

# **Guidelines: Good Neighbor Program (GNP)**

**Texas Higher  
Education**  
COORDINATING BOARD

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# GOOD NEIGHBOR PROGRAM

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Program Guidelines are intended to support institutions by highlighting requirements that appear in the Texas Education Code (TEC) and Title 21 of the Texas Administrative Code (TAC). When administering this program, institutions should always refer to the applicable statutes and rules. The information provided in this document is to be used solely as a resource and does not supersede the statute or rules for this program.

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## PROGRAM AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE ([19 TAC, SECTION 21.634](#))

The Good Neighbor Program (GNP) is authorized by [TEC, Chapter 54, Subchapter D, Section 54.331](#). Rules establishing procedures to administer the subchapter can be found in [Title 19 of the TAC, Chapter 21, Subchapter U](#). The GNP provides tuition assistance to students from nations of the Western (American) Hemisphere other than Cuba and the United States. Academically talented students from these countries are encouraged to pursue higher education in the state of Texas, thus establishing beneficial relationships between the state of Texas and the students' home countries.

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## ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS ([19 TAC, SECTION 21.636](#))

Texas public institutions, as defined in [TEC, Section 61.003\(8\)](#), are eligible to participate in the GNP, if the institution's governing board elects to do so.

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## ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES ([19 TAC, SECTION 21.635](#))

The following countries are eligible to participate in the GNP.

ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES OF THE WESTERN (AMERICAN) HEMISPHERE	
Antigua and Barbuda	Guyana
Argentina	Haiti
Bahamas	Honduras
Barbados	Jamaica
Belize (British Honduras)	Mexico
Bolivia	Nicaragua
Brazil	Panama
Canada	Paraguay
Chile	Peru
Colombia	Saint Kitts and Nevis
Costa Rica	Saint Lucia
Dominica	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Dominican Republic	Suriname
Ecuador	Trinidad and Tobago
El Salvador	Uruguay
Grenada	Venezuela
Guatemala	
<i>Cuba and the United States do not qualify as eligible countries for this program.</i>	

## ELIGIBILITY

### ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS ([19 TAC, SECTION 21.637](#))

#### TO QUALIFY, A STUDENT MUST:

- ✓ Be a bona fide native-born citizen and resident of an eligible country.
- ✓ Intend to return to the eligible country to live after completing the program of study.
- ✓ Not be a dual citizen of an eligible country and the United States of America.
- ✓ Have resided in the Western (American) Hemisphere for at least five years.
- ✓ Not be a member of the Communist Party.
- ✓ Demonstrate scholastic qualification for admission to the nominating institution.
- ✓ Be registered for Selective Service or be exempt (see [Selective Service Statement Requirements](#)).
- ✓ Be enrolled at an eligible institution that is willing to exempt the person's tuition.
- ✓ Be selected by the THECB for a tuition exemption based on the institution's recommendation.

#### **ALERT: Child Support Arrearages**

Per [Texas Family Code, Title 5, Section 231.006](#), a student who is obligated to pay child support and is more than 30 days delinquent is not eligible to receive a state-funded grant or loan.

Institutions determine how to best comply with this state requirement and should work with their legal counsel on questions related to this statutory mandate.

### CONTINUATION OF ELIGIBILITY ([19 TAC, SECTION 21.640](#))

A student can continue to receive this exemption during the 12-month award period if the student meets the institution's grade point average (GPA) requirement for financial aid.

**NOTE:** A student who fails to meet the institutional GPA requirement may have the ability to regain eligibility for this exemption if he or she meets the GPA requirement during an upcoming term or semester in which the exemption was not awarded. The student may also be granted a hardship **exception** by the institution.

### DISCONTINUATION OF ELIGIBILITY

A student may **not** continue to receive this exemption in a subsequent semester or term if the student has enrolled in undergraduate hours considered to be excessive under [TEC, Section 54.2001\(a\)\(2\)](#).

**NOTE:** At the start of a semester or term, if an undergraduate student is attempting hours considered to be excessive, the student may continue to receive this exemption if he or she is granted a hardship **extension** by the institution.

### HARDSHIP PROVISIONS ([19 TAC, SECTION 21.641](#))

Institutions must adopt a hardship policy that may grant a student an **exception** from meeting the institution's GPA requirement, or an **extension** of eligibility for excess undergraduate hours, when a student has a hardship or other good cause, including:

- A showing of a severe illness or other debilitating condition that could affect the student's academic performance;
- An indication that the student is responsible for the care of a sick, injured, or needy person and that the student's provision of care could affect the student's academic performance;
- The student's active duty or other service in the United States armed forces or the student's active duty in the Texas National Guard; **or**
- Any other cause considered acceptable by the institution.

All hardship decisions must be documented in the student's record and be available for submission to the THECB, if requested.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### CONTINUING STUDENTS WITH COUNTRY MISMATCH

If a student received an award through the Good Neighbor Program in a prior year and has a mismatch between countries, their application will be reviewed on a case by case basis by the THECB.

### RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS

The student must be classified by the institution as a nonresident for tuition purposes in order to qualify. Students classified as Texas residents by the institution do NOT qualify, but nonresidents awarded waivers of nonresident tuition MAY still qualify.

### VISA STATUS

The GNP program statute indicates an applicant must be a resident of a country of the Western Hemisphere (other than the United States or Cuba). F 1 and J 1 visa holders typically meet this qualification and nonresidents using other visas could as well.

### PERMANENT RESIDENT STATUS IN THE U.S.

Any student who has applied for permanent resident status in the U.S. or who has dual citizenship that includes the U.S. is NOT eligible for an exemption through this program. Recipients of the Good Neighbor Exemption must plan to return to their home country when they complete their studies.



## SELECTIVE SERVICE STATEMENT ([19 TAC, SECTION 22.3](#))

Under [TEC, Title 3, Section 51.9095](#), an individual must file a statement of their selective service status with the institution confirming registration or exemption.

This statute applies to all state-funded financial aid, as well as “federal funds or gifts and grants accepted by this state.” The statement is required from students receiving federal aid or private donations that pass through the state Treasury or Governor’s office (i.e., Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER)), state-appropriated funds, or institutional funding, which includes programs funded by tuition set-asides, exemptions, and waivers.

### **ALERT: Proof of Selective Service Status No Longer Required**

Institutions are no longer required to collect “proof” of registration or exemption from students or to verify the accuracy of the statement against external databases or other resources if conflicting information does not exist (see [Updated Guidance on Statutory Requirements that Impact Financial Aid Memo](#)).

**Note:** The THECB approved an amendment to TAC, Title 19, Section 22.3 during their quarterly meeting held on April 28, 2022.

Any of the following can be used to meet the statutory statement requirement:

- THECB Selective Service Statement of Registration Status ([English Statement](#) or [Spanish Statement](#))
- Printout from [SSS.gov](#) website
- Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR) if status is available
- THECB Selective Service Statement of Registration Status imbedded in the Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA)

SELECTIVE SERVICE STATEMENT OF REGISTRATION STATUS	
In accordance with <a href="#">Texas Education Code, Section 51.9095</a> , male students must file a Selective Service Statement of Registration Status with their institution or other entity granting financial assistance. For more information about the Selective Service System, visit <a href="#">sss.gov</a> .	
Please mark <b>one</b> option below:	
<input type="checkbox"/> I was born female and not required to register. <input type="checkbox"/> I was born male and am under the age of 18 and not currently required to register. <input type="checkbox"/> I was born male and am <b>REGISTERED</b> with the Selective Service. <input type="checkbox"/> I was born male and am over the age of 18. I am not registered with Selective Service and I am not exempt from registration with Selective Service.	<input type="checkbox"/> I was born male and am <b>EXEMPT</b> from registration because: (please briefly explain why you are exempt in the box below.) <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 100px; width: 100%;"></div>
I, _____, hereby certify that the Selective Service status statement provided above is true and accurate.	
Student ID: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____	
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Complete and return to the Financial Aid Office at your institution of higher education.</i></p> <p>Selective Service Statement of Registration Status <span style="float: right;">As of 09/28/2021</span></p>	

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### COLLECTION METHOD

The institution has flexibility to create an online, paper, or alternate method to collect the statement as long as it uses the content developed and required by the THECB.

### FREQUENCY COLLECTING THE STATEMENT

If the student's status will NOT change, the statement collected can be used for subsequent semesters at the same institution.

If the student is NOT registered for selective service, a statement must be collected each time they apply for financial aid or a student loan until the statement indicates registered or exempt.

### MALES AGE 26 OR OLDER

Individuals older than the maximum age at which an individual is required to be registered with the Selective Service System under federal law are not required to complete this status statement.

### RETENTION SCHEDULE

The status statement must be retained in the student's record based on the retention schedule outlined in the institution's Program Participation Agreement (PPA).

## AWARDING

### SELECTION PROCESS ([19 TAC, SECTION 21.638](#))

The student selection process is completed on an annual basis. Institutions will assign each student a unique priority ranking among all students being submitted, regardless of his or her country. After participating institutions submit all eligible students, the THECB will determine the selected recipients. The total of the selections made by the THECB cannot exceed 235 in a year. The basic allotment consists of:

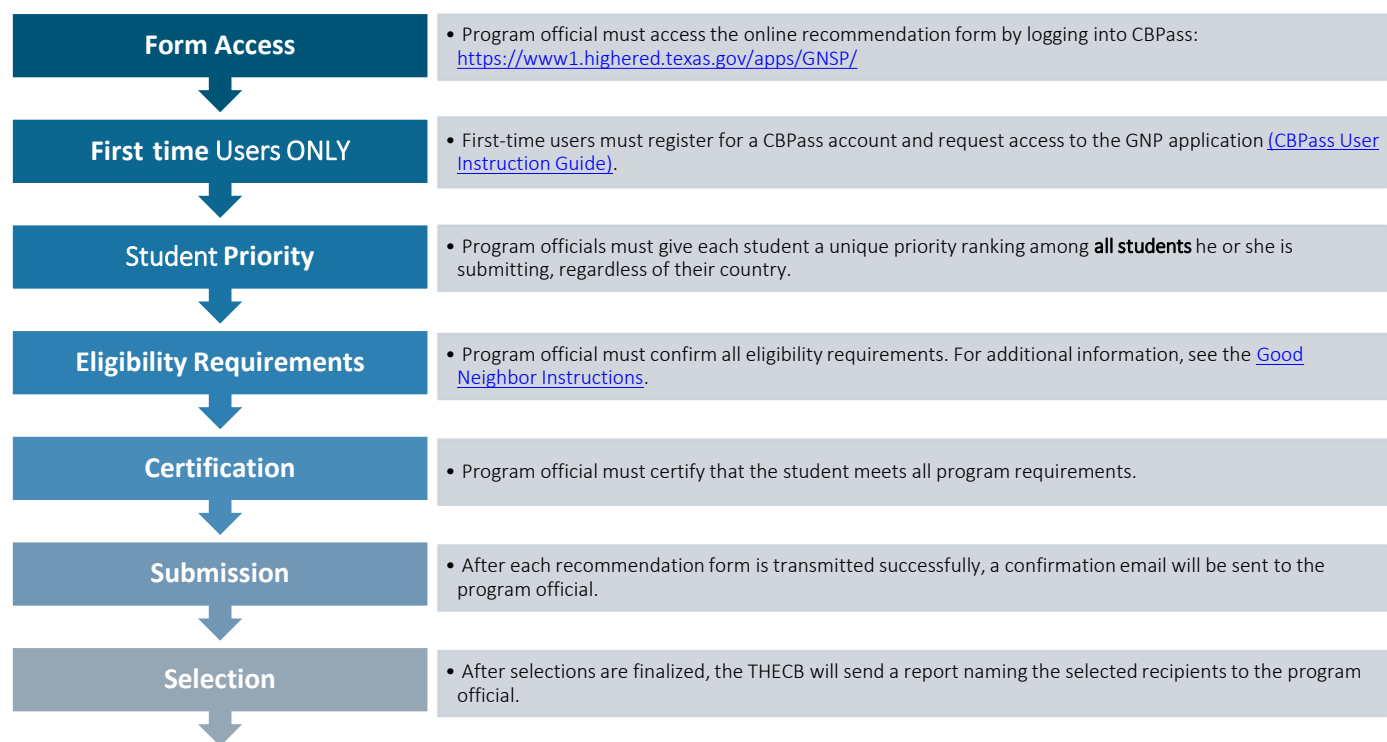
- Up to 10 students per eligible country, plus
- 35 students from a Latin American country designated by the United States Department of State.

**NOTE:** Under no circumstances will special consideration be given to applicants who are related to employees of the THECB.

### ONLINE STUDENT RECOMMENDATION PROCESS

Participating institutions are required to use the **Online Recommendation Form** to submit recommendations for eligible applicants to the THECB. Student recommendations must be submitted to the THECB by **March 15** of each year.

Below is the process flow that occurs when an institution submits student recommendations:



### AWARD AMOUNT ([19 TAC, SECTION 21.639](#))

Students selected by the THECB will be exempted from the payment of tuition for the **12-month period** beginning with the fall semester after a student is selected as a recipient. The student must be recommended each year by a participating institution and be selected each year by the THECB to get a new 12-month award. Eligible courses are those for which an institution receives formula funding ([TEC, Section 54.2002](#)).

**NOTE: Formula funding** is defined as the method used to allocate appropriated sources of funds among institutions of higher education. Formula-funded courses are those that do not depend solely on student tuition and fees to cover their costs.

# APPENDIX 1: QUICK REFERENCES

## CONTACT FINANCIAL AID SERVICES

By phone: (844) 792-2640

Contact us by completing an [online inquiry form](#) and select "Financial Aid Question" as the Contact Reason.

## OTHER RESOURCES FOR INSTITUTIONS

General program information for institutions	<a href="#">Student Financial Aid Programs Information Webpage</a>
Texas Program Statutes	<a href="#">Texas Education Code</a>
Texas Program Rules	<a href="#">Texas Administrative Code</a>
Information concerning programs, procedures, allocations, and other topics will be communicated to institutions through the GovDelivery system. To receive these communications, interested individuals must subscribe.	<a href="#">GovDelivery</a>
Federal Selective Service Requirement Guide	<a href="#">Who Must Register Chart</a>