

Pledge to Advance Connecticut

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Issue

Describe the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities' (CSCU) Pledge to Advance Connecticut (PACT) program, and provide some recent system-wide reporting data, such as the number of PACT-eligible students. This report updates OLR Report [2021-R-0193](#).

Summary

PACT provides eligible Connecticut high school graduates with the opportunity to attend a Connecticut community college debt-free by providing them the difference between the cost of tuition and fees and any scholarships, grants, and federal, state, or institutional aid. For students who have aid packages that cover the cost of tuition and fees, PACT provides a minimum award of \$150 to \$250, depending on the student's enrollment status.

Using data provided by CSCU for the Spring 2023 and Fall 2023 semesters, the average award ranged from a low of \$469 in the Fall 2022 semester at Capital Community College to a high of \$1,477 for the Spring 2023 semester at Asnuntuck Community College. The average award across all institutions was \$887 in the Fall 2022 and \$925 in the Spring 2023. Depending on the semester, between 84% and 90% of PACT eligible students received an award.

Background

In 2019, the legislature required the Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR), CSCU's governing body, to establish a debt-free community college program by January 1, 2020 ([PA 19-117](#), § 362). This program, known as PACT, is offered to certain Connecticut high school graduates who enroll as part- or full-time regional community-technical college students. Returning students are also eligible to receive an award. PACT eligibility depends on a student's enrollment status, in-state student classification, academic progress during matriculation, and financial need.

By law, PACT provides eligible students with awards that:

1. cover the unpaid portion of the tuition and required fees established by BOR (i.e., tuition and fee costs, minus scholarships; grants; and federal, state, and institutional aid awarded to the student that is not a loan) or
2. provide a minimum \$250 grant for full-time students or \$150 grant for part-time students, whichever is greater. Provided on a semester basis, the awards must apply to the first 72 credit hours earned by a student in the first 48 months of community college enrollment in a degree-granting or certificate program ([CGS § 10a-174](#)).

CSCU officially launched the program for students starting in the fall 2020 semester.

PACT Statistics

The law requires CSCU to report system-wide data to the Higher Education and Appropriations committees each semester ([CGS § 10a-174\(e\)](#)). This reporting data must include, among other things, the number of qualifying students (1) at the regional community-technical colleges each semester, (2) receiving minimum awards, and (3) receiving awards for the unpaid portion of eligible institutional costs. CSCU also provided the average amount of the award made to these students for the unpaid portion of eligible institutional costs. This information for the Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 semesters is listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: PACT System-Wide Reporting Data for Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 Semesters

Community College	PACT Eligible Students		Recipients (Minimum Award)		Recipients (Unpaid Portion Award)		Average PACT Award	
	Fall 22	Spring 23	Fall 22	Spring 23	Fall 22	Spring 23	Fall 22	Spring 23
Asnuntuck	495	361	201	137	215	187	\$1,314	\$1,477
Capital	519	469	399	298	67	70	469	469
Gateway	1,634	1,414	1,087	850	372	311	707	682
Housatonic	971	830	655	511	198	175	664	667
Manchester	1,493	1,202	823	600	464	412	942	1,089
Middlesex	720	620	395	295	268	246	1,026	1,122
Naugatuck Valley	1,598	1,488	756	628	748	630	1,073	1,077
Northwestern	472	391	246	171	184	166	1,109	1,174
Norwalk	916	806	643	488	162	143	604	608
Quinebaug Valley	428	355	234	187	153	125	1,023	948
Three Rivers	1,091	926	658	483	366	329	953	966
Tunxis	1,154	987	680	535	380	356	920	961

Source: CSCU

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