

Higher Education Grant Program for Enrolled Pregnant Persons and Persons Who Gave Birth (2025-2027 Biennium)

Program Overview:

The **Higher Education Grant Program for Enrolled Pregnant Persons and Persons Who Gave Birth** is a pilot initiative designed to support students navigating the challenges of unexpected pregnancies or caregiving responsibilities while pursuing higher education. The program seeks to alleviate financial and logistical barriers to academic success by providing targeted assistance.

Eligibility Criteria for Students:

"Eligible students" are defined as:

1. **Enrolled students who are pregnant** and experiencing an unexpected pregnancy while currently attending school.
2. **Enrolled students who have given birth** unexpectedly while currently attending school.
3. **Enrolled students caring for children aged 4 or younger.**

Eligibility Criteria for Schools:

- **Eligible schools include any public or private higher education institution located in North Dakota.**

Program Details:

- The program will be administered through the **North Dakota University System (NDUS)**.
- Public and private higher education institutions in North Dakota can apply for funding under this program. **There is no cap on the grant amount per institution**, provided funds are justified by the submitted program plan and approved by NDUS,
- Schools must submit a comprehensive plan detailing how the program will work on their campus and the estimated costs for the 2025-26 and 2026-27 fiscal school years.
- A **year-end progress report** is required, with submissions due by **December 31, 2026**.

Funding and Timeline:

1. **Total Available Funds:** \$5 million for the 2025-2027 biennium.
2. **First Round:** Applications due and grants committed by **August 31, 2025**.
3. **Second Round:** Remaining funds (including any unawarded funds from the first round) committed by **December 31, 2025**.
4. **Third Round:** Any uncommitted funds allocated by **August 31, 2026**.
5. **Fourth Round:** Final allocation of funds, including recycled unawarded funds, by **December 31, 2026**.
6. **Funds Utilization:** All distributed grants must be utilized by **June 30, 2027**.

Allowable Use of Funds:

- Room and board.
- Tuition and fees.
- Books and educational supplies.
- On-campus daycare facilities (if available).
- **Flexible Funding Allocation:** Schools may reallocate funds between categories (e.g., from tuition to daycare) based on the evolving needs of eligible students, provided the changes align with their submitted program plan and receive prior approval from NDUS.

Estimated Program Costs

If all eligible institutions in North Dakota—**11 public institutions and 5 private institutions (16 total)**—were to receive equal grants totaling the full \$5 million allocation, the distribution would be:

- **Total Program Allocation:** \$5 million
- **Number of Eligible Institutions:** 16
- **Equal Grant Per Institution:** $\$5,000,000 \div 16 = \$312,500$ per institution

This estimation assumes all institutions apply and justify funding needs aligned with program goals and guidelines.

SECTION ____ . HIGHER EDUCATION GRANT PROGRAM FOR ENROLLED PREGNANT PERSONS AND PERSONS WHO GAVE BIRTH – PILOT PROGRAM – APPROPRIATION. The North Dakota university system shall administer a pilot grant program to support students facing financial and logistical barriers due to pregnancy or caregiving responsibilities while pursuing higher education. There is appropriated out of any moneys in the general fund in the state treasury, not otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$5,000,000, or so much of the sum as may be necessary, to the North Dakota university system for the purpose of implementing this pilot program, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2027.

1. **Eligibility:** An eligible student under this program is one who is enrolled in a public or private institution of higher education in North Dakota and:
 - Is pregnant and experiencing an unexpected pregnancy while attending;
 - Has given birth unexpectedly while attending; or
 - Is the primary caregiver of a child age four or younger.

An institution seeking grant funding under this program must apply to the North Dakota university system and meet any program requirements established by the North Dakota university system.

2. **Grant Distribution:** The total funding for the 2025-2027 biennium for this program is \$5,000,000. Grants must be awarded in four rounds:
 - **First round:** Applications due and initial grants committed by August 31, 2025;
 - **Second round:** Any remaining or unawarded funds committed by December 31, 2025;
 - **Third round:** Additional funds allocated by August 31, 2026;
 - **Fourth round:** Final allocation of any remaining unawarded funds by December 31, 2026.

All grant funds must be expended by June 30, 2027.

3. **Allowable Use of Funds:** Grant funds may be used for:
 - Room and board;
 - Tuition and fees;
 - Books and educational supplies; and
 - On-campus daycare facilities, if available.

An institution may reallocate funds among these categories with approval from the North Dakota university system.

4. **Institutional Requirements:** An institution applying for a grant under this program shall submit to the North Dakota university system a detailed program plan that includes:
 - The projected number of students to be served;
 - Estimated costs for the 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 academic years; and
 - Strategies for supporting pregnant students and new parents.

Each institution receiving a grant shall submit a year-end progress report to the North Dakota university system by December 31, 2026.

5. **Reporting and Oversight:** The North Dakota university system shall submit a report to the Legislative Assembly by December 1, 2027, summarizing the program implementation, distribution of funds, and student outcomes.