

Funding AP Exams for Low-Income Students in 2018

Act now to make sure all students can take and succeed in AP.

Funding Sources for AP Exams

State and Local Funds: A number of states cover the costs of their students' AP[®] Exams by using local funds. For example, Arkansas, Florida, North Carolina, and South Carolina cover the cost of AP Exams for all their students using state funds. Others use state funds to pay for a specific subset of exams—exams taken by low-income students, or exams taken in specific disciplines like STEM.

Title IV, Part A: States and districts can use federal funds under the new Title IV, Part A Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants program to cover part or all of the cost of AP Exams for low-income students.

Important details about these funds

- Title IV-A funds may be used for a variety of purposes beyond AP, including programs that support a well-rounded education (e.g., STEM, arts, civics, health and physical education), or health and safety (e.g., drug and violence prevention, mental health), or the effective use of technology (e.g., professional development, technology devices).
- The vast majority (95%) of this funding will go to districts. States may reserve 1% for administrative purposes and an additional 4% for state-level activities.

Title I: Districts or schools receiving Title I funds may use those funds to cover a portion of AP Exam fees for low-income students. The funds must be used to supplement and not supplant any state or local funding for AP Exams. States may also reserve 3% of their Title I funds for Direct Student Services, which can include reimbursing AP Exam fees for low-income students.

A Combination of the Above: Funding sources can be combined in creative ways. For example, a state could partially cover low-income students' exams using state funds and then cover the remaining costs with their Title IV-A state set-aside. Or a state could cover a portion of the cost with state funds and encourage districts to cover remaining costs from their Title IV-A allocation. We encourage states to start working now with districts on a plan to fund their AP programs, especially since 95% of Title IV-A funds will go to districts.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT

Since 1998, the federal government has dedicated funding to offset the cost of AP Exams for low-income students under a Title I program called the Advanced Placement Test Fee Program.

Beginning in 2017, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) eliminated this program, and consolidated AP funding with 40 other educational programs under a new Title IV-A block grant.

For the 2017-18 school year, the program will be funded with \$400 million appropriated by Congress in the federal fiscal year 2017 budget. States have the option to provide Title IV-A funds to districts via formula or competitive grants.

The vast majority (95%) of this new Title IV-A funding will go to districts, and districts can use these funds to subsidize their low-income students' AP Exam fees.

States Are Acting

More than 30 states stepped up and developed a plan to cover part or all of the cost of AP Exams for low-income students in May 2017. Here are some examples of what states said when they announced this commitment:

- **Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE):** “The funding will enable ISBE to continue to ensure that eligible low-income students will have access to AP Exams in spring 2017. ISBE considers the participation of these students to be a significant step toward improving their educational opportunities and potentially increasing achievement.”
- **Kentucky Department of Education:** “The Kentucky Department of Education is committed to closing the opportunity gap for students, and as such, believes all students should have equal access to the benefits of AP coursework. Nothing, including the testing fee, should stand in the way. All of our students should have the opportunity to enroll in AP classes and take the corresponding AP Exam for college credit.”
- **Texas Education Agency:** “The commitment to educational excellence by Texas educators and students is evident in the growth and success of the AP/IB Program, and we hope that the funding of these components strengthens programs even further.”

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FROM THE COLLEGE BOARD

- In 2018, the College Board will provide a fee reduction of \$32, so the cost of an AP Exam for a low-income student is \$53.
- The College Board can also work with states and individual districts to estimate the amount they may receive through both federal and state funding streams.