

Did You Know?

Groundbreaking legislation making postsecondary education more affordable for deaf people, was passed into law by the 2005 Minnesota legislature.

The Higher Education Finance Bill / Conference Committee Report on House File No. 1385 was signed into law by Governor Tim Pawlenty on May 26th, 2005.

One provision in this bill, Section 4 (135A.165) (Deaf Students; Tuition Assistance) allows that

"(a) For the purpose of this section, a "deaf person" means an individual with a hearing loss of such severity that the individual must depend primarily on visual communication, such as writing, lip reading, manual communication, and gestures.

(b) A deaf person, who is a resident student...is entitled to tuition assistance for the tuition and fees remaining after deducting any federal or state grants or other public or private grants made to the person for the purpose of paying the tuition and fees at a Minnesota state college or university or the University of Minnesota. A deaf person must receive a federal Pell grant or a state grant...to receive tuition assistance for that term."

The bill was introduced in the Minnesota House of Representatives and the Senate and received hearings in both chambers. The bill was advocated by members of Minnesota's deaf community, and by the Minnesota Association of Deaf Citizens (MADC).

Representative Jim Abeler (Republican from Anoka) carried the bill in the House, and Senator Sandy Pappas (Democrat from St. Paul) sponsored the bill in the Senate. In early April, at least one legislator anticipated there would be little or no chance for this provision to pass. But, it did pass and was later included in the Higher Education Finance bill, where it received strong support!

Any student interested in attending a Minnesota state university, community college or technical college should contact the school's admissions office about this opportunity. To take advantage of this opportunity, students should apply for admission at the selected Minnesota public college or university, and should complete the federal FAFSA form for the federal Pell Grant. Students should also apply for the Minnesota State Grant program. Applications for admission are available online at [www.mnscu.edu](http://www.mnscu.edu) and through individual colleges and universities. More information on the federal Pell grant and the state grant program is available through the local high school and through financial aid offices in colleges and universities.

Steps to take:

- 1) Apply for admission to the college or university;
- 2) Apply for a Federal Pell Grant and a Minnesota State Grant to be applied at that college/university;
- 3) Contact the disability services coordinator for interpreter

services;

4) Provide documentation of one's hearing loss.

The student will be informed of their Pell grant award and MN State Grant through the usual financial aid processes.

If eligible for either the Pell or State grant, the college/university will apply these and any other public or private grants to the costs of tuition and fees.

Any remaining amount will be covered by the college/university; covered costs include actual tuition charged to the student plus mandatory fees plus those optional fees charged to all students at that institution...

...minus any of the following:

Pell Grant

MN State Grant

Institutional grants and scholarships

Private grants or scholarships received by the student.

The remaining amount is the "Deaf Student Tuition Assistance."