

Office of Higher Education
responses from Appropriations Committee questions on Feb 19, 2025

CT Loan Reimbursement Program

- *Do you have any projection of how much money will be spent on the CT Student Loan Reimbursement Program by the end of the year?* **It is difficult to determine this since the agency has no way of determining how many applications it will have received by the end of the fiscal year. As of February 27, 2025, OHE received 1,527 applications for an average award of \$ 1,627.09. OHE will continue to review and approve applications through the end of June 30, 2025 or until available funding is exhausted this fiscal year.**
- *What is the rejection rate for the CT Student Loan Reimbursement Program?* **OHE receives applications with missing information and/or incorrect document uploads. Multiple uploaded documents may be flagged as ineligible per application but applicants can correct discrepancies and upload additional documents for review. Incomplete applications at the point of allocation exhaustion or at the close of the application period will become ineligible for the award. OHE staff responds to applicant emails with missing or incorrect application information to provide guidance to help resolve their ineligibility reasons.**
- *How many inquiries have you received about the CT Student Reimbursement program?* **OHE receives hundreds of emails per week regarding the Student Loan Reimbursement Program (SLRP). Applicant questions include how to apply for the program, navigating our database, eligibility requirements, and reimbursement distribution timelines. OHE has created a [program information page](#), [“How to Apply” instructions](#), and a [frequently asked questions document on our website](#). Also, OHE’s SLRP Team monitors the SLRP email box daily and responds accordingly.**
- *Do you have any demographic data about applicants to the program? Yes*
How old are they?
All SLRP applicants by reported age as of February 25, 2025
 - Age 19 to 30: 674 applicants**
 - Age 31 to 40: 503 applicants**
 - Age 41 to 50: 213 applicants**
 - Age 51 to 75: 114 applicants**
- *How much outstanding loans do they have?* **OHE doesn’t collect total student loan debt; we calculate the number of submitted student loan payments that were made by each applicant in 2024 up to the maximum yearly award of \$5,000.**
 - *Where are they from?* **SLRP applicants received per town or city as of February 28, 2025:**

Andover- 1
Ansonia-12
Avon-4
Beacon Falls-11
Berlin-13
Bethlehem-2
Bloomfield-16
Bolton-4
Bozrah-1
Branford-18

Bridgeport-49
Bristol-34
Brookfield-5
Brooklyn-3
Canaan-3
Canterbury-1
Cheshire-14
Clinton-6
Colchester-5
Columbia-1

Coventry-3
Cromwell-12
Danbury-31
Derby-13
Durham-6
East Berlin-1
East Haddam-2
East Hampton-6
East Hartford-24
East Haven-19

East Lyme-6	Monroe-10	Somers-3
East Windsor-1	Naugatuck-1	Southington-20
Ellington-11	New Britain-28	South Windsor-8
Enfield-12	New Cannan-3	Stamford-22
Essex-2	New Fairfield-10	Stonington-2
Fairfield-11	New Hartford-4	Stratford-25
Farmington-8	New Haven-72	Tolland-4
Glastonbury-10	New Milford-7	Torrington-13
Goshen-2	Newington-21	Trumbull-19
Granby-4	Newtown-2	Vernon-27
Greenwich-3	North Branford-7	Wallingford-24
Griswold-4	North Haven-18	Waterbury-59
Groton-4	N. Stonington-3	Watertown-7
Guilford-7	Norwalk-26	Waterford-7
Haddam-2	Norwich-7	West Granby-1
Hamden-54	Orange-7	West Hartford-26
Hebron-1	Plainfield-3	West Haven-38
Hartford -65	Plainville-12	Westbrook-3
Kent-1	Plymouth-1	Westport-1
Killingworth-4	Portland-5	Wethersfield-14
Ledyard-6	Preston-2	Wilton-1
Madison-4	Prospect-11	Windham-12
Manchester-31	Redding-3	Windsor-28
Mansfield-3	Rocky Hill -10	Windsor Locks-6
Marlborough-2	Salem-4	Wolcott-9
Meriden-29	Scotland-2	Woodbridge-2
Middlebury-1	Seymour-8	Woodbury-6
Middletown-34	Shelton-15	
Milford-35	Simsbury-7	

- *What are their incomes?*

All SLRP Applicants by reported CT Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) as of February 25, 2025:

- CT AGI between \$0.00 to \$25,000: 262 applicants
- CT AGI between \$25,001 to \$50,000: 304 applicants
- CT AGI between \$50,001 to \$75,000: 420 applicants
- CT AGI between \$75,001 to \$100,000: 224 applicants
- CT AGI between \$100,001 to \$125,000: 117 applicants
- CT AGI between \$125,001 to \$150,000: 79 applicants
- CT AGI between \$150,001 to \$175,000: 71 applicants
- CT AGI above \$175,000 (do not qualify): 29 applicants

- *Was the new position for the program filled? **No permanent position has been filled.** If not, why not? **OHE hired 3 temporary employees to support the program. Their contracts are set to conclude on June 30, 2025.***
- *What is the ratio of questions about the program to the number of applications?*

OHE does not track the number of inquiries received via email. OHE maintains email correspondence to use for responding to repeat applicant questions.

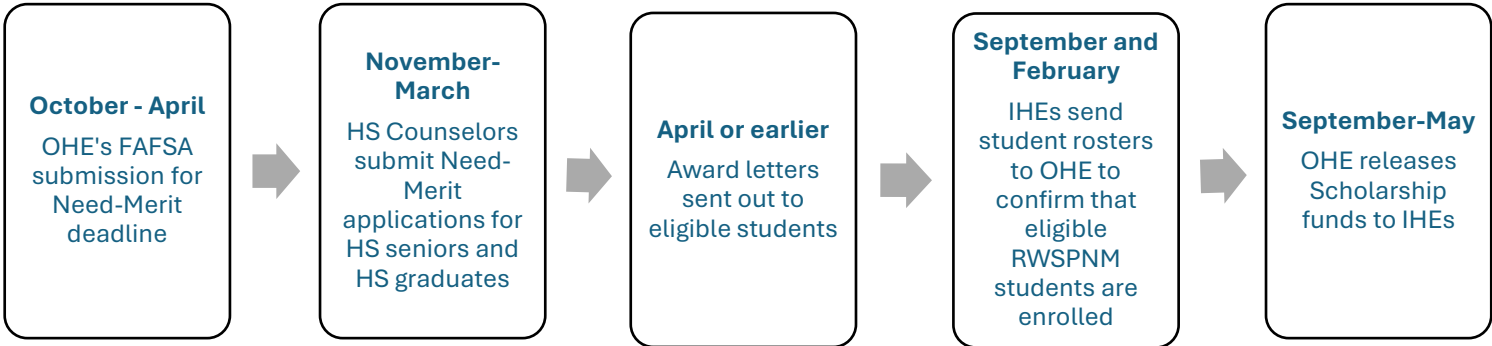
Roberta B. Willis Scholarship

- Could OHE summarize the timing issue as it relates to both the Need Merit grant and the Need-Based grant? Has either timing issue been effectively addressed? If not, what funding or statutory change is necessary to address it?

RWSP Need-Merit Award Timeline for Last Four Scholarship Cycles

Need-Merit awards - Last year’s additional appropriation of \$15 million and carry forward language enabled OHE to notify Need-Merit students much earlier than previous years. This year’s 2025 Need-Merit award letters were sent out on Friday, February 21st . In doing so, students have a clear idea of how much it will cost them to attend a Connecticut IHE. Once they’ve made their school decision, they notify the IHE that they are a RWSP Need-Merit recipient. The funds will be disbursed to IHEs between the months of September and May after the school has provided a certified roster to OHE that confirms awardees’ enrollment.

ACADEMIC YEAR	September 22- August 23	September 23- August 24	September 24- August 25	September 25- August 26
	10/18/2021 - 2/13/2022	10/11/2022 - 12/29/2023	4/12/2024 - 12/31/2024	12/1/2024 - 2/15/2025
May 1 st Commitment Deadline (not CT specific)	5/1/2022	5/1/2023	5/1/2024	5/1/2025
RWSP Need-Merit Award Notices sent to Students	7/18/2022	7/20/2023	6/11/2024 Delay caused by FAFSA roll-out	2/20/2025 Anticipated

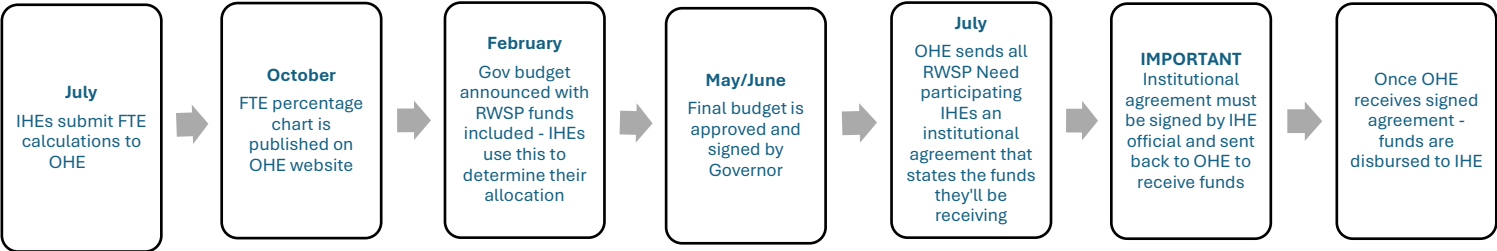


RWSP Need Award Timeline for Last Four Scholarship Cycles

Need-Based grants - Once a budget is passed and signed by the Governor, OHE determines the amount of RWSP Need funds that each IHE will receive in the form of an agreement. This is based on the FTE they submitted to our

agency the previous July. Appropriated funds are deposited into our account on July 1st and once the agreement is signed and returned to OHE, the designated funds are disbursed to an IHE.

ACADEMIC YEAR	September 21-August 22	September 22-August 23	September 23- August 24	September 24-August 25
FAFSA Submission Period	10/7/2020 - 1/12/2022	10/18/2021 - 2/13/2023	10/11/2022 - 12/29/2023	4/12/2024 - 12/31/2024
Need-Based Award Institutional Agreements sent to IHEs	Jul-21	Jul-22	9/1/2023 Delay caused by ARPA changes	Jun-24



- Could OHE show how much funding has been spent on Willis scholarships in FY 25 (both on Need-Based and Need-Merit grants, from either ARPA or the GF)?

	(GF) RWSP Need-Based	(ARPA) RWSP Need-Based	(GF) RWSP Need Merit	Total
FY25	\$20,438,257*	\$16,324,531	\$8,634,327	\$45,397,115

*OHE over awarded and is currently reconciling.

- Could OHE confirm how much funding will be available in FY 26 and FY 27 (ie – the proposed GF appropriations + any carried forward FY 25 appropriations per Sec. 50 of PA 24-81)?

Section 30 of the Governor’s proposed budget bill, H.B. 6864, allows OHE to carry forward up to \$15 million from available funds in FY 2026 for disbursement in FY 2027. The table shows when the funding will be first available, but any funding reserved under this provision would shift from FY 2026 to FY 2027.

	Proposed Appropriation	Carryforward from FY 2025 (PA 24-81 §50)	Total
FY 2026	\$24,888,637	\$15,000,000	\$39,388,637
FY 2027*	\$24,888,637	\$0	\$24,888,637

AmeriCorps

- Could OHE describe how the Governor’s proposed AmeriCorps program will fit into the larger @statewide AmeriCorps program? Why is this program being proposed and what are expectations?

In 2020, as part Connecticut's COVID-19 response, the State partnered with the CT Nonprofit Alliance to create ConnectiCorps, an AmeriCorps CT program designed to address the effects of the pandemic on Connecticut's nonprofits and communities. Although this program ended in FY2022, the post COVID-19 effects continue to exist within the state. Nonprofits are still experiencing a higher demand for critical services and a lower number of volunteers who are willing and able to serve. The Governor's proposed AmeriCorps expansion seeks to build on the success of the ConnectiCorps program and to continue closing the gap in service delivery by supporting our nonprofits and communities in adapting, recovering, and thriving during future crises and challenges.

AmeriCorps expansion funding will establish a total of 450 full-time and 300 part-time AmeriCorps service roles over the biennium, aimed at providing all youth in Connecticut an opportunity to serve their communities. The AmeriCorps proposal is one of four programmatic pillars of the Connecticut Youth Service Corps (CYSC), which is a statewide community service-based initiative designed to create more opportunities for young people in Connecticut to build and strengthen the cities and towns they call home. Together with local communities, nonprofit partners and philanthropy, CYSC is working to:

- Sustain Connecticut's Youth Employment Program, providing youth and young adults with paid work experience and career exploration opportunities within the local public and private sector;
 - Replicate Hartford's Youth Service Corps by partnering with (8) cities and towns to recruit high school students in need of support outside the classroom and provide them with the opportunity to earn a paycheck while strengthening their neighborhoods;
 - Create service to career pathways to help our local cities and towns recruit local talent and develop their future workforce, and
 - As mentioned above, expand Connecticut's AmeriCorps program to increase community resiliency by expanding the capacity of local non-profit providers responding to community needs.
- *How does program sponsorship work? Is the state becoming a sponsor for a new program? If so, why? How many other AmeriCorps sponsors are there in CT and how many people volunteer for AmeriCorps currently?* **Federal National Service** funding comes from Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS) Appropriations and is administered by AmeriCorps, the agency. The Connecticut Commission on Community Service (known as Serve Connecticut) and service commissions in 51 other US states and territories deploy some of this federal funding to eligible agencies, nonprofits, municipalities and/or tribes in the form of AmeriCorps State grants. AmeriCorps Connecticut funds are used to provide planning and operational support to projects that leverage a corps-based approach to community problem solving in Connecticut by engaging AmeriCorps National Service participants and community volunteers. Serve Connecticut works with local partners to provide communities throughout the state with access to National Service resources of all kinds – AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps Seniors, AmeriCorps VISTA, and AmeriCorps NCCC – and provides oversight, monitoring, training and technical assistance to awarded AmeriCorps State projects.

More than three-quarters of AmeriCorps*State and National grant funding goes to governor-appointed state commissions (such as Serve Connecticut), which in turn distribute and monitor grants to local nonprofits and agencies. These are AmeriCorps*State programs. Non-profits receiving AmeriCorps*State grants are responsible for recruiting, selecting, and supervising AmeriCorps members. All applicants for AmeriCorps funding are required to match the federal award with non-AmeriCorps cash and/or in-kind

contributions. A first-time successful applicant is required to match at 24 percent for the first three-year funding period. Starting with year four, the match requirement gradually increases every year to 50% by year ten.

In the 2024-2025 program year Connecticut has 7 operational AmeriCorps*State projects (2 planning grants), across 55 locations with 324 AmeriCorps members devoting themselves to improving the lives of people in their communities by tutoring, providing after-school programs for youth, increasing early childhood literacy and more. AmeriCorps is eligible to U.S. citizens, nationals, or lawful permanent residents aged 17 or older. In exchange for their terms of service, members receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award to pay educational expenses at eligible post-secondary institutions, including many technical schools and G. I. Bill approved programs, or to repay qualified student loans. The dollar amount of the education award is \$7,395. Since 1994, more than 17,000 Connecticut residents have earned education awards totaling more than \$61.8 million.

- *What will the proposed state appropriation be used for, specifically?*
 - The Governor's AmeriCorps proposal seeks to hire 450 full-time and 300 part-time AmeriCorps members over the next two years with the goal of strengthening community resiliency and increasing the organizational capacity of local nonprofit organizations responding to community needs.

The United Way of Connecticut has agreed to apply for an AmeriCorps planning grant which will allow them to engage with a dedicated consultant to develop a need-based, evidence-based project concept, identify and partner with an eligible entity to run an AmeriCorps program, engage with philanthropic partners and build service/host site networks to ensure placements. In addition to developing an application, the planning grant will facilitate the creation of an implementation plan, hiring program staff, and conducting AmeriCorps member recruitment. Some funding for AmeriCorps expansion may also be used to support additional corps members at existing AmeriCorps grantee sites, subject to availability.

- *Please provide a summary on existing AmeriCorps programs.* Please see the attached link <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/yi7v7o0m697rrshx87bri/2024-2025-AmeriCorps-Grantee-Tracker.xlsx?rlkey=5s9reiv5uqts7o0914pty5yv8&st=mrg7ylhe&dl=0>