

**OFFICE OF NURSING WORKFORCE
NURSING WORKFORCE INVESTMENT PROGRAM
FY2026-FY2027**

I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Office of Nursing Workforce (ONW), under the Mississippi Board of Nursing, administers the Nursing School Scholarship Program to support Mississippi residents pursuing nursing education within the state.

The program provides **needs-based scholarship funding** to accredited Mississippi schools of nursing for distribution to eligible students enrolled in:

- Pre-Licensure Practical Nursing (PN)
- Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN/ASN)
- Traditional Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)
- RN-to-BSN
- Graduate Nursing Programs (MSN, DNP, Ph.D.)

The program provides needs-based scholarship funding to accredited Mississippi schools of nursing for distribution to eligible students.

Eligible students must apply for the ONW Scholarship through their nursing school in accordance with institutional procedures and deadlines.

Participating schools are responsible for reviewing student applications, verifying financial need, ranking qualified applicants, and distributing funds in accordance with ONW requirements.

While the scholarship does not impose a mandatory service obligation, participating institutions are encouraged to inform recipients of workforce opportunities within Mississippi upon graduation.

ONW may collect aggregate data regarding post-graduation employment outcomes to evaluate the program's impact on the Mississippi Nursing Workforce.

All awards must comply with applicable federal and state non-discrimination laws.

II. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

A. Institutional Eligibility

To participate, a school must:

- Be an accredited nursing school located in Mississippi;
- Have a primary campus within the state;
- Submit a complete Institution Scholarship Application by the established deadline;
- Agree to comply with all ONW reporting and accountability requirements;
- Designate a School Representative responsible for submissions and communications.

B. Student Eligibility

An eligible student must:

- Be a U.S. Citizen;
- Be a Mississippi resident;
- Be enrolled in an accredited Mississippi nursing program;
- Hold an unencumbered Mississippi nursing license (if already licensed);
- Not receive funding that would result in an over-award when combined with ONW funds;
- Demonstrate financial need as defined in Section III.

III. FINANCIAL NEED REQUIREMENT

The ONW Scholarship Program is strictly needs-based.

Financial need must be determined by the institution's Financial Aid Office using information from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for the applicable academic year.

For the purposes of this program, financial need is defined as the difference between a student's Cost of Attendance (COA) and the financial resources available to the student, including federal, state, institutional, and private financial aid. Financial need exists when the student's total educational costs exceed available financial resources, resulting in unmet cost of attendance.

Minimum Eligibility Requirements

To be considered for the ONW Scholarship, applicants must:

- Complete the FAFSA for the applicable academic year
- Demonstrate unmet cost of attendance after all federal, state, institutional, and private financial aid has been applied

Prioritization of Eligible Applicants

All eligible applicants must demonstrate unmet cost of attendance. Among eligible applicants, institutions must rank and prioritize students in the following order:

1. Highest Unmet Cost of Attendance
2. Closest Expected Graduation Date

Verification of Financial Need

The institution's Financial Aid Office must verify and document financial need using FAFSA data.

Institutions may use supporting FAFSA-derived data, such as the Student Aid Index (SAI), to assist in verifying and documenting financial need.

SAI may also be used as a tie-breaker only in cases where students have comparable unmet need and similar expected graduation timelines. SAI must not be used as a primary ranking or prioritization criterion.

The Office of Nursing Workforce does not collect or review FAFSA records, tax returns, or other personal financial documents. Verification of financial need remains the responsibility of the institution.

The institution's Financial Aid Office must also ensure that the ONW Scholarship does not result in an over-award of financial aid, as defined by federal student aid regulations.

IV. STUDENT APPLICATION, NOMINATION, AND APPROVAL PROCESS

A. Student Application Requirement

Students must submit a completed ONW Scholarship Application to their nursing school by the deadline established by the institution.

Submission of an application does not guarantee selection.

Applications must include confirmation of FAFSA completion and any additional documentation required by the institution.

B. Institutional Review and Verification

Participating institutions must:

1. Receive all student applications and provide them to the Financial Aid Office for eligibility review.
2. Verify financial need through the Financial Aid Office using FAFSA data.
3. Confirm that the award will not result in an over-award.
4. Rank qualified applicants in priority order based on program requirements:
 - First, highest documented unmet cost of attendance
 - Second, closest expected graduation date
5. Apply SAI only as a tie-breaker, when applicable, consistent with program guidelines.

Institutions must ensure a conflict-of-interest-free review process and shall establish an internal appeal process for students not selected.

C. Financial Need Certification

Each institution must submit a signed Financial Need Certification affirming that:

- Each student listed completed a FAFSA
- Each student demonstrates financial need, including documented unmet cost of attendance
- The award will not result in an over-award
- The institution maintains supporting documentation for audit purposes
- The student ranking was conducted in accordance with ONW prioritization requirements

Certification must be signed by:

- The Financial Aid Director (or authorized designee); and
- The Designated School Representative

Failure to provide certification will result in non-approval of the student roster.

D. Ranked Scholarship Roster and ONW Pre-Approval

Before any funds are disbursed:

- The Financial Aid Office must submit a Ranked Scholarship Roster to ONW
- No scholarship funds may be disbursed until ONW provides written approval

The roster must reflect ranking in accordance with ONW requirements:

- Highest unmet need first, followed by
- Closest expected graduation date

The roster must include:

- Student's full legal name
- Program type
- Semester status
- Expected graduation date
- Confirmation of Mississippi residency
- Confirmation of financial need certification
- Award amount

Upon review, ONW will:

- Approve the roster in writing
- Return the roster for correction
- Deny incomplete or non-compliant submissions

Only students listed on an approved roster may receive ONW scholarship funds.

V. AWARD AMOUNTS AND DISBURSEMENT

Award Amount Parameters

To ensure equitable distribution of funds and meaningful financial impact for recipients, scholarship awards shall adhere to the following parameters:

- Minimum Award Amount: \$500 per student per academic year
- Maximum Award Amount: \$3,000 per student per academic year

Institutional Discretion

Within the established minimum and maximum limits, participating institutions have discretion to determine individual award amounts based on:

- Level of unmet financial need
- Student Aid Index (SAI) or equivalent measure
- Pell Grant eligibility or other indicators of need
- Proximity to program completion

Institutions are strongly encouraged to prioritize students with the highest unmet financial need.

Equitable Distribution Requirement

Institutions should distribute funds in a manner that maximizes the number of students served while ensuring that each award provides a meaningful contribution toward educational expenses.

Disbursement Requirements

- ONW will issue one disbursement per approved institution.
- The total amount disbursed to students must equal the total amount awarded to the institution.
- All funds must be disbursed by the established deadlines.
- Any unused funds must be reported to ONW immediately.

VI. FUND REALLOCATION

If a student withdraws, declines the award, or becomes ineligible:

- The institution must notify ONW immediately.
- A revised Ranked Scholarship Roster must be submitted.
- Funds may be reallocated only after written ONW approval.

Unauthorized reassignment of funds may result in disqualification from current or future participation.

VII. MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Participating institutions must submit:

- Institution Scholarship Application / Scholarship Award Commitment Form
- Ranked Scholarship Roster (Pre-Approval Required)
- Financial Need Certification
- Scholarship Accountability Book
- Student Scholarship Recipient Survey (completed by each student)

The Scholarship Accountability Book must reconcile all awarded and disbursed funds.

Institutions must maintain documentation supporting student eligibility and financial need for audit purposes.

VIII. TIMELINES

Please see Appendix A for complete timelines.

IX. DEADLINES

- **Institution Scholarship Application / Commitment Form**
Due: April 30, 2026
- **Student Application Period (Fall)**
May 20, 2026– September 1, 2026
- **Ranked Scholarship Roster – Fall**
Due: By September 15, 2026
- **Fall Disbursement Deadline**
December 2, 2026
- **Scholarship Accountability Book & Student Surveys (Fall Reporting)**
Due: December 2, 2026

- **Student Application Period (Spring/Summer)**
September 20, 2026 – January 1, 2027
- **Ranked Scholarship Roster – Spring**
Due: By January 15, 2027
- **Spring & Summer Disbursement Deadline (Final Deadline)**
April 1, 2027
- **Final Reporting: Scholarship Accountability Book & Student Surveys**
Due: April 1, 2027

All funds must be fully distributed by April 1, 2027. Late, incomplete, or non-compliant submissions will not be reviewed.

X. COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

Failure to comply with program requirements, including:

- Improper fund distribution;
- Failure to verify financial need;
- Late or incomplete submissions;
- Unauthorized fund reallocation;

may result in:

- Disqualification from current funding;
- Reduction or denial of future funding;
- Recovery of improperly distributed funds.

ONW reserves the right to conduct random or risk-based audits and request supporting documentation at any time.

XI. CONTACT INFORMATION

Office of Nursing Workforce
Mississippi Board of Nursing
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