

(b) Each recipient of an Educational Excellence Award who is enrolled in an associate degree program as permitted in § 18-303(b)(1) of this subtitle may hold the award for 3 years if the same conditions of subsection (a) of this section are met.

(c) Each recipient of an Educational Excellence Award may hold the award for a 5th year if the recipient:

(1) Is enrolled in an academic program that, as determined by the institution, requires 5 years to complete; or

(2) Provides evidence, satisfactory to the [State Scholarship Administration] OFFICE, of extenuating financial, academic, or other circumstances that prevent the recipient from completing the academic program in 4 years.

(d) In addition to the requirements for renewal of an Educational Excellence Award under subsections (a), (b), and (c) of this section, a recipient of a Guaranteed Access Grant shall hold the grant for not more than 5 consecutive years or, failing to do so, provide evidence satisfactory to the [State Scholarship Administration] OFFICE of extenuating circumstances.

18-307.

(a) [The Administration] EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (D) OF THIS SECTION, THE OFFICE shall compile and certify lists for the entire State that rank applicants by financial need.

(b) All funds for annual initial grants shall be awarded from the statewide list on the basis of greatest financial need.

(c) On or before May 1 of each year, the Administration shall send each Senator and each Delegate a list of individuals in each legislative district to whom Educational Excellence Awards are awarded.

(D) (1) IF STATE FUNDS ARE AVAILABLE FOR THIS PURPOSE, INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE STATE MAY PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS TO STUDENTS WHO OTHERWISE MEET THE REQUIREMENTS FOR RECEIVING AN EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE AWARD BUT WHO APPLY AFTER THE MARCH 1 DEADLINE OR HAVE OTHER EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES.

(2) THE COMMISSION SHALL:

(I) ESTABLISH GUIDELINES FOR THE AWARDING OF EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS BY THE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO THE STUDENTS; AND

(II) ADOPT REGULATIONS NECESSARY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS SUBSECTION.

(3) (1) THE COMMISSION SHALL ALLOCATE AVAILABLE FUNDS TO INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION BASED ON THE PROPORTION OF STATE RESIDENTS ENROLLED AT EACH INSTITUTION WHO RECEIVE FEDERAL PELL GRANTS.