

AOKY & ABILITY TO BENEFIT GUIDELINES

Ability to Benefit (AtB), allows GED® seeking students who are enrolled in approved career pathway programs to receive federal financial aid (Pell).

Key Points:

- In order for a student to be eligible for AtB, they have to be enrolled in an AOKY program that meet both Ability to Benefit guidelines and regular Pell requirements.
- Students can receive under AtB in one of two ways:
 1. Meet a cut score on an approved AtB test
 - KCTCS will use the Compass test through October 2015.
 2. Successfully complete six credit hours in classes that are part of a pathway
- Students can only use their federal funds for courses that are part of the AOKY pathway leading to a credential.
 - Example: A student working towards their Tack Welding certificate can only use their federal funds in the courses required for the Tack Welding certificate.
 - The only exception are for students attending a college where a college success course (such as FYE 105) is a mandatory requirement for all students.
- Students are considered an AtB student until they earn their GED®. Once they earn their GED, they become a “regular Pell” student.
- AOKY programs have to meet pathway requirements in order to qualify for AtB/Pell funding.
 - Credentials students earn in AOKY have to be a minimum of 16 credit hours, or
 - Be embedded in a credential that is at least 16 credit hours offered at that college
- A college has to submit the AOKY Program Proposal to the state AOKY coordinator to determine AtB eligibility. If the proposal meets the AtB requirements, a copy will be sent to the Financial Aid office to certify its eligibility.
- AtB students have to be concurrently enrolled in adult education and at the college.
- AtB students should be enrolled at the college as a conditionally admitted student.
 - Note, at this point, KCTCS policy only allows students without a secondary credential to be enrolled for one semester.

Ability to Benefit Guidelines:

Meeting Ability to Benefit (students who have not obtained a high school diploma or its equivalency) COMPASS score requirements¹ of Math 25, Reading six², Writing 32; COMPASS/ESL Grammar/Usage six⁴, Reading 70, Listening 70; or satisfactorily complete six credit hours or the equivalent coursework, applicable toward a degree or certificate offered by the institution making the determination. Students meeting ability to benefit and seeking federal financial aid funds must be enrolled in a eligible career pathway defined as:

- Concurrently enrolls participants in connected adult education and eligible postsecondary programs;
- Provides counseling and supportive services to identify and attain academic and career goals;
- Provides opportunities for acceleration to attain recognized credentials or degrees;
- Provides structured course sequences that are contextualized and allow students to advance to higher levels of education and employment;
- Is organized to meet the needs of adults;
- Is aligned with the education and skill needs of the regional economy;
- Has been developed and implemented in collaboration with partners in business, workforce development, and economic development

Pell Grant Guidelines:

A program is considered eligible for financial aid if it meets the following criteria:

- Minimum length of 15 weeks
- Minimum of 16 credit hours or 600 clock hours (total length of the program)
- Program must lead to a credential such as an associate's degree, diploma or certificate that qualifies for Gainful Employment (*FSA Handbook, 2-16*)
- The basic list of general eligibility requirements students must meet to receive a Pell Grant:
 - Submission of an official FAFSA with all discrepancies resolved
 - Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) determined on the FAFSA that indicates they have financial need.
 - Have not completed any degree greater than or equal to a bachelor's degree
 - Has a valid social security number
 - Registered with Selective Service (for male students between the ages of 18 and 25)
 - Meeting SAP standards
 - Has a high school diploma or recognized equivalent, such as a GED, or meets the new Ability to Benefit (AtB) standards

Once a student's eligibility is confirmed and they are enrolled in an eligible program, the amount of Pell grant awarded in a given semester or enrollment period is based on their EFC and final enrollment status for that payment period.

¹ COMPASS can only be used through October 2015 as an Ability to Benefit test. Guidelines will be updated with new AtB test once those have been determined.