

AGENCY NAME:	Higher Education Tuition Grants Commission		
AGENCY CODE:	H060	SECTION:	12

Fiscal Year 2017-18 Accountability Report

SUBMISSION FORM

AGENCY MISSION

The mission of the South Carolina Higher Education Tuition Grants Commission is to administer a state-funded, need-based tuition grants program for the State of South Carolina designed to:

- Gain maximum usage of the available independent college facilities located in every region of our state by assisting eligible South Carolina residents to afford the cost of the independent colleges and thereby helping to educate our state citizenry;
- Help offset the higher education costs of attending South Carolina independent colleges for South Carolina students just as the state offsets the higher education costs of state residents attending South Carolina public colleges;
- Preserve the dual system of public and independent college higher education in South Carolina which provides healthy competition between the two sectors;
- Save the state tax dollars that would be appropriated via the automatic per student state subsidy that would go, regardless of financial need or progress towards graduation, to all South Carolina independent college students if they migrated into the South Carolina public college system;
- Give eligible South Carolina residents the opportunity to choose the in-state college that best meets their individual academic needs and preferences.

AGENCY VISION

Provide increased state economic benefits and a more educated citizenry by enabling more South Carolinians to obtain a college education by providing financial assistance in the form of need-based state tuition grants to qualified South Carolina residents electing to attend on a full-time basis certain eligible accredited South Carolina independent junior and senior colleges.

Please select yes or no if the agency has any major or minor (internal or external) recommendations that would allow the agency to operate more effectively and efficiently.

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	Yes	No
RESTRUCTURING RECOMMENDATIONS:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Please identify your agency's preferred contacts for this year's accountability report.

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>
PRIMARY CONTACT:	Katherine (Katie) Harrison	803-896-1121	katie@sctuitiongrants.org
SECONDARY CONTACT:	Earl Mayo	803-896-1122	earl@sctuitiongrants.org

I have reviewed and approved the enclosed FY 2017-18 Accountability Report, which is complete and accurate to the extent of my knowledge.

**AGENCY DIRECTOR
(SIGN AND DATE):**

Katherine Harrison 9/2/18

(TYPE/PRINT NAME):

Katherine Harrison

**BOARD/CMSN CHAIR
(SIGN AND DATE):**

Krista Newkirk 9/12/2018

(TYPE/PRINT NAME):

Krista Newkirk

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AGENCY'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The South Carolina Tuition Grants Program is a “need-based” grants program that was enacted in 1970 by the South Carolina General Assembly as a tuition grants program designed to offset the differences between public college tuition and independent colleges tuition to give South Carolina students the ability to afford to attend the South Carolina college that best meets the student’s academic needs.

The South Carolina Tuition Grants Program is a sound and intelligent investment for the State of South Carolina. The South Carolina independent colleges attended by students receiving Tuition Grants have total operating budgets of over \$750 million and combined capital assets (physical plants and endowments) of over one billion dollars. Thus, the state’s current investment of \$39,476,386 in the South Carolina Tuition Grants Program supports an industry whose economic impact to the state exceeds \$1.75 billion. Although the South Carolina Tuition Grants Program receives only about 4% of the total state dollars going to higher education, South Carolina independent colleges educate over 14% of our state’s full-time students and graduate annually over 23% of the state’s bachelor’s degree recipients. In addition to leveraging available private facilities with this modest investment of funds, the Tuition Grants Program saves the State of South Carolina millions of dollars each year. The savings result from attracting South Carolina students into the South Carolina independent college sector, thereby saving the automatic per student state subsidy that goes to all students attending South Carolina public colleges regardless of financial need and regardless of academic progress towards graduation. The per-student state subsidy averaged \$3,722 in fiscal year 2017-2018 while the average tuition grant was \$2,905. Because of that differential, the State saved \$11,101,396 last year. Since its inception in 1970, it is estimated that the South Carolina Tuition Grants Program has saved the State in excess of \$868 million that tax payers would have spent through direct subsidies to educate these same students in the State's public colleges. This amount does not include the additional state dollars that would have been needed during the last 48 years to build classrooms and dormitories and to hire additional faculty members. It also does not include dollars that went to public colleges in the form of revenue bond issues.

With a customer-service oriented philosophy and staff, the South Carolina Tuition Grants Commission takes great pride in its outstanding public reputation for customer service. The "customers" served by the South Carolina Tuition Grants Program are the students of South Carolina and their families, the 21 South Carolina independent colleges participating through statutory eligibility in the grants program, all the high schools located throughout the state, the members of the South Carolina General Assembly, and the various state agencies with which the Commission coordinates its operations. The South Carolina Tuition Grants Commission comes into contact with all of these constituents throughout the normal operating cycle of a fiscal year.

The day-to-day operation of the South Carolina Tuition Grants Program includes the following:

- 1) Processing over 36,600 applications that are submitted each year for South Carolina Tuition Grant assistance;
- 2) Analyzing all applications for “financial need” using the federal methodology approved by Congress;
- 3) Analyzing all applications to determine if they meet Program eligibility requirements as required by statute and policy;
- 4) Notifying the students and their colleges of their eligibility or ineligibility for grant funds;
- 5) Processing appeals of eligibility from students who are not eligible;
- 6) Disbursing tuition grant funds to each student at his/her college once full-time enrollment status and academic eligibility are confirmed;
- 7) Securely issuing various reports to the participating independent colleges regarding grant eligibility of their South Carolina students;

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- 8) Extensively disseminating South Carolina Tuition Grants Program information to the general public, the South Carolina high schools, and the guidance counselors;
- 9) Responding to all communications from the public concerning general Program information and Program eligibility requirements;
- 10) Communication and coordination with the State Treasurer’s Office, the Comptroller General’s Office, the State Auditor’s Office, the State Executive Budget Office, the State Department of Technology Operations, the State Division of Information Security, the State Human Resources Office, the Commission on Higher Education, the Governor’s Office, the South Carolina General Assembly and its various committees, and all other state agencies involved with administering a state program

Some of the past year's efforts and results that the Commission would like to highlight, all of which will not show up with quantitative results, include:

- A) In the 2017-2018 academic year, 13,588 financially and academically eligible students received South Carolina Tuition Grants. Since the creation of the South Carolina Tuition Grants Program in 1970, over 437,000 Tuition Grants have been made assisting South Carolina students to attain their academic and career goals enabling them to contribute economically and educationally to the State of South Carolina.

- B) For over 15 years the Commission has operated its own Internet web site to send and receive applicant data to and from the participating colleges. Over time, the necessary reports and secure college access to student applicant information via the Internet significantly increased the Commission's efficiency and effectiveness in administering the South Carolina Tuition Grants Program. During the 2014-2015 year, the Commission changed its processing of student applications to attain the highest level of security and protection possible of confidential student information. In August 2014, the Commission moved to a new, security-enhanced web site ensuring that it continues to serve students and families effectively, efficiently, and securely. The Commission’s website continues to be enhanced as needed and updated to maintain high security standards. While not showing up in "measured" ways of doing business, the time and effort involved with information security requirements consumes a larger and larger portion of the work time of agency personnel.

- C) For thirteen years, in collaboration with the South Carolina Educational Assistance Authority (and by extension the South Carolina Student Loan Corporation), the Commission has sent secure tentative eligibility notices via e-mail to students eligible for a South Carolina Tuition Grant. Students provide their e-mail addresses via the Commission’s annual application (the Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Using that information and the web services of SCEAA (provided free of charge to the Commission), as the Commission processes new awards on a weekly basis, students having valid e-mail addresses are notified immediately of their awards. The initial group of 81.35% of students in 2005 received their letters electronically saving the Commission about \$5,000 in postage and printing. In the latest processing year, cost savings for postage alone were over \$14,400 with 99.4% of students receiving their eligibility notices via e-mail. For the past eight years, the Commission moved further into the area of electronically contacting students by additionally notifying students who applied, but were not eligible, via e-mail. In 2017-2018 this provided the Commission almost \$2,600 in additional postage savings giving the agency a total savings of over \$17,000, not including printing and paper. Since the inception of electronic notices to students, the Commission has saved an estimated \$191,000, not including printing and paper. With the web services of SCEAA no longer being available to the Commission after the 2017-2018 award year, due to changes in South Carolina Student Loan Corporation’s business model, the Commission has implemented a new process using the e-mail service provider, JangoMail. The use of JangoMail allows the Commission to continue to save on postage, printing, and paper, while effectively notifying students of their eligibility via e-mail on a weekly basis. Since implementing the new process with JangoMail in March 2018, the Commission has saved an estimated \$15,000.

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D) Of the total state dollars appropriated for the South Carolina Tuition Grants Program in 2017-2018, only 1% of the agency budget, including salaries, benefits and required information security expenses, goes into program Administration, with the remaining 99% of the state funds being awarded directly to South Carolina students in the form of need-based state tuition grants.

Risk Assessment and Mitigation Strategies

The potential most negative impact on the public would be to reduce access to higher education for nearly 13,600 college students and their families. This would hinder the State’s goals to increase the educational level of its citizenry and would result in a further negative impact on the economic future of the State. There is no outside help that could resolve this issue because the General Assembly holds fully within its responsibilities the ability to appropriate funds to keep this from happening. There is only one option for what the General Assembly could do to help resolve the issue before it became a crisis and that is to simply appropriate the needed funds to continue enabling grant-eligible students and their families to afford to attend college to become educated.

Restructuring Recommendations

N/A

Program Needs

An increase of \$1,903,014 in grants funding is being requested for 2019-20 to provide a \$3,450 program-wide maximum grant for an estimated 13,900 eligible students. This request enables the Maximum Grant to be increased by \$150 from the current 2018-2019 Maximum Grant of \$3,300. This increase of \$1.9 million would enable the Maximum Grant to take an incremental step toward matching the Statutory maximum as found in SC Code of Laws, Title 59, Chapter 113, Section 30, Subsection C: “The maximum amount may not exceed the average state appropriation for each full-time student enrolled in the state-supported institutions of higher learning with four-year undergraduate degree programs in the previous year” (for the most recent academic year, the average state appropriation for FTE in the public college sector was \$3,722). Approximately 6% of Tuition Grant recipients are enrolled in non-traditional programs geared toward adult learners, allowing for flexibility in educational delivery methods. The level-funding that was provided for the Program during several years of economic turmoil and the increase in funding that was provided in recent years for the Tuition Grants Program is greatly appreciated by students and their families. In 2016-2017, with the requested increase being approved, the Maximum Grant finally returned to \$3,200 for the first time since 2008-2009. The \$3,200 Maximum Grant again remained level for the 2017-2018 academic year. With generous Legislative support, the Commission received enough of an increase in funding to increase the Maximum Grant to \$3,300 for the 2018-2019 academic year.

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Concerns

1. Disparity of State Funding of Need-based aid versus Merit-based aid for ALL students at both State public and independent colleges.

For all 2017-2018 Tuition Grants Recipients:

Palmetto Fellows: 7.67% (about 1 out of 13) receive both SCTG and Palmetto Fellows.

LIFE: 41.23% (about 2 out of 5) receive both SCTG and LIFE.

HOPE: 7.53% (about 1 out of 13) receive both SCTG and HOPE.

TOTAL: 57.85% receive both Merit and Need-based funds.

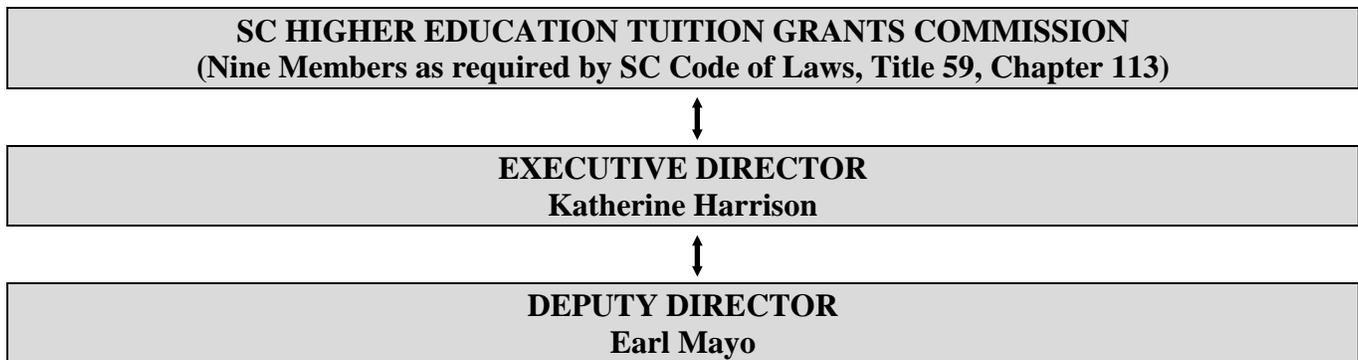
42.15% of Tuition Grants recipients receive ONLY Need-based aid and NO Merit-based Aid.

For Tuition Grants Recipients attending the 5 HBCUs where students may receive Tuition Grants:

39.58% (well below the overall 57.85%) receive both Merit and Need-based funds.

60.42% of HBCU students (more than 3 out of 5) receive ONLY Need-based aid and NO merit-based aid.

ORGANIZATION CHART



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Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement Template

Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective	Type	Item #			Description	2017-18			Time Applicable	Data Source and Availability	Calculation Method	Meaningful Use of Measure
		Goal	Strategy	Measure		Base	Target	Actual				
Education, Training, and Human Development	G	1			Provide increased state economic benefits and a more educated citizenry by enabling more South Carolinians to obtain a college education by providing financial assistance in the form of need-based state tuition grants to qualified South Carolina residents electing to attend on a full-time basis certain eligible accredited South Carolina independent junior and senior colleges.							
	S	1.1			Gain maximum usage of the available independent college facilities located in South Carolina by assisting eligible students afford the cost of the independent colleges and thereby help in the educatin of our state citizenry.							
	M		1.1.1	Increase the number of applications processed		33,378	36,000	36,621	July 1-June 30	Agency Data Base, Updated Daily	Total applications received from federal processor	Provides a measure of the extent to which state residents rely on need-based state financial aid programs to enroll in and persist through college
	M		1.1.2	Increase the number of Tuition Grant recipients		13,214	13,500	13,588	July 1-June 30	Agency Data Base, Updated Daily	Total eligible applications processed by Commission	Demonstrates value of Tuition Grants program by documenting the number of state residents meeting all eligibility requirements and receiving grant assistance
	S	1.2			Help offset the higher education costs of attending South Carolina independent colleges for South Carolina students just as the state offsets the higher education costs of state residents attending South Carolina public colleges.							
	M		1.2.1	Increase the value of the Maximum Tuition Grant Award		\$ 3,200	\$ 3,300	\$ 3,200	July 1-June 30	Commission Meeting Decision in March	Calculated based on prior year awards, projected next year awards, and projected appropriations	Indicates the level to which the state invests in need-based financial assistance for eligible state residents; also necessary to ensure the program does not exceed statutory limit for grant amount
	M		1.2.2	Increase the value of the average Tuition Grant Award		\$ 2,897	\$ 2,850	\$ 2,905	July 1-June 30	Agency Data Base, Updated Weekly	Total dollars disbursed by total recipients	Provides a measure of actual state assistance for the program and is used to demonstrate fiscally responsible use of state tax dollars
	S	1.3			Preserve the dual system of public and independent college higher education in South Carolina which provides healthy competition between the two sectors.							
	M		1.3.1	Maintain a proportional percentage of SC resident FTEs attending eligible independent colleges		16.53%	17.00%	16.23%	July 1-June 30	CHE, Updated Annually	CHEMIS reports through CHE	Demonstrates value of independent colleges and their resources to state citizens
	M		1.3.2	Increase the percentage of SC FTEs attending eligible independent colleges receiving a Tuition Grant		69.00%	70%	68.90%	July 1-June 30	Combined CHE and Tuition Grants Commission Data, Updated Annually	Total full-time SC residents at eligible independent colleges receiving tuition grants	Provides evidence supporting the need for the state to continue providing need-based financial assistance to college students

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Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement Template

Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective	Type	Item #			Description	2017-18			Time Applicable	Data Source and Availability	Calculation Method	Meaningful Use of Measure
		Goal	Strategy	Measure		Base	Target	Actual				
	S	1.4			Attract SC residents into the SC independent college sector to save State tax dollars that would have to be appropriated at a higher dollar value via the automatic subsidy to those students if they migrated into the SC public college system.							
	M	1.4.1			Continue to save State tax dollars in this manner by effectively administering the Tuition Grants Program.	\$11,033,690	\$13,000,000	\$11,101,396	July 1-June 30	Combined CHE and Tuition Grants Commission Data, Updated Annually	Average subsidy per public college minus average TG per recipient times number of TG recipients	Promotes sound fiscal stewardship of state funds by saving dollars that would otherwise be allocated at a higher rate to college students attending public institutions of higher education
Maintaining Safety, Integrity and Security	G	2			Provide protection of agency information and data.							
	S	2.1			Ensure compliance with State and Federal PII and data security requirements by utilizing all available security and encryption mechanisms and by ensuring all software applications maintain current software updates and security patches.							
	M	2.1.1			Number of security incidents resulting in compromised data	0	0	0	July 1-June 30	Notification Emails to Agency from Security Operations Center (SOC)	Maintain and review all SOC notifications sent to agency by the Department of Technology Operations	Protects sensitive and confidential data of state residents applying for the Tuition Grant
	S	2.2			Provide information security training for agency personnel and track completion rates to ensure all staff members receive training.							
	-	2.2.1			Percentage of agency personnel completing information security training	100%	100%	100%	July 1-June 30	Agency Training Records	Check records that agency personnel have completed all required Information Security Training	Promotes information and data security as a critical component of every agency procedure by providing personnel with knowledge and tools to prevent security incidents
Government and Citizens	G	3			Support statewide efforts to provide information and guidance concerning higher education funding options to college-going populations.							
	S	3.1			Increase awareness of Tuition Grants Program and financial aid application process by participating in a variety of outreach opportunities.							
	M	3.1.1			Increase the number of events attended by staff, including high school counselor workshops, financial aid nights, and other events in which information concerning the Tuition Grants Program and the application process can be provided.	14	15	12	July 1-June 30	Agency Tracking Records	Maintain updated records containing outreach event details at the agency level	Provides critical information concerning the Tuition Grants Program and the financial aid application process to college-going population

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Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement Template

Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective	Type	Item #			Description	2018-19			Time Applicable	Data Source and Availability	Calculation Method	Meaningful Use of Measure
		Goal	Strategy	Measure		Base	Target	Actual				
Education, Training, and Human Development	G	1			Provide increased state economic benefits and a more educated citizenry by enabling more South Carolinians to obtain a college education by providing financial assistance in the form of need-based state tuition grants to qualified South Carolina residents electing to attend on a full-time basis certain eligible accredited South Carolina independent junior and senior colleges.							
	S	1.1			Gain maximum usage of the available independent college facilities located in South Carolina by assisting eligible students afford the cost of the independent colleges and thereby help in the educatin of our state citizenry.							
	M		1.1.1	Increase the number of applications processed		36,621	36,700	TBD	July 1-June 30	Agency Data Base, Updated Daily	Total applications received from federal processor	Provides a measure of the extent to which state residents rely on need-based state financial aid programs to enroll in and persist through college
	M		1.1.2	Increase the number of Tuition Grant recipients		13,588	13,500	TBD	July 1-June 30	Agency Data Base, Updated Daily	Total eligible applications processed by Commission	Demonstrates value of Tuition Grants program by documenting the number of state residents meeting all eligibility requirements and receiving grant assistance
	S	1.2			Help offset the higher education costs of attending South Carolina independent colleges for South Carolina students just as the state offsets the higher education costs of state residents attending South Carolina public colleges.							
	M		1.2.1	Increase the value of the Maximum Tuition Grant Award		\$ 3,200	\$ 3,300	\$ 3,300	July 1-June 30	Commission Meeting Decision in March	Calculated based on prior year awards, projected next year awards, and projected appropriations	Indicates the level to which the state invests in need-based financial assistance for eligible state residents; also necessary to ensure the program does not exceed statutory limit for grant amount
	M		1.2.2	Increase the value of the average Tuition Grant Award		\$ 2,905	\$ 2,850	TBD	July 1-June 30	Agency Data Base, Updated Weekly	Total dollars disbursed by total recipients	Provides a measure of actual state assistance for the program and is used to demonstrate fiscally responsible use of state tax dollars
	S	1.3			Preserve the dual system of public and independent college higher education in South Carolina which provides healthy competition between the two sectors.							
	M		1.3.1	Maintain a proportional percentage of SC resident FTEs attending eligible independent colleges		16.23%	17.00%	TBD	July 1-June 30	CHE, Updated Annually	CHEMIS reports through CHE	Demonstrates value of independent colleges and their resources to state citizens
	M		1.3.2	Increase the percentage of SC FTEs attending eligible independent colleges receiving a Tuition Grant		68.90%	70%	TBD	July 1-June 30	Combined CHE and Tuition Grants Commission Data, Updated Annually	Total full-time SC residents at eligible independent colleges receiving tuition grants	Provides evidence supporting the need for the state to continue providing need-based financial assistance to college students

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Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement Template

Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective	Type	Item #			Description	2018-19			Time Applicable	Data Source and Availability	Calculation Method	Meaningful Use of Measure
		Goal	Strategy	Measure		Base	Target	Actual				
	S	1.4			Attract SC residents into the SC independent college sector to save State tax dollars that would have to be appropriated at a higher dollar value via the automatic subsidy to those students if they migrated into the SC public college system.							
	M	1.4.1			Continue to save State tax dollars in this manner by effectively administering the Tuition Grants Program.	\$11,101,396	\$13,000,000	TBD	July 1-June 30	Combined CHE and Tuition Grants Commission Data, Updated Annually	Average subsidy per public college minus average TG per recipient times number of TG recipients	Promotes sound fiscal stewardship of state funds by saving dollars that would otherwise be allocated at a higher rate to college students attending public institutions of higher education
Maintaining Safety, Integrity and Security	G	2			Provide protection of agency information and data.							
	S	2.1			Ensure compliance with State and Federal PII and data security requirements by utilizing all available security and encryption mechanisms and by ensuring all software applications maintain current software updates and security patches.							
	M	2.1.1			Number of security incidents resulting in compromised data	0	0	TBD	July 1-June 30	Notification Emails to Agency from Security Operations Center (SOC)	Maintain and review all SOC notifications sent to agency by the Department of Technology Operations	Protects sensitive and confidential data of state residents applying for the Tuition Grant
	S	2.2			Provide information security training for agency personnel and track completion rates to ensure all staff members receive training.							
	-	2.2.1			Percentage of agency personnel completing information security training	100%	100%	TBD	July 1-June 30	Agency Training Records	Check records that agency personnel have completed all required Information Security Training	Promotes information and data security as a critical component of every agency procedure by providing personnel with knowledge and tools to prevent security incidents
Government and Citizens	G	3			Support statewide efforts to provide information and guidance concerning higher education funding options to college-going populations.							
	S	3.1			Increase awareness of Tuition Grants Program and financial aid application process by participating in a variety of outreach opportunities.							
	M	3.1.1			Increase the number of events attended by staff, including high school counselor workshops, financial aid nights, and other events in which information concerning the Tuition Grants Program and the application process can be provided.	12	15	TBD	July 1-June 30	Agency Tracking Records	Maintain updated records containing outreach event details at the agency level	Provides critical information concerning the Tuition Grants Program and the financial aid application process to college-going population

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Partner Template

Name of Partner Entity	Type of Partner Entity	Description of Partnership	Associated Goal(s)
U. S. Department of Education-Federal Student Aid Office	Federal Government	Provides applications for students and assists with determination of financial need	1
General Assembly	State Government	Provides 100% of Program funding	1
Commission on Higher Education	State Government	Provides data to assist with program administration; Original recipient of Children's Education Endowment Funds, of which the Tuition Grants program receives a percentage	1
SCETV	State Government	Provides annual broadcast about Program to citizens	1,3
21 Eligible SC Independent Colleges	Higher Education Institute	Assists with determination of student eligibility including enrollment and academic eligibility and disburses Tuition Grant funds to recipients	1
All SC High Schools	K-12 Education Institute	Distribute Program information and assist students with applications	1,3
SCICU	Non-Governmental Organization	Advocates for Independent Higher Education in South Carolina including federal and state financial aid, assists with communications to students	1,3
SCISA	Non-Governmental Organization	Advocates for Independent K-12 Education in South Carolina, assists with communications to students	1,3
SCASFAA	Professional Association	Provides professional training and assistance for employees and provides public information on the Program to high schools and colleges state-wide	1,3
NASSGAP	Professional Association	Provides professional training and advocates for State financial aid programs in Washington, DC and nationwide	1
CACRAO	Professional Association	Provides opportunities for Program communication to college admissions personnel and high school guidance counselors	1,3
Department of Technology Operations	State Government	Provides agency-wide desktop computer support and secure server environment for agency data; Provides critical security patches and updates to ensure secure computer operations	2

