January 15, 2024

# Gap Tuition Assistance Program Legislative Report

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**Department of Education**

## Overview of the Gap Tuition Assistance Program

The Gap Tuition Assistance Program (Gap) was established in 2013 by the Iowa Legislature to provide funding to community colleges and their students for need-based tuition assistance allowing for the completion of continuing education certificate training programs connected to in-demand occupations (Iowa Code section 260I).

### Eligibility Criteria

Applicant must demonstrate capacity to achieve the following outcomes:

- The ability to complete an eligible certificate program
- The ability to enter a postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree program for credit
- The ability to gain full-time employment
- The ability to maintain full-time employment over time

Applicants may be found eligible for partial or total tuition assistance. Only an applicant eligible to work in the United States shall be approved for tuition assistance under this program.

### Eligible Costs

Costs of a program eligible for coverage by tuition assistance shall include but are not limited to:

- Tuition
- Direct training costs and support services
- Required books and personal protective equipment for the program
- Fees, including those for industry testing services and background check testing services
- Personal support appropriate for short-term programs such as:
  - Childcare while in training
  - Transportation assistance to and from training
  - Uniform/shoes for occupation related to training
- Upgraded/new program-specific equipment

Costs of providing direct staff support services include, but are not limited to, marketing, outreach, application, interview, and assessment processes. Eligible costs for this purpose shall be limited to twenty percent of any allocation of monies to the two smallest community colleges, ten percent of any allocation of moneys to the two largest community colleges, and fifteen percent of any allocation of moneys to the remaining eleven community colleges. Community college size shall be determined based on the most recent three-year rolling average full-time equivalent enrollment.

### Eligible Programs

Programs and their participants that meet the following criteria shall be eligible for assistance under the program:

The program is aligned with a certificate, diploma, or degree for credit, 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
- Offers a similar credential or training

The program offers training or a credential in an in-demand occupation within one of the following industry sectors:

- Information technology
- Health care
- Advanced manufacturing
- Transportation and logistics
- Any other industry designated as in-demand by a regional advisory board

## Requirements for Participation

An applicant for Gap tuition assistance under this program will be required to complete an application to determine the applicant's readiness to complete an eligible certificate program.

A participant in an eligible certificate program who receives tuition assistance will be required to do all of the following:

- Maintain regular contact with staff members for the certificate program to document the applicant's progress in the program
- Sign a release form to provide relevant information to community college faculty or case managers
- Discuss with staff members for the certificate program any issues that may impact the participant's ability to complete the certificate program, obtain employment, and maintain employment over time
- Attend all required courses regularly
- Meet with staff members for the certificate program to develop a career pathway plan

## Gap Financial Reporting, FY23

In FY23, community colleges received a state appropriation of $2,000,000 to implement Gap. In addition to this annual appropriation, $437,989 of funding carried forward from FY22 into FY23, for a total of $2,437,989. Table 1 documents the allocations, expenditures and carryover for FY23 by community college.

**Table 1. Gap Tuition Assistance Program Allocation, Expenditures and Carryover by College, FY23***

| College | Allocation & Carryover FY23 | Expenditures | Carryover in FY24 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Northeast Iowa | $109,640 | $ 97,471 | $ 12,169 |
| North Iowa Area | $165,484 | $ 59,907 | $105,577 |
| Iowa Lakes | $100,926 | $ 86,068 | $ 14,858 |
| Northwest Iowa | $ 96,828 | $ 15,074 | $ 81,754 |
| Iowa Central | $113,337 | $113,337 | $ 0 |
| Iowa Valley | $ 94,300 | $ 87,872 | $ 6,428 |
| Hawkeye | $144,469 | $144,469 | $ 0 |
| Eastern Iowa | $170,819 | $140,001 | $ 30,818 |
| Kirkwood | $569,616 | $520,616 | $ 49,000 |
| Des Moines Area | $336,022 | $336,022 | $ 0 |
| Western Iowa Tech | $110,985 | $110,985 | $ 0 |
| Iowa Western | $120,711 | $113,541 | $ 7,170 |
| Southwestern | $ 71,286 | $ 35,759 | $ 35,527 |
| Indian Hills | $148,909 | $148,909 | $ 0 |
| Southeastern | $ 84,657 | $ 80,688 | $ 3,969 |
| **Total** | **$2,437,989** | **$2,090,719** | **$347,270** |

*\* Totals may vary throughout this report due to rounding methods.*

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## Eligible Expenditures, FY23

Of the total available funds, colleges spent $2,090,719 on tuition and books, equipment, fees and testing and program staff support services. It should be noted that a portion of the funds carried forward may already be apportioned to active students who are currently participating in, or waiting to participate in, an approved training program. No funding is used for indirect expenses related to college administration.

**Table 2. Gap Expenditures by College, FY23***

| College | Tuition & Books | Equipment | Fees, Assessment & Testing | Staff Support Services | Total Expenditures |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Northeast Iowa | $97,471 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $97,471 |
| North Iowa Area | $38,942 | $3,675 | $961 | $16,329 | $59,907 |
| Iowa Lakes | $73,772 | $0 | $1,230 | $11,066 | $86,068 |
| Northwest Iowa | $9,390 | $0 | $0 | $5,684 | $15,074 |
| Iowa Central | $94,411 | $0 | $1,925 | $17,001 | $113,337 |
| Iowa Valley | $59,384 | $10,403 | $4,087 | $14,036 | $87,872 |
| Hawkeye | $115,613 | $669 | $2,974 | $25,212 | $144,469 |
| Eastern Iowa | $116,090 | $0 | $2,952 | $20,959 | $140,001 |
| Kirkwood | $431,598 | $10,234 | $27,989 | $50,794 | $520,616 |
| Des Moines Area | $335,455 | $0 | $567 | $0 | $336,022 |
| Western Iowa Tech | $100,882 | $9,548 | $555 | $0 | $110,985 |
| Iowa Western | $81,928 | $7,510 | $5,996 | $18,107 | $113,541 |
| Southwestern | $19,500 | $715 | $675 | $14,869 | $35,759 |
| Indian Hills | $95,862 | $759 | $32,864 | $19,423 | $148,909 |
| Southeastern | $70,363 | $0 | $0 | $10,324 | $80,688 |
| Total | $1,740,642 | $43,495 | $82,777 | $223,805 | $2,090,719 |

* Totals may vary throughout the report due to rounding methods.

## Gap Enrollment and Completion, FY23

### Applicants and Participant Counts, FY23

There were 2,876 individuals who applied for Gap funding. Of these applicants, 2,239 were approved, and either started their program or were waiting to participate. Participant numbers vary based on applicant qualifications, funding availability, program start dates and program capacity. The numbers associated with these counts should not be compared to the previous year as enrollments oftentimes cross fiscal years.

**Table 3. Gap Applicants and Approved Participants by College, FY23\***

| College | Number of Applications | Number of Approved Participants | Waiting to Participate |
|---|---|---|---|
| Northeast Iowa | 135 | 55 | 44 |
| North Iowa Area | 62 | 33 | 13 |
| Iowa Lakes | 58 | 43 | 3 |
| Northwest Iowa | 7 | 5 | 5 |
| Iowa Central | 61 | 84 | 84 |
| Iowa Valley | 53 | 48 | 53 |
| Hawkeye | 62 | 33 | 13 |
| Eastern Iowa | 90 | 62 | 14 |
| Kirkwood | 219 | 190 | 293 |
| Des Moines Area | 1,432 | 259 | 259 |
| Western Iowa Tech | 67 | 53 | 120 |
| Iowa Western | 84 | 73 | 109 |
| Southwestern | 83 | 24 | 107 |
| Indian Hills | 111 | 32 | 46 |
| Southeastern | 352 | 41 | 41 |
| **Total** | **2,876** | **1,035** | **1,204** |

\* Each training program has individual requirements and timelines for completion. Participant and completer numbers include both long- and short-term programs. It is the individual college's choice which of these programs will be supported by Gap funds, and this will reflect larger or smaller participant and completer data, depending on the program and time to completion. Additionally, participants and completers can be reflected in different fiscal years due to length of program (FY 23 Participants and Completers by Program).

## Enrollment, FY23

In FY23, 1,401 students (duplicated count) enrolled in a Gap-approved program, for a total of 124,338.4 contact hours.* The career and technical education (CTE) programs with the highest enrollment were nursing assistant/aide and patient care (425 students), truck and bus driver/commercial vehicle operator (335 students), emergency medical technician (EMT paramedic) (91 students) and welding technology (82 students). Table 4 lists the top 15 Gap-eligible programs statewide.

**Table 4. Gap-Eligible Programs with Top 15 Enrollment, FY23**

| Gap-Eligible Program | Student Enrollment |
|---|---:|
| Nursing assistant/aide and patient care | 425 |
| Truck and bus driver/commercial vehicle operator and instructor | 335 |
| Emergency medical technology/technician (EMT paramedic) | 91 |
| Welding technology | 82 |
| Business administration and management, general | 58 |
| Business/office automation/technology/data entry | 54 |
| Phlebotomy technician/phlebotomist | 46 |
| Dog/pet/animal grooming | 39 |
| Medical insurance coding specialist/coder | 18 |
| Computer and information systems security/auditing/information assurance | 16 |
| Administrative assistant and secretarial science, general | 15 |
| Medication aide | 13 |
| Allied health diagnostic, intervention and treatment professions | 12 |
| Logistics, materials and supply chain management | 12 |
| Sterile processing technology/technician | 10 |

## Gap Noncredit Awards, FY23

A Gap award signifies completion of a CTE program approved for Gap funding, by a student who received such funding. During FY23, Gap students earned a total of 4,455 awards. These students may have enrolled in the current year or in previous years, based on the length of the program. (Often, programs will overlap fiscal years for reporting, since many of the programs are noncredit and vary in terms of length).  Similar to the top program enrollment, the programs with the highest number of awards were nursing assistant/aide and patient care (3,844 awards), truck and bus driver/commercial vehicle operator (227 awards) and emergency medical technician (EMT paramedic) (57 awards). The programs with the highest number of awards are listed in Table 5.

**Table 5. Gap Tuition Assistance Eligible Programs with Highest Number of Awards, FY2023**

| Gap-Eligible Program | Awards |
|---|---:|
| Nursing assistant/aide and patient care | 3,844 |
| Truck and bus driver/commercial vehicle operator and instructor | 227 |
| Emergency medical technology/technician (EMT paramedic) | 57 |
| Medication aide | 40 |
| Phlebotomy technician/phlebotomist | 40 |
| Dog/pet/animal grooming | 31 |
| Business administration and management, general | 27 |
| Industrial mechanics and maintenance technology | 24 |
| Welding technology/welder | 21 |
| Administrative assistant and secretarial science, general | 17 |
| Medical insurance coding specialist/coder | 15 |
| Computer and information systems security/auditing/information assurance | 13 |
| Heating, air conditioning, ventilation and refrigeration maintenance technology/technician | 10 |
| Cooking and related culinary arts, general | 9 |
| Health/health care administration/management | 9 |

## Industry Awards by Program, FY23

In addition to Gap awards, noncredit programs also lead students toward earning local or national industry-stackable credentials throughout their career pathway. Often, these credentials are awarded by third-party organizations. The Iowa Department of Education (Department) is currently identifying these credentials and issuing organizations, with a goal of implementing reporting in FY24.

In FY23, 529 Gap students completed a program that leads to a local or national industry credential. The highest number of students were in the following program areas: truck and bus driver/commercial vehicle operator (292 students), nursing assistant/aide and patient care (151) and emergency medical technician (EMT paramedic) (84).

**Table 6. Top 15 Gap Programs Leading to Industry Credentials, FY23**

| Gap-Eligible Program | Students |
|---|---:|
| Truck and bus driver/commercial vehicle operator and instructor | 292 |
| Nursing assistant/aide and patient care | 151 |
| Emergency medical technology/technician (EMT paramedic) | 84 |
| Allied health and medical assisting services, other | 57 |
| Welding technology | 18 |
| Dog/pet/animal grooming | 14 |
| Medical insurance coding specialist/coder | 14 |
| Phlebotomy technician/phlebotomist | 12 |
| Teacher assistant/aide | 9 |
| Health/health care administration/management | 8 |
| Information technology | 7 |
| Electrocardiograph technology/technician | 6 |
| Occupational safety and health technology/technician | 5 |
| Logistics, materials and supply chain management | 4 |
| Medical/clinical assistant | 4 |

## Gap Impact and Outcomes

The Department provides data on Gap student outcomes related to further education and employment one year following program year completion. Gap student outcomes for FY22 can be found on the Department's website (URL: https://educateiowa.gov/adult-career-comm-college/community-colleges/iowa-skilled-worker-and-job-creation-fund/gap-tuition-assistance-program).