

**Appropriations Higher Education Subcommittee
Working Session
Wednesday, March 4, 2026
11:00 AM**

1. *Can OHE provide, for FY 26, the number of students that OHE anticipates receiving a Willis award, the average grant, and what schools they are attending? Can OHE break this out by merit and need-merit awards?*

As of February 24, 2026, 1,779 eligible students received a Roberta B. Willis Scholarship Program, Need Merit (RWSPNM). The average award for those recipients is \$4,864. RWSPNM certifications will continue to be processed by participating institutions through May 2026. RWSP Need-Based awarded student data will not be available until the end of the academic year, when this information is reported to OHE by each participating institution.

2. *Can OHE provide the distribution of need-based grants to colleges in FY 26?*

Institutions	Need-Based Allotment-FY-26	Need-Based FY-25 funds returned unused to OHE
Albertus Magnus College	\$ 654,186.94	\$ 31,000.00
Central Connecticut State University	\$ 4,594,459.72	\$ 447,859.00
Charter Oak	\$ 703,260.01	\$ 34,812.00
Connecticut College	\$ 72,394.41	\$ -
Eastern Connecticut State University	\$ 1,861,622.34	\$ 579,443.00
Fairfield University	\$ 225,961.06	\$ 6,350.00
Goodwin University	\$ 860,976.41	\$ 3,267.00
Mitchell College	\$ 232,605.84	\$ -
Quinnipiac University	\$ 916,564.98	\$ 249,019.00
Sacred Heart University	\$ 797,075.42	\$ 5,246.00
Southern Connecticut State University	\$ 4,330,737.22	\$ 27,117.00
Trinity College	\$ 131,214.87	\$ -
University of Bridgeport	\$ 1,001,886.97	\$ 2,250.00
University of Connecticut	\$ 10,233,467.41	\$ 65,386.00
University of Hartford	\$ 1,137,497.22	\$ -
University of New Haven	\$ 1,412,751.12	\$ 19,321.00
University of Saint Joseph	\$ 469,426.06	\$ 312,737.00
Western Connecticut State University	\$ 2,233,238.37	\$ 2,655.00
All Institutions	\$ 31,869,326.38	\$ 1,786,462.00

3. *Can OHE provide, from FY 21 to FY 26, the total amount of Willis Scholarship funding paid out broken out by GF, ARPA, and CF dollars? Can OHE break it out by need-based and need-merit?*

	General Fund RWSP Appropriation Including Carryforward	General Fund RWSP Need-Based Expenditures	Need-Based ARPA Expenditures	General Fund RWSP Need-Merit Expenditures	Total
FY 2021	\$33,826,782	\$23,437,491		\$9,337,610	\$32,775,101
FY 2022	\$35,033,702	\$24,173,591	\$4,137,659	\$9,118,962	\$37,430,212
FY 2023	\$35,313,224	\$24,543,157	\$24,192,614	\$8,639,267	\$57,375,038
FY 2024 (Community Colleges Drop Off)	\$24,888,637	\$0	\$33,344,032	\$8,199,726	\$41,543,758
FY 2025	\$29,074,523	\$20,211,622	\$16,324,531	\$8,634,327	\$45,170,480
FY 2026	\$41,969,326	\$31,869,324		\$10,000,000	\$41,869,324

4. *Can OHE describe the efforts it has taken to address the Willis timing issue?*

In March 2025, OHE notified RWSP Need-Merit applicants of their awards – this was months earlier than the usual notification period of June/July. OHE has complied with all relevant statutes and provided timely notice of estimated award amounts to institutions to the greatest extent possible within the agency’s budgetary authority.

5. *Can OHE provide a detailed accounting of the Student Loan Reimbursement program? For FY 25, how many applications were received? How many were awarded? What was the average grant? How has this changed to date in FY 26?*

2025

- Total FY-25 Applications Received- 3,076
- Total FY-25 Reimbursement Recipients- 975
- Total FY-25 Reimbursement Disbursement Amount- \$2,618,317.46
- Average Reimbursement Amount- \$2,685.45

2026 (January 31 – February 24, 2026)

- Total applications received – 736
- Total applications approved for reimbursement – 43

- Total Reimbursement disbursement amount – \$177,619
- Average Reimbursement Amount – \$4,130
- The average award for FY-26 (to date) is \$1,445 higher than the average award for FY-25.

January- February 24, 2025, Complete Applications Received- 271
 January- February 24, 2026, Complete Applications Received- 320

6. *Can OHE demonstrate the year-over-year uptick in Student Loan Reimbursement awards resulting from the 2025 expansion of the grant?*

Of the 417 reimbursement recipients for the second half of FY-25 (July-December), 112 applicants presented advanced degrees to satisfy their educational credential eligibility requirement. Advanced degrees were not eligible for the first half of FY-25 (January-June).

7. *Can OHE break down its OE expenditures by specific expenses?*

Office of Higher Education	Projection Total FY27	Description
General Administration	\$ 179,166	
General Office Supplies	14,700	
General Honoraria	23,000	Curriculum Specialists being paid for site visit evaluations allowed for by statute.
Global Payment Fee POSA	500	Credit Card Fees
In-State Travel	2,000	Costs associated with visits
Membership Dues	25,000	SHEEO membership
Mileage Reimbursement	5,000	Reimbursement for staff to go to site visits.
Motor Vehicle Fuel - Gasoline	2,500	
ST-Motor Vehicle Lease/Rental	7,830	
Out-Of-State Travel	17,020	
Regular Postage	7,000	
Records Destruction Services	3,500	Destruction of student records uploaded into Veoci
Photographic Services	21,000	Digitalization of student records from closed schools and upload into Veoci
ST-Office Equip Lease/Rental	9,350	
Storage Expenses	200	Storage of paper records as required by statute
Subscriptions	6,000	NexisLexis - allows us to run background checks on school owners and directors as required by statute
Non-Controllable Software	10,000	Adobe...etc
IT Hardware Controllable	19,000	
IT Hardware Non-Controllable	5,566	
OHE OE Budget	\$ 179,166	

8. *For each other line item, can OHE describe what the program does, who is served, and what outcome measures exist regarding each program?*

SID 12188 – Minority Advancement Program

The Minority Advancement Program (MAP) offers competitive grants to colleges, universities, and nonprofit organizations. The grants help fund programs that increase the diversity of students who attend and graduate from Connecticut's colleges and universities. The funding is divided between three sub-grants: [The Connecticut Collegiate Awareness and Preparation Program \(ConnCAP\)](#), [Promoting Academically Successful Students \(PASS\)](#), and [Preparation for Academic Transition to Higher Education \(PATH\)](#). MAP was established in 1983 by [Connecticut General Statute Title 10a, Chapter 185, Section 10a-11](#).

SID 12200 – National Service Act

National Service in Connecticut is delivered primarily through AmeriCorps programs administered by Serve Connecticut, the Connecticut Commission on Community Service. AmeriCorps is the federal national service program that engages Americans of all ages in sustained, meaningful service to address community needs. Serve Connecticut partners with the federal AmeriCorps agency to administer funding, provide training, and support local programs that leverage national service to meet Connecticut's community priorities.

In Connecticut, AmeriCorps members serve with local nonprofits, schools, government agencies, and community partners to tackle pressing challenges such as:

- improving educational outcomes and early literacy,
- supporting public health and serving vulnerable populations,
- fighting the opioid epidemic and strengthening community health systems,
- expanding volunteer capacity and bolstering nonprofit infrastructure.

Members serve in full- or part-time positions and receive a living allowance and, upon completing their term, an education award that can be used for college or to repay student loans.

SID 12214 – Minority Teacher Incentive Program

The Minority Teacher Incentive Program was launched in 1999 to encourage more minority students to become teachers in Connecticut. Minority junior or senior college students enrolled in state teacher preparation programs are nominated by their institutions to receive grants of up to \$5,000 per year for the last two years enrolled in college. Additionally, students who gain teaching positions in a Connecticut public elementary, middle, or high school are eligible for loan reimbursement grants for up to four years of \$2,500 per year. Potentially, each

qualified student and subsequent teacher may earn up to \$20,000 from the program in total.

SID 12669 – CT Loan Forgiveness (Student Loan Reimbursement Program – SLRP)

In 2024, the General Assembly approved the Student Loan Reimbursement Program which began in January 2025 and is aimed at providing financial relief to Connecticut residents burdened with student loan debt. Applicants are awarded on a first-come first-serve basis and receive up to \$5,000 of student loan reimbursement for payments made in the prior-year with a \$20,000 cap over four years. Eligibility requirements were changed in August of 2025 to expand eligibility.

SID 16261 – Roberta B. Willis Scholarship Fund

RWSP Need-Merit Scholarship – The RWSP Need-Merit Scholarship provides state aid to help Connecticut’s neediest and brightest students pay for college. It is not strictly a merit program; priority is given to those who are least able to contribute to college costs. Based upon continued funding, students can use their awards at any Connecticut four-year college or university apart from Wesleyan University and Yale University. Awards are made on a sliding scale up to a maximum federal Student Aid Index (SAI) set annually by the Office of Higher Education and based on funding levels and the number of eligible applicants. The dollar amount of individual RWSP Need-Merit Scholarships are higher than RWSP Need-Based Grants and are awarded by the Office of Higher Education. Starting with the FY 2017-year, legislation limited the total expenditure for the RWSP Need-Merit Scholarship to no more than 30 percent of the entire annual RWSP appropriation. This limitation prevented the Office of Higher Education from awarding any need-merit scholarships to incoming first-year students since FY 2016. Beginning in FY 2024, legislation limited the total expenditure for the RWSP Need-Merit Scholarship to no more than 30 percent of the entire annual RWSP appropriation or ten million dollars, whichever is greater. Program objectives are:

- Access – To qualify, students must meet the SAI range set by the Office of Higher Education. The RWSP Need-Merit Scholarship provides Connecticut’s neediest, highest academic achieving students with a guaranteed award amount which is portable to any eligible four-year Connecticut college or university they choose to attend – except for Wesleyan University and Yale University. RWSP Need-Merit awards are transferable.
- Retention – These awards recognize the academic performance students achieved in high school. Recognizing and rewarding academic performance is a nationally proven enrollment and retention strategy. Awards are

renewable with satisfactory academic progress and continuing need. Awards are renewable for up to six years at a four-year school.

- Completion – For many students, the RWSP Need-Merit Scholarship provides the final bridge to making attainment of their degree a reality.

The Need-Based Grant – The RWSP Need-Based Grant provides state aid to help Connecticut students who are least able to pay for college. Eligible individual institutions receive a funding allotment based on the number of needy Connecticut students enrolled in the previous year. Eligible students may receive up to \$4,500 per year for full-time study/Part-time students have their awards prorated. To be eligible students must have a federal EFC equal to or less than the maximum annual EFC as determined by state statute. Based upon continued funding, students are awarded at the determination of the Connecticut college or university they attend. The RWSP Need-Based Grant is not transferable from one institution to another. Students who receive a RWSP Need-Merit Scholarship are not eligible for a RWSP Need-Based Grant. Program Objectives are:

- Access – To qualify, students first must meet the required EFC limits established by statute. Individual student awards can vary by institution and within an institution. Students with like EFC's are not guaranteed equal award amounts.
- Retention – Awards may be renewable with satisfactory academic progress and continuing need. Awards are renewable for up to six years at a four-year school.
- Completion – The RWSP Need-Based Grant helps thousands of students achieve their degrees.

SID 16291 – Health Care Adjunct Grant Program

The Health Care Adjunct Professor Incentive Program began in 2024. This program provides incentive grants to newly hired adjunct professors who are licensed health care providers who accept a position as professor teaching in a health care field at a public institution of higher education. Recipients also must have taught a healthcare related course(s) for not less than one academic year. Each eligible grant recipient who receives a grant shall be eligible for an additional grant of \$20,000 if they remain in their teaching position for not less than two academic years.

8. *Does OHE have any data about how Connecticut's expenditure on state-sponsored scholarships for college students compares to other states? Could OHE produce such an analysis?*

OHE contributes Connecticut's data (collected from UConn, BOR, and OPM) to SHEEO's annual [Grapevine/SHEF reports](#) and comparative information on state higher education finance and student aid is also available through the [NASSGAP annual survey](#) and the [IPEDS Data Center](#); links to these resources have been provided for reference. It should be noted that certain funding streams—such as PACT support to CSCU—may be reflected as general fiscal support for higher education rather than as state grant aid, which would result in Connecticut's grant expenditure percentage appearing artificially low relative to other states.