



2011-2012
SAY YES TO EDUCATION

Guide for High School Students



SYRACUSE SAY YES TO EDUCATION (SYTE) offers comprehensive academic, social-emotional, and health supports that are critical to enabling every child to achieve his or her potential. Perhaps the most celebrated support offered by SYTE is the promise of free college tuition for Syracuse City School District (SCSD) students. This *Guide* is intended to assist high school students and their families in understanding this promise as well as the process for determining Say Yes awards, eligibility, and information on student responsibilities. Don't forget to add the upcoming FAFSA nights and other dates to your 2012 calendar! (see back page)

WHAT IS THE SAY YES TO EDUCATION TUITION GUARANTEE?

When a Say Yes **eligible student** enrolls at a **participating college**, Say Yes guarantees that the combination of grants and scholarships from federal, state, and/or private sources will cover the cost of tuition or the student will receive a grant from Say Yes to make up the difference.

To be eligible, students must:

- ⇒ Be a resident of the city of Syracuse.
- ⇒ Have continuous enrollment in a SCSD High School for three years; 10th, 11th, and 12th grades [or be *legally designated as having refugee status on an Arrival-Departure Record (I-94) from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)*].
- ⇒ Enroll as a full time student in a Say Yes participating college or university within one academic year after graduation (in addition students must apply for and otherwise be eligible for federal and state financial aid programs).
- ⇒ Graduate from one of the SCSD High Schools in or after June 2009.

High school seniors in the SCSD who do not meet the Say Yes criteria due to extenuating circumstances may appeal by requesting, completing, and returning a "Request for Eligibility" form. Call 315.443.5300 to request the form.

What are the Say Yes participating colleges & universities?

SYTE has partnered with almost 100 colleges, including most of the SUNY and CUNY colleges and over 20 private colleges. For a complete list of participating institutions and details, please visit www.SayYesSyracuse.org and look for the link under the "Say Yes to College" tab.

WHAT STEPS MUST A SAY YES ELIGIBLE STUDENT FOLLOW?

Step 1. Apply to a Say Yes College.

Say Yes students must apply and be admitted to a Say Yes college to be considered for Say Yes Grants. Students should work closely with their high school guidance counselor to ensure that they have taken the appropriate courses, standardized tests (SATs and ACTs), and meet all admission requirements and deadlines of the colleges to which they are applying. When applying to one of the Say Yes Private Colleges, students must inform that college's admissions office that they are part of the Syracuse Say Yes to Education Program.

Step 2. Apply for Financial Aid.

Say Yes students must apply for financial aid and meet all deadlines just as other students do. Keep in mind that different colleges may have different deadlines and forms to complete. All students must complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), NYS TAP application, and any other forms required by the college. Say Yes Grants are considered "last dollar scholarships" and can only be determined after a student has applied for financial aid at the college they are considering. For assistance filling out the FAFSA, plan to attend one of the Financial Aid events listed on the back page.

Step 3. Complete a Student Certification Form.

When students know which college or university they will be attending, they must complete a Say Yes Student Certification Form available from their guidance counselor. Say Yes staff will use this form to determine students' Say Yes awards and/or grants and ensure that they are processed in time for the fall semester.

HOW DOES SAY YES WORK AT THE SUNY AND CUNY PUBLIC COLLEGES?

Say Yes Tuition Grants are determined by the following calculation:

1. **Determine the cost of tuition** at the participating Say Yes College.
2. **Add together all the grants and scholarships** offered to the student. Subtract this amount from the cost of tuition.
3. **The remaining amount** will be the amount of the Say Yes Tuition Grant.

Students who receive a full Federal Pell Grant and reside on campus will automatically be considered for an additional Say Yes Opportunity Grant (up to \$2000). For more information on the Opportunity Grant, please see **“Say Yes Grants Overview”** on the following page.

The Say Yes program will work with colleges to determine the amount of funding an eligible student will receive from Say Yes. Say Yes grant money will be sent directly to the college (half during the fall semester and half during the spring semester). Students will receive an award notice from Say Yes via email once their eligibility has been confirmed in late summer. The college will be informed of the Say Yes Award the same time as the student and will generally provide a deferral on the student’s account (deduct the Say Yes award from any money owed to the college). Say Yes Awards will post to student’s college accounts 6-8 weeks into the semester once their full time enrollment has been verified.

HOW DOES SAY YES WORK AT THE PRIVATE COMPACT COLLEGES?

The financial aid process will be slightly different for students applying to the private compact colleges. Just as in the SUNY and CUNY colleges, the SY Tuition Grant plus NYS TAP, Federal Pell Grant, and other grants/scholarships will total the cost of tuition. The funding to meet the Say Yes Tuition Guarantee will be coming from the private institution and therefore the Say Yes Tuition Grant should be part of the student’s initial financial aid award package. Depending on the college, the grants that make up the cost of tuition may have different names than “Say Yes Grant”.

Please note that most private colleges only guarantee full tuition to students from families with incomes of less than \$75,000. It is important that each student work directly with the financial aid offices at the private

college where they are applying to determine the total amount of financial assistance that he/she is eligible to receive.

Students from families with incomes of more than \$75,000 who are attending a Say Yes Private College (and are not receiving a Tuition Guarantee Grant) may receive the Say Yes Choice Grant. The Choice Grant offers up to \$5000 per year. For more information on the Choice Grant, please see section “Say Yes Grants Overview.”

TO REMAIN ELIGIBLE FOR SAY YES TUITION GRANTS, STUDENTS MUST:

- **Maintain satisfactory academic progress by completing a minimum of 12 credit hours each semester (fall and spring) and maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or better.** If a student completes less than 12 credit hours in the fall or does not have a 2.0 GPA, then he/she can make up for it by taking additional credits in the spring and/or bringing their grade point average up. If, at the end of the spring semester, the student has not completed the required 24 credit hours and does not have a 2.0 or better, then the student will not be eligible for Say Yes funding for the following year. Students that do not meet the standards of academic progress at the end of an academic year can enroll in college courses over the summer to make up their deficiencies, but please note, Say Yes funding is not available to students for summer coursework.
- **Apply for financial aid each year and complete the financial aid process at their college.** Forms should be filled out as early as possible in the calendar year to ensure the most aid.
- **Inform Say Yes of any changes in college plans.** If a student withdraws from college or takes a semester off, he/she may lose their Say Yes eligibility. Students should contact Say Yes regarding the circumstances of their situation.
- **Keep Say Yes informed.** Say Yes will inform students of their award through e-mail. Therefore it is important that we have the e-mail address for graduating seniors and one for parents on file. The best way of doing this is to send us an e-mail at SayYesCollege@syr.edu. In the subject line type “E-mail Update” and in the body of

the e-mail include the student's full name and the parent or guardian name, the high school that the student will graduate from, and a phone number. Once enrolled in college, students need to update Say Yes with a current and frequently checked e-mail address. This assures that students will be kept up to date of processes and procedures that may impact their access to Say Yes programs and future grant consideration.

- **Report any additional financial aid.**

Students need to be aware that SYTE Grants are considered "last dollar" awards. Students are required to inform SYTE of any additional grants and/or scholarships that they are receiving that were not taken into consideration when calculating the SYTE awards. A student's SYTE award may be reduced if additional financial aid from sources other than Say Yes is received by the student. Failure to inform Say Yes of additional awards may result in a student becoming ineligible for future Say Yes award consideration.

- **Complete studies within 8 semesters.**

Say Yes funding is available for 4 semesters at a 2-year college or 8 semesters at a 4-year college. While students will need to maintain full time status (at least 12 credit hours a semester) for fall and spring, they should try to complete at least 15 credit hours a semester to earn their degrees during the time requirement of Say Yes. Say Yes funding is not available for summer or winter semesters.

SAY YES GRANTS OVERVIEW

The Say Yes Grants available to eligible students are designed to reduce the financial barriers that prevent students from starting or completing college. College costs vary greatly by institution and every student's financial need is different. In order to support these different needs, Say Yes students may qualify for one of the following grants:

- **Say Yes Tuition Grant**

If a Say Yes eligible student enrolls at a Say Yes participating college and does not receive the cost of tuition from state, federal, and/or institutional grants and scholarships, Say Yes will provide a grant for the remaining tuition balance. The Say Yes Tuition Grant is available to all students, regardless of family income, at SUNY and CUNY colleges. Most private colleges only guarantee full tuition to students from families with incomes of less than \$75,000.

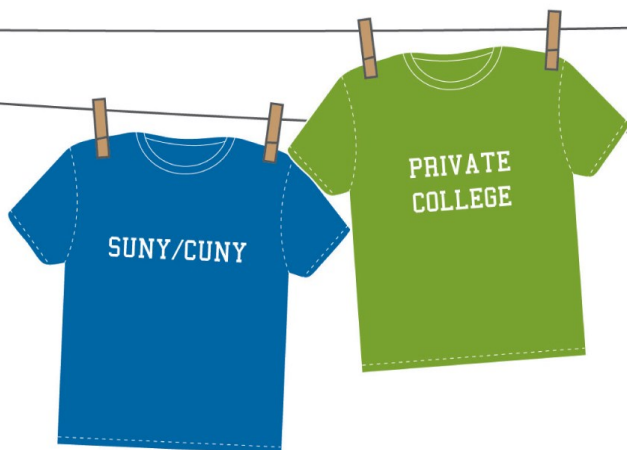
- **Say Yes Opportunity Grant– SUNY/CUNY Colleges ONLY**

The Opportunity Grant may be awarded to eligible students enrolled at a SUNY or CUNY college who have received the maximum Federal Pell Grant, reside on campus, and have high remaining need for financial aid. The Opportunity Grant offers up to \$2,000 per year and may be used for books, fees, or room and board.

- **Say Yes Choice Grant– Private Compact Colleges ONLY**

Students from families with incomes of more than \$75,000 who are attending a Say Yes Private Compact College (and are not receiving a Tuition Guarantee Grant) may receive the Choice Grant. The Choice Grant offers up to \$5,000 per year. Awards are determined by the difference between financial aid and the cost of full time tuition. Choice Grants, when combined with state, federal, and institutional grants and scholarships, are not to exceed the cost of full time undergraduate tuition. Please note, the Say Yes Tuition Grant is available to all students at SUNY and CUNY colleges, regardless of family income.

IS YOUR FUTURE ON THE LINE?



Find your fit.

Learn more at sayyessyracuse.org

Email: SayYesCollege@syr.edu
www.SayYesSyracuse.org
315.443.5300

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

IMPORTANT EVENTS

Navigating the college financial aid process and filling out financial aid forms can be a bit overwhelming. That's why the Financial Aid Counseling Network (FACN) was formed. FACN is a joint effort between Say Yes to Education, the Syracuse City School District, and financial aid administrators from the colleges in Central New York. The FACN sponsors programs that help educate and inform students and their families about the college financial aid process. In addition to college information events for high school juniors and seniors, the FACN conducts a number of financial aid application filing events like those listed below where students and parents can meet one on one with financial aid administrators and complete the financial aid application process. We strongly encourage students and their families to attend one of these upcoming events:

High School Sponsored FAFSA Nights

- Corcoran HS FAFSA Filing Night, **Tuesday, January 24, 2012**, 5-7pm, at Corcoran HS
- Nottingham HS FAFSA Filing Night, **Thursday, January 26, 2012** 5-7pm, at Nottingham HS
- Fowler HS FAFSA Filing Night, **Thursday, February 02, 2012, 5-7pm**, at Fowler HS
- Henninger High School FAFSA Filing Night, **Wednesday, February 08, 2012**, 5-7 pm, at Henninger HS
- ITC FAFSA Filing Night, **Thursday, February 16, 2012**, 5-7pm, at ITC

College Goal New York FAFSA Event

Saturday, January 28, 2012, 9-12pm, at Nottingham HS

This state sponsored FAFSA filing event is open to all students regardless of the high school they attend.

SUNY Financial Aid Day FAFSA Event

SUNY Financial Aid Day, @ ESF, **Saturday, February 11, 2012**, TBD, SUNY ESF

SUNY Financial Aid Day, @ OCC, **Saturday, February 11, 2012**, TBD, Onondaga Community College

This FAFSA filing event is sponsored by the State University of New York (SUNY) and is open to all students regardless of the high school or college they attend.

College Scholarship Service Profile (CSS) Filing Day (Attend ONLY if you are planning to attend a private college)

Saturday, January 7, 2012

9-1 pm, SYTE Office, 109 Otisco Street, Syracuse, NY

Certain private colleges require this form in addition to the FAFSA. Make sure your college requires a CSS Profile before filing one.

ADDITIONAL SAY YES SUPPORTS

In addition to free college tuition, Say Yes to Education also provides comprehensive supports beginning in kindergarten for all families and students in the Syracuse City School District. Detailed information about these supports can be found on our website at www.sayyessyracuse.org or by calling the following numbers:

HIGH SCHOOL TUTORING (9-12): 315-443-2106

ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE SCHOOL TUTORING (K-8): 315-443-4260

FREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE: 315-443-9689

Go to www.ssayyessyracuse.org for clinic locations and hours

FAMILY SUPPORT: 315-362-7686

LOW COST/NO COST HEALTH INSURANCE: 315-479-1382

K-5 AFTER SCHOOL & SUMMER CAMP PROGRAMS: Contact your child's school



FOR GENERAL INFORMATION: Say Yes to Education, 109 Otisco St., Syracuse, NY 13244, 315.443.4260
info@sayyessyracuse.org