



March 31, 2023

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Chair

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education

The Honorable Shelly Moore Capito
Ranking Member

Dear Chairs Aderholt and Baldwin and Ranking Members DeLauro and Capito:

On behalf of the Student Aid Alliance, we write to thank you for the increases provided for the student aid programs in the FY 2023 omnibus bill and ask that the tradition of strong bipartisan support for federal student aid be continued as you work on FY 2024 funding.

As you begin to work on the FY 2024 appropriations process, we ask that the Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations subcommittee receive a sufficient allocation to address the needs across all the agencies in its jurisdiction, and that student aid funding remain a high priority in the bill. Now, more than ever, the programs that help low- and middle-income students access and succeed in postsecondary education need additional funding to ensure that students with disrupted educations during the pandemic can pursue their higher education goals.

While the country transitions away from the pandemic, students continue to feel the effects of an unsettled economy. To help our nation's college students persist in their education, we call on Congress to make bold investments in the federal student aid programs. The most direct way to improve college affordability is to enhance and expand proven, successful programs. Not only is this an investment in students' futures, but it is also an investment in our country's economic recovery from the pandemic.

For FY 2024, we respectfully request the following funding levels:

Pell Grants: The Pell Grant maximum should be increased to \$13,000. The Pell Grant program is the single most important tool to enable low-income students to afford college. A maximum Pell Grant of \$13,000 would restore much of the purchasing power the grant had in FY 1975, when the maximum Pell award covered 78 percent of the cost of attendance at a four-year public college. It now covers just 28 percent. While students use Pell Grants at all public and private nonprofit colleges and universities, the purchasing power at a four-year public university has historically been the benchmark for its value.

Currently, nearly 7 million students use Pell Grants to finance their education. Doubling the maximum Pell award to \$13,000 (from its FY21 level) would increase the number of eligible students, and would also lower the amount students need to borrow to pay for college.

Campus-Based Aid: The campus-based aid programs are critical components of federal student aid. These programs have always required “skin in the game” from institutions by requiring a match from colleges to participate. The two main campus-based programs are Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG) and Federal Work-Study (FWS). SEOG provides targeted, need-based grant aid of up to \$4,000 per student to 1.6 million students. Participating colleges match federal dollars to make more than \$1 billion in grant aid available. Over 99 percent of all SEOG recipients are Pell Grant recipients, and SEOG recipients have higher need on average than students receiving only Pell Grants. The FWS program provides federal and institutional funding to support part-time employment for more than 700,000 students to help them pay their college costs. Studies show that students who work on campus have higher graduation rates.

We greatly appreciate the increase in funding for both programs recently, and request additional funding towards our inflation-adjusted goals. For SEOG, that would be \$1.115 billion and for FWS it would be \$1.555 billion. We urge you to consider the importance of restoring full funding for these programs in FY 2024 appropriations.

TRIO: TRIO should be increased to \$1.298 billion. Increased funding for TRIO would allow for strengthening the academic, financial, and cultural supports provided by TRIO, and allow programs to keep pace with the drastic increase in cost of maintaining high quality services. The increase will support Upward Bound and Upward Bound Math-Science that provide intensive pre-college support for first-generation and low-income high school students; Veterans Upward Bound, supporting first-generation and low-income military veterans on the path to college; and the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Program, supporting low-income and minority undergraduates entering and completing graduate school. The TRIO increase could also serve more students and programs in Student Support Services for undergraduate completion; Talent Search for middle and high school student college outreach; and Educational Opportunity Centers for low-income and unemployed adults.

A robust investment in TRIO will help ensure that low-income students, first-generation students, and students with disabilities successfully prepare for, enroll in, and graduate from postsecondary programs and make wise choices in financing their educations.

GEAR UP: GEAR UP should be funded at \$410 million. This increase would bring approximately 40,000 new students into the program and increase the overall number of students served to 548,000. Increased funding is needed to meet the high demand from new communities, states, and expiring grantees to apply for new GEAR UP awards. GEAR UP has a proven track record of success in preparing students to enter and succeed in college.

Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN): The GAANN program should be increased to \$35 million to reflect the need for increased investment. GAANN competitive grants offer support to top students studying in fields directly related to American competitiveness.

Thank you for considering our request. Without the strong partnership between the federal government, states, institutions, and families, millions of students would not be able to go to college. We call on Congress to continue its bipartisan support of federal student aid programs—which combine grants, work-study, and loan programs—to enable low- and middle-income students to succeed.

Sincerely,

SAA Steering Committee




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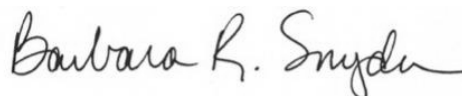
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ACPA-College Student Educators International

ACT

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American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC)

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Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area

Consortium on Financing Higher Education

Council of Independent Colleges

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EDUCAUSE

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National Association for College Admission Counseling

National Association of College and University Business Officers

National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE)

National Association of State Student Grant & Aid Programs (NASSGAP)

National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP)

National Education Association

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UPCEA - Leaders in Professional, Continuing and Online Education

Work Colleges Consortium

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