

MAXIMIZING TAP FOR NEW YORKERS

The state's 33-year-old Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) makes college possible for many New Yorkers. TAP's maximum award has not changed in seven years. The \$205 million comprehensive package of proposals outlined to the right will enable students to choose the college that is right for them; correct program inequities; and demonstrate New York State's support for a strong knowledge-based economy.

Higher Education in New York

New York is a national leader in providing postsecondary opportunities for its citizens because of a unique mix of 271 institutions of higher education: 146 independent (private, not-for-profit) colleges and universities, 64 SUNY campuses, 19 CUNY campuses, and 42 proprietary institutions. Collectively, these colleges and universities educate more than 913,000 New Yorkers annually plus thousands of others who come to the state, drawn by the quality of higher education New York has to offer. With nearly eight in 10 of the fastest-growing jobs requiring education beyond a high school diploma, a college education is the single best investment New Yorkers can make.

Most students pay for college with a combination of their own and their family's resources plus assistance from government and from the colleges themselves. For example, New York's independent colleges and universities commit more than \$2 billion each year in student financial aid. The federal government makes available Pell Grants, work-study funds, and subsidized student loans. New York State funds grants and scholarship programs, too.

Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)

TAP has helped nearly four million state residents attend college. This program successfully works to increase access for the state's citizens, and to keep New York's best students at home. But numbers don't tell the whole story. Results are best exemplified by the lives of TAP alumni. They include individuals in every conceivable profession and field, from educators and government administrators to business leaders and entrepreneurs. TAP made it possible for these men and women to attend college, excel in a discipline, and continue on to graduate work or to jobs where they use their talents for the benefit of other New Yorkers. This year, more than 335,000 New Yorkers are relying on TAP to meet some of their college expenses.

Who Receives TAP?

TAP provides awards to eligible students enrolled full-time in undergraduate or graduate degree programs at colleges or universities in New York State, including:

- Undergraduate students, both *dependent* and *independent*; and
- Graduate students, both *dependent* and *independent*.

Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) Proposals

(See reverse side for program details)

Undergraduate TAP for Dependent Students

- Increase the TAP maximum award for the neediest dependent undergraduate students to \$6,000; raise the minimum award to \$1,000, and increase income eligibility for minimum award to \$100,000 net taxable income (NTI) and increase income level for minimum award.

Orphans and Wards of the Court

- Make students who are legal wards of the court and orphans eligible for the higher dependent TAP awards.

Undergraduate TAP for Independent Students

- Increase the TAP maximum award for the neediest independent undergraduate students to \$4,000; raise the income eligibility level to \$20,000 NTI.

Graduate TAP

- Increase the TAP maximum award for the neediest graduate students to \$1,000; raise the minimum to \$500.

Three in every four TAP recipients qualify for the dependent series of awards; one in four receives support as an independent student. Eligibility requirements and award amounts for TAP vary depending on income levels, age, and certain other criteria including support from parents or others. (See reverse side for additional information regarding independent status and awards for dependent, and independent students.)

The Case for Investing in TAP to Promote Higher Education Access

- The current maximum award for dependent undergraduate students is \$5,000, the minimum is \$500, and the income eligibility caps at \$80,000 net taxable income. TAP awards for dependent undergraduate students have not changed since 2000.
- The first TAP awards in 1974-75 covered 60 percent of the cost of a private (not-for-profit) four-year college for the neediest undergraduate students; today the maximum grant covers 21 percent.
- Large numbers of students are delaying their college plans. Yet TAP has not been adjusted to reflect this change. Awards for independent students – financially-independent single students who begin their college experience after working for several years – have not increased since 1990-91.
- The current TAP structure further disadvantages wards of the court and orphans who are single with no dependents. These individuals are identified as independent students. Their TAP awards are calculated from the undergraduate independent TAP schedule – a schedule with considerably lower TAP awards and income eligibility levels than those for dependent student. (See tables on reverse side.)
- TAP for graduate students has not increased since 1987-88 despite the fact that jobs increasingly require at least a bachelor's degree. Many positions need a high level of technical skill and advanced competency found only with post-baccalaureate training and study.

Undergraduate (UG) TAP for Dependent Students

Students dependent on parents (family of 4, one in college); or financially-independent married students; or students with tax dependents.

■ Proposal:

- Increase maximum award to \$6,000;
- Increase minimum to \$1,000; and
- Increase income eligibility for minimum award to \$100,000 NYS net taxable income (NTI).
- Increase income level for minimum award.

■ Investment:

- \$170 million (estimated);
- \$145 million for recent high school graduates who are single, no dependents; \$25 million for financially-independent married students or single students with dependents.

Current UG Dependent TAP: Maximum award is \$5,000; minimum award is \$500; minimum award from \$50,000-\$80,000 NTI. These TAP awards have not increased since 2000.

Dependent Student TAP Schedule

Students dependent on parents (family of 4, one in college); or financially-independent married students; or students with tax dependents.

Parent Adjusted Gross Income	Estimated NYS NTI	Current Dependent TAP Award	Proposed Dependent TAP Award at Independent Colleges and Universities
\$0 - \$23,600	\$7,000	\$5,000 *	\$6,000 *
\$26,600	\$10,000	\$4,790	\$6,000 *
\$36,600	\$20,000	\$3,780	\$5,050
\$46,600	\$30,000	\$2,580	\$3,870
\$56,600	\$40,000	\$1,380	\$2,670
\$66,600	\$50,000	\$500 *	\$1,470
\$76,600	\$60,000	\$500 *	\$1,000 *
\$96,600	\$80,000	\$500 *	\$1,000 *
\$116,600	\$100,000	\$0	\$1,000 *

* Default maximum/minimum award. TAP award may not exceed tuition; the minimum award starts at \$53,900 NTI.

Undergraduate (UG) TAP for Independent Students

Generally independent students are older students who are no longer financially dependent on their parents. This schedule is used for single students with no dependents. (See side bar for definition of independent student.)

■ Proposal:

- Increase maximum award to \$4,000;
- Increase income eligibility level to \$20,000 net taxable income (NTI).

■ Investment:

- \$20 million (estimated).

Current UG Independent TAP: Maximum award is \$3,025. The income eligibility is \$10,000 NTI. These TAP awards have not increased since 1990-91.

Independent Student TAP Schedule

Financially-independent single students without dependents.

Adjusted Gross Income	Estimated NYS NTI	Current Independent TAP Award	Proposed Independent TAP Award at Independent Colleges and Universities
\$0 - \$10,500	\$3,000	\$3,025	\$4,000 *
\$12,500	\$5,000	\$2,405	\$3,380
\$17,500	\$10,000	\$855	\$1,830
\$22,500	\$15,000	\$0	\$500 *
\$27,500	\$20,000	\$0	\$500 *

* Default maximum/minimum award. TAP award may not exceed tuition.

TAP for Orphans and Wards of the Court

■ Proposal:

- Allow eligible wards of the court and orphans to be classified as dependent and therefore qualify for dependent TAP.

■ Investment:

- \$10 million (estimated).

Current TAP: Wards of the court and orphans are currently treated as independent students on the independent award schedule.

Who is Considered Independent for TAP?

- Students age 35 years or older; or
- Students age 22-35, or married students, or graduate students who meet all these basic conditions: Students have not ...
 - resided with parents for more than six weeks (6 months for military);
 - been claimed by parents on state or federal income tax in preceding or current academic year;
 - received gift or support in excess of \$750.
- Students under age 22 who meet the basic conditions above and meet at least one of the conditions below. Student ...
 - is a ward of the court;
 - has a deceased, totally or permanently disabled or incompetent parent;
 - receives public assistance (does not include food stamps, unemployment insurance, or AFDC);
 - has involuntary dissolution of the family, resulting in relinquishment of parental responsibility and control;
 - is an honorably discharged veteran.

TAP for Graduate Students (Grad TAP)

■ Proposal:

- Increase Grad TAP maximum award to \$1,000;
- Increase Grad TAP minimum to \$500.

■ Investment:

- \$5 million (estimated).

Current Grad TAP: Maximum award is \$550; the minimum is \$75. These TAP awards have not increased since 1987-88.