TAP APPLICATION COMPANION

The Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) is a grant for New York state residents going to New York State colleges or universities. Eligible dependent students could potentially receive a grant of $5,165 a year towards tuition at the NYS school of their choice. Students who are orphans, wards of the court, or in foster care are also eligible for a grant of up to $5,165.

Purpose:
To determine student’s eligibility for the New York State TAP grant.

General Application and Eligibility Information:
- Similar to FAFSA, only US citizens, permanent residents and eligible non-citizens can file this form. Undocumented students cannot and should not file the TAP application.

- Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC), the organization that administers TAP, communicates a lot more with students than with the federal Department of Education, who administers FAFSA. Because of this, students could be required to provide additional documentation to HESC to obtain a TAP grant. Be on the lookout for additional communication from HESC.

- HESC verifies student and parent tax information directly with New York State and may communicate with students afterwards about inconsistencies.

HESC accepts the signatures provided on the FAFSA (FSA ID) as signatures for the TAP application.
Before Applying

1. Complete the FAFSA
   - Before starting the TAP application, students must first submit the FAFSA at www.fafsa.ed.gov or www.fafsa.gov.
   - Students cannot file TAP until the FAFSA is complete. This is because the TAP form pre-fills information from the FAFSA. New York State will use FAFSA information as part of your application for TAP. Students must double check all information against their NYS tax forms.
   - Students can complete their online TAP application after pressing submit on their FAFSA application, by choosing “Start your state application. Click here if you want to apply for New York state-based financial aid,” or they may visit www.tapweb.org at a later date to complete it.

2. Establish a TAP PIN number
   - Before beginning the application, students will be asked to establish a username and PIN (Personal Identification Number) for TAP. The TAP PIN (also referred to as HescPIN) and username will allow students to complete their application, keep track of their application information and make changes.
   - TAP does not let students choose PINs that can be easily guessed by others (i.e. birthday, last 4 digits of social security number, etc).

3. Collect Documents
   - Social Security Number (can be found on Social Security card)
   - Alien registration number or permanent residence card (if you are not a U.S. Citizen)
   - Students should collect the following financial documents:
     - W-2 Forms and other records of money earned for the preceding year
     - Federal Income Tax Return* for student and student’s spouse, if married - IRS Form 1040, 1040A, 1040EZ, foreign tax return, or tax return for Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia or Palau
     - New York State Income Tax Return* (IT-201)
   - Parents (for dependent students) should collect the following financial documents:
     - Federal Income Tax Return*
     - State Income Tax Return* (IT-201)
   - * In applying for the 2016-17 school year, using 2015 documents is ideal. In order to meet the priority financial aid filing dates, families may use their 2014 documents to estimate their finances and update their TAP as soon as the new documents are ready.
TAP only lets you list one school on the form. TAP will pre-fill the school question with the first New York State college mentioned on the FAFSA.

TAP is an “open” form, meaning that if a student applies for TAP to one school, all other New York State schools have access to their application.

There is no need to change the school listed on TAP until the student has committed to enroll somewhere after May 1st. Once the student identifies the school they will attend, they can log in to HESC (www.hesc.ny.gov) and switch the school code.

If a student will only attend a school in the spring and it has been prefilled for both fall and spring, they can delete the Fall term by clicking the delete box in the appropriate row.
Students who can prove that they are honorably discharged veterans are considered for independence.
Just because a student is independent on FAFSA does not mean the student will be considered independent on TAP, and vice versa.

A student’s dependency status affects their TAP award amount. Most students who are independent are only eligible to receive up to $3,025, whereas dependent students may receive up to $5,165. Students who are in foster care, wards of the court, or orphans may also receive up to $5,165.
FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE STATUS (FIS)

- TAP asks the questions on the previous page to gauge if a student is independent.
- Depending on how the student answers these questions, the form will ask them to enter information about their parents.
- There are questions about living situation: if an adult student, under 35, is living with their parents. TAP might consider them dependent.
- There are questions about receiving gifts, loans, or other assistance: if the student is living with their parent and is not sure of the answer, it is more likely than not they have received more than $750. The question is about financial support. (Not whether the student received a big birthday check).
- Students, 22 and older, who answered “no” to all questions on this page, will not be asked to enter any parental information, and they will only have to enter information about themselves.
- Students under 22, who answered “no” to all questions on this page, will have to provide documentation for one of the special conditions below or prove they are an honorably discharged veteran in order to be considered independent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLLEGE</th>
<th>PERSONAL INFO</th>
<th>MARITAL STATUS</th>
<th>DEPENDENT</th>
<th>PARENT</th>
<th>PARENT'S INCOME</th>
<th>INCOME</th>
<th>FAMILY MEMBERS</th>
<th>SUMMARY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Special Conditions**

- Are both of your parents totally and permanently disabled or declared incompetent?  
  - [ ] Yes  
  - [ ] No

- Are you a Ward of the Court?  
  - [ ] Yes  
  - [ ] No

- Are you receiving Public Assistance? Public Assistance DOES NOT include food stamps, unemployment insurance, or aid as a dependent child under the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program.  
  - [ ] Yes  
  - [ ] No

- Has your family been involuntarily dissolved resulting in relinquishment of your parents responsibility and control?  
  - [ ] Yes  
  - [ ] No

*To be thorough, the following pages of this document show questions about parental information. If a student is deemed independent, the online form will skip these questions.*
PARENT’S MARITAL STATUS

- Like the FAFSA, the TAP Application only cares about the custodial parent.
- TAP uses “Parent 1” and “Parent 2” for certain marital statuses.
- Parent marital status determines who the student needs to supply information for:
  - If parents are married or remarried, the student needs to provide information on both parents or parent and step-parent.
  - If parents are separated, divorced, or widowed before December 31, 2015, the student needs to provide information only for the custodial parent.
  - If parents were never married and do not live together, the student needs to provide information only for the custodial parent.
  - If the student indicated that their parents are unmarried and living together on the FAFSA, the student can only provide information for one parent. NY doesn’t recognize Common Law marriage, so HESC will consider the student’s parents as never married.
- Students who are US citizens but whose parents are undocumented are eligible for TAP and will be able to file the form on-line.
  - Undocumented parents can either provide a Tax ID number (ITIN) or check the box that says “If your parent does not have a social security number, check this box”
  - HESC will ask the student to submit a signature page and complete an additional questionnaire.
Parent's Disability Information

Please indicate if Parent 1 or Parent 2 (or both) is permanently disabled.

Is parent permanently disabled?

Parent 1:  
- Yes  
- No  

Date parent became disabled:  
Date: [ ] (mm-yyy)

Parent 2:  
- Yes  
- No  

Date: [ ] (mm-yyy)
PARENT 1/PARENT 2 NEW YORK STATE TAX FORM and INCOME

- TAP focuses on the NYS tax return, so that will be the primary financial document used.
- Based on information entered in FAFSA, TAP will pre-fill tax information. The student must then check the information against the actual forms, using the indication about which line to look at on the NYS tax form.
- TAP will also accept information from the IT 203 form, which is the Non-Resident and Part-Year Resident Income Tax Return.
STUDENT/SPOUSE NYS TAX FORM and FEDERAL TAX FORM and UNREPORTED INCOME

- TAP focuses on the NYS tax return, so that will be the primary financial document used.
- Based on information entered in FAFSA, TAP will pre-fill tax information. The student must then check the information against the actual forms, using the indication about which line to look at on the NYS tax form.
- TAP will also accept information from the IT 203 form, which is the Non-Resident and Part-Year Resident Income Tax Return.
PRINT THE TAP APPLICATION

- After this page, you will see a summary of your completed TAP application. It has not been submitted yet. However, it is always a good idea to print a copy for your records.
The New York State (NYS) Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC) will accept the signatures on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as signatures for the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) application. By continuing with the submission of the TAP data, I affirm that the information herein is true.

This information will be accepted for all purposes as the equivalent of a signed affidavit and if it contains a false statement, shall subject me to the same penalties for perjury as if I had been duly sworn. I understand that the income information included in this application will be verified by NYS HESC with the NYS Department of Taxation and Finance.

I further understand that in submitting this application, all future communication from HESC regarding this application, and any subsequent application for financial aid, will be electronic. If you wish to receive future communication from HESC in paper format, please select “Do Not Submit.” A paper application for the Tuition Assistance Program will be mailed to you upon request. Instructions are on HESC’s website: www.hesc.ny.gov under Manage My Account.

COMPLETING THE TAP

- Your application will not be submitted until you click “submit” on this page.
- Unlike the FAFSA, TAP doesn’t provide a confirmation page.