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Louisiana Budget Project

Louisiana Go Grants 101

The Louisiana Board of Regents created the needs-based Go Grants financial aid program in 2007 to assist students with financial need to pay for the cost of attendance at an eligible Louisiana college or university. In 2010, the Legislature codified the rules for Go Grants in state law. The Board of Regents retains the authority to determine Go Grant aid amounts and other program criteria that are not included in state law. The program is administered by the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance.

Unlike Taylor Opportunity Program for Students scholarships, which an entitlement program for any Louisiana student who qualifies, Go Grants receive a fixed amount of funding each year from the Legislature.

How Go Grants work

Go Grants support non-traditional and low-to-moderate income students who qualify for a need-based federal Pell Grant and have remaining financial need after factoring in all other sources of aid. Individual grants range from a minimum \$300 to a maximum \$3,000 per year.

To be eligible for a Louisiana Go Grant a student must:

1. Complete the free application for federal student financial aid (FASFA)
2. Be a resident of Louisiana
3. Receive a federal Pell Grant
4. Have remaining financial need after accounting for all other sources of aid
5. Be enrolled as an undergraduate at a Louisiana institution on at least a part-time basis

Each institution maintains its own Go Grants policy that determines which students can receive awards and the amount of their award. The Regents require colleges to prioritize awards for non-traditional students, such as those who are 25 and older, going to school part-time or going back to school after time off.

In 2013, the Board of Regents adopted a new methodology intended to distribute limited Go Grant dollars more effectively. The new rules stated that students could receive a maximum of 60 percent of total “need” from all sources of gift aid, including TOPS, Pell, institutional scholarships and GO Grants. The rules also allowed institutions to cap the amount of individual Go Grant awards. The new rules meant that more students could receive grants, but reduced the amount of the individual grants. While the change benefited many students, it left a cost gap for students with the highest financial need.

Cost gap example: student with the greatest amount of need with maximum Pell Grant at Bossier Parish Community College

Cost of Attendance:	\$12,795
Estimated Family Contribution:	\$0
Need:	\$12,795

60% of need (\$12,795) =	\$7,677
Gift Aid (Pell Grant) =	\$5,815
Eligible Go Grant:	\$1,862

Maximum GO Grant Award set by BPCC = \$1,000
Total aid to student: \$6,815 (Pell: \$5,815 + GO Grant: \$1,000)
COST GAP : \$5,980

Source: Louisiana Board of Regents

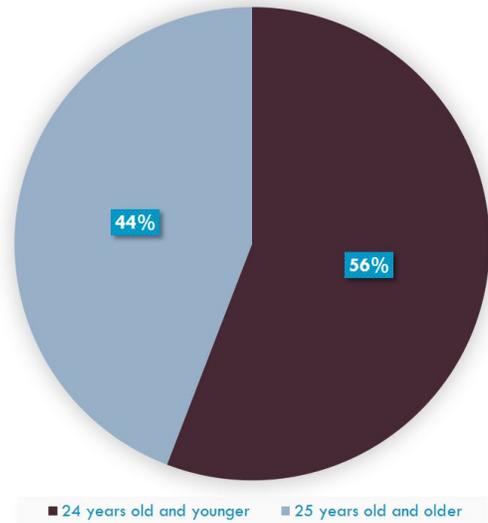
Who uses Go Grants?

In 2007-08 school year, the first year of Go Grants, 10,500 entering college freshmen received awards. In the 2016-2017 academic year the state made 24,823 awards. Only 15.3 percent of students receiving Go Grant also received a TOPS award. Students 25 and older made up 44.2 percent of all recipients.

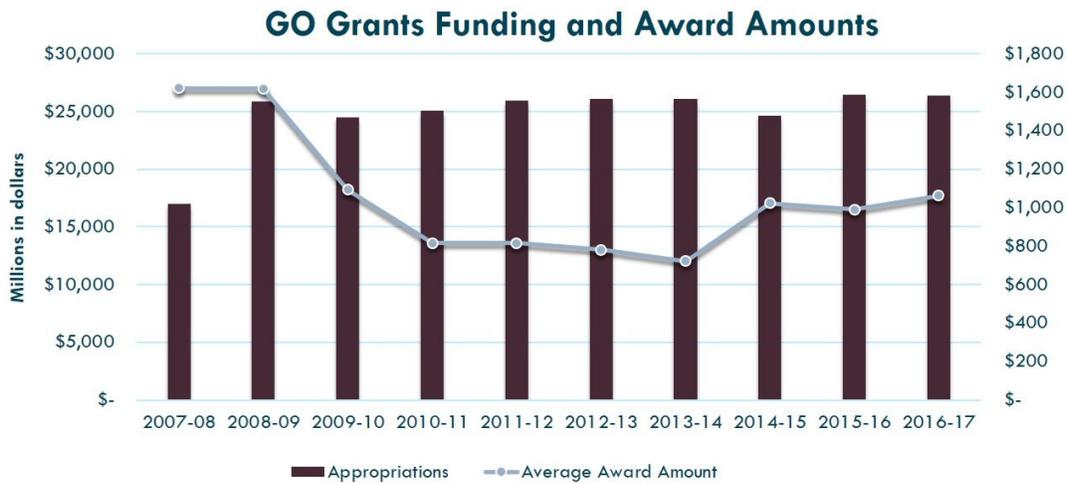
How are Go Grants funded?

Go Grants are funded by state general funds appropriated by the Legislature to the Board of Regents, which distributes the money. The Legislature appropriated \$17 million for the program in its first year of operation. That grew to \$26 million in the second year, but it has largely been flat since then. The 2018-2019 appropriation of \$28.4 million is an all-time high. The average Go Grant award in FY 16-17 was \$1,064, compared to the average tuition at a four-year public college or university in Louisiana of \$8,900.

Adult learners are benefiting from GO Grants



Source: Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance



Source: Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance

Go Grants need additional state investment

Go Grants are a wise investment that help students with financial need access higher education. But the program is chronically underfunded. In 2017 the Board of Regents estimated that an additional \$135 million would be needed to fully fund Go Grants. The lack of adequate investment in Go Grants means many students who are eligible don't receive an award or receive a reduced award. As a result, many may not enroll at all due to the cost and lack of adequate aid.

**By: Davante Lewis
October 2018**

Sources: Student Financial Aid Bulletin: S2013-01 - Jan 2013, Board of Regents Response to ACT 619 - Feb. 2017, Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance presentation Updated Go Grants Statistics - Oct. 2017, Louisiana House Fiscal Division FY18-19 Executive Budget: Higher Education Review - April 2018