

## Frequently Asked Questions

**1. I applied last year. Do I have to provide the supporting documents again this year?**

Yes, we require all new supporting documents with the application. We cannot use documents from a prior year's file.

**2. What is the application deadline date?**

Applications for the 2021-2022 award year will be made available in July. The application and all supporting documents must be submitted to the Office of Student Financial Assistance by October 1st to be considered 'on time'. **Postmarked documents stamped by October 1st will be considered as on-time.** You need to apply through the Maryland College Aid Processing System (MDCAPS). After application submission, you will be provided with a task list which will be your checklist for all the documents that you need to submit.

**3. How should I submit the required documents?**

Submit all required documents to MHEC by **SECURE UPLOAD** online through MDCAPS. Once logged into MDCAPS, select "Electronic File Upload" from the homepage and then follow the prompts.

**4. How are awards determined?**

Applications are grouped by employment field and within employment field are grouped by renewal, priority and non-priority. Renewals are awarded first, then priority and then non-priority applicants. For additional information, refer to our website.

**5. What is the award process?**

If you are awarded, you will be notified by email. You may accept or decline the award offer through your account in MDCAPS. After you accept the award the first six months of employment will be verified. Once your employment has been verified, a check will be issued to you for the purpose of payment to your lender.

**Important Note:** If you fail to accept your award and/or provide updated verification of employment for the first six months, your award will be cancelled.

**6. Do I need to submit both my federal and state income tax returns?**

No. You are not required to submit both your state and federal tax return, only your Maryland income tax return for the 2020 tax year. Your Maryland state income tax return must be signed (and by your spouse if applicable). Income tax returns which are filed electronically must be printed out and signed for submission. *State tax returns which are incomplete or not signed will not be accepted.* Please refer to your MDCAPS account Program Tasks list for more information after application submission.

**7. I didn't file a Maryland State tax return last year? What should I provide?**

You should provide a copy of your Federal tax return. If you did not file either Maryland or Federal tax returns last year, you must get a nontax filing letter from the IRS. This letter states that the IRS has no record of a Federal tax return filing from you. It is a letter that you request from the IRS and must be included with your supporting documents by the October 1st deadline.

**8. How will I receive payment of the award?**

Award checks are issued and made payable to the applicant. Once you have received the check from our office, you **must** deposit and make the necessary payment to your lender(s) of the amount received.

Within one-hundred (120) days of receipt of your payment, you **must** submit proof that you made a payment(s) to your lender in the amount received. Acceptable documentation may consist of but is not limited to: *a Detailed Payment History Statement from your loan lender, which can be obtained from your online account.*

**9. Can I fax or email my supporting documents to Maryland Higher Education Commission?**

Faxed documents are not acceptable at this time. You must **submit** copies of all required documentation through the Secure Upload process available in your MDCAPS account. Required documentation includes but is not limited to your signed *2020 Maryland or federal tax return, lender verification form, address verification documentation, employment verification form and institutional certification form.* You may also provide your college transcript in lieu of a completed institutional certification form.

**10. Do I qualify for the Hoffman program if I do not live or work in Maryland. Do I qualify if I did not graduate from a MD college?**

Applicants must meet all of the eligibility requirements which includes but is not limited to: maintaining eligible employment in Maryland, graduate from a Maryland institution, be employed full-time in the eligible employment field, and have student loans that are not in default. Teachers must have a resident teacher certificate from Maryland State Department of Education.

**11. My student loans are in deferment/grace status. Do they qualify?**

Yes. All student loans are to be included in the lender verification information provided. However, you may not include personal loans that are not considered to be "educational."

**12. I have consolidated my loans. Do they qualify?**

Yes, all higher education student loans that are not in default may qualify.

**13. Is my school a Title 1 school?**

Each year the schools with a Title 1 designation can change. The link to the list of Title 1 schools for the current year is at the bottom the Janet L. Hoffman LARP website.

**14. I am currently fulfilling a State service obligation (e.g.: Hope, Nursing, and Developmental Disabilities Scholarship). Am I eligible to apply?**

No, not at this time. Prior service obligations from other State of Maryland scholarships must be completed before July 1<sup>st</sup> of the year in which you apply.

**15. How is the award paid?**

Recipients have two options available to them: they can either receive their award in one lump sum or by opt into the monthly payment option if they are currently participating in a [Public Service Loan Forgiveness \(PSLF\) program](#). More information in regards to this program may be found by visiting. To receive the award in one lump sum, no further action is needed after submitting the Mid-Year Employment Verification form and all other required documentation (available in January).

To receive the award as monthly payments, the LARP Monthly Payment form must be completed and submitted by the deadline. The Mid-Year Employment Verification form, W-9 form, and address verification documentation must also be submitted prior to the monthly payments being paid. Individuals who opt to participate in the monthly payment option will receive 12 installments January 2022 through December 2022. The monthly installment amount will be determined based on the award amount (i.e. Yearly award of \$6,000 equals 12 monthly payments of \$500).