can be submitted November 15

(March 15 for Career Program of Study); deadline May 15

- For 2016 Summer classes which have a start date prior to July 1 – app. can be submitted April 1

(May 15 for Career Program of Study); deadline July 1

The ACE website is currently being updated with these changes to reflect the new information and should be completed by September 2015.