

NEW MEXICO  
HIGHER EDUCATION  
DEPARTMENT



*Fostering Student Success from Cradle to Career*

# UNDERSTANDING NEW MEXICO'S TUITION-FREE COLLEGE PROGRAMS

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# WHY TUITION-FREE COLLEGE?

- Promotes **access** to college degrees and career training programs
- Limits or **eliminates** student loan **debt**
- Promotes **family** and **economic prosperity**
- **Strengthens communities** and our state!



# THE HISTORY OF TUITION-FREE COLLEGE IN NEW MEXICO

- New Mexico was the first state in the nation to implement a tuition-free college program.
- The New Mexico Lottery Scholarship was established in law in 1996 to provide tuition-free college to recent high school graduates.
- Gov. Lujan Grisham expanded tuition-free college to more New Mexicans with the New Mexico Opportunity Scholarship, which was created as a budget item in 2020 and made the program permanent by law this year.
- Both scholarships are available to New Mexico residents this Fall!

# WHAT'S NEW?

## *Expanding the Opportunity Scholarship*

- Provides tuition-free college and required fees for part-time and full-time returning adult students and those pursuing career training certificates. \*
- Can be used to cover tuition during a Lottery student's qualifying semester if a bridge scholarship does not cover full tuition.
- Can be used to cover required fees for eligible Lottery and non-Lottery Scholarship recipients.
- Can be used to pay for tuition in the summer.
- Students can benefit from the scholarship for multiple career training certificates, up to 90 credit hours for an associate degree, or up to 160 credit hours for a bachelor's degree.



A photograph of three young adults, two women and one man, wearing blue graduation caps and gowns. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera. The woman on the left is holding a rolled-up diploma tied with a blue ribbon. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with green trees.

# WHAT IS NEW MEXICO'S TUITION-FREE COLLEGE PROGRAM?

*Understanding the Opportunity and Lottery Scholarships*

# WHICH PATH IS RIGHT FOR ME?



- Students will likely utilize both scholarship programs during their time in college.
- These scholarships work side by side to accomplish the same goal:
  - ✓ College Completion
  - ✓ Family Sustaining Careers
  - ✓ And More

# The Lottery Scholarship is your main path if:

- ✓ You are enrolling in college within 16 months after graduating from high school, attaining your high school equivalency credential, or being honorably discharged from military service.

## WHAT TO KNOW DURING YOUR FIRST SEMESTER:

- For Lottery students, this is known as your qualifying semester. You will receive the Lottery Scholarship the following semester if you maintain the required number of credit hours and minimum 2.5 GPA.
- New Mexico public colleges and universities provide a bridge scholarship to help Lottery students cover this first semester. If you still have a tuition balance after receiving a bridge scholarship, the Opportunity Scholarship can kick in to cover the rest.
- The Opportunity Scholarship is available to Lottery Scholarship students every semester they receive Lottery to cover required fees.

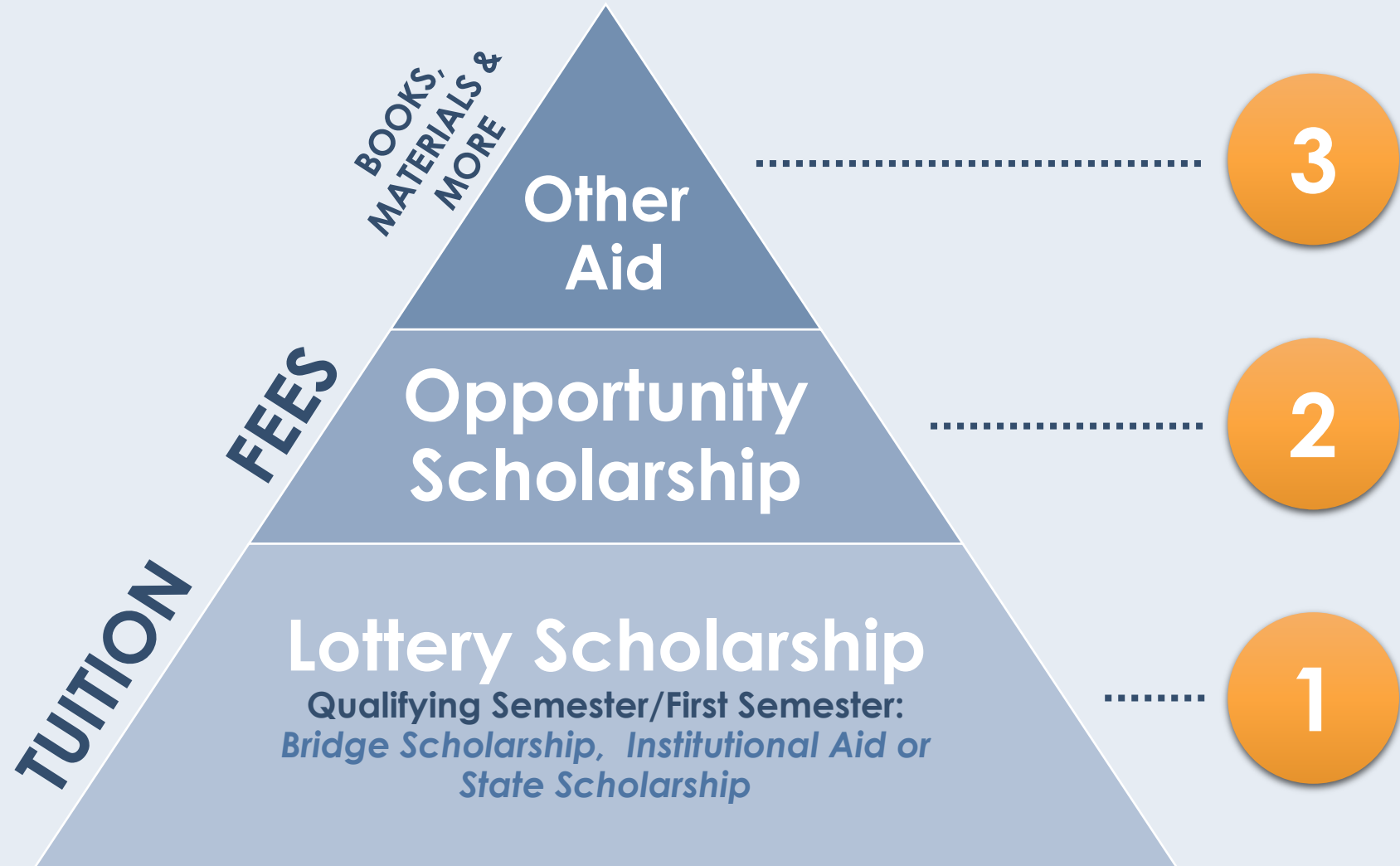


# Lottery Scholarship

## Eligibility:

- ✓ You are a New Mexico resident or graduated from a New Mexico high school
- ✓ You enroll full-time at a participating school
  - 12 credit hours for community colleges
  - 15 credit hours for four-year universities
- ✓ You establish a 2.5 GPA or higher your first college semester and maintain it every semester afterward

# Stacking Financial Aid for **Lottery Scholarship** Awardees



# The Opportunity Scholarship is your main path if:

- ✓ You are enrolling in college after being out of high school for more than 16 months and
- ✓ You plan to pursue an approved career training certificate, an associate degree, or a bachelor's degree
- ✓ You previously lost the Lottery Scholarship and/or left college

## WHAT IT COVERS:

- The Opportunity Scholarship covers **full tuition and required fees** for eligible students up to your first bachelor's degree or 160 credit hours, whichever comes first.



# Opportunity Scholarship

## Eligibility:

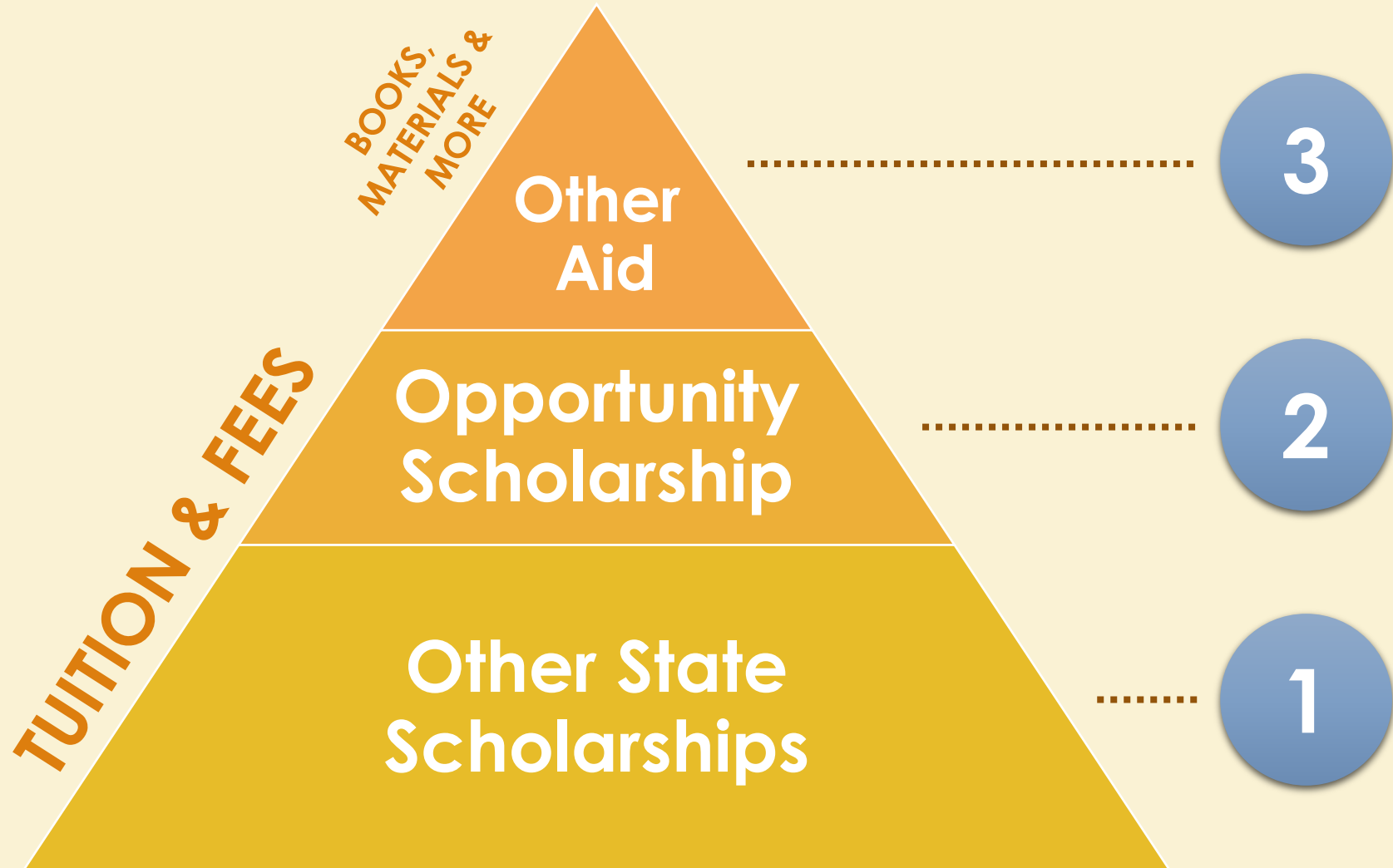
- ✓ You are a New Mexico resident or graduated from a New Mexico high school
- ✓ You enroll full-time or part-time (at least 6 credit hours) at a participating school toward an approved certificate or any associate or bachelor's degree.
- ✓ You establish a 2.5 GPA or higher your first semester receiving the scholarship and maintain this minimum GPA every semester afterward.
- ✓ You have not yet completed 160 credit hours or attained a bachelor's degree (whichever comes first).

# Opportunity Scholarship

*Approved High-Demand Certificate and Trade Programs*

- ✓ Architecture & Engineering
- ✓ Arts, Design & Entertainment
- ✓ Business, Finance, & Management
- ✓ Community & Social Services
- ✓ STEM & IT
- ✓ Construction & Extraction
- ✓ Education & Library Services
- ✓ Food Preparation
- ✓ Healthcare Practice & Technology
- ✓ Healthcare Support
- ✓ Legal Careers
- ✓ Life, Physical, & Social Sciences
- ✓ Management
- ✓ Office & Admin Support
- ✓ Personal Care & Service
- ✓ Protective Service
- ✓ Sales
- ✓ Transportation & Materials Moving

# Stacking Financial Aid for **Opportunity Scholarship** Awardees



Where do I start? **ACE!**



A

**APPLY**

To a participating  
college or university



C

**COMPLETE**

Your Free Application  
for Federal Student  
Aid (FAFSA) \*



E

**ENROLL**

In the required  
number of credit  
hours for your  
scholarship program



## REACH HIGHER NEW MEXICO

[Overview & Eligibility](#) [How it Works](#) [Participating Schools](#) [Frequently Asked Questions](#) [Latest News](#) [Let's Get Started](#)

# Introducing tuition-FREE higher education for every New Mexican.

With the New Mexico Opportunity and Lottery Scholarships, there are options for every New Mexican to pursue higher education without having to worry about the cost of tuition and fees.

[Click Here to Get Started](#)



# FAQ:

## Frequently Asked Questions

**What fees does the Opportunity Scholarship Cover?**

The Opportunity Scholarship covers required fees and course-specific fees.



# FAQ:

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Do I need to be a U.S. citizen to receive the New Mexico Opportunity or Lottery Scholarships?**

No, as long as you are an established New Mexico resident for tuition purposes, you can qualify.



# FAQ:

## Frequently Asked Questions

**If I lost the Lottery Scholarship, can I receive the Opportunity Scholarship immediately the next semester?**

There is a two-year waiting period to qualify for the Opportunity Scholarship if you lose the Lottery Scholarship. However, you can appeal to your college or university to continue as a Lottery student.



# FAQ:

## Frequently Asked Questions

**What if my GPA drops below a 2.5?  
Can I still qualify for the Opportunity  
Scholarship?**

Your school has the option to grant you a probationary semester to reestablish the 2.5 GPA. Otherwise, you can petition for reinstatement after two years.



# FAQ:

## Frequently Asked Questions

**If I am not a New Mexico resident but I receive a tuition-waiver, can I qualify for the Opportunity Scholarship?**

No, you must be an established New Mexico resident to be eligible.



# FAQ:

## Frequently Asked Questions

**I already have credits from a college or university? Can I still receive the Opportunity Scholarship?**

There are no fee caps for certificates and they are stackable! The Opportunity Scholarship covers an associate degree up to 90 credit hours and 160 credit hours for a bachelor's degree. If you have more credits, ask your financial aid office what other financial aid is available.



# FAQ:

## Frequently Asked Questions

**What if I have a hold on my account and cannot get my transcripts or register for classes?**

You will need to contact the Bursar's Office at your school to find out how to remove the hold. Ask them what options may be available.



# FAQ:

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Do I need to provide proof of income to qualify for the Opportunity or Lottery Scholarships?**

No, the New Mexico Opportunity and Lottery Scholarships are not income-based.



# Q&A: Question & Answer Session



Please type your  
question in the  
chat box!

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# THANK YOU!

Contact us!

Financial Aid Hotline:

**1-800-279-9777**

Email: [Fin.Aid@state.nm.us](mailto:Fin.Aid@state.nm.us)



**@NMHigherEd**

For more information, visit

***ReachHigherNM.com***

