

Applicant Notification to Participate in the Evaluation of the Pell Grant Experiments

Dear **[INSERT FIRST, LAST NAME]**:

You recently applied to a program at **[INSERT SCHOOL NAME]**. This school is participating in a new national study about expanding access to higher education by offering Federal Pell Grants to certain students who would otherwise not qualify. A Federal Pell Grant is financial aid usually given to undergraduate students that is based on financial need and does not need to be repaid (<http://studentaid.ed.gov/types/grants-scholarships/pell>). The study is called the Evaluation of the Pell Grant Experiments and is funded by the U.S. Department of Education (ED). ED has contracted with Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) and Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., to conduct the evaluation.

The Initiative expands eligibility for Pell Grants to students who: (1) already possess a bachelor's degree and who are enrolling in vocational or career programs, or (2) enroll in certain short-term vocational or career training programs. The specific conditions for eligibility are dependent on the school and program to which you applied. Additionally, students also must meet all other criteria for eligibility for a Federal Pell Grant, such as having a demonstrated financial need and being a U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen, and being enrolled in an eligible degree or certification program. The findings from this study will assist policymakers by answering questions concerning the impact of Pell Grants on job training, employment, earnings, and student debt.

We would like to welcome you as a participant in the study. Your participation in this study is extremely valuable because it will allow ED to learn about how they can best help students like yourself to access education and training. Participation in the evaluation involves two key activities:

1) Being assigned into one of two study groups:

- Group A: Receives Pell Grant experiment funds, as well as any other financial aid that the school determines is available.

OR

- Group B: Does **not** receive Pell Grant experiment funds; however, members of this group still may receive other financial aid, if determined eligible for it by the school.

The assignment will be conducted using a lottery-like process in which every study participant has the same chance of being assigned to the group that is eligible for the Pell Grants. The results of the lottery will be reflected in the financial aid package you receive from the school.

- 2) Allowing the research team to collect data over the next several years from administrative files concerning your applications for and receipt of financial aid, as well as your educational experiences, employment, and earnings. You will not need to do anything for this; the research team will collect this information for research purposes only, and will ensure that any information about you is kept confidential and secure, in accordance with the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Title I, Part E, Section 183. Your answers will be combined with those of others, and your name will never be used in reporting the results of the study. We will not provide information that identifies you to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.

There are no potential risks associated with participating, only the possibility of receiving additional funds. However, participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate in the study, or if you want to withdraw from the study at any time, please contact the study team at Social Policy Research Associates by email at contact@pellexperiments.org or toll-free at (866) 235-7263. For more information about the study you may also visit the website www.pellexperiments.org.

Thank you in advance for your assistance with this important research.

Sincerely,
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