

Student Financial Aid in Alaska

Alaska Performance Scholarship
Alaska Education Grant
Higher Education Investment Fund

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House Finance
Education Subcommittee
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acpe.alaska.gov



Background

- **Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE)**
 - Established in Statute (AS 14.42), ACPE:
 - Administers financial aid programs and interstate compacts
 - Serves as an advisor to the Governor, Legislature, and Institutional governing bodies, relative to higher education in Alaska
 - Administers state Institutional Authorization, delivering educational consumer protection
 - Serves as Alaska's Higher Education agency, as required by the federal Higher Education Act
- **Higher Education Investment Fund (HEIF)**
 - Established in Statute (AS 37.14.740), the HEIF is a separate fund for the purpose of making grant and scholarship payments to qualified postsecondary institutions on behalf of eligible students and funding agreements for WWAMI medical education program



Background

- **Alaska Education Grant (AEG)**
 - Established in Alaska Statute, AEG a need-based grant funded by the HEIF and administered by ACPE
 - Provides \$500 - \$4,000 per academic year to eligible students for postsecondary education at qualified postsecondary institutions in Alaska
- **AEG is awarded by highest financial need and date of FAFSA filing, until available funds are exhausted**
 - Financial need is determined by the Student Aid Index (SAI) from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
 - SAI is a number ranging from -1,500 to 999,999
 - A lower or negative SAI indicates higher financial need



Background

■ Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS)

- Established in Statute, APS is Alaska's merit-based scholarship for students who meet specific eligibility criteria during high school
- Students qualify for APS based on:
 - Completing a specified rigorous curriculum
 - Earning a qualifying Grade Point Average (GPA) **OR** minimum score on ACT (formerly American College Test), SAT (formerly Scholastic Assessment Test), or WorkKeys
- Provides up to \$28,000 across eight full-time semesters, within eight years of high school graduation, for use at participating in Alaska postsecondary institutions
- Offers Step-Up opportunity for eligible APS students to increase to a higher award level after meeting specific postsecondary GPA and enrollment criteria



Funding Sources & Levels

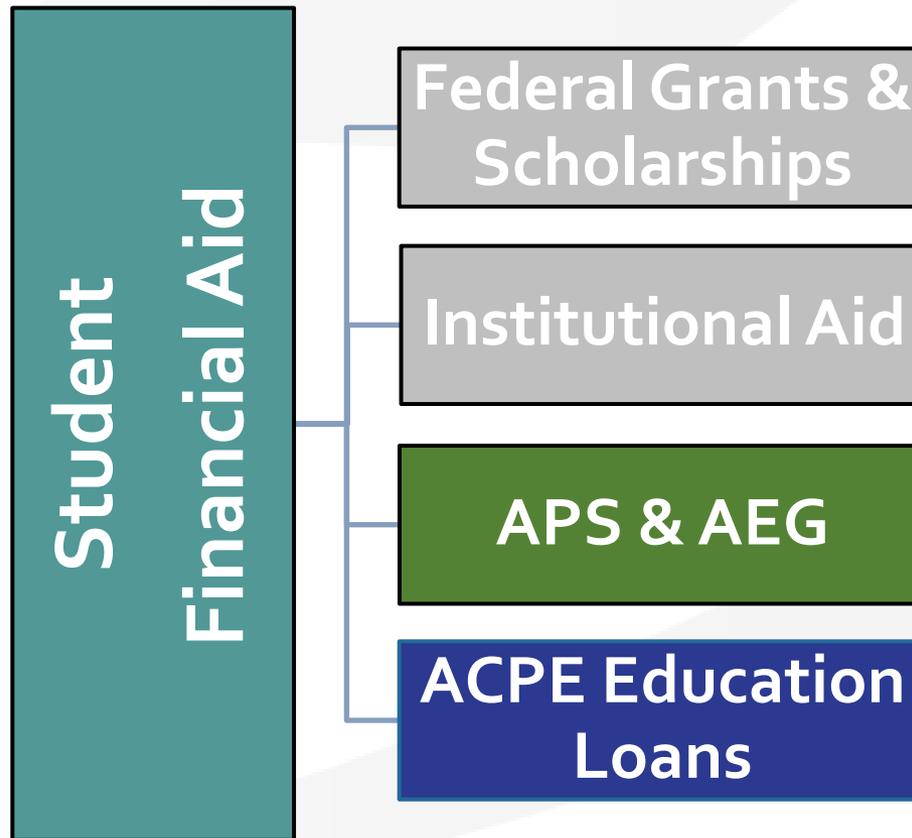


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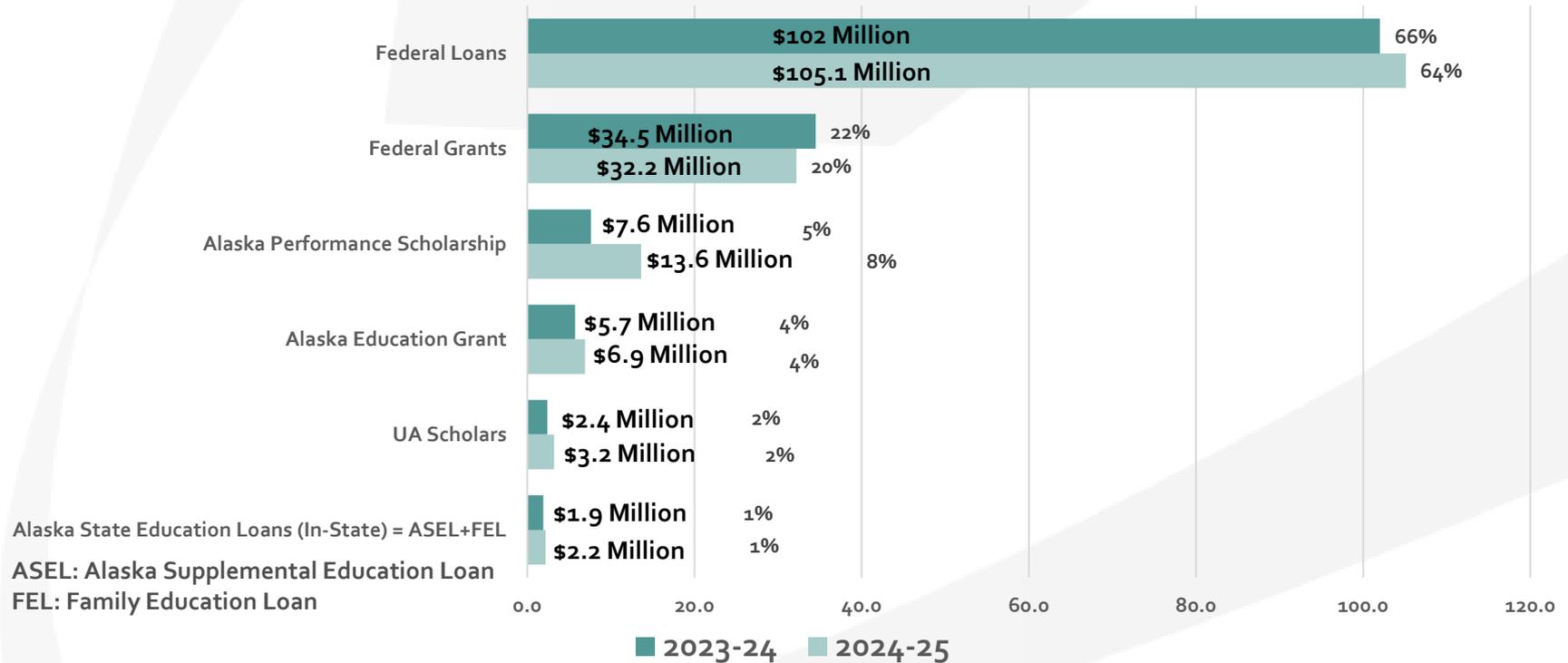
Funding Sources

- Student financial aid is comprised of funds from multiple sources including federal, state, and institutional aid



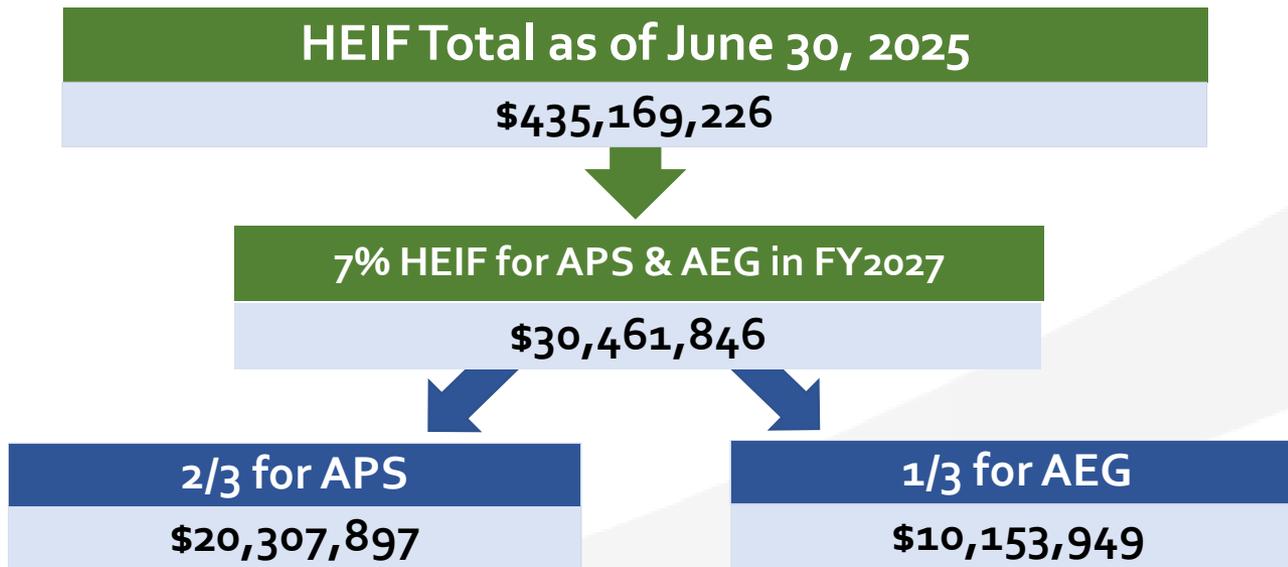
State & Federal Student Aid

Total State and Federal Aid Disbursed in Alaska 2023-2025



Funding Source - HEIF

- HEIF may consist of funding from: money appropriated to the fund; income earned on investment of fund assets; donations to the fund; and money redeposited under 14.43.915(c)
 - Every July, the amount available for APS and AEG is determined by the Department of Revenue (DOR) based on the HEIF's total value as of June 30.



APS Funding

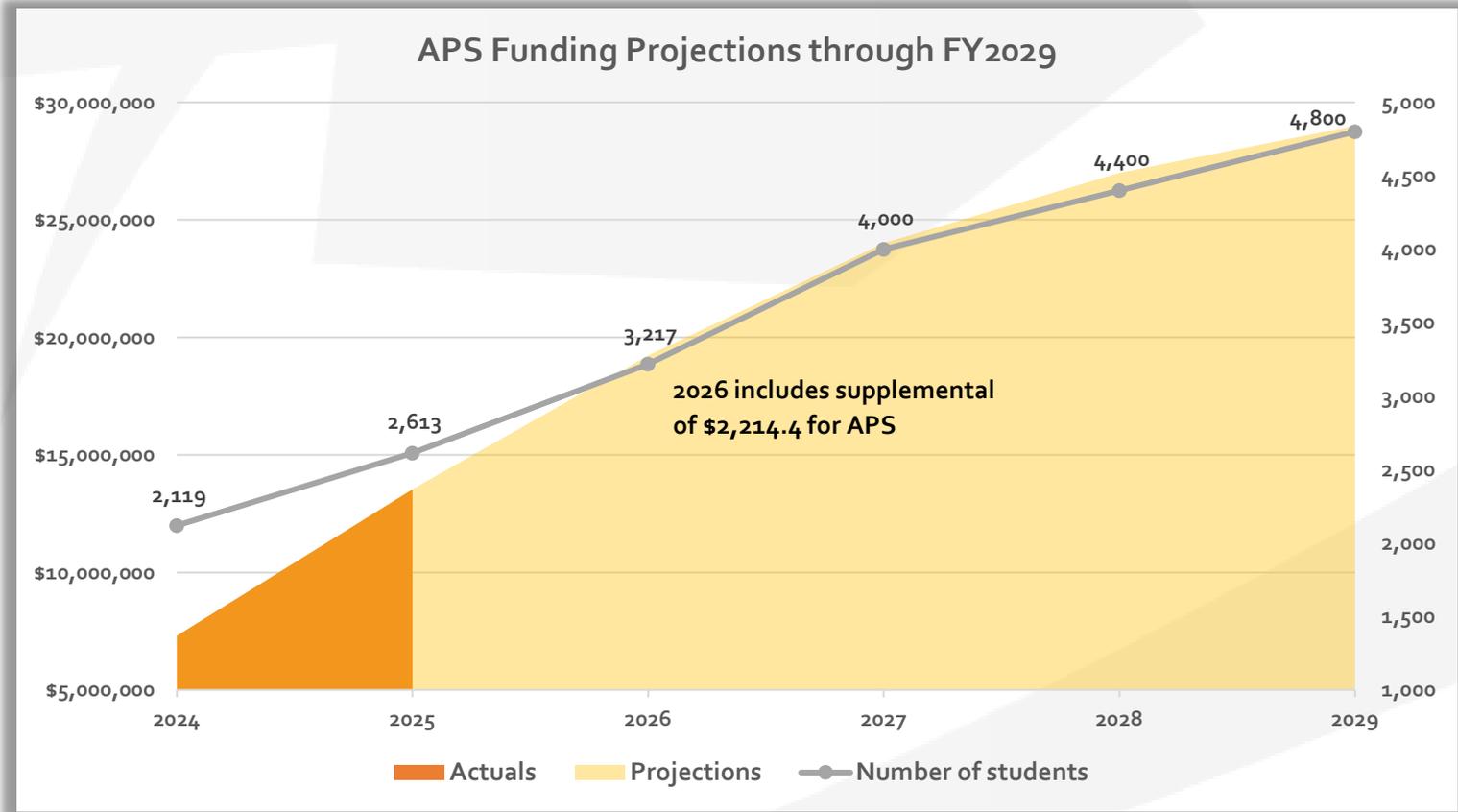
- ACPE's FY2027 budget request for APS is equal to 100% of the funding available from the HEIF (\$20,307,897)
- Passage of HB 148 in 2024 improving the APS program resulted in significant increases in:
 - Number of APS eligible students
 - Number of APS eligible students using APS at an Alaska postsecondary institution or training provider
 - Annual cost of providing full scholarships to eligible students
 - Note: per statute, if there is insufficient funding to provide full scholarships to all eligible students, scholarships shall be prorated



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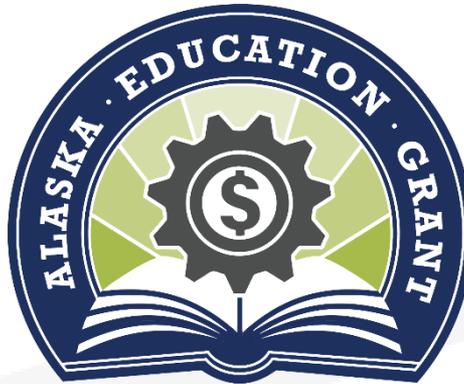


APS Funding Projections



AEG Funding

- ACPE's FY2027 budget request for AEG is equal to 100% of the funding available from the HEIF (\$10,153,949)
 - The amount of HEIF funding available for AEG is proportional to the amount available for APS, as the seven percent from the HEIF is split 2/3 to 1/3 for APS and AEG, respectively
- Any change to APS funding will directly impact AEG funding



AEG Funding

- **Students with the highest financial need (SAI: -1,500 to 0) may not receive AEG due to funding limitations**
 - Since 2024, **over 500 students** in the lowest SAI range did not receive AEG due to funding limitations
- **A student with an SAI of -1,500 up to 6,655 may be eligible to receive a need-based Federal Pell Grant**
 - Since 2024, over **1,900 students** had an SAI between 0 and 6,655, meaning they are *considered high need/Pell-Grant eligible* at the Federal level, but AEG funding was unavailable to them due to limited funding
- **In total, since 2024, over 2,400 Pell-eligible students did not receive AEG due to funding limitations**



Outcomes & Challenges

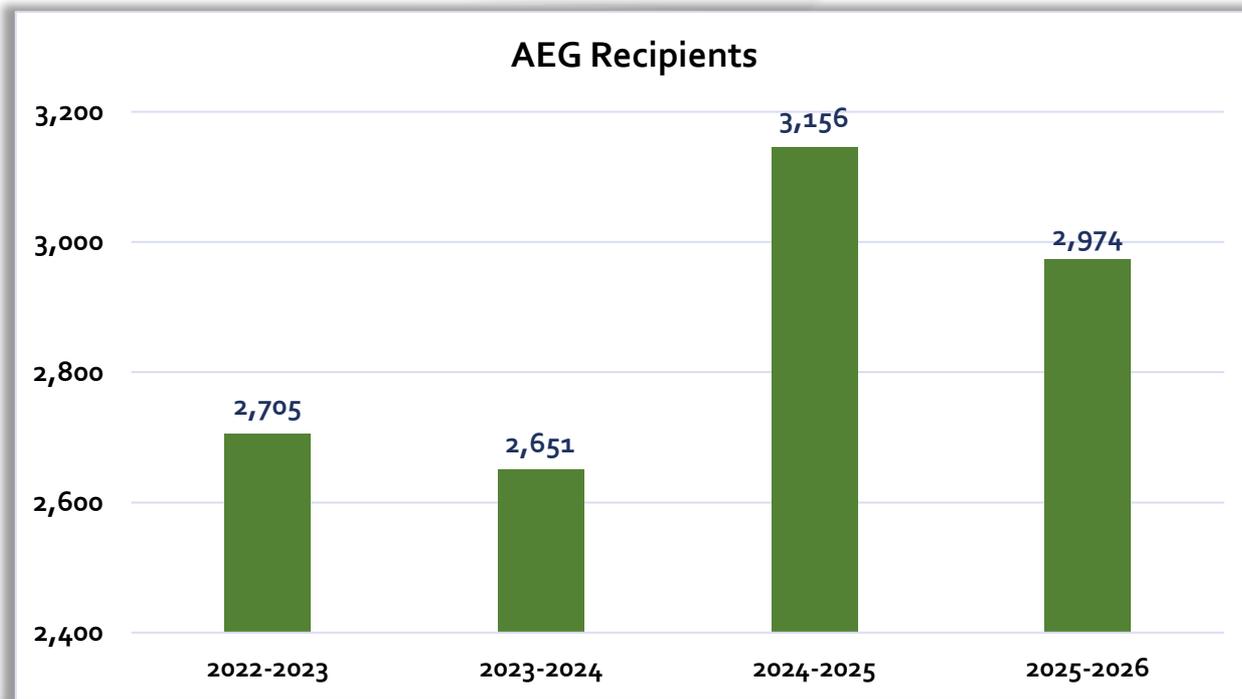


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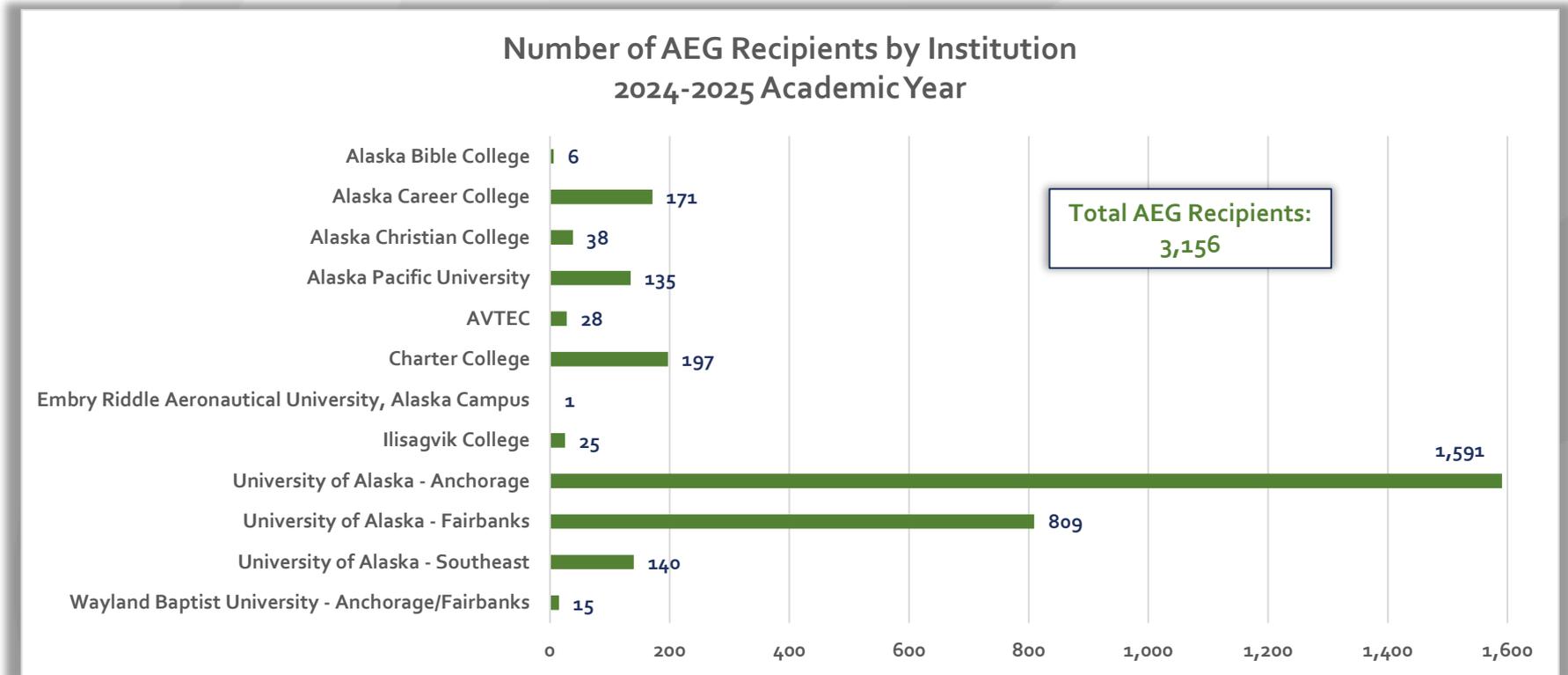
AEG Outcomes

- AEG recipients below are awarded based on meeting financial need and priority awarding criteria
 - 2024-2025 increase in recipients was due to proportional APS funding increase in 24-25 over 23-24
 - 2025-2026 recipients reflect year-to-date information as of January 2026. By June 30, 2026, the number of AEG recipients will exceed the prior year count



AEG Outcomes

- AEG is awarded to students attending eligible Alaska institutions, based on financial need and prioritization criteria



APS Outcomes

- ACPE publishes the APS Outcomes Report to provide relevant data points related to the goals of the APS program, including:
 - Students perform well in high school
 - Students get ready for college or career training
 - Students do well in college or career training
 - High-achieving students continue to live in Alaska

53% Over half of public high school graduates in the Class of 2025 qualified for the APS, an unprecedented rate in the history of the APS program.

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2025	1,167	new highest
2016	924	historical highest
2022	378	lowest

Class of 2025 saw the greatest number of students using the APS award in the fall after graduation.

Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education

ALASKA PERFORMANCE SCHOLARSHIP

Fall 2024-2025

2026 Outcomes REPORT

Prepared By: Research Data, Inc.

Prepared For: Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education

Respectfully Provided By: Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE), Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (EDDE), Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DLWRF), University of Alaska System

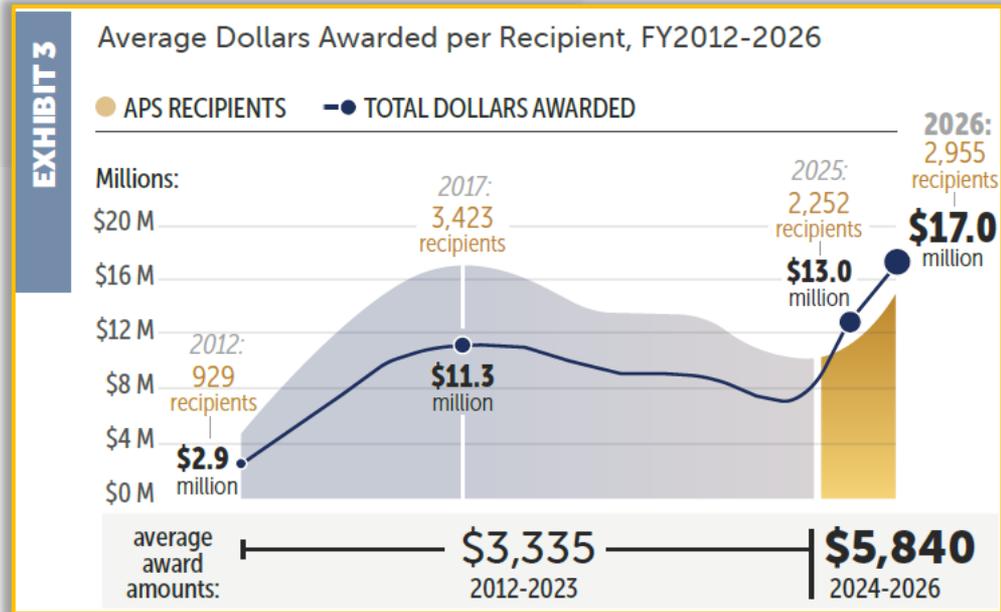


APS Outcomes

EXHIBIT 2 APS Total Dollars Awarded & Recipients, FY2012-2026

AWARD YEAR (AY)	TOTAL DOLLARS AWARDED	RECIPIENTS (EACH AY)
2012	\$2,982,448	929
2013	\$5,653,223	1,717
2014	\$7,823,335	2,330
2015	\$10,046,898	2,976
2016	\$11,055,641	3,358
2017	\$11,285,711	3,423
2018	\$11,079,588	3,358
2019	\$10,156,663	3,089
2020	\$9,371,849	2,835
2021	\$9,334,253	2,798
2022	\$9,194,559	2,689
2023	\$7,822,721	2,281
2024	\$7,299,882	2,119
2025	\$13,018,746	2,252
2026*	\$17,014,000	2,955
TOTAL:	\$143,139,517	<i>n/a</i>

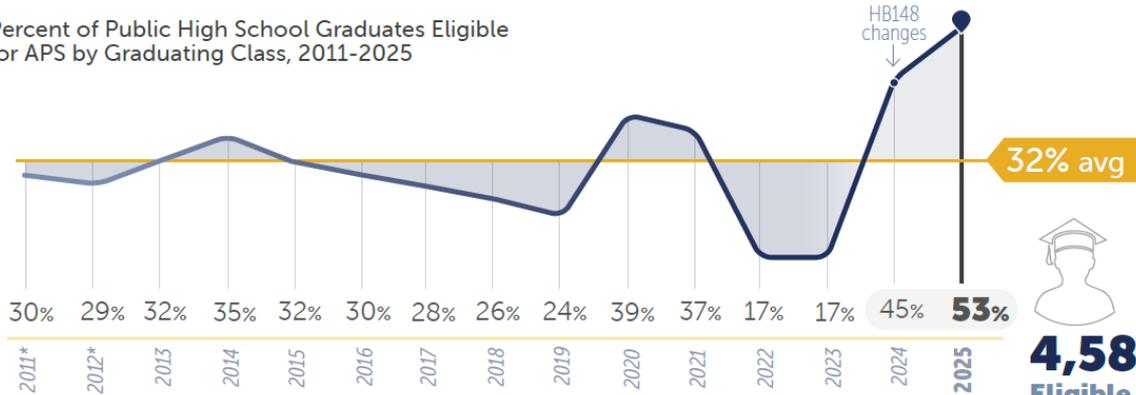
*2026 award and recipient totals are projections based on Fall award amounts (as of Oct 2025).



APS Outcomes

EXHIBIT 4

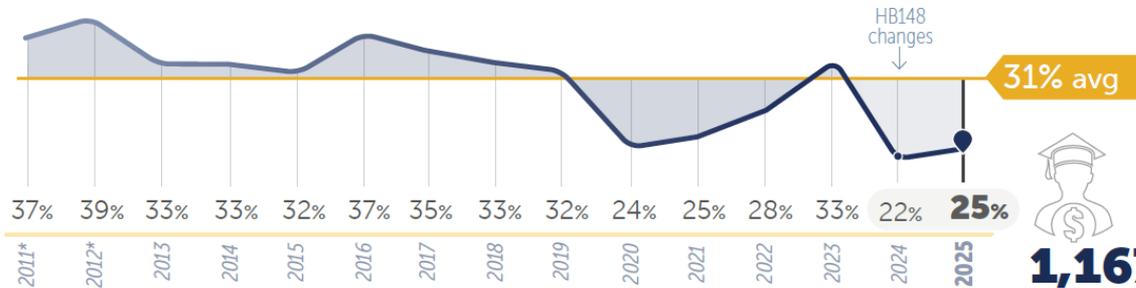
Percent of Public High School Graduates Eligible for APS by Graduating Class, 2011-2025



4,589
Eligible 2025
Graduates

EXHIBIT 5

Percent of Public APS-Eligible Graduates Using APS the Fall After High School Graduation, 2011-2025



1,167
2025 Graduates
Using APS



Challenges

■ Meeting Financial Demands

- APS funding projections indicate substantial and continued growth based on increased eligibility and usage since the passage of HB148 in 2024
 - *The FY2026 budget plus the FY2026 supplemental request, and the FY2027 proposed budget, utilize 100% of the HEIF's calculated APS appropriation amount*
- Limited APS data to analyze impacts of new eligibility requirements (since 2024 only) make projecting program outcomes and funding needs difficult
- AEG eligible students' financial need substantially exceeds funds available
 - *All high-need, AEG eligible students do not receive a disbursement*



Challenges

■ Timing of Award Notifications:

- Students are not informed of final APS eligibility until after graduation
 - *As of 2025, earlier APS awareness & preliminary eligibility notifications are delivered starting in 9th grade*
 - *Final APS eligibility notification is delivered in August, following graduation.*
- AEG-eligible students cannot anticipate receiving the grant and do not know from one year to the next if they will receive a disbursement

■ APS Communication/Awareness Limitations

- Per the annual APS survey, a majority of the Class of 2025 were not aware of legislative changes to the program
 - *Students may not know about new opportunities to gain APS eligibility and/or program improvements implemented since HB148 in 2024*



Financial Aid Communications



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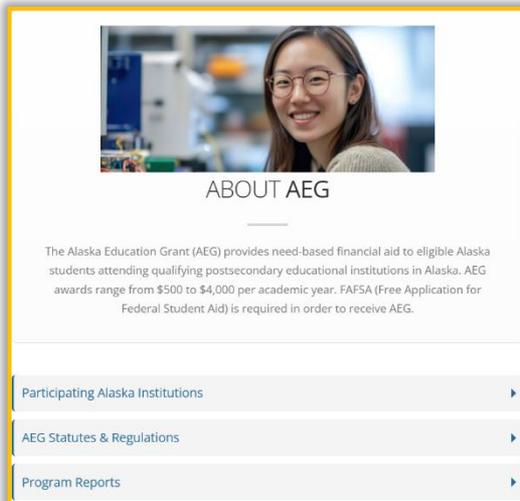
Financial Aid Communications

- ACPE communicates with diverse stakeholders including students, parents, educators, and Legislators
- Relevant content is shared about education funding solutions available to Alaskans including, but not limited to:
 - Alaska Performance Scholarship
 - Alaska Education Grant
 - ACPE's Education Loan Programs, and
 - Federal financial aid programs available by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), including the Pell Grant



Financial Aid Communications

- As administrator of the APS and AEG programs, ACPE's website provides information and materials for both programs including:
 - APS Checklist & Road Map
 - Frequently Asked Questions
 - Institutions & Training Providers
 - Contact Information



ABOUT AEG

The Alaska Education Grant (AEG) provides need-based financial aid to eligible Alaska students attending qualifying postsecondary educational institutions in Alaska. AEG awards range from \$500 to \$4,000 per academic year. FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) is required in order to receive AEG.

- Participating Alaska Institutions
- AEG Statutes & Regulations
- Program Reports



Alaska Performance Scholarship
Everything You Need to Know!

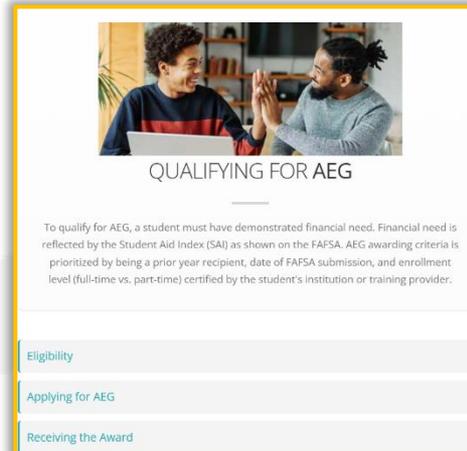
- About APS
- Award Levels & Amounts
- Planning for APS
- Initial Eligibility
- Continuing Eligibility
- Institutions & Training Providers
- Receiving APS
- Step-Up Award
- Private & Homeschool
- Alaska Student Aid Portal

Alaska Performance Scholarship

The Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS) is Alaska's merit-based scholarship program, awarding eligible students up to \$28,000 total towards their postsecondary education. To qualify for APS, Alaska high school students must complete a specific rigorous high school curriculum and meet either a minimum GPA or minimum standardized test score.

Resources At-A-Glance

- APS Checklist & Road Map
- APS FAQ's
- APS Statutes & Regulations
- APS Contact Information



QUALIFYING FOR AEG

To qualify for AEG, a student must have demonstrated financial need. Financial need is reflected by the Student Aid Index (SAI) as shown on the FAFSA. AEG awarding criteria is prioritized by being a prior year recipient, date of FAFSA submission, and enrollment level (full-time vs. part-time) certified by the student's institution or training provider.

- Eligibility
- Applying for AEG
- Receiving the Award



APS Communications

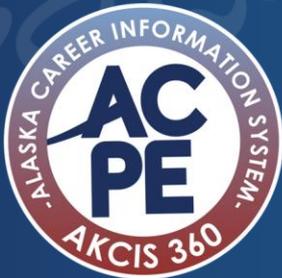
- As APS administrator, ACPE has operationalized an integrated, multi-channel communications strategy related to APS
- This strategy includes the following components:
 - Redesign of APS website
 - Creation & development of APS collateral materials (digital & print)
 - Social media campaigns
 - Large-scale, targeted email communications to students & parents
 - Direct communications & newsletters to educators and counselors
 - APS presentations at professional organizations' conferences
 - Launch of APS training program
- The passage of **HB148** established new communication requirements as follows:
 - School districts notify 9th & 10th graders about the APS program by January 15th
 - School districts notify 11th graders of remaining APS requirements by December 31st
 - ACPE notifies incoming seniors & recent graduates of APS eligibility by August 15th



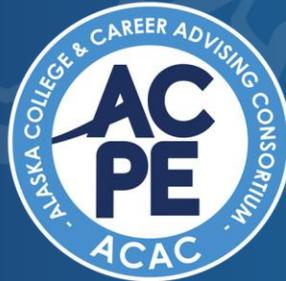
ACPE Outreach Resources



Kids2Careers provides free resources to help 5th -12th grade students explore and plan for education and career training options after high school.



AKCIS 360 is a comprehensive Personal Learning & Career Plan (PLCP) resource for discovering national and Alaska-specific education and career opportunities.



ACAC fosters partnerships with education stakeholders to improve the lives of Alaskans through access to postsecondary education and career training opportunities.



AFCA supports education and workforce development professionals to increase FAFSA completion rates in Alaska through partnerships and statewide collaboration.



The Success Center offers education, career training, and financial aid guidance. Connect in person or virtually for assistance and reach your college & career training goals.



Institutional Authorization serves as the educational consumer protection authority for Alaska's postsecondary students, institutions, and training providers.



Thank You

