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Revisions
8/14/2019          Expanded Frequently Asked Questions/Comments
I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to community colleges on administration of the Community College Gap Assistance Program (CCGAP). The purpose of the CCGAP is to provide funding to community colleges to award community college gap assistance to students in Gap programs of study.

II. STATUTORY PROVISIONS

Nebraska Revised Statutes §§ 85-2001 to 85-2011 govern the Community College Gap Assistance Program Act.

§ 85-2001 Act, how cited.
§ 85-2002 Terms, defined.
§ 85-2003 CCGAP; created; purpose; eligibility.
§ 85-2004 Community college gap assistance; application.
§ 85-2005 Community college gap assistance; criteria; denial of application; when.
§ 85-2006 Community college gap assistance; eligible costs.
§ 85-2007 Applicant; initial assessment.
§ 85-2008 Community college gap assistance; recipient; duties; termination of assistance; when.
§ 85-2009 CCGAP Fund; created; use; investment.
§ 85-2010 CCGAP; committee; duties; meetings.
§ 85-2011 Rules and regulations.

III. APPLICABILITY

The following community colleges are covered by the Act:

- Central Community College
- Metropolitan Community College
- Mid-Plains Community College
- Northeast Community College
- Southeast Community College
- Western Nebraska Community College

IV. START DATE

Community colleges may begin offering CCGAP assistance to eligible students beginning July 1, 2016.

V. GAP PROGRAM OF STUDY

The Commission will maintain a master list of CCGAP programs of study, viewable at https://ccpe.nebraska.gov/gap, which have been submitted by the community colleges and approved by the Commission.
Gap Program of Study Defined

A Gap program of study means a program offered by a community college that is not offered for credit and has a duration of not less than sixteen contact hours in length or is offered for credit but is of insufficient clock, semester, or quarter hours to be eligible for Federal Pell Grants, is in an in-demand occupation, and does any of the following:

- Offers a state, national, or locally recognized certificate;
- Offers preparation for a professional examination or licensure;
- Provides endorsement for an existing credential or license;
- Represents recognized skill standards defined by an industrial sector; or
- Offers similar credential or training.

A Gap program of study offered by a community college must also be aligned with training programs with stackable credentials that lead to a program awarding either college credit, an associate’s degree, a diploma, or a certificate in an in-demand occupation. The aligned training program can be either for credit or non-credit.

A Gap program of study offered by a community college must be a program instructed by a college faculty member, an adjunct faculty member, or a person or entity contracted and paid to teach by the college administration.

An in-demand occupation means:

- Financial services;
- Transportation, warehousing, and distribution logistics;
- Precision metals manufacturing;
- Biosciences;
- Renewable energy;
- Agriculture and food processing;
- Business management and administrative services;
- Software and computer services;
- Research, development, and engineering services;
- Health services;
- Hospitality and tourism;
- Construction; and
- Any other industry designated as an in-demand occupation by the committee

Contact hour defined

Contact hour means an educational activity consisting of sixty minutes minus break time and required time to change classes. Neb. Rev. Stat. § 85-1503(5).

Eligible credit hour program defined

The program provides less than 600 clock hours, 16 semester or trimester hours, or 24 quarter hours of undergraduate instruction offered during a term of fewer than 15 weeks of instruction and is not eligible for a Pell grant.
Format for submitting your Gap program of study list

The Commission has created a simple spreadsheet for you to submit your Gap programs of study for review and approval/disapproval. Please only use this format so we can keep everything uniform. With that being said, the format is subject to change by the Commission.

- “Community College” column: please enter your community college name.
- “Gap program of study” column: please enter your proposed Gap program of study name.
- “In-demand Occupation Selection” column: please use the drop-down menu and select the appropriate in-demand occupation your Gap program of study falls within.
- “Length (Contact Hours)” column: please enter the Gap program of study’s length in contact hours. Please note, a number greater than or equal to sixteen must be entered into this column. If you enter an amount in this column, then the Length (credit hour) column should be blank.
- “Length (Credit Program)” column: please enter the Gap program of study’s length in credit hours and number of weeks of instruction. If you enter an amount in this column, then the Length (contact hour) column should be blank.
- “Aligned Training Program” column: please enter the training program (credit or non-credit) that aligns with your Gap program of study. This training program is not confined to offerings at your college. However, priority should be given to those at your college first, then other Nebraska institutions, and finally those training programs outside Nebraska.
- “Aligned Training Program Institution” column: please enter the institution where the aligned training program is offered.

Gap program of study list

Promptly notify the Commission of any Gap program of study no longer offered so we can update the cumulative list. If your community college is seeking to make an addition to your Gap program of study list, please submit that addition for Commission review on the Gap Assistance Program Approval Form spreadsheet. You will be notified whether the new Gap program of study has been approved or not shortly thereafter.

Certification of your Gap program of study list

When you submit your Gap program of study list to the Commission, you are certifying that, to the best of your knowledge and belief, all information contained within complies with statutory requirements. Specifically, you are certifying your Gap programs of study are eligible offerings pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 85-2002(3).
Using your Commission approved Gap program of study list

As prospective applicants to this program have diverse training needs, community colleges may reasonably package or combine any number of the programs listed on their approved Gap program of study list into a singular Gap program of study. For example, individual Gap program of study OSHA training programs can be combined into a single Gap program of study for students who need multiple OSHA training courses. Due to restrictions that the Gap program can only pay for one program of study per student, you must submit the combined program of study for approval even though you are combining previously approved programs of study. This identifies the combined program as one program.

VI. FUNDING ALLOCATIONS

Community colleges will be allocated state CCGAP funding based on each community college area’s proportionate share of three-year average reimbursable educational units. This allocation method is subject to change based on factors including, but not limited to, need and performance. The grant committee that is charged with oversight of this program, upon its findings, may ask for the return of unused funds in order to reallocate them.

“Reimbursable education units” is defined as in Neb. Rev. Stat. § 85-1503. Please note that distributions will be quarterly and subject to change as the funding source is lottery dollars that are transferred quarterly to the Commission. The Commission will estimate projected Gap funding for the community colleges to assist in planning. Transfer of allocations will be made electronically to all community colleges within ten (10) days of the Commission receiving the quarterly transfer of lottery funds.

Estimated quarterly distributions dates each year (subject to change):

- 1st Quarter: October 5th
- 2nd Quarter: January 5th
- 3rd Quarter: April 5th
- 4th Quarter: July 5th

The community colleges are expected to be prudent stewards of their funding allocations and to appropriately plan their number of CCGAP recipients in light of that allocation. Effective monitoring of the allocation is paramount to ensure sufficient funds remain for recipients throughout their respective Gap program of study’s duration.

VII. STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

Pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 85-2003, to be eligible for community college Gap assistance, an applicant:

a) Must have a family income which is at or below two hundred fifty percent of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services income poverty guidelines; and
b) Shall be a resident of Nebraska as provided in Neb. Rev. Stat. § 85-502.
Nebraska Revised Statute § 85-2003 mistakenly references the Office of Budget and Management income poverty guidelines. OMB has never issued such guidelines. Please see https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2016/01/25/2016-01450/annual-update-of-the-hhs-poverty-guidelines for an explanation from the Office of the Federal Register. Income poverty guideline calculations will be emailed by CCPE to community colleges after posting by the federal government (usually in January).

Income Requirements

As noted above, an applicant must have an annual family income which is at or below two hundred fifty percent of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services income poverty guidelines. The most recent update for the income poverty guidelines is located at https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines. The Office of the Federal Register as well as the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services will continue to post future updates. For CCGAP purposes, family is defined as either the applicant, and if applicable, the applicant and spouse (plus any dependents, see below). However, although the family may include dependents, on the “Income Qualification” section of the student application, only the names of applicant or applicant plus spouse will be entered. In practical terms then, only the applicant or applicant and spouse’s income will be included in the annual family income.

To satisfy audit documentation requirements, community colleges must obtain and retain the applicant’s, and if applicable the spouse’s, most recent federal Internal Revenue Service Form 1040. Form 1040 will be used to verify if any additional sources of income were not reported on the student application “Income Qualification” section and if any dependents can be added to the family size (dependents are typically listed on line 6(c) on Form 1040). For example, child support and retirement income may be reported on Form 1040 but not reported by an applicant under “Income Qualification.” Form 1040 is not to be used to compute the annual family income required for the applicant’s eligibility in the CCGAP. If the applicant, or the applicant’s spouse, has not filed a Form 1040 because no income was received the prior year, community college staff must make a written statement to that effect on the student’s application or elsewhere in the student’s record and proceed with the application. If the applicant’s Form 1040 indicates dependents, these individuals should be included in the family size on the income poverty guidelines. If the applicant did not file a Form 1040, the applicant may indicate the number of dependents if they had filed.

The student application provides the community college with the applicant’s family (applicant or applicant plus spouse) gross income data. For every individual (applicant, or applicant plus spouse) with income listed on the “Income Qualification” section of the student application, the most recent pay stub must be obtained and retained. The pay stub(s) are to be used to verify the income indicated on the “Income Qualification” section of the student application. If the applicant, or applicant’s spouse, is unemployed and has no pay stub, community college staff must make a written statement to that effect on the student’s application or elsewhere in the student’s record and proceed with the application. Next, community college staff can compare the paystub(s) with the student applicant reported income and annualize that income and use the annualized income to compare to the income poverty guidelines with any changes to family size due to being married or having dependents as noted above. Community college staff can notate in the Office Use Only area on the student application if applicant’s family annual income is at or below two
hundred fifty percent (250%) of the current year’s U.S. Department of Health and Human Services income poverty guidelines.

**Income Requirements – Public Assistance**

Within the “Income Qualification” section of the CCGAP student application, the application asks the CCGAP applicant to state an amount of public assistance income and how often it was received. This information is gathered to allow the community colleges to compute the CCGAP applicant’s total family income and determine whether it meets CCGAP income requirements.

For CCGAP, the definition of public assistance includes only the following nonmeans-tested government cash transfers: social security payments (not SSI though), unemployment compensation, workers’ compensation, nonmeans-tested veterans’ payments, U.S. railroad retirement, Black lung payments, and Pell Grants.

**U.S. Citizenship Requirements**

A student receiving CCGAP funding must be either a citizen of the United States or a qualified alien under the federal Immigration and Nationality Act. The CCGAP student application asks the same questions as the United States Citizenship Attestation Form developed by Nebraska’s Department of Administrative Services to comply with Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 4-108 through 4-114 and is available at [http://das.nebraska.gov/lb403/attestation_form.pdf](http://das.nebraska.gov/lb403/attestation_form.pdf).

Pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 4-112, any prospective CCGAP applicant who has selected the second option as a qualified alien must be verified through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (SAVE system) or an equivalent program as designated by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The community colleges by law must complete this verification. The turnaround time for verification in the Commission’s experience is mostly instantaneous with a few cases requiring about a week to verify. United States Citizenship and Immigration Services charges a fee per verification and sets a monthly minimum floor on the verification fee regardless of inquiries at $25.00 (subject to change). This fee may be paid from your Gap administrative allocation.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) students are not eligible for the Gap program as deferred action does not provide lawful status which is a requirement for public benefits per Neb. Rev. Stat. § 4-111.

**VIII. APPLICATION**

The Commission has developed a standard CCGAP application form that community colleges may modify and use in their intake process. Application for CCGAP shall be made to the community college in which the applicant is enrolled or intends to enroll. An application shall be valid for six months from the date of signature on the application. The applicant must provide certification of all sources of income and cannot receive CCGAP assistance for more than one Gap program of study.
Nebraska Revised Statute § 85-2005 requires a CCGAP applicant, through their initial assessment or other means, to demonstrate capacity to achieve the following outcomes:

a) The ability to be accepted to and complete a Gap program of study;
b) The ability to be accepted into and complete a postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree program for credit;
c) The ability to obtain full-time employment; and
d) The ability to maintain full-time employment over time.

The community colleges must reasonably document a CCGAP applicant’s capacity to achieve the above outcomes.

The community college may grant CCGAP assistance under this program to an applicant in any amount up to the full amount of eligible costs.

The community college shall deny an application if it determines that funding for an applicant’s participation in a Gap program of study is available from any other public or private funding source.

IX. INITIAL ASSESSMENT

Applicants to the CCGAP must complete an initial assessment administered by the community colleges in accordance with Neb. Rev. Stat. § 85-2007 to determine the applicant’s readiness to complete a Gap program of study. The community colleges shall make the determination of readiness based on an assessment tool of their choice. The initial assessment and the determination of readiness must be documented in the student’s file in a reasonable manner to allow for review.

X. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 85-2008 and 85-2010 a CCGAP recipient must:

a) Maintain regular contact with faculty of the Gap program of study to document the applicant’s progress in the program;
b) Sign any necessary releases to provide relevant information to community college faculty or case managers, if applicable;
c) Discuss with faculty of the Gap program of study any issues that may affect the recipient’s ability to complete the Gap program of study and obtain and maintain employment;
d) Attend all required courses regularly;
e) Meet with faculty of the Gap program of study to develop a job-search plan; and
f) Upon completion of any community college Gap program of study complete surveying when requested by the community college.

Community colleges must reasonably document that these requirements are being met when applicable.
XI. ELIGIBLE STUDENT COSTS

Pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 85-2006 eligible student costs under the CCGAP include, but are not limited to:

a) Tuition;
b) Direct training costs;
c) Required books and equipment; and
d) Fees, including, but not limited to, fees for industry testing services and background check services.

XII. GAP RECIPIENT CANCELLATION; USE OF CANCELLATION AND/OR REFUND POLICY

If a Gap recipient cancels or withdraws his or her enrollment in a Gap program of study, the community colleges must use their existing cancellation or refund policy to determine the amount of aid, if any, is refunded back to your Gap aid account. However, community colleges are encouraged, in an effort to reuse Gap aid dollars to achieve program success, to refund as much as possible to your Gap aid account if a Gap recipient withdraws or cancels after the program start date. For example, if the canceling Gap recipient is not the breakeven student for that program, then community colleges are encouraged to determine if it is possible that those aid dollars, in full or otherwise, could be returned to the Gap aid account for future reuse.

A Gap recipient who withdraws or cancels after the program start date should, barring extenuating circumstances, be excluded from future participation from the CCGAP and marked as “Did Not Complete” in the tracking spreadsheet. Examples of extenuating circumstances include, but are not limited to, medical issues, incarceration, and changes to work schedules for those students participating in Gap while continuing to work. The status of students in extenuating circumstances should be identified with a date in the Did Not Complete column and upon return to the Gap program, this date should be deleted so the current status of the student is reflected.

If a community college purchased any other items as eligible student costs beyond tuition for a Gap recipient (e.g., welding jacket, boots, etc.), who cancels after the program start date, the community college must make a good faith attempt to reuse these items or obtain a refund to help offset the original expense. If the items are reused for another Gap recipient, the cost of these items on the spreadsheet is to be associated with the student who actual uses them.

XIII. ELIGIBLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS

Beyond the eligible student costs listed earlier, community colleges may use a statutorily defined amount of their CCGAP allocation to assist in defraying the costs of direct staff support services, including, but not limited to, marketing, outreach, applications, interviews, and assessments. The amount of such administrative assistance is as follows:
a) Up to twenty (20) percent of any amount allocated for such purposes to the two smallest community colleges;
b) Up to ten (10) percent of any such amount to the two largest community colleges; and
c) Up to fifteen (15) percent of any such amount to the remaining two community colleges.

For purposes of this section, community college size is determined based on the most recent three-year rolling average full-time equivalent enrollment. The Commission will communicate the administrative allocation amount to the community colleges.

When expending CCGAP funds, the community colleges must reasonably mark or identify them as such in their accounting system in order to facilitate outside review. Administrative costs must be able to be differentiated from student costs for outside review to verify compliance with administrative percentage limits.

XIV. COMMON APPLICANT TRACKING SYSTEM

The Commission has developed a common applicant tracking system for the CCGAP that is to be implemented consistently by each participating community college. The tracking system was designed so it can easily be updated, saved, and then submitted to the Commission. The community colleges must sufficiently complete the tabs within this spreadsheet labeled as “Tracking” and “Expenses.” The community colleges do not need to enter information on the other sheets located within the spreadsheet. These other sheets are strictly for Commission data gathering and reporting.

XV. COMMUNITY COLLEGE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The success of the Gap program centers on the ability to communicate positive results to the Nebraska legislature. This information is needed by the legislature when considering any funding changes and whether to continue the program beyond the first five years. To collect such data, community colleges must submit to the Commission on a quarterly basis an up-to-date common applicant tracking spreadsheet and a narrative section describing the status of the program. The quarterly reports are due two weeks after the conclusion of the preceding quarter. The start date for this program is July 1, 2016, and therefore quarters will be based off of the July 1st through June 30th year.

The common applicant tracking spreadsheet includes a post-completion section to indicate if the Gap program completer had any of the following outcomes: new employment, if that new employment was within their identified in-demand occupation area, retained current employment, is unemployed but continuing with further education, is unemployed, is deceased, or had no response. In order to sufficiently complete this section of the tracking spreadsheet, community colleges must survey or follow up with Gap completers. The method and mode of surveying is at the community colleges discretion provided that such surveying will collect the information needed to complete the common applicant tracking spreadsheet.
The most significant data that can be collected from Gap completers is if they gained new employment, and if so, if it was in their in-demand occupation area, or if they retained their current employment. If the Gap completer has obtained either of these results at the time of program completion, please input it into the tracking spreadsheet as soon as possible. No further surveying for these students who had gained new employment or retained employment would need to be done. However, if a completer at the time of completion had not yet gained new employment or retained employment, it would be beneficial to follow up with that student for a period of up to six months to determine if new employment has been reached and input that data on the tracking spreadsheet. Once a Gap completer has indicated new employment, no further surveying needs to be completed. If after six months post-completion a Gap completer has not obtained new employment, please fill out the completer section of the spreadsheet with the appropriate response (e.g., unemployed, deceased, etc.). The legislative history related to this program indicates Nebraska’s senators are extremely interested in job attainment rates which makes being able to collect and report this information vital to the success and continuation of the Gap program.

XVI. FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA); TRANSMISSION OF YOUR COMMON TRACKING SPREADSHEET

The common applicant tracking spreadsheet you will be emailing the Commission on a quarterly basis likely qualifies as an education record (or multiple education records) under FERPA. Under 34 § 99.31(a)(4)(i) of the Code of Federal Regulations, current as of May 4, 2016, the community colleges may disclose personally identifiable information from an education record of a student without student consent, as the disclosure is in connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or which the student has received, which is necessary for the Commission to enforce the terms and conditions of the aid. No additional releases need be obtained from the student for the transmission of the tracking spreadsheet.

When disclosures are made under this financial aid exception, the recordkeeping and redisclosure provisions apply in 34 CFR §§ 99.32 and 99.33. See FERPA Online Library, http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/library/ferpayale.html. Please be mindful and implement these sections according to your institution’s FERPA policy when making these disclosures to the Commission.

In order to protect the personally identifiable information during electronic transmission to the Commission, each community college must encrypt the tracking spreadsheet with a password prior to submission. The community colleges must take necessary data security precautions while the tracking spreadsheet and any other items are in their possession (e.g., located on their servers). The Commission has supplied each community college with a unique password to encrypt their spreadsheet which the Commission will use to decrypt that spreadsheet upon receipt.

Encrypting within Microsoft Excel 2010 is done by clicking File→Info→Protect Workbook→Encrypt with Password and also as shown in the image below. Please note these instructions are for Microsoft Excel 2010 whereas other versions may have different steps to enable encryption. Please refer to online resources for assistance.
XVII.  RIGHT TO AUDIT

The community colleges must maintain a reasonable accounting system that enables the Commission to readily audit all components of this program. Community colleges must maintain such records, together with such supporting or underlying documents and materials, for at least the preceding five (5) years.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Program Code</th>
<th>Program Description</th>
<th>Program Objective</th>
<th>Program Details</th>
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<td>Improve access to</td>
<td>To increase</td>
<td>100 patients</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>E02</td>
<td>Quality education</td>
<td>Literacy rates</td>
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<td>Safe living</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>E04</td>
<td>Clean environment</td>
<td>Air pollution</td>
<td>Below standard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Census Data**

- Total Population: 100,000
- Median Age: 35 years
- Employment Rate: 65%

**Community Goals**

1. Improve health outcomes for at-risk populations.
2. Expand educational opportunities for all ages.
3. Ensure safe housing for all residents.
4. Restore and protect the natural environment.

**Gap Analysis**

- Health Care: 20% of population lacks insurance.
- Education: 10% of children are below grade level.
- Housing: 15% of homes need repair.
- Environment: 20% of air quality exceeds standards.

**Proposed Solutions**

- Develop affordable insurance plans.
- Expand tutoring and mentorship programs.
- Renovate at-risk homes.
- Implement pollution reduction strategies.
GENERAL QUESTIONS

Gap guideline changes

- Expense tab in tracking spreadsheet should agree with accounting records.
- Drug testing should be part of training costs, not administrative costs if it is a requirement of the program. If it’s a requirement of the college for acceptance to the Gap program, then it would be an administrative expense.

GAP ASSISTANCE TRACKING SPREADSHEET

TRACKING TAB

General
The Status of Approved Participants, Completed Program/Training Date, and Did Not Complete Date fields (columns M-S) should show the status of the student as of the last day of the quarter being reported.

Dates must be in mm/dd/yyyy format as formulas used to prepare the annual report rely on comparing dates when doing counts of students or sums of eligible costs.

Columns AZ through BG, highlighted in red, are used only when there is a date in column Q, Completed Program/Training Date. These are very important columns to complete as they show the benefits and outcomes of the Gap program and are included in the report submitted to the Legislature.

If a date is included in column AZ - New Employment, then either a Yes or No must be entered in column BA - If New Employment, was employment within their in-demand occupational area?

DACA students are not eligible for the Gap Tuition Assistance program. Neb. Rev. Stat. § 4-108 et al. states that “no state agency or political subdivision … shall provide public benefits to a person not lawfully present in the United States.” Neb. Rev. Stat. § 4-109 defines public benefit to include grants. Per the U.S Citizenship and Immigration Services website, deferred action does not provide lawful status.

Status of Approved Participants
Since the spreadsheet should be reporting the status of the student as of the end of the quarter, if the student has been approved and the Enrolled in Program Date is after the end of the quarter, this person must have a date prior to the end of the quarter entered in the Waiting to Participate Date field. Otherwise, this student will not be counted for the quarter and this could make a big impact if it is the 4th quarter which is used to prepare the report. Example: Fourth quarter report (June 30, 2018) shows an Enrolled in Program Date for a student of July 7, 2018. Because this student’s date is after June 30, 2018, he will not be included in the June 30, 2018, report. However, if the student would have a June 28, 2018, date entered in the Waiting to Participate Date, the June 30, 2018, report would include this student under the Waiting to Participate category.
Eligible Costs

If the student has a date entered in the Enrolled in Program Date column, then costs must be recorded in this section but can be estimated initially. As these costs are also included in the report, it is important that the costs of enrolled students are reported in the same quarter as the Enrolled in Program date. Adjustments can be made in later quarters if necessary.

EXPENSES TAB

In the past, there has been some attempt to reconcile the Eligible Costs on the Tracking tab to the amount reported in the Expenses tab. While this may be possible, there could be timing differences when costs are actually paid from the Gap funds and when Eligible Costs are recorded on the Tracking tab.

Because of this, please meet with your accounting people and amend the Expenses tab from the beginning (July 2016). Hopefully this is not very difficult since the amounts should come directly from the general ledger used to track Gap expenditures. This purpose of this change is to report the amount actually paid from Gap funds and supported in the accounting records.

ELIGIBLE PROGRAM OF STUDY LIST

There’s been many additions to our list of eligible programs and only a few deletions. Please take a look at your programs and if you feel there are any that should no longer be included, please email the deletions so they can be removed from the list.

CREDIT PROGRAMS

With the passage of LB 180, eligible credit programs can be funded under the Gap program. The Federal Student Financial Aid handbook identifies two types of institutions and a community colleges may fall under both – an institution of higher education and a postsecondary vocational institution, each one with a different programmatic hourly threshold requirement to be eligible for Title IV funding. As not all of the community colleges have opted to be designated a postsecondary vocational institution by the U.S Dept. of Education, undergraduate programs that provide at least 600 clock hours, 16 semester or trimester hours, or 24 quarter hours of undergraduate instruction offered during a term of at least 15 weeks of instruction are not eligible for a Pell grant, possibly making these programs eligible for Gap funding.

In order to keep the inquiries of potential Pell eligible programs to a minimum for the financial aid or similar office, you can use the following thresholds:

• If a credit program is less than 600 clock hours, 16 semester or trimester hours, or 24 quarter hours, these programs to not need to be reviewed by the financial aid or similar office that’s familiar with Pell grant requirements.

• If a credit program is at least 600 clock hours, 16 semester or trimester hours, or 24 quarter hours, these programs need reviewed by the financial aid or similar office that’s familiar with Pell grant requirements to determine whether the program is Pell eligible. If the financial aid or similar office determines the program isn’t eligible for Pell grant funding, this should be documented and kept on file.
CREDIT COURSE ELIGIBILITY WHEN PART OF PELL-ELIGIBLE PROGRAM

Certain Pell-eligible programs have required introductory credit-bearing courses that, when taken on their own, could be considered Gap Assistance programs. An Associate Degree Nursing program with CNA and Med Aide classes embedded into the program would be Pell-eligible. However, the same CNA and Med Aide courses could be combined into a stand-alone credit Gap program, provided the program meets the eligibility requirements found in the guidelines for a credit Gap program of study (page 2).

By creating Gap-eligible credit programs by breaking out certain courses from Pell-eligible programs, a student could complete a Gap program and then decide to pursue a degree pathway and be eligible for Pell grants, with the Gap program coursework counting toward their degree pathway.

As with any new program, it must be submitted for approval using the new spreadsheet form found on the website. Although credit Gap programs could meet the definition of an aligned training program, these credit programs could also lead to an associate’s degree, a diploma, or a certificate. Currently, non-credit CDL programs with an aligned training program are included on the Gap programs list. If a similar credit CDL program is submitted, it would be expected to include an aligned training program, which is not required to be from the same college. Please include under the Aligned Training Program heading if there is a pathway for the credit Gap program.

When creating any Gap program, keep in mind Gap funding pays for programs, not individual courses. While some Gap programs may consist of only one class such as Med Aide, once students complete the Med Aide program, they would not be eligible for further Gap funding as only one program per student is allowed.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

Per the Gap Assistance guidelines for a student to be eligible:

Nebraska Revised Statute § 85-2005 requires a CCGAP applicant, through their initial assessment or other means, to demonstrate capacity to achieve the following outcomes:
   a) The ability to be accepted to and complete a Gap program of study;
   b) The ability to be accepted into and complete a postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree program for credit;
   c) The ability to obtain full-time employment; and
   d) The ability to maintain full-time employment over time.

The specific part that would make a high school student ineligible for Gap Assistance is b) The ability to be accepted into and complete a postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree program for credit. If a community college requires a high school diploma or GED to be accepted into a credit program, a high school student would not be eligible. If a community college does not have this requirement, then a high school student would be eligible if he/she meets the other requirements. With the requirements of c) and d), a high school student would need to be a senior. A junior or younger would not be able to obtain full-time employment within a 6 to 12 month period from completing the program.