

THE EVALUATION OF THE PELL GRANT EXPERIMENTS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS THE EVALUATION OF THE PELL GRANT EXPERIMENTS? The Evaluation of the Pell Grant Experiments will assess the impacts of two different experimental expansions to the Pell Grant eligibility criteria for income-eligible students enrolling in occupational training. It is designed to produce scientifically sound estimates of how changes to Pell Grant eligibility could affect the employment and earnings of people who pursue postsecondary education and training. The evaluation aims to provide schools and policy officials with information about whether offering Pell Grants in these circumstances makes a difference in students' lives in their enrollment in education and job training, their subsequent employment and earnings, and their school-related debts. The specific experiments being evaluated include the following:

Experiment 1: Temporarily expands eligibility for Pell Grants to students who already possess a bachelor's degree (BA) and who enroll in vocational or career programs.

Experiment 2: Temporarily expands eligibility for Pell Grants to students who enroll in certain short-term vocational or career training programs.

WHAT IS A FEDERAL PELL GRANT? A Federal Pell Grant is financial aid usually given to undergraduate students based on financial need that does not have to be repaid. To learn more about Federal Pell Grants, you can visit: <http://studentaid.ed.gov/types/grants-scholarships/pell>.

WHO IS SPONSORING THE STUDY? This evaluation is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education (Institute of Education Sciences and the Office of Federal Student Aid) and its partner, the U.S. Department of Labor.

WHO IS CONDUCTING THE STUDY? The U.S. Department of Education has contracted with Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) and Mathematica Policy Research to conduct the evaluation. Founded in 1991, SPR is a nationally recognized research, evaluation, and technical assistance firm located in Oakland, California. SPR specializes in providing rigorous and responsive services related to employment assistance, job training, education, youth, and philanthropy services. You can learn more about SPR by visiting its website at www.spra.com. Mathematica is an independent research company and a leader in the policy research and analysis field and has been conducting surveys and evaluations for more than 40 years. You can learn more about Mathematica by visiting its website at www.mathematica-mpr.com.

WHO IS PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY? Schools participating in the study responded to the Federal Registry Notice issued by the U.S. Department of Education for recruitment. Students participating in the study were identified by participating schools as meeting the eligibility criteria of Experiment 1 and/or Experiment 2.

WHAT IS THE STUDY DESIGN? As part of the Evaluation of Pell Grant Experiments, eligible applicants at participating schools will be randomly assigned to one of two study groups using a lottery-like process:

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

Group B: Does not receive Pell Grant Experiment funds; however, members of this group will still receive any other financial aid the school determines is available.

Eligible applicants have the same chance of being assigned to the group that will receive Pell Grant funds. Personal characteristics are not taken into account in the lottery process. The random assignment, like a lottery, is a fair way to allocate the special Pell Grant Experiments funds because not all eligible students can be served. The study will use administrative and survey data to compare the outcomes of students in Group A with students in Group B in order to assess the effects of expanded Pell Grant access on educational attainment, employment, and earnings. It is anticipated that eligible applicants will be enrolled in the evaluation over an 18-month period starting in fall 2012.

WHEN WILL STUDY RESULTS BE AVAILABLE? Information will be provided to participating schools and a Federal report can be expected June 2017.

HOW WERE SCHOOLS SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE? The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Federal Student Aid recruited career or vocational postsecondary schools that volunteered for the study.

IS THIS STUDY APPROVED UNDER FEDERAL STATUTES? Yes, the Evaluation of Pell Grant Experiments has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the New England Institutional Review Board (NEIRB).

WHO SHOULD I CONTACT IF I HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR WANT MORE INFORMATION? If you have any questions about the study, you can contact, Andrew Wiegand, project director, toll-free, at (866) 235-7263 or by email at contact@pellexperiments.org. For more information about the study, you can visit the U.S. Department of Education website at <http://www.ed.gov/>.