



Maryland Higher Education Commission
 Office of Student Financial Aid
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 MHEC.MARYLAND.GOV

SPECIAL FINANCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Appeal Criteria / Required Documentation
2025-26 Academic Year

The Maryland Higher Education Commission understands that students may experience circumstances that result in them failing to meet certain requirements for consideration or reinstatement of State grant and scholarship programs. Therefore, the Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA) has developed an appeal process for certain allowable programs and circumstances that allows students to request (re)consideration of a State award.

Appeal Process

1. Students determine if they meet the criteria to submit an appeal based off the program and allowable appeals under that program.
2. Student gathers all required documentation for the appeal.
3. Student completes the 2025-26 MHEC Grant and Scholarship Appeal Request Form, uploading all required documentation, by the published deadline.
4. OSFA staff will review the appeal and make a determination within 45 business days, unless the student is informed otherwise.

Important Reminders

- Appeals must be submitted through the Appeal Request Form and will not be accepted by any other means.
- It is the student’s responsibility to ensure they have provided all required documentation for their appeal. Incomplete appeal requests will be denied.
- It is the student’s responsibility to submit their appeal by the published deadline. Late appeals requests will be denied.

2025-26 Special Financial Circumstances Appeal Information	
Eligible Programs	Guaranteed Access Grant Educational Assistance Grant 2+2 Transfer Scholarship
Appeal Opens	March 17, 2025
Appeal Closes	June 1, 2025
Allowable Reasons for Appeal	Required Documentation
Death of parent or student’s spouse on or after <u>January 1, 2025</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter explaining student’s circumstances including financial impact • Copy of the death certificate of parent or student’s spouse • 2023 IRS Tax Return Transcript or Signed 1040 Form of a) student and b) parent(s) or c) student’s spouse <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>If student/parent/student’s spouse did not file taxes in 2023, provide W-2s/1099s or other documentation to prove income</i> • Estimated 2025 total income and pay stubs or other documentation showing income earned between January 1, 2025 and date of appeal submission for student and/or surviving parent
Separation or divorce (of parent or student) on or after <u>January 1, 2025</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of the separation agreement or divorce decree of parents or of student from spouse • 2023 IRS Tax Return Transcript or Signed 1040 Form of a) student and b) parent(s) or c) student’s spouse <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>If student/parent/student’s spouse did not file taxes in 2023, provide W-2s/1099s or other documentation to prove income</i> • Estimated 2025 total income and pay stubs or other documentation showing income earned between January 1, 2025 and date of appeal submission for student and/or custodial parent

Allowable Reasons for Appeal (cont.)	Required Documentation (cont.)
<p>Complete involuntary unemployment that began on or after <u>January 1, 2024</u>, for at least 10 consecutive weeks of the student, the student's parent (if dependent) or student's spouse (if independent and married)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter explaining student's circumstances for appeal including financial impact and timeline • Written notice of involuntary job termination or layoff from former employer (loss of income from temporary positions, self-employment, or commissions may not be considered) • 2023 IRS Tax Return Transcript or Signed 1040 Form of a) student and, if applicable, b) parent(s) or c) student's spouse <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If student/parent/student's spouse did not file taxes in 2023, provide W-2s/1099s or other documentation to prove income • Copy of last pay stub from previous employer • If applicable, copies of severance pay and/or any benefits that continued after dismissal • Copy of unemployment benefits or proof of denial of benefits <p><u>If involuntary unemployment began in 2024</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2024 IRS Tax Return Transcript or Signed 1040 Form a) student and b) parent(s) or c) student's spouse <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If student/parent/student's spouse did not file or has not yet filed 2024 taxes, provide W-2s/1099s or other documentation to prove 2024 total income • Estimated 2025 total income and pay stubs or other documentation showing income earned between January 1, 2025 and date of appeal submission <p><u>If involuntary unemployment began in 2025</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimated 2025 total income and most recent pay stubs from current employer, if applicable
<p>Loss of child support or social security benefits as result of student reaching the age of majority on or after <u>January 1, 2025</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter explaining student's circumstances for appeal including financial impact • Documentation of the loss of child support (i.e. court order or divorce decree) or loss of social security benefits • 2023 IRS Tax Return Transcript or Signed 1040 Form of a) student and, if applicable, b) parent(s) or c) student's spouse <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If student/parent/student's spouse did not file taxes in 2023, provide W-2s/1099s or other documentation to prove income • Estimated 2025 total income and pay stubs or other documentation showing income earned between January 1, 2025 and date of appeal submission for student and/or custodial parent

IMPORTANT: Students who have previously received the Educational Assistance Grant (EA) or Campus-Based Educational Assistance Grant (CB-EAG) cannot be considered for the Guaranteed Access Grant, regardless of any changes to their circumstances. **Appeals for GA consideration from students who have previously received EA or CBEAG will be denied.**