

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair, House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Bill Cassidy, M.D.
Chair, Senate Committee on Health, Education,
Labor & Pensions

The Honorable Tim Walberg
Chair, House Committee on Education &
Workforce

The Honorable Patty Murray
Vice Chair, Senate Committee on
Appropriations

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member, House Committee on
Appropriations

The Honorable Bernie Sanders
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Health,
Education, Labor & Pensions

The Honorable Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Ranking Member, House Committee on
Education & Workforce

February 26, 2025

Dear Chair Collins, Chair Cassidy, Vice Chair Murray, Ranking Member Sanders, Chair Cole, Chair Walberg, Ranking Member DeLauro, and Ranking Member Scott:

On behalf of more than 100 organizations, we write to urge you to shore up funding for the Pell Grant program and protect students from the harmful effects of a funding shortfall. In January, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) released [new supplemental projections](#) for the Pell Grant program showing that absent Congressional action, the Pell program will face a \$2.7 billion funding shortfall this year.

If additional funding is not added to the Pell Grant program very soon, students could face eligibility or award cuts for the first time in more than a decade. Students cannot afford such cuts during a time of rising living costs, and our economy cannot afford to have students lose access to the education and training they need to succeed in the labor market. The maximum Pell Grant already covers the [lowest share of college costs](#) in the program's history, contributing to a persistent "affordability gap" that forces low- and middle-income students to either take out loans or forgo higher education and training entirely.

Funding gaps in the Pell Grant program can lead to harmful cuts, as in the wake of the Great Recession, when Congress last faced a significant chasm between the amount appropriated for Pell and the amount needed to cover program costs. To close that gap, in FYs 2011 and 2012, Congress made harmful cuts such as reducing Pell program costs by imposing eligibility restrictions, including eliminating the option for "year-round" Pell, which helped students make continuous progress toward their credentials. While some of those cuts were later restored, Congress has never reversed some of the restrictions, such as the reduction of the number of lifetime semesters a student can receive Pell Grants from 18 to 12 semesters.

While shifting the Pell Grant program to fully mandatory funding is the only way to fully eliminate annual funding uncertainty, absent such a shift, we ask that Congress add new discretionary and mandatory funds to the program to close any shortfall and avoid eligibility cuts. The shortfall will be larger in FY26 if no additional funding is added in FY25. Congress should prioritize maintaining current student eligibility and the \$7,395 maximum Pell Grant, while ensuring that the program is on solid financial footing, before considering any expansions to the program.

We strongly urge you to invest in our nation's students and our economic future by fully funding the Pell Grant program and rejecting any proposed cuts to the program.

Sincerely,

AACTE: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
ACTION Ohio
Adoption Network Cleveland
Alabama Possible
Alliance for a Just Society
American Association of University Women (AAUW)
Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities
Bates Technical College
Bottom Line
Breakthrough Central Texas
Cal State Student Association
California Competes: Higher Education for a Strong Economy
California State University
Campaign for College Opportunity
Capital Area College Access Network, Lansing, MI
CARES, An Initiative of the Center for the Study of Social Policy
Center for Healthy Communities
Center for Higher Education Policy and Practice at SNHU
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Children's Advocacy Institute
Children's Law Center of California
Chinese for Affirmative Action
College Beyond
Community Food Bank of San Benito County
Complete College America
Congressional Research Institute for Social Work Policy
Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL)
Denver Scholarship Foundation
Detroit College Access Network
EdTrust
Excelencia in Education
FACES (Foster Care Alumni Creating Educational Success) Student Organization: Texas State University
Finance Authority of Maine (FAME)
Florida Impact
Foster Success
Fostering Academic Achievement Nationwide (FAAN)
Fostering Youth Success Alliance
FuturesNW
Generation Hope
Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce
GO Public Schools
Hildreth Institute
iFoster
Illinois Hunger Coalition

InnerCity Struggle
Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP)
John Burton Advocates for Youth
Latino U College Access
Law Foundation of Silicon Valley
Maddy Day LLC & Associates
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
Michelson Center for Public Policy
Michigan College Access Network
Michigan League for Public Policy
More Than Bootstraps
NAACP
NAACP, Youth & College Division
National Association for College Admission Counseling
National Association of Counsel for Children
National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs
National College Attainment Network (NCAN)
National Consumer Law Center (on behalf of its low-income clients)
National Education Association
National Young Farmers Coalition
New America Higher Education Policy Program
New Mexico Basic Needs Consortium
NextGen CA
Northern California College Promise Coalition (NCCPC)
Ohana Project
One Family
Onward We Learn
Opt-In Iowa
Overcoming Hurdles in Ohio Youth Advisory Board
Parent Institute for Quality Education
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon
Partnership for the Future
Public Advocates, Inc.
Ready to Succeed
Rise
SBCEO
SchoolHouse Connection
Social Justice Learning Institute
South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center
Southern California College Attainment Network
State Higher Education Executive Officers Association
Student Borrower Protection Center
Students United
Swipe Out Hunger
The Cal State Student Association
The Century Foundation Higher Education Policy Team
The Hope Center for Student Basic Needs
The Institute for College Access & Success (TICAS)
Third Way

Today's Students Coalition
uAspire
UNCF
UnidosUS
UNITE-LA
University of California Student Association
WA State Postsecondary Basic Needs (PSBN) Coalition
Washington Anti-Hunger & Nutrition Coalition
Washington Student Achievement Council
Young Invincibles
Youth and Shelter Services of Iowa
Youth Law Center
Youth On Their Own