

The Florida College System Transparency, Accountability, Progress, and Performance

How many students in the Florida College System receive Pell Grant financial aid?

The latest Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Systems (IPEDS) Financial Aid Survey figures for the Florida College System (FCS) show nearly a quarter of a million students (**223,453**) received Pell Grants in 2011-12. **Nearly one-half (46.7 percent) of FCS undergraduates in the financial aid cohort received Pell Grants.** FCS Pell levels are about 10 percent above the community college national average. The percent of FCS students receiving Pell has grown 4.3 percentage points compared to last year and is up 20.3 percentage points over the last five years. FCS Pell Grant recipients grew five times faster than FCS undergraduate enrollments since 2007-08 (percent change). The latest average Pell Grant for FCS students was \$3,624 which is down \$398 from last year and above 2008-09 levels by \$586. Twenty-four of the 28 colleges reported average award decreases compared to last year.

Year	Financial Aid Cohort	# Pell Recipients	% Pell Recipients	Average Pell Grant
FY 2007-08	384,930	101,570	26.4%	NA
FY 2008-09	408,949	112,977	27.6%	\$3,038
FY 2009-10	449,411	160,806	35.8%	\$3,930
FY 2010-11	471,843	199,799	42.3%	\$4,022
FY 2011-12	478,944	223,453	46.7%	\$3,624

Source: IPEDS Data Center Financial Aid Surveys

The [U.S. Department of Education](#) (USED) describes the [Federal Pell Grant program](#) as a need-based grant program for low-income undergraduates to promote postsecondary education access. Grant amounts are awarded based on the student's expected family contribution; cost of attendance; student's enrollment status (full- or part-time); and whether the student attends for a full academic year. The USED uses a standard formula to evaluate completed Free Applications for Federal Student Aid ([FAFSA](#)) to determine Pell eligibility. **Prospective students should complete the FAFSA as soon as possible** – ideally about one year before they plan to enter college – since it is the gateway to financial assistance. Pell recipients are individuals with the highest levels of financial need.

Community College Facts about Pell Grants

- 8.36 million credit students attend community colleges (half of all U.S. undergraduates).
- 3.45 million community college students receive Pell Grants.
- \$11.3 billion in Pell funds are awarded annually to community colleges.
- One-third of all Pell recipients attend community colleges.
- 78 percent of Pell recipients at community colleges are working students.

Source: Association of Community College Trustees

According to the [Association of Community College Trustees](#), because community college students, on average, have the lowest incomes and pay the lowest average tuition fees, Pell Grants cover more expenses for community college students than for those attending other types of institutions. Grants do not have to be repaid by the student. A [recent study](#) of Pell recipients in community colleges by the Community College Research Center (CCRC) at Teachers College, Columbia University, showed that students who received Pell were generally younger and poorer than non-Pell students at the same colleges. The CCRC also found that while these students had lower initial levels of college readiness, students supported by Pell appeared to have higher levels of academic focus than non-Pell recipients and also took longer to finish.

USED's [Federal Pell Grant Program End-of-Year Report](#) for 2011-12 (most current data available) shows that nationwide, public two-year institutions have the highest proportions of Pell Grant recipients at 36.3 percent. This is followed by public four-year institutions at 29.2 percent. Collectively, 12.7 percent of students attending private institutions (two- and four-year colleges) received Pell Grants while 21.8 percent of students attending proprietary schools received Pell assistance. For 2011-12, more than 406,000 students in Florida public institutions (two- and four-year) received Pell Grants with over \$1.4 billion awarded. Florida was third in the number of Pell recipients in public institutions behind California (768,954 recipients, \$2.7 billion awarded) and Texas (545,592 recipients, \$1.9 billion awarded). A [report](#) from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) found that the Pell program increased 168 percent from 5.2 million recipients in 2006-07 to 9.3 million in 2010-11. The CBO attributes this increase to a weak economy, increased availability of federal financial aid, an increase in the college-age population, and the well-known economic and employment benefits for individuals with college degrees versus those with high school diplomas.

To learn more about different financial aid options, visit the [Florida Virtual Campus](#) or the Florida Department of Education's [Office of Student Financial Assistance](#). To find a college near you, visit the FCS [directory](#).

For assistance, contact the Florida College System Research & Analytics
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