

PROMOTING ACADEMICALLY
SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS



PASS

REQUEST FOR
PROPOSAL

Submission Deadline

May 17, 2024

Fiscal Award Period

July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2027

PROMOTING ACADEMICALLY SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS (PASS)

PROGRAM	This Request for Proposals provides directions for applying for state funds in compliance with the General Statutes of Connecticut, Volume 3, Title 10a, Chapter 185, Section 10a-11, Minority Advancement Program (MAP) for the Promoting Academically Successful Students (PASS) grant.
PURPOSE	Promoting Academically Successful Students is an initiative of the Minority Advancement Program (MAP) to address those students of color who are placed on academic warning or probation and need additional support to improve their academic standing. PASS seeks to help undergraduate minority students transition off academic warning or probation and remain on track to graduate. PASS is implemented by Connecticut public institutions of higher education (IHE). It provides individualized academic support to minority students on academic warning or probation in the fall and spring semesters. Program support must address personal and academic development and improve the retention, persistence, and graduation rates of minority students at Connecticut public colleges and universities.
ELIGIBILITY	Any Connecticut public institution of higher education can apply to carry out a PASS initiative. Both two- and four-year public institutions are eligible.
SUBMISSION	Proposals are due to the Office of Higher Education by 11:59 pm. on May 17, 2024. All proposals, including attachments, must be submitted electronically to Jeffrey.Barry@ct.gov . Proposals must meet all submission requirements to be accepted.
FUNDING	Funding will be available for Connecticut's public IHEs to serve the target population of minority students on academic warning or probation. The yearly maximum grant award to an institution is \$100,000, calculating an average cost of \$1,000 per student. *Please note that under the terms of this grant, grantees are expressly prohibited from allocating any portion of the grant funds toward finance and administration (F&A) costs.
REQUIRED MATCH	No institutional match is required for the PASS grant.
FISCAL YEAR AWARD PERIOD	The grant award period is three years: July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2027. Those grantees chosen in Year 1 will not be required to participate in another competition through Year 3. However, funding is not guaranteed beyond Year 1. Yearly renewal will be subject to program performance and the availability and level of appropriations to fund MAP and the PASS grant.
PERFORMANCE PERIOD	The PASS grant performance period is July 1 through June 30 to coincide with the state's fiscal year.

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GRANT TIMELINE

Request for Proposal (RFP) Announced	April 19, 2024
Proposal Submission Deadline	May 17, 2024
Grant Award Notification	May 31, 2024
Fiscal Year Award Period	July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2027
Performance Period	July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2027

Questions regarding the RFP and related forms should be directed to Jeffrey Barry at Jeffrey.Barry@ct.gov.

Proposals are due to the Office of Higher Education by 11:59 pm. on May 17, 2024. All supplemental application documents (budget, organizational chart, sample surveys, calendar of events, and MOUs) must be submitted electronically to Jeffrey.Barry@ct.gov, along with completing the online application found below.

Link to the online application: <https://forms.office.com/g/87704KwD8y>

The Office of Higher Education will send an electronic confirmation of submissions; applicants are encouraged to verify receipt by email. Proposals must meet submission requirements and include all supplemental documentation to be accepted. Applications submitted via fax or hard copies are not acceptable.

***Please note: Applications received after the deadline will not be accepted or reviewed.**

PASS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

This Request for Proposals provides directions for applying for state funds in compliance with the General Statutes of Connecticut, Volume 3, Title 10a, Chapter 185, Section 10a-11, Minority Advancement Program (MAP) for the Promoting Academically Successful Students grant.

BACKGROUND

PASS is a competitive grant program initiative of the Minority Advancement Program (MAP) to address undergraduate minority students on academic warning or probation who need additional support to improve their academic standing and remain on track to graduate. PASS is implemented by Connecticut public institutions of higher education (IHE) during the traditional fall and spring semesters.

The need for the PASS program arises from a consistent pattern of minority students (mainly Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino) enrolling in and graduating and earning a postsecondary degree at lower rates. Data for Connecticut for 2023 indicates that 12% of Black or African American and 16% of Hispanic or Latino students showed lower rates of total enrollment than White students at 52%¹. Similarly, 54% of Black or African American and 62% of Hispanic or Latino students showed lower graduation rates than White students at 75%².

Academic warning and probation are associated with the satisfactory academic progress (SAP) process. SAP is a federal requirement associated with financial aid eligibility. Failure to meet the three standards places the student into the SAP process (warning, probation, and dismissal). Students who do not meet SAP standards are in jeopardy of losing their financial aid and failing to achieve their goal of a college degree.

The three criteria comprising SAP are a student's grade-point average (GPA), course completion rate (progress), and maximum time frame (completion), as defined below³:

- GPA — Students must maintain a 2.0 cumulative GPA.
- Progress — Students must complete two-thirds (66.7%) of all attempted courses.
- Completion — Students must complete their program of study without attempting more than 150% of the credits required to complete the degree.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

State of Connecticut public IHEs can apply for a grant to carry out a PASS initiative. All IHEs, even those part of a larger group of institutions, must apply independently for a PASS grant. OHE will evaluate each applicant's ability to carry out a PASS grant as an independent IHE.

NEW APPLICANTS

The Office of Higher Education encourages institutions that have never received MAP funding to apply for funding described in this Request for Proposals.

¹ *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. (2022, August 15). *Compare the states*. <https://www-chronicle-com/article/almanac-states>

² *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. (2022, August 15). *Compare the states*. <https://www-chronicle-com/article/almanac-states>

³ U.S. Department of Education. (2022, November 17). *Satisfactory academic progress* | Knowledge center. FSA Partner Connect. <https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/library/fsa-assessments/2022-11-17/satisfactory-academic-progress>

ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS

Undergraduate students of any minority racial/ethnic background who are on academic warning or probation, as defined by the IHE and SAP process, are eligible to participate in the PASS program. Successful applicants can add more targeted criteria than those stipulated by PASS. Each PASS program may recruit and receive funding for up to 100 unique participants per grant year.

PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY DEFINITIONS

1. **RACE/ETHNICITY** — Eligible minority students refer to students who are Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native, or students identifying as Two or More Races.
2. **PROBATION STATUS** — Eligible probationary students refer to students in the SAP process who are on academic warning or probation.

PROGRAM DESIGN

PASS programs aim to support minority undergraduate students on academic warning or probation. PASS programming implemented by grantees will provide minority student participants on academic warning or probation with personal and academic support and development during the fall and spring semesters. Personal and academic support development activities must emphasize a growth mindset that reinforces improving academic achievement and coming off academic warning or probation. The programs will track students from initial enrollment through completion, focusing on maximizing and improving the retention, persistence, and graduation rates of minority students at Connecticut colleges and universities.

REQUIRED ACTIVITIES

PASS programs must provide all students with individualized personal and academic support and developmental activities during the traditional academic year (fall and spring semesters). Programs must help minority students increase their academic standing and remove them from academic warning or probation while preparing them to increase the participants' likelihood of graduating and attaining a college degree.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Grantees demonstrating program efficacy will meet all requirements listed below regarding the staffing, record keeping, reporting, and citation of the Office of Higher Education and the Promoting Academically Successful Students grant program. The application should address the requirements, provide details on implementation, and provide supporting documentation of planned program components listed below.

1. **PROGRAM STAFFING AND TRAINING**
 - A. Appoint a program director (principal investigator) to oversee program administration.
 - B. Hire and maintain well-qualified staff to ensure effective program implementation.
 - C. Equip staff with the skills and knowledge required to identify, support, and respond to minority students on academic warning or probation, developed with consideration given to the student's race, cultural background, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, socio-economic status or status as a veteran or service member of the armed forces of the United States.

2. PROGRAM LOCATION AND OPERATIONS

- A. House the PASS program within the institution's Academic Success Centers.
 - i. Academic Success Centers. Examples include established divisions designed and staffed to provide the academic support and skills development necessary for students to achieve their academic goals. Examples might include Academic Center for Excellence, Tutoring, Student Success Center, Center for Academic Success and Accessibility Services, University Access Programs, Learning Center, etc.
- B. PASS programs should NOT duplicate incumbent programmatic interventions by the IHE for students in the SAP process (warning and probation).
- C. PASS programs should supplement, augment, and initiate new programs for minority students in the SAP process (warning and probation).

3. OFFICE OF HIGHER EDUCATION CITATION

- A. The grantee shall identify the Office of Higher Education on all programmatic marketing utilizing the following citation, **"this program is supported by the Minority Advancement Program administered by the Connecticut Office of Higher Education."**
- B. The grantee shall identify the program on all programmatic marketing utilizing the PASS program logo provided by OHE.
- C. Grantees shall clearly state they are a MAP grantee in the PASS program and use the MAP name and PASS logo on public materials such as websites, stationery, application forms, recruitment brochures, online position postings, or other recruitment materials, orientation materials, student curriculum materials, signs, videos, banners, press releases, and publications related to MAP.
- D. If the PASS program is part of a more extensive web of grant initiatives at the grantee institution, the MAP and PASS citation requirements still exist and should be displayed prominently alongside other grant marketing and logos.

4. RECORD KEEPING AND REPORTING

- A. Grantees will utilize intake forms to enroll students into the PASS program to identify eligibility and collect and maintain demographic information required by OHE.
 - i. Intake forms are required for initial enrollment into the PASS program or if a student leaves the program and re-enters it.
 - ii. Demographic information should be updated yearly to reflect the status of student participants.
- B. Grantees will have an adequate record-keeping system to report to OHE on students' attendance in programmatic activities, academic progress (GPA), program retention, or other metrics defined by OHE.
- C. Grantees shall develop and implement a survey of students and staff participating in the grant and utilize the results and analysis as part of grant reporting.
- D. All student files shall be housed digitally in secured folders on the grantee's network or fireproof filing cabinets for three years after the student's participation in the program.

- E. Information collected by grantees shall be provided to OHE for review during site visits. OHE site visits will provide grantees with adequate notification to prepare records for review.
- F. Grantees will submit interim and year-end budgets, reports, student rosters, and other data to OHE by the due dates defined in the fully executed Memorandum of Agreement.

5. OFFICE OF HIGHER EDUCATION MEETINGS

- A. Grantees must attend all MAP meetings (including professional development and technical support workshops) called by the OHE.
- B. Grantee institutions are to be represented by the program director (principal investigator) and designated personnel unless otherwise indicated by OHE.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The PASS grant is a year-long program from July 1 to June 30 each grant year. Two primary components govern the program's activities: 1) personal and 2) academic support and development. These combined components are paramount to promoting student academic success by providing participating students with an array of student-supportive services that enhance the likelihood that they will succeed in their coursework, improve their academic standing, and persist in their college enrollment through graduation.

Recent research⁴ has indicated that students are more likely to be successful when adopting a growth mindset addressing perceptions of belonging and ability. Therefore, students are more likely to succeed if they believe that the challenges or setbacks experienced at college are typical and that they can overcome them.

The programmatic interventions and activities that provide personal and academic support to students should be delivered weekly throughout the fall and spring semesters. To be considered a PASS student, they must attend eighty percent (80%) of all personal and academic support and development program activities.

1. PROGRAM DELIVERY: FALL AND SPRING SEMESTERS

- A. The programmatic interventions and activities that provide personal and academic support to students should be delivered weekly throughout the fall and spring semesters.
- B. Fall and spring activities must:
 - i. Provide a weekly calendar of activities for students.
 - ii. Detailed description of the activity (topic, intent, outcomes, etc.).
 - iii. Track student attendance at all activities.
 - iv. Utilize surveys for continuous improvement (student and facilitator).

2. COMPONENT 1: PERSONAL SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

- A. Grantees will assign all students to an academic counselor, mentor, advisor, or coach and receive support and development activities such as:

⁴ Paunesku, D., Walton, G. M., Romero, C., Smith, E. N., Yeager, D. S., & Dweck, C. S. (2015). Mind-set interventions are a scalable treatment for academic underachievement. *Psychological Science*, 26(6), 784-793. doi:10.1177/0956797615571017
 Yeager, D. S., Walton, G. M., Brady, S. T., Akcinar, E. N., Paunesku, D., Keane, L., & ... Dweck, C. S. (2016). Teaching a lay theory before college narrows achievement gaps at scale. *PNAS Proceedings Of The National Academy Of Sciences Of The United States Of America*, 113(24), E3341-E3348. doi:10.1073/pnas.1524360113

- i. 1-on-1 counseling, mentoring, advising, or coaching meetings
 - ii. Goal setting, mapping, and tracking
 - iii. Identifying and overcoming personal barriers hindering academic achievement
- B. Grantees will provide students with activities such as:
- i. Self-Advocacy / Self-Responsibility
 - ii. Peer-Networking
 - iii. Career Exploration
 - iv. Guest Speakers (financial aid, professors, previous PASS students, etc.)
 - v. *Additional Activities
- C. Programmatic interventions and activities offered to students should be grounded in a growth mindset.

3. **COMPONENT 2: ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT**

- A. Grantees will provide students with direct engagement through:
- i. 1-on-1 and group academic advising meetings
 - ii. Goal setting, mapping, and tracking
 - iii. Identifying and overcoming academic barriers in improving academic standing
- B. Grantees will provide students with activities such as:
- i. Test-Taking
 - ii. Note-Taking
 - iii. Time Management
 - iv. Research Methodology
 - v. *Additional Activities
- C. Grantees will provide students with academic support by introducing them to college resources such as tutoring, advising, library, writing center, career services, etc.
- D. Programmatic interventions and activities offered to students should be grounded in a growth mindset.

4. ***ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:** Applicants are encouraged to be innovative in helping students on academic probation. As such, applicants should be creative in implementing the two required PASS program components and include other necessary activities to help these students improve their academic standing. Activities should be realistic within the grant's budget, the IHE's resources, and the program's implementation timeframe.

5. PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES:

- A. Gift Cards awarded directly to students.
- B. Travel outside of the domestic U. S. (study abroad).
- C. Scholarship Payments, Tuition, Fees, or Waivers.
- D. Payment of academic support for books, meals, or transportation.

PROPOSAL PROCEDURES

Proposals are due to the Office of Higher Education by 11:59 pm. on May 17, 2024. All supplemental application documents (budget summary, intake form, organizational chart, sample surveys, and calendar of events) and the completed application must be submitted electronically to Jeffrey.Barry@ct.gov.

Link to the online application: <https://forms.office.com/g/87704KwD8y>

The Office of Higher Education will send an electronic confirmation of submissions; applicants are encouraged to verify receipt by email. Proposals must meet submission requirements and include all supplemental documentation to be accepted. Applications submitted via fax or hard copies are not acceptable.

***Please note: Applications received after the deadline will not be accepted or reviewed.**

APPLICATION CRITERIA

Applications must adhere to the following format.

- A. **ONLINE APPLICATION & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY** — Complete the online application and provide a concise program summary. Executive summaries of all compliant applications will be published on the OHE website following grant award notifications.
- B. **BUDGET SUMMARY & NARRATIVE** — Provide total funding requirements for each budget category described in the Budget Narrative on the Microsoft Excel Budget Summary. The Budget Narrative must explain how costs were derived for each budget category found in the Budget Summary and describe all contributions. Note that reviewers give close attention to the Budget Narrative.
- C. **PROGRAM NARRATIVE** — The narrative section of the application is your opportunity to convince reviewers that your program meets the selection criteria. Provide a concise, jargon-free description of the proposed program by addressing subsections one (1) through five (5) regarding 1) demonstrated need, 2) measurable objectives, 3) program activities, 4) institutional commitment to the proposed program, and 5) evaluation plan.
- D. **SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENTATION** — The online application must include several supplemental documents emailed to Jeffrey.Barry@ct.gov to complete the application process.



THE FIVE (5) REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENTS ARE — 1) Intake form, 2) Calendar of events, 3) Organizational chart, 4) Evaluation surveys, and 5) Budget summary.

CRITERIA FOR REVIEWING PROPOSALS

A review panel comprised of qualified professionals and professional organizations within and outside of the Office of Higher Education who are familiar with effective pre-college access programs will evaluate eligible proposals based on the categories of review below. Reviewer ratings and comments will serve as a significant, but not the only, aspect of the final award selection made by the Office of Higher Education.

REVIEW CRITERIA CATEGORIES

1. Demonstrated Need (10 points)
2. Measurable Objectives (20 points)
3. Program Activities (25 points)
4. Institutional Commitment to the Proposed Program (10 points)
5. Evaluation Plan (20 points)
6. Proposed Budget and Budget Adequacy (15 points)

A proposal must receive an average panel review of 70 points or greater to be considered for final award approval.

BELOW, YOU'LL FIND SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS TO EFFECTIVELY PRESENT YOUR PROPOSED PROGRAM IN A MANNER THAT WILL RESONATE WITH REVIEWERS.

🌀 **Be clear and concise.** Reviewers are not interested in jargon, boilerplate, rhetoric, or exaggeration. They are interested in learning what you intend to do and how your program responds to the charge to provide motivation and skills development for underachievers.

🌀 **Avoid circular reasoning.** The problem you describe should not be defined as lacking your proposed solution.

🌀 **Explain how.** Avoid simply stating that the program you describe will address the issue. Explicitly describe how the proposed program will meet the need identified.

🌀 **Don't make assumptions.** Even if you have received MAP funding in the past, do not assume your reviewers know anything about you, your proposed program, your partners, or your participants. Avoid overuse of acronyms.

🌀 **Use an impartial proofreader.** Before submitting your application, let someone unfamiliar with your program read and critique the program narrative.

🌀 **Follow the instructions and discuss each criterion within each area presented.** Use the RFP to identify criteria in each area when completing the narrative sections.

GRANT AWARDS & REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Following final program and budget negotiations, grants will be issued to each successful program after the Office of Higher Education has received a signed agreement on the terms of the award. Terms of the award include completion of contract compliance forms. Successful applicants are required to submit interim and end-of-year final narratives, data, and financial reports. Grantees will receive funds on a reimbursement basis once the financial reports are submitted and a cash request has been made to OHE.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Please provide an executive summary of your proposed program. Ensure you address the following elements.

BE SURE TO INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

1. Provide a high-level overview of the proposed program.
2. Address how the program will help minority students improve their academic standing through personal and academic support and development programming and activities.
3. Address how the program will engage with minority students to support the goals of the PASS program to promote academic success, improve academic achievement, and persist through to graduating with a degree.
4. Address the anticipated outcome of the proposed program at the end of the grant cycle (what do you expect to see as a result of the grant at the end of year three of the grant).

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Explain how costs were derived for each budget category in the Budget Summary.

- A. **SALARIES AND WAGES** — Please list the title of each staff position and provide a description, salary, and percentage of effort devoted to this award. Explain all salary requests by position and how salary requests were calculated. Staff salaries should be prorated for the period/percentage of time committed to the program and be displayed as an **hourly rate**. Be specific.
- B. **FRINGE BENEFITS** — Fringe Benefits may be applied if applicable. Identify the types of fringe benefits to be covered and the costs of benefit(s) for each staff position. Allowable fringe benefits typically include FICA, Worker's Compensation, Retirement, SUTA, Health and Life Insurance, IRA, and 401K. You may calculate total benefits as a percentage of the salaries to which they apply or list each benefit as a separate item. Holidays, leave, and other similar vacation benefits are not included in the fringe benefit rates but are absorbed into the salaries and wages budget line item. Uncommon or exceptionally high-cost benefits should be itemized.
- C. **INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES** — Identify all items necessary during the grant year to support program delivery.
- D. **OTHER COSTS** — Enter any other costs essential to the delivery of the proposed program.
- E. **FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION (F&A)** — Under this grant's terms, grantees are expressly prohibited from allocating any portion of the grant funds toward finance and administration (F&A) costs.

PROGRAM NARRATIVE

Provide a concise, jargon-free description of the proposed program by addressing subsections one (1) through five (5) regarding 1) demonstrated need, 2) measurable objectives, 3) program activities, 4) institutional commitment to the proposed program, and 5) evaluation plan.

1. DEMONSTRATED NEED

- A. Describe the specific need, priority, and degree to which your proposed program is particularly well suited to address the identified concern of minority student's retention, persistence, and

graduation. Explain how the PASS program will improve minority students' retention, persistence, and graduation.

- B. Describe your current SAP process (academic warning and probation) and what services are available for students on academic probation.
- C. Explain and define how the PASS program will supplement, augment, and initiate new interventions for minority students in the SAP process (warning and probation) beyond what is currently offered by the institution.

2. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

- A. OHE has the following four objectives that grantees are expected to measure and achieve:
 - i. The average attendance rate of PASS students across all program activities is eighty percent (80%).
 - ii. Ninety percent (90%) of PASS students will persist throughout the academic year.
 - iii. Fifty percent (50%) of PASS students will improve their SAP standing and come off academic warning or probation in year one of the program.
 - iv. Ninety percent (90%) of PASS students will improve their SAP standing and come off academic warning or probation by year two of program attendance.
- B. Grantees must furnish a minimum of three (3) institutional outcomes along with measurable objectives that the grant aims to achieve. These objectives must be quantifiable, with well-defined criteria to assess their attainment.

3. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

- A. Describe the plan for identifying, recruiting, and selecting participants to be served by the program.
- B. Detail the plan for assessing individual participant needs and monitoring their academic progress in the PASS program.
- C. Describe the systems that will be implemented to ensure effective and efficient program administration, including, but not limited to, financial management, student records management, and personnel management.
- D. Outline the curriculum, services, and activities planned for participants in both the academic year and summer components and the planned timelines for accomplishing critical elements of the program.
- E. Provide a weekly timeline of events (calendar) for the grant year. Include a detailed description of the activity (topic, intent, outcomes, etc.).
- F. Provide an organizational chart that details the program's staffing.
 - i. The organizational chart should only include the principal staff involved in the delivery of grant programming, not the entire organization.

- ii. Staff identified in the organizational chart should include titles, roles, and responsibilities.

4. INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT TO THE PROPOSED PROGRAM

- A. Detail the institution's commitment to supplementing the program with resources that will enhance the program, such as direct financial support, space, furniture, equipment, supplies, and the time and effort of personnel engaged in program functions other than those employed in the program.
- B. Describe the strategy to inform faculty, staff members, and students of the program's objectives and to engage faculty, staff members, and students in achieving the program objectives.

5. EVALUATION PLAN

- A. Describe the evaluation plan for the program. Include quantitative and qualitative evaluation measures, which examine the program's success in achieving its outcomes and objectives in specific and measurable ways.
- B. Detail how the evaluation plan informs an internal program modification and improvement process.
- C. Define how the program will track student attendance at all activities and utilize this data to determine program efficacy and continuous improvement.
- D. Provide sample surveys that will be used to determine program efficacy and continuous improvement (provide examples for students and facilitators).