

**New York State College Access Challenge Grant
College Tour Reimbursement Program
Program Overview Document**

The purpose of the U.S. Department of Education's College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) program is to foster partnerships among federal, state, and local governments and philanthropic organizations through matching challenge grants that are aimed at increasing the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education.

The overall goal of New York State's CACG program is to increase the number and percentage of CACG-eligible individuals who are prepared to apply to college, enter and succeed in college, with a priority on families living below the poverty level. To meet this goal, HESC is pleased to offer targeted support to assist qualified organizations in providing college tours for CACG-eligible students.

The opportunity to visit a college campus can significantly influence a high school student's motivation and enthusiasm for continuing his or her education. The goal of the College Tour Reimbursement Program is to increase expectations and interest in postsecondary education opportunities among low-income New York State high school students by providing as many low-income New York State high school students the opportunity to experience college first-hand by eliminating the financial burden and costs associated with college campus visits.

HESC is pleased to offer funding for college tour(s) and college campus visit(s), on a reimbursement basis, to qualified not-for-profit organizations (as defined in the Criteria section below) that organize, coordinate and provide college tours to the target population.

The target CACG population to be served by this funding is defined as students from families who are living below the poverty line, applicable to the individual's family size (as determined under section 673(2) of the Community Service Block Grant Act). Students must attend high school in New York State.

To be eligible, all college tour expenses must be incurred by August 31, 2016. Qualified organizations must submit a Pre-approval Request and provide documentation confirming the following for each tour: budget for costs to be incurred, including all anticipated costs; evidence of prior work with the target CACG population; itinerary/itineraries for the college visit(s) demonstrating the advancement of CACG goals; statement of the students' CACG eligibility; and other verification documents as requested or required by HESC. Pre-approval will be determined by HESC so organizations know in advance which expenses will be eligible for reimbursement when a final request is submitted. Regardless of any pre-approvals, final reimbursement will only be made if the Reimbursement Request, actual receipts, and required documentation are submitted, with all details of the request confirmed and documented with HESC, upon completion of the college tour(s).

HESC has up to \$1,000,000.00 of CACG funding to be used for the purpose of subsidizing college tours organized by qualified organizations with demonstrated experience working with the target CACG population. Up to \$45,000 per qualified organization will be available through the program for college tour(s) organized by such qualified organizations with demonstrated

experience working with the target CACG population. Organizations that are funded by a current 2015-2016 CACG sub-grant contract are not eligible to apply for this sub-grant.

Eligible organizations may apply for funds to provide a single college tour, the same college tour to multiple, unique groups of students or to take the same students on multiple, unique college tours. The student is not required to have a parent/supportive adult attend the tour(s) but under the CACG provisions, one will be allowed at no cost to the parent/supportive adult.

Costs must be reasonable, allocable and necessary to providing the college tour(s). Travel costs include expenses incurred for transportation, lodging, meals and related items as part of the college tour(s). Reimbursement will be based on actual, documented costs and will not exceed \$175 per eligible person per day.

Any transportation expenditures equal to or greater than \$25,000 are subject to Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises, M/WBE, goals. Please see the additional information on M/WBE Requirements* at the end of this document.

When choosing a method of transportation several factors should be considered:

- Distance being traveled
- Travel time
- Number of travelers
- Number of locations to be visited
- Type of transportation available

Payment will be made on a reimbursement basis for actual costs incurred, subject to limitations set forth herein, and submission of all documentation supporting costs and confirming details of the actual trip. Upon completion of the college tour(s), actual receipts and documentation must be submitted to HESC for reimbursement **within 45 days** of the last day of the college tour for which reimbursement is being requested.

Appropriate verification will include travel (transportation, meals, lodging, as applicable) receipts, participant sign-in sheets, detailed itinerary/itineraries signed by the eligible organization's representative and counter signed by the college official who provided the tour after the conclusion of the campus tour activities, copies of surveys provided to participants at the conclusion of the campus tour activities, and other documentation as deemed necessary and required by HESC.

Reasonable reimbursement of bus or van travel will be considered for those costs which are documented as evidenced by a receipt sent to HESC or for mileage if a contracted travel carrier is not engaged. The most efficient, cost effective, and reasonable travel option must be selected by the applicant in order to be considered for reimbursement. Any costs deemed to be excessive or not necessary for the trip will not be approved for reimbursement. Any reimbursement requests that exceed the pre-approved amount will not be reimbursed. Organizations must submit complete and accurate records in order to receive the reimbursement payment.

A detailed budget narrative must accompany all requests and provide explanation as to all travel plans and transportation method selected.

CRITERIA: The applicant will be the facilitating organization and must be: (a) a not-for-profit; (b) in existence prior to September 27, 2007; and (c) have been (as of that date) working with CACG-eligible populations. Applicants must describe the college tour(s) and related activities to be reimbursed by the CACG fund. Applicants will be considered a ‘vendor’ and must apply for and receive a New York State Vendor Identification number and be subject to New York State’s Statewide Financial System (SFS). Information can be found at the following:
http://www.osc.state.ny.us/vendor_management/index.htm.

Please note that effective July 31, 2013, all not-for-profit vendors are required to pre-qualify through the NYS Grants Gateway prior to grant application and execution of contracts. Your college tour pre-approval request will not be considered complete unless HESC can verify the organization’s pre-qualification status.

As part of the pre-qualification process, vendors are asked to submit commonly requested documents and answer frequently asked questions once. The application requests organizational information about the vendor’s capacity, legal compliance, and integrity.

To learn more about pre-qualification, go to the Grants Reform website, www.grantsreform.ny.gov, where you can preview required documents and the questions.

Applicants may seek reimbursement for college tour expenses provided to New York State high school students who are living below the poverty line applicable to the individual’s family size (as determined under section 673(2) of the Community Service Block Grant Act). Additionally, an applicant that serves a high school for which at least 50 percent of its total student population is eligible to participate in the federal free and reduced-price lunch program shall be considered to be serving the target population. Applicant must specifically identify the population to be served by the funded activity, providing geographical reference and size.

By offering this reimbursement program, HESC does not assume any liability or responsibility in the planning of the trip, actual outcome of the trip or any issues that arise during a college tour trip. The applicant is responsible to collect and maintain all necessary documents on behalf of trip participants, including, but not limited to, parent consent forms, medical statements and/or forms, trip insurance, permission slips, trip applications and emergency contact information.

An applicant must demonstrate it is seeking reimbursement for having taken eligible students and one parent or supportive adult per student, if applicable, on the college tour(s). A student is not required to have a parent/supportive adult attend the tour(s), but under the CACG provisions one will be allowed at no cost to the parent/supportive adult. To be eligible, students must attend high school within New York State and live below the poverty line applicable to the individual’s family size (as determined under section 673(2) of the Community Service Block Grant Act).

A group will consist of a minimum of five students and one parent/supportive adult per student, if applicable. The college tour(s) **must** consist of a guided tour of a college campus. The college tour(s) can consist of non-CACG-eligible students but this program will only reimburse the qualified organization for each CACG-eligible student and, if applicable, his/her parent or supportive adult.

Qualified organizations are invited to complete and submit a Pre-approval Request along with required documentation using the NYS Grants Gateway. Requests must be complete and include all required documentation before HESC will review the request. Completed requests will be reviewed in the order in which they are completed based on the completion time / date within the NYS Grants Gateway. Processing of completed requests will continue until funding limitations have been reached.

If upon review of a completed requested, HESC deems the request to be incomplete, additional information will be requested through the NYS Grants Gateway. Each trip must be submitted individually for pre-approval. If your organization wants to be pre-approved for multiple trips, you must complete a separate NYS Grants Gateway application for each trip. Organizations who receive a denial may elect to submit a new request through the NYS Grants Gateway which will be reviewed based on the associated completion time / date as long as funds remain available.

Grant awards valuing \$10,000 or less will require a Purchase Order and Letter of Agreement. Grant awards valuing over \$10,000 will require a contract.

Upon completion of the college tour(s), actual receipts and documentation must be submitted to HESC for reimbursement **within 45 days** of the last day of the college tour for which reimbursement is being requested.

*Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises

Pursuant to Article 15-A of the New York State Executive Law, HESC must ensure that certified Minority/Women-Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBE's) are provided the opportunity for meaningful participation in programs administered by HESC. While personal services, rent and utilities are exempt from M/WBE goals, all other expenses (including non-personal services) in excess of \$25,000 are subject to M/WBE goals. Any transportation expenditures equal to or greater than \$25,000 are subject to Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises, M/WBE, goals. You must submit a M/WBE Utilization Plan, and subsequently, a M/WBE Quarterly Contractor Compliance Report. If you do not use a certified M/WBE company, you must provide a waiver and be approved for the waiver before HESC will pre-approve your travel costs. If you do not obtain waiver approval, HESC will not pre-approve your trip and will not provide reimbursement. The Waiver, Utilization Plan and Compliance Report are located on HESC's Website at the following link:

<http://www.hesc.ny.gov/procurement-opportunities/minority-and-women-owned-business-enterprise-m-wbe/m-wbe-compliance-and-reporting-forms.html>.

In accordance with Article 15-A, HESC has established a goal of thirty percent (30%) for business participation by certified Minority-Owned Business Enterprises and/or Women-Owned Business Enterprises for this particular program. And specific goals of fifteen percent (15%) for participation by certified Minority-owned business enterprises and fifteen percent (15%) for certified Women-owned business enterprises on this particular program. Both parties will agree, as a condition of participation, to be bound by the provisions of Section 316 of Articles 15-A of the Executive Law. Additional information and resources can be found at the following link: <http://esd.ny.gov/MWBE.html>. We have also provided the link to the NYS M/WBE Directory for your use: <https://ny.newnycontracts.com/>