

# Congressional *Factsheet*



## United States Student Association

### Fiscal Year 2009 Appropriations

Education determines employment eligibility; employment influences economic status; economic status affects one's access to education, including access to education for one's children. This cycle perpetuates low paying jobs, lower socio-economic status and a lack of education. **WE MUST BREAK THIS CYCLE!** Divestment in higher education only makes it harder for American families to succeed in our global economy. The programs listed below work together to provide access to higher education for all students. These programs must be adequately funded before true access to higher education can be attained. We fight for increases that will expand access to higher education because every qualified individual has a right to education in this country.

#### An Overview of the President's FY 2009 Budget

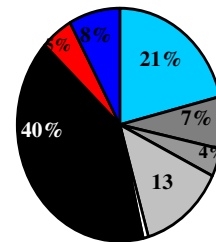
In February 2008, the President released his FY 2009 budget. He proposed the elimination and level funding of many vital higher education programs including the LEAP program, which is crucial for sustaining many state based financial aid programs, the Perkins Loan Cancellation program which provides loan cancellation for borrowers pursuing careers in public service, the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG) which supplements the Pell Grant by providing an additional \$4,000 grant to low income students, and the Thurgood Marshall program which provides funding for low income students pursuing law school. **USSA strongly believes that creating access to higher education begins with adequate funding for all vital higher education programs and that Congress needs to make higher education a priority.** Students are running USSA's national campaign to increase support for higher education in this years appropriations process. We urge Congress to do better than the President's budget for higher education. USSA is working in coalition with the Student Aid Alliance and the Committee for Education Funding (CEF) to obtain increased funding for federal student aid programs, which in return, will provide access for millions of students across the country.

The **Pell Grant Program** is the most basic grant for low-income students. It is a "quasi-entitlement" program meaning that although it is part of the appropriations process every year, anyone who qualifies gets a grant. The maximum grant for fiscal year 2007 (the '07-08' school year) is \$4,241. Students from the poorest families receive the maximum Pell grant. The minimum grant is \$400. More than 5.3 million students with a median family income of less than \$20,000 received Pell Grants in FY 2007. **We urge Congress to increase the maximum Pell Grant to \$5,100.**

**Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnerships (LEAP)** is a grant program targeted at low income students. LEAP provides a federal match to states to encourage, retain, and expand their need-based student aid programs. Under \$30 million in federal appropriations requires a dollar for dollar match from the states. For funds above \$30 million, states must match two new dollars (more than they awarded the previous year) for every one federal dollar. In the current environment of shrinking state budgets, federal matching programs like LEAP are especially important to maintain state investment in grant aid. At \$100 million, LEAP would provide an estimated \$270 million in need-based grants. **We urge Congress to increase funding for LEAP to \$100 million.**

#### Undergraduate Student Aid By Type\*

\* Not including private student loans



Source: Trends In Student Aid 2007, The College Board

#### Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant Program (SEOG)

SEOG is a grant program for low-income students. It is a matching program where institutions match 25% of federal dollars. In FY2007, SEOG was funded at \$771 million. With these institutional matching funds, almost \$975 million is given in total aid to students. The federal government's role is crucial; without federal contribution, low-income students would receive a fraction of their current grant awards. The program currently serves over one million students. SEOG provides up to an additional \$4,000 in grant assistance to Pell Grant recipients who need it the most. **We urge Congress to increase funding for the SEOG program to \$1 billion.**

### The Facts

- In 1987-88, the \$2,100 maximum Pell Grant covered 50% of tuition, fees, and room and board charges at the average public four-year college or university. In 2007-08, the \$4,310 maximum Pell Grant covers 32% of the same costs.
- **From 1997-98 to 2007-08 tuition and fees for full-time in-state students at public four-year colleges and universities rose 54% in inflation-adjusted dollars.**
- In 1996-97, 93% of loans to students came from the federal government. A decade later, 76% of loans was federal and 24% came from private and state sources.

### Perkins loan program

Perkins loans provide low interest loans (5%) to low-income students. The capital contributions portion of the program operates as a revolving fund as schools distribute the loans, meaning that as students pay back their loans the schools use that money to provide new ones. Federal capital contributions have not been made to this program in four years. **We urge Congress to restore Perkins Loan Capital Contributions to \$100 million.**

When Perkins loans have been forgiven for undertaking certain public service employment such as teaching at Head Start or nursing, Perkins loan cancellations allows schools to be paid back. Average Perkins loans are about \$1500. Year after year, this program has been underfunded, which jeopardizes the ability for future generations of students to benefit from the program. **We urge Congress to increase funding for Perkins Loan Cancellation Reimbursements to \$120 million.**

### Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS)

CCAMPIS provides grants to schools to start or expand childcare facilities on campus. The program encourages schools to leverage local or institutional aid and to provide a sliding fee scale for students who use the childcare center. **We urge Congress to increase funding for CCAMPIS to \$35 million.**

### Federal Work-Study

Work-Study provides students with income-generating jobs on campus, in the community or in the private sector to supplement other financial aid. Currently, over 810,000 students participate in the work-study program. Schools must provide a match of at least \$1 institutional dollar to \$3 federal dollars. **We urge Congress to increase funding for the Federal Work Study Program to \$1.25 billion.**

### Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP)

GEAR UP is an early intervention program that targets an entire 6th or 7th grade class and helps them through high school to college with mentoring, tutoring, and academic or career counseling. The program provides grants to states and to partnerships of low-income middle/high schools, colleges and universities and community organizations. A recent study shows that nearly 90% of the first class of GEAR UP students graduated from high school in 2005. Increasing funding to \$350 million would allow GEAR UP to serve an additional 175,000 students. **We urge Congress to increase funding for GEAR UP to \$350 million.**

### TRIO Programs

TRIO funds outreach and student support services to individual students in one of 5 TRIO programs. These programs include Upward Bound, Student Support Services, Talent Search, Educational Opportunity Centers, and Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement. Its services range from early outreach to in-school academic support, and even research fellowships after graduation. Two-thirds of TRIO students come from families with incomes of less than \$24,000 where neither parent graduated from college and only serves 7% of eligible students due to the lack of funding. TRIO programs serve nearly 900,000 students in all 50 states. An increase of \$120 million would allow for approximately 85,600 additional students to benefit from the program in 2009. **We urge Congress to increase funding for TRIO programs to \$948 million.**

**Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN)** awards fellowships through grants to colleges and universities for graduate students studying in areas of national need, mostly science and technical fields, who show high ability and need. Our nation needs highly skilled professionals to ensure our economic competitiveness and national security. **We urge Congress to increase funding for GAANN to \$32 million.**

**Javits** fellowships provide aid for up to 4 years for students in the arts, humanities, and social sciences pursuing a doctoral or terminal degree. **We urge Congress to increase funding for Javits to \$12.5 million.**

**The Thurgood Marshall Legal Educational Opportunity Program** was designed to assist talented, economically disadvantaged students pursuing a career in law. **We urge Congress to increase funding for the Thurgood Marshall program to \$5 million.**