

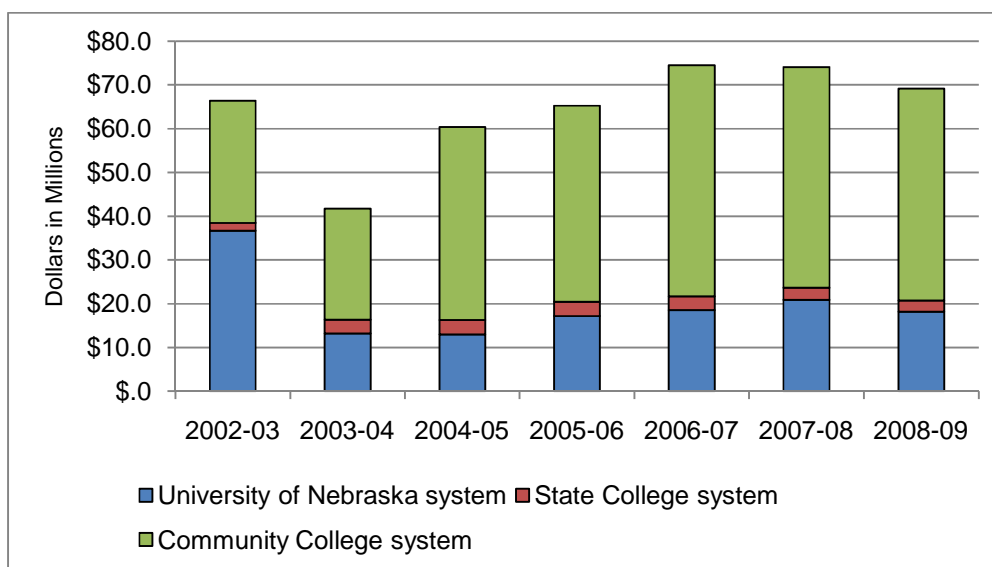
## 1.5 Financial Aid

### Increase need-based financial aid in order to improve access to higher education for Nebraskans with limited financial means.

As another strategic approach to increasing the number of students who enter postsecondary education in Nebraska, the 2003 LR 174 Higher Education Task Force recommended increasing need-based financial aid as a means of improving access to higher education for Nebraskans with limited financial resources. Increasing college costs are making higher education less attainable for students. While there are many sources of financial aid available to students, the amount available has not kept up with increasing costs. This can be illustrated in several ways.

First, there is a substantial amount of unmet financial need in Nebraska. As shown in [Figure 1.5.1](#), the Commission estimates that there was approximately \$69 million in unmet financial need at Nebraska's public colleges and universities in 2008–2009. This is down slightly from more than \$70 million in 2006–2007 and 2007–2008, but still a high, continuing unmet need. Furthermore, these figures do not reflect the unmet need of students at Nebraska's independent colleges and universities and the for-profit/career schools.

**Figure 1.5.1**  
**Unmet Financial Need of Students at Nebraska Public Colleges and Universities**  
**2002–2003 to 2008–2009<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup>Data Source: Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education's Unmet Need Report, compiled from data submitted to the Commission by Nebraska's postsecondary institutions. September 2009.

Second, students and their families are covering an increasing percentage of the costs of education for all sectors of Nebraska's public postsecondary institutions. See pages 11–16 of the Commission's *2008 Tuition, Fees and Financial Aid Report*. The report is available on the Commission's Web site at <http://www.ccpe.state.ne.us/publicdoc/ccpe/Reports/tuition-and-fees/default.asp>.

Finally, students are borrowing at higher and higher levels. The amount borrowed to attend Nebraska's public postsecondary institutions rose 69.1% from 2003–2004 to 2008–2009. The number of loans increased 24.4% from 54,444 in 2003–2004 to 67,717 in 2008–2009.

The State of Nebraska provides need-based financial aid to college students through the Nebraska State Grant program, authorized by the Nebraska Scholarship Act and passed by the Legislature in 2003. In addition, the state provides financial aid through a system of tuition waivers at the Nebraska state colleges and the institutions constituting the University of Nebraska. However, tuition waivers may or may not be need-based, depending on how each institution decides to allocate tuition waivers on the basis of merit or need.

The State of Nebraska also funds the Access College Early (ACE) Scholarship Program. Initiated in fall 2007, ACE scholarships are awarded to eligible low-income Nebraska high school students who take college courses for credit from qualified postsecondary institutions while the students are still in high school.

Since the Nebraska State Grant program is the primary source of state-funded, need-based financial aid for Nebraska residents who are attending postsecondary institutions within the state, the analysis in this section focuses primarily on the changes in the Nebraska State Grant program that occurred between 2003–2004, which is this report's baseline year, and 2008–2009. In this section, other sources of need-based aid also are discussed to present a complete picture of the amount of financial aid available to Nebraskans.

### **The Nebraska State Grant Program and Other Sources of Title IV Financial Aid**

The Nebraska State Grant (NSG) program is one of several programs based on or administered under the guidelines of Title IV of the U.S. Higher Education Act. These programs provide financial aid to students attending postsecondary institutions in Nebraska and include the following federal programs (See [Explanatory Note A8.1](#) in [Appendix 8](#) for definitions of all of the financial aid programs listed below):

- Federal Pell Grant
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)
- Academic Competitiveness Grants (ACG)
- National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent (SMART) Grants
- Federal Work-Study (FWS)
- Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education Grant (TEACH)
- Perkins Loan
- Subsidized (Sub) and Unsubsidized (Unsub) Stafford Loans
- PLUS Loans for Graduate and Professional Degree Students (Grad PLUS)
- PLUS Loans

Federal Pell Grants are awarded to undergraduates who have not yet earned bachelor's degrees and who demonstrate high financial need. Nebraska State Grants are awarded to Nebraska-resident, Pell Grant-eligible students attending eligible Nebraska postsecondary institutions to help students pay their educational expenses. Since Nebraska State Grants are based on Pell Grant eligibility, a student must demonstrate financial need to receive a state grant.

## **Funding of the Nebraska State Grant Program**

- The majority of the funding for the Nebraska State Grant program comes from the state through the Nebraska Lottery and the state's general fund, while the remaining funding comes from the federal government through its regular and special Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership (S/LEAP) authorizations.
- As shown in [Table 1.5.1](#) below, state funding in the amount of \$7,704,305 accounted for 88.2% of the \$8,735,163 awarded through Nebraska state grants in 2003–2004.
- Between 2003–2004 and 2008–2009, state funding increased \$4,414,219 or 57.3%. This amount more than offset the 52.2% decrease of \$537,998 in federal funding so that by 2008–2009, state funding accounted for 96.1% of the \$12,611,384 awarded in state grants.
- In total, the amount of state and federal funding awarded through the state grant program increased 44.4%, from \$8,735,163 in 2003–2004 to \$12,611,384 in 2008–2009.

<b>Table 1.5.1</b> <b>Amounts of Nebraska and Federal Funding</b> <b>for the Nebraska State Grant Program</b> <b>2003–2004 through 2008–2009<sup>1</sup></b>						
Academic Year	State Funding	% of Total	Federal Funding <sup>2</sup>	% of Total	Total Funding	% of Total
2003–2004	\$7,704,305	88.2%	\$1,030,858	11.8%	\$8,735,163	100.0%
2004–2005	\$7,749,542	93.0%	\$587,152	7.0%	\$8,336,694	100.0%
2005–2006	\$9,344,247	94.2%	\$573,348	5.8%	\$9,917,595	100.0%
2006–2007	\$9,809,558	94.4%	\$578,665	5.6%	\$10,388,223	100.0%
2007–2008	\$11,919,109	96.0%	\$502,715	4.0%	\$12,421,824	100.0%
2008–2009	\$12,118,524	96.1%	\$492,860	3.9%	\$12,611,384	100.0%
\$ Change since 2003–2004	\$4,414,219		-\$537,998		\$3,876,221	
% Change since 2003–2004	57.3%		-52.2%		44.4%	

<sup>1</sup>Data Sources: U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education and Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, October 2005–2009.

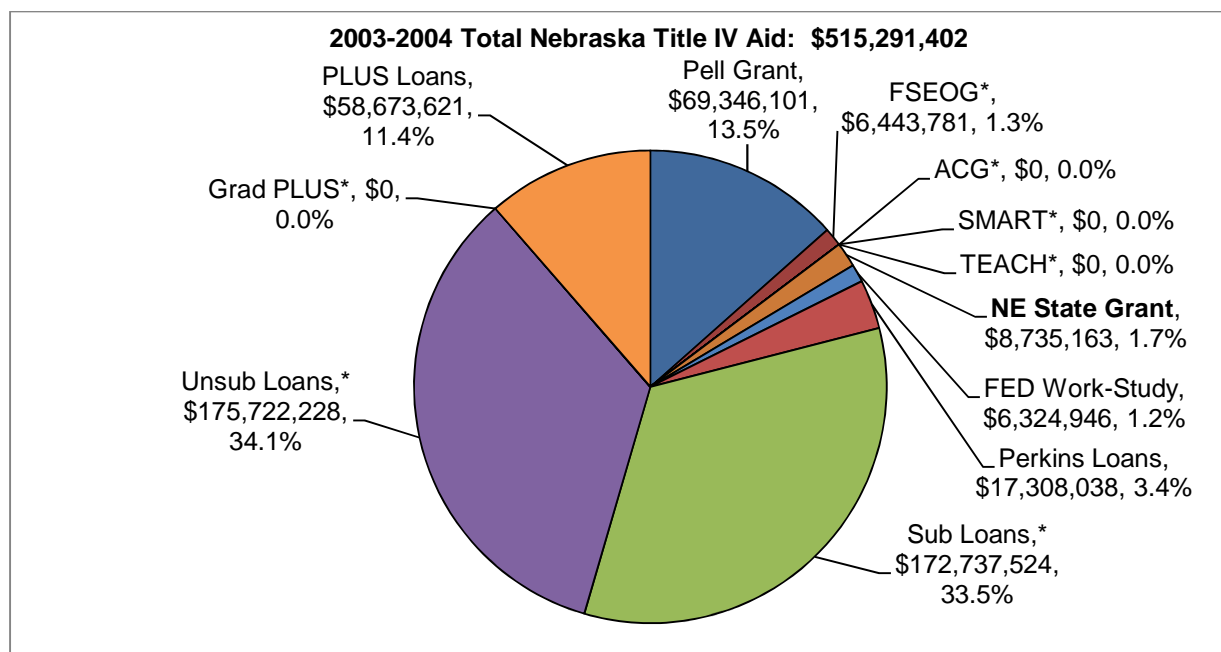
<sup>2</sup>Many states were unable to participate in the federal funding program in the 2003-2004 academic year. Therefore, those that were able to participate, like Nebraska, received extra funding. In the 2004-2005 academic year, many of the states that could not participate in the previous year were able to return to the program which, in turn, reduced the amount of funding to the other participating states.

## The Nebraska State Grant Program as a Percentage of All Title IV Financial Aid

- Between 2003–2004 and 2007–2008, Nebraska State Grants accounted for only a small percentage of all of the total Title IV financial aid awarded through all of the eligible postsecondary institutions in Nebraska.
- As shown in [Figure 1.5.2](#), Nebraska State Grants accounted for 1.7% of the \$515,291,402 in Title IV financial aid that was awarded to students attending Nebraska postsecondary institutions in 2003–2004, including loans that must be repaid.<sup>1</sup> Excluding loans, Nebraska State Grants accounted for 9.6% of the \$90,849,991 in Title IV financial aid awarded to Nebraska college students in 2003–2004.
- As mentioned previously, the State of Nebraska funded \$7,704,305 (88.2%) of the \$8,735,163 awarded in state grants, while the remaining \$1,030,858 was federally funded. As a result, the state-funded portion of the Nebraska Grant State program accounted for 8.5% of the Title IV financial aid awarded in 2003–2004, excluding loans.

**Figure 1.5.2**

### **Total Title IV Federal and State Financial Aid Awarded at All Eligible Nebraska Postsecondary Institutions 2003–2004 Baseline Year<sup>1</sup>**



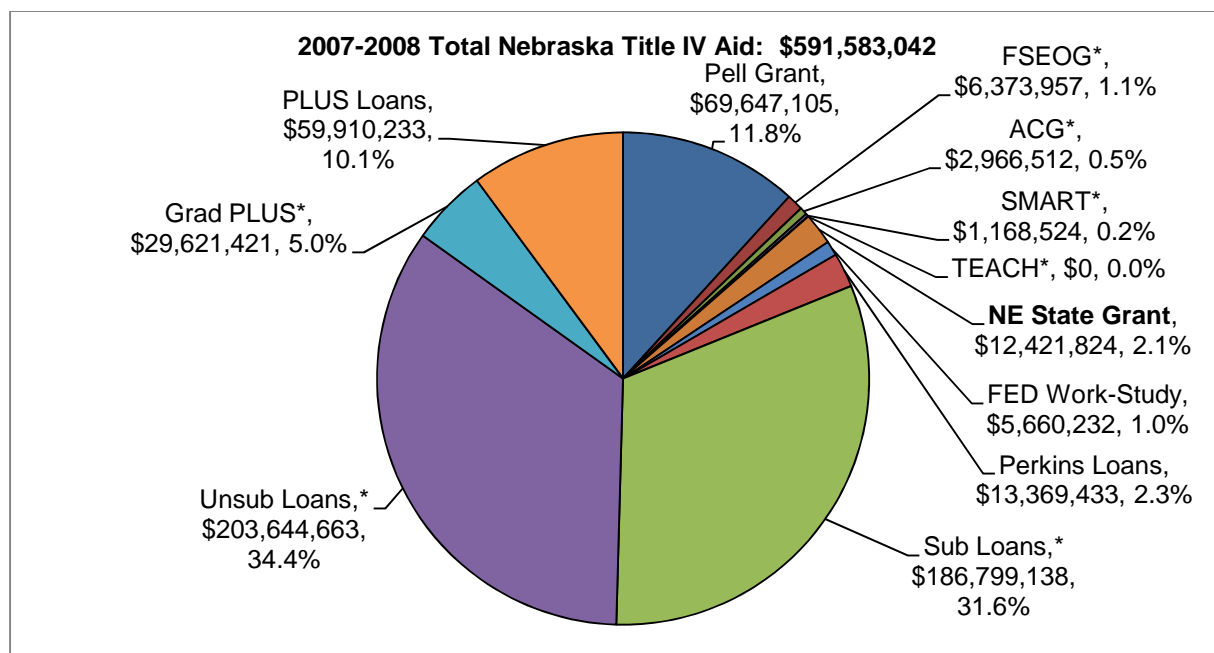
\*FSEOG = Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant; ACG = Academic Competitiveness Grants; SMART = National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent; TEACH = Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education Grants; Grad PLUS = PLUS for Graduate and Professional Degree Students. ACG, SMART and TEACH grants and Grad Plus loans were not available in 2003–2004. Unsub and Sub Loans refer to unsubsidized and subsidized loans. See the [Explanatory Note A8.1](#) in [Appendix 8](#) for information about each of the programs included in this analysis.

<sup>1</sup>Data Sources: U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education, Nebraska DAS Supplements, and Nebraska CCPE, October 2005.

<sup>1</sup>The interest on a Perkins Loan or a subsidized Stafford loan is paid by the federal government while the student borrower is in college. Therefore, this interest is comparable to a grant in the sense that it does not have to be repaid. For the sake of clarification, the amounts reported in this section are for the actual amounts borrowed, not including interest.

- Figure 1.5.3 shows Nebraska State Grants as a percentage of the total amount of financial aid awarded to students attending Nebraska colleges and universities in 2007–2008, the latest year for which federal data for all Nebraska institutions are available. (Comparable amounts for 2008–2009 will be reported in this section of the *2011 Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report*.)
- As shown in Figure 1.5.3, Nebraska State Grants totaled \$12,421,824 and accounted for 2.1% of the \$591,583,042 in Title IV financial aid that was awarded in 2007–2008, including loans.
- Excluding loans, Nebraska State Grants accounted for 12.6% of the \$98,238,154 in Title IV financial aid awarded to Nebraska college students in 2007–2008.
- Of the \$12,421,824 awarded in state grants in 2007–2008, \$11,919,109 (96.0%) was state funded, while the remaining \$502,715 was federally funded. As a result, the state-funded portion of the Nebraska Grant State program accounted for 12.1% of the Title IV financial aid awarded in 2007–2008, compared to 8.5% in 2003–2004, excluding loans.

**Figure 1.5.3**  
**Total Title IV Federal and State Financial Aid**  
**Awarded at All Eligible Nebraska Postsecondary Institutions**  
**2007–2008<sup>1</sup>**



\*FSEOG = Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant; ACG = Academic Competitiveness Grants; SMART = National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent; TEACH = Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education Grants; Grad PLUS = PLUS for Graduate and Professional Degree Students. TEACH grants were not available until 2008–2009. Unsub and Sub Loans refer to unsubsidized and subsidized loans. See the Explanatory Note A8.1 in Appendix 8 for information about each of the programs included in this analysis.

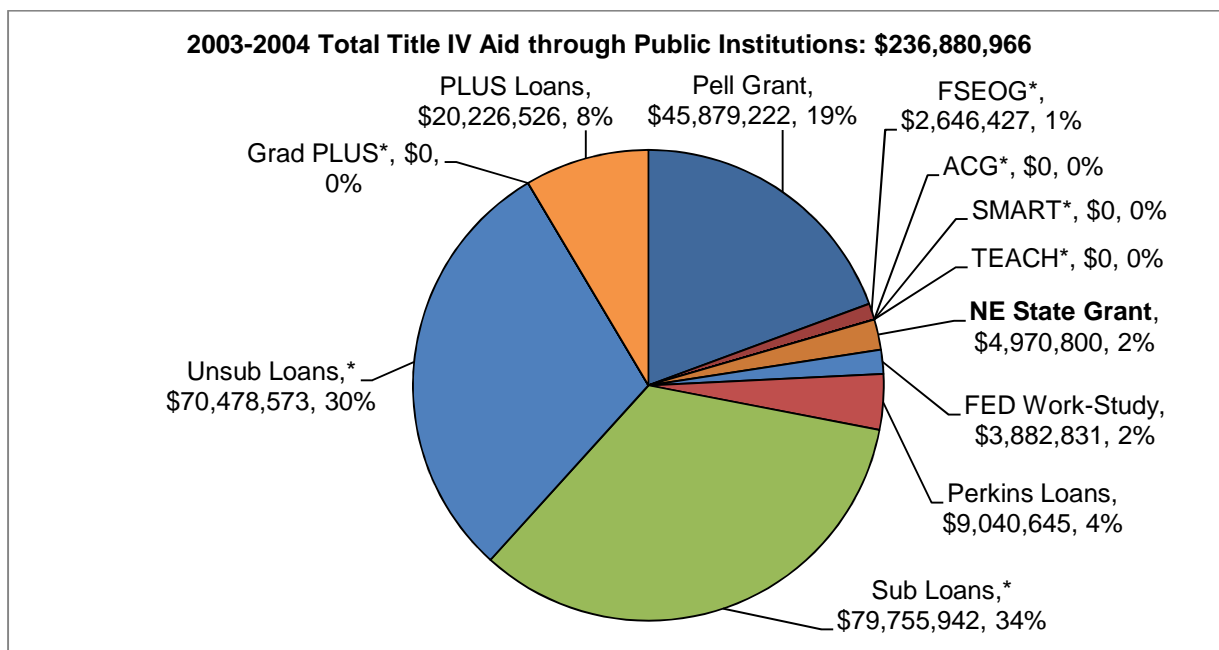
<sup>1</sup>Data Sources: U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education, January 2010, Nebraska DAS Supplements and Nebraska CCPE, October 2008.

**The Nebraska State Grant Program as a Percentage of Title IV Financial Aid Awarded at Nebraska Public Institutions**

**For 2003–2004 (Baseline Year)**

- Of the \$515,291,402 in financial aid that was awarded to students at all of Nebraska’s eligible postsecondary institutions in 2003–2004, \$236,880,966 (46.0%) was awarded to students attending the state’s public institutions, consisting of the University of Nebraska, the Nebraska State College System, and the Nebraska community colleges.
- As shown in Figure 1.5.4, Nebraska State Grants accounted for 2.1% of the \$236,880,966 in financial aid awarded by Nebraska’s public institutions in 2003–2004. Excluding loans, state grants accounted for 8.7% of the \$57,379,280 in Title IV financial aid awarded by public institutions in 2003–2004.
- The State of Nebraska provided \$4,386,690 (88.2 %) of the \$4,970,800 for state grants that were awarded at public institutions, compared to \$584,100 (11.8%) provided by the federal government. Consequently, the state-funded portion of the state grant program accounted for 7.6% of the total Title IV financial aid awarded by Nebraska public institutions in 2003–2004, excluding loans.

**Figure 1.5.4**  
**Total Title IV Federal and State Financial Aid**  
**Awarded at Nebraska Public Postsecondary Institutions**  
**2003–2004<sup>1</sup>**



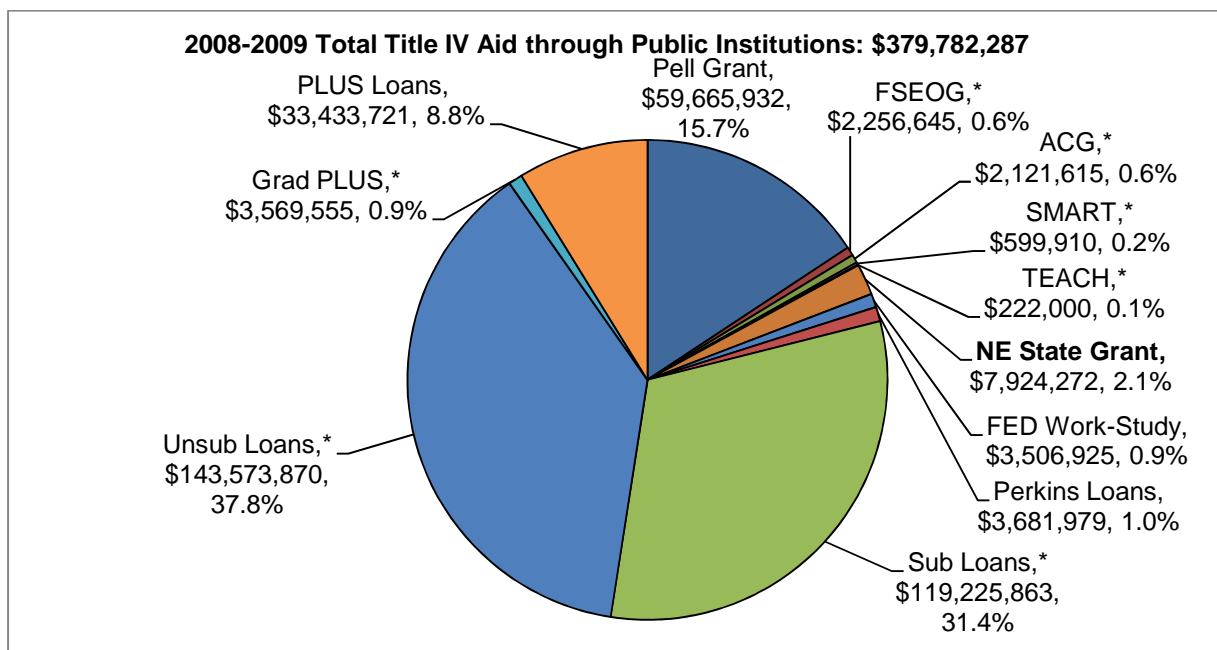
\*FSEOG = Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant; ACG = Academic Competitiveness Grants; SMART = National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent; TEACH = Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education Grants; Grad PLUS = PLUS for Graduate and Professional Degree Students. ACG, SMART and TEACH grants and Grad Plus loans were not available in 2003–2004. Unsub and Sub Loans refer to unsubsidized and subsidized loans. See the Explanatory Note A8.1 in Appendix 8 for information about each of the programs included in this analysis.

<sup>1</sup>Data Sources: U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education, Nebraska DAS Supplements, and Nebraska CCPE, October 2005.

**For 2008–2009**

- The amounts of federal funding for all types of Title IV financial aid that were awarded to students at all of Nebraska’s eligible postsecondary institutions in 2008–2009 are not yet available. However, the amount of aid awarded through each Title IV program to students attending the state’s public institutions in 2008–2009 is available to compare to the amount awarded in 2003–2004.
- A total of \$379,782,287 Title IV financial aid was awarded to students at Nebraska’s public postsecondary institutions in 2008–2009, an increase of \$142,901,321 (60.3%) from the 2003–2004 baseline amount of \$236,880,966.
- As shown in Figure 1.5.5, Nebraska State Grants accounted for 2.1% of the \$379,782,287 awarded to students at public institutions in 2008–2009, including loans. This percentage is the same as it was in 2003–2004, when state grants accounted for 2.1% of the total Title IV financial aid awarded.
- Excluding loans, a total of \$76,297,299 in Title IV financial aid was awarded to students attending public institutions in 2008–2009, an increase of 33.0% from the \$57,379,280 awarded in 2003–2004.

**Figure 1.5.5**  
**Total Title IV Federal and State Financial Aid**  
**Awarded at Nebraska Public Postsecondary Institutions**  
**2008–2009<sup>1</sup>**



\*FSEOG = Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant; ACG = Academic Competitiveness Grants; SMART = National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent; TEACH = Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education Grants; Grad PLUS = PLUS for Graduate and Professional Degree Students. Unsub and Sub Loans refer to unsubsidized and subsidized loans. See the Explanatory Note A8.1 in Appendix 8 for information about each of the programs included in this analysis.

<sup>1</sup>Data Sources: U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education, January 2010, Nebraska DAS Supplements and Nebraska CCPE, October 2009.

- Of the \$76,297,299 awarded through grants or the work-study program in 2008–2009, 10.4% was awarded through the Nebraska State Grant program, compared to 8.7% in 2003–2004, as shown in [Table 1.5.2](#).
- State funds accounted for \$7,561,479 (95.4%) of the \$7,924,272 awarded in state grants to students enrolled at public institutions in 2008–2009, while federal funds accounted for the remaining \$362,793 (4.6%).
- Total federal funding of grants and work study increased by 29.7%, or by \$15,743,230, from \$52,992,590 in 2003–2004 to \$68,735,820 in 2008–2009.
- However, between 2003–2004 and 2008–2009, state funding of state grants increased \$3,174,789 or by 72.4%, from \$4,386,690 to \$7,561,479. As a result, the state funded portion of the Nebraska State Grant program increased from 7.6% of the total Title IV financial aid, excluding loans, awarded through Nebraska public institutions in 2003–2004 to 9.9% in 2008–2009, as shown in [Table 1.5.2](#).

**Table 1.5.2**  
**Need-Based Title IV Federal and State Financial Aid**  
**Awarded at Nebraska Public Postsecondary Institutions**  
**Excluding Loans: 2008–2009 Compared to 2003–2004 Baseline<sup>1</sup>**

Need-Based Title IV Financial Aid	2003–2004		2008–2009		% Change
	Amount Awarded	% of Total	Amount Awarded	% of Total	
<b>Nebraska State Grant</b>					
<b>State-Funded</b>	<b>\$4,386,690</b>	<b>7.6%</b>	<b>\$7,561,479</b>	<b>9.9%</b>	<b>72.4%</b>
Federal-Funded	\$584,110	1.0%	\$362,793	0.5%	-37.9%
Total NE State Grant	\$4,970,800	8.7%	\$7,924,272	10.4%	59.4%
Pell Grant	\$45,879,222	80.0%	\$59,665,932	78.2%	30.1%
FSEOG*	\$2,646,427	4.6%	\$2,256,645	3.0%	-14.7%
ACG**	Not awarded		\$2,121,615	2.8%	NA
SMART**	Not awarded		\$599,910	0.8%	NA
TEACH**			\$222,000	0.3%	NA
Federal Work Study	\$3,882,831	6.8%	\$3,506,925	4.6%	-9.7%
<b>Total Title IV Aid Excluding Loans</b>	<b>\$57,379,280</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>\$76,297,299</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>33.0%</b>

\*FSEOG = Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant.

\*\*Academic Competitive Grants (ACG) and National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent (SMART) Grants were first awarded in 2006–2007. Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grants were first awarded in 2008–2009.

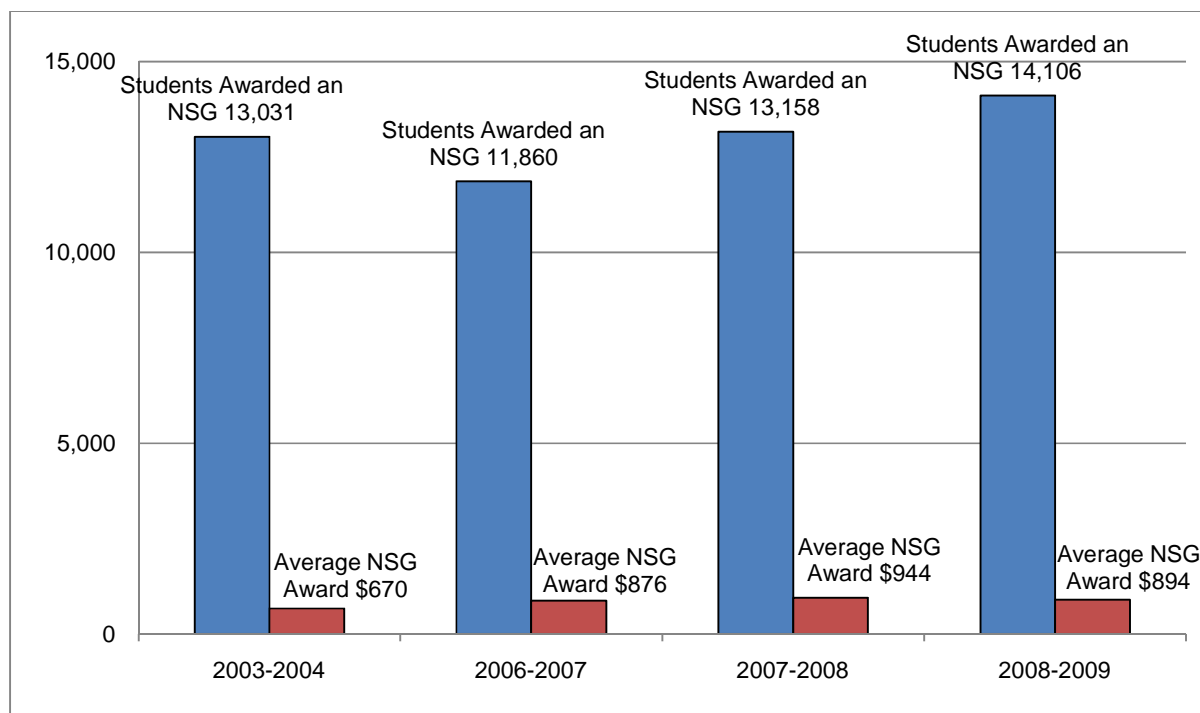
<sup>1</sup>Data Sources: U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education, January 2010, Nebraska DAS Supplements and Nebraska CCPE, October 2009.

## **Number and Average Amount of Nebraska State Grants Awarded**

- The total amount of Nebraska State Grants awarded to Nebraskans attending all eligible postsecondary institutions in Nebraska increased by 44.4%, from \$8,735,163 in 2003–2004 to \$12,611,384 in 2008–2009.
- In 2008–2009, the average awarded grant was \$224 higher than in 2003–2004.
- A higher number of students received state grants in 2008–2009 than in 2007–2008, so the average grant was \$50 lower in 2008–2009, as illustrated in [Figure 1.5.6](#).<sup>1</sup>
- Of the 28,222 Nebraska-resident, Pell Grant-eligible students who attended postsecondary institutions in Nebraska in 2003–2004, 46.2% received state grants. In 2008–2009, 48.2% of the 29,281 eligible students received Nebraska State Grants.
- See [Table A8.1](#) and [Table A8.2](#) in [Appendix 8](#) for supporting data and for additional information about the numbers and amounts of Nebraska State Grants awarded by sector.

**Figure 1.5.6**

**Total Numbers of Students Who Received Nebraska State Grants (NSGs)  
and the Average Grant Awarded: 2006–2007 through 2008–2009  
Compared to 2003–2004 Baseline<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup>Data Source: Nebraska State Grant Expenditure Reports, September 2004 and September 2009.

<sup>1</sup>In 2003–2004, the maximum award a student could receive was 25% of the tuition and mandatory fees charged to a full-time, Nebraska-resident undergraduate student attending the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), resulting in a maximum award of \$1,032. In 2004-2005, the Legislature changed the maximum award to 50% of the tuition and mandatory fees charged by UNL to a full-time, Nebraska-resident undergraduate student. For 2007-2008, the maximum award reverted to the 25% level or \$1,646.

### **Other Need-Based Financial Aid Programs**

Although Title IV-related programs are the primary source of need-based financial aid, other institution-based programs are available to assist students. Programs available through the state's public institutions are funded by the institutions and private sources. In addition, state funding is provided through need-based tuition waivers offered by the Nebraska state colleges and the institutions constituting the University of Nebraska.

- The total amount of need-based financial aid, not including Title IV aid, provided to students by Nebraska's public institutions increased 59.8% between 2003–2004 and 2008–2009, and the amount of aid varied by sector, as shown in Table 1.5.3.
- The amount of funding provided by the University of Nebraska increased 65.2%, while the amount of need-based aid available from the community colleges increased 56.2% and the amount of aid awarded by the Nebraska State College System decreased 21.1% between 2003–2004 and 2008–2009.

<b>Table 1.5.3 Amount of Other Need-Based Financial Aid Awarded by <u>Public</u> Nebraska Postsecondary Institutions by Sector 2008–2009 Compared to 2003–2004 Baseline<sup>1</sup></b>					
Sector	2003–2004		2008–2009		% Change
	\$ Amount	%	\$ Amount <sup>2</sup>	%	
University of Nebraska	\$9,843,307	78.7%	\$16,262,327	81.3%	65.2%
Nebraska State College System	567,739	4.5%	\$448,036	2.2%	-21.1%
Nebraska Community Colleges	\$2,102,256	16.8%	\$3,283,722	16.4%	56.2%
Total Other Need-Based Financial Aid	\$12,513,302	100.0%	\$19,994,085	100.0%	59.8%

<sup>1</sup>Data Source: Nebraska DAS Supplements, October 2005 and October 2009.

<sup>2</sup>2008-2009 amounts do not include aid awarded by Western Nebraska Community College, since no information was reported by the college as of the writing of this report. In 2007-2008, WNCC accounted for 13% of the other need-based aid reported by the six community colleges.

### **The Total Amount of Need-Based Aid Provided Through Nebraska Public Institutions**

- The total amount of need-based financial aid provided to students attending Nebraska's public institutions, including Title IV programs and other need-based aid, but excluding loans, increased 37.8%, from \$69,892,582 in 2003–2004 to \$96,291,384 in 2008–2009, as shown in Table 1.5.4 on the next page.
- As also shown in Table 1.5.4 and illustrated in Figure 1.5.7, the state-funded portion of the Nebraska State Grant program accounted for 6.3% of all of the need-based aid awarded by Nebraska public institutions in 2003–2004, excluding loans.

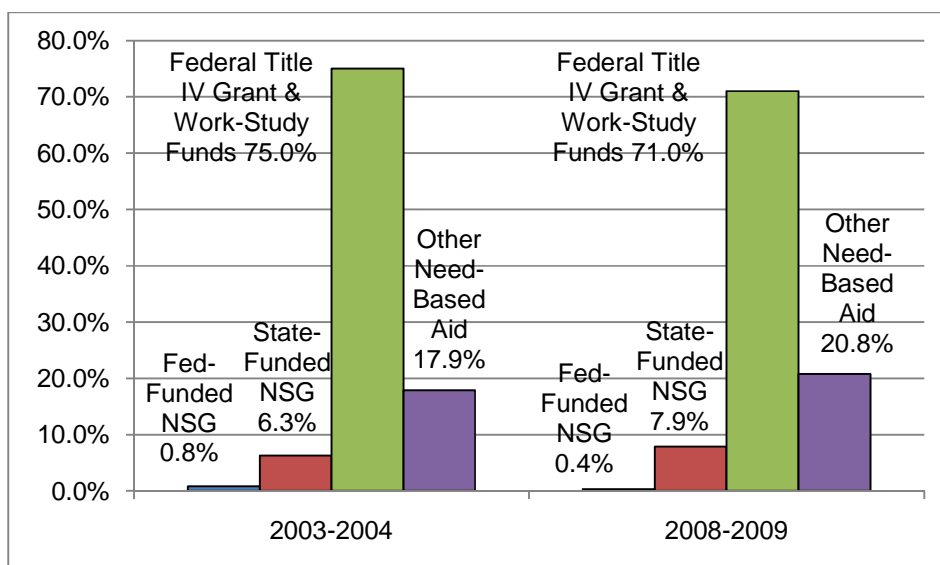
- As the result of a 72.4% increase in state funding and decreases in federal funding for state grants and federal work-study programs that were not offset by the 59.8% increase in institution-based programs, the state-funded portion of the Nebraska State Grant program was 7.9% of all of the need-based aid awarded by Nebraska public colleges and universities in 2008–2009, compared to 6.3% in 2003–2004.

Sector	2003–2004		2008–2009		% Change
	\$ Amount	%	\$ Amount	%	
<b>Nebraska State Grants</b>					
<b>State-Funded</b>	<b>\$4,386,690</b>	<b>6.3%</b>	<b>\$7,561,479</b>	<b>7.9%</b>	<b>72.4%</b>
Federal-Funded	\$584,110	0.8%	\$362,793	0.4%	-37.9%
Federal Title IV Grants & Work-Study Funds	\$52,408,480	75.0%	\$68,373,027	71.0%	30.5%
Other Need-Based Aid	\$12,513,302	17.9%	\$19,994,085	20.8%	59.8%
<b>Total Need-Based Aid Excluding Loans</b>	<b>\$69,892,582</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>\$96,291,384</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>37.8%</b>

<sup>1</sup>Data Source: Nebraska DAS Supplements, October 2005 and October 2009.

**Figure 1.5.7**

**Total Need-Based Financial Aid  
Awarded by Public Nebraska Postsecondary Institutions,  
Excluding Loans: 2008–2009 Compared to 2003–2004 Baseline<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup>Data Source: Nebraska DAS Supplements, October 2005 and October 2009.

## **Access College Early (ACE) Scholarship Program**

As mentioned in the introduction of this section, the State of Nebraska funds the Access College Early (ACE) Scholarship Program, which was started in fall 2007. ACE scholarships are awarded to eligible low-income Nebraska high school students who take courses for credit from postsecondary institutions while the students are in high school.

In 2007–2008, 363 ACE scholarships totaling \$114,856 were awarded to 294 Nebraska high school students from 110 high schools. These students took courses at 11 Nebraska colleges and universities. A total of 171 additional eligible applicants were unable to be awarded scholarships due to insufficient funds.

For the 2008–2009 academic year, the Commission received a federal grant of \$330,000—of which \$100,000 was allocated to the ACE program. This allowed total funding for the year to be \$215,000. As a result of additional funding, 824 ACE scholarships were awarded to students from 146 Nebraska high schools.

The \$100,000 federal grant was available again for the 2009–2010 academic year. However, beginning in 2010–2011, the ACE scholarship program will depend entirely on state funding.

The Commission has received additional state funding for 2009–2010 and 2010–2011. As of the writing of this report, 1,033 ACE scholarships have been awarded to Nebraska high school students to take courses during the current academic year at a dozen colleges and universities in Nebraska, and more scholarships will be awarded before the end of the 2009–2010 academic year.

## **Research on the College Continuation Rates of ACE Scholarship Recipients**

In 2009, the Coordinating Commission conducted research to determine how many of the high school seniors who received ACE scholarships in 2007–2008 continued on to college, compared to other low-income and non-low-income graduates of Nebraska's public high schools. Following is a summary of the methodology and findings of this research.

Using students records and summary reports from the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) and enrollment records from the National Student Clearinghouse, the Coordinating Commission estimated the college continuation rates for male and female low-income and non-low-income students who graduated from Nebraska public high schools during the 2007–2008 school year. For the purposes of this research, low-income students are defined as students who are approved to receive free or reduced-price school lunches. Non-low-income students are students who are not approved for free or reduced-price school lunches.<sup>1</sup> For additional information about the methodology of this research project, refer to Section 1.1.c of this report, which is titled, College Continuation Rates.

As a separate but related project, the Commission used its records of the 2007–2008 ACE scholarship recipients and college enrollment records from the Clearinghouse to calculate the college continuation rates of the male and female scholarship recipients who were seniors in high school during the 2007–2008 school year. The college continuation rates of the high school

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<sup>1</sup>The non-low-income students in this study included at least some students who lived in low-income households but who did not apply for free or reduced-price school lunches. Since participation in the free or reduced-price school lunch program is the only indicant of household income in the student records maintained by the Nebraska Department of Education, low-income students in the non-low-income category could not be identified and excluded for the purposes of analysis.

seniors who received ACE scholarships while they were attending Nebraska public high schools were then compared to the college continuation rates for other low-income and non-low-income graduates of Nebraska's public high schools.

### Summary of Findings

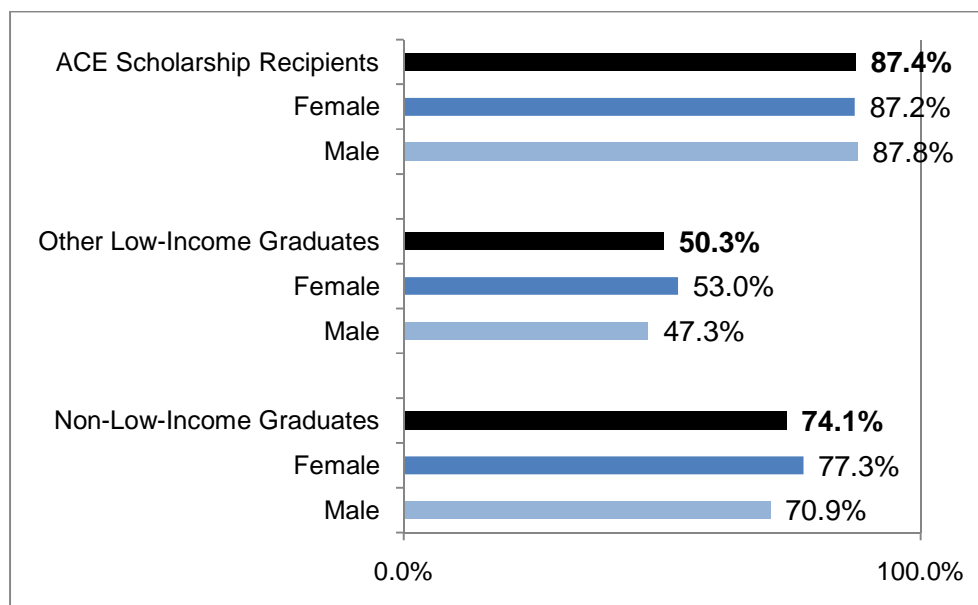
- In total, 87.7% of the high school seniors who received ACE scholarships enrolled in college during the 2008-2009 academic year ending May 31, 2009.
  - Of the 294 high school students who received ACE scholarships in 2007–2008, 220 (74.8%) were seniors and 74 (25.2%) were freshmen, sophomore, or juniors.
  - Of the 220 seniors who received ACE scholarships, 215 (97.7%) attended public high schools, while only five attended nonpublic (private) high schools in Nebraska.
  - All five of the seniors from nonpublic (private) high schools and 87.4% of the seniors from public high schools continued on to college after they left high school.
  - See [Table A8.3](#) in [Appendix 8](#) for supporting data.
- Only one male and four females received ACE scholarships while they were seniors at nonpublic (private) high schools. As mentioned above, all five of these students continued on to college after high school.
- Of the 215 ACE scholarship recipients who attended public high schools, 141 (65.6%) were female and 74 (34.4%) were males. In comparison, 50.3% of all public high school graduates in 2007–2008 were female and 49.7% were male. (See [Table A8.4](#) in [Appendix 8](#) for supporting data.)
- Compared to male scholarship recipients, females accounted for a significantly higher percentage of the public high school seniors who received ACE scholarships. However, the college continuation rates for the male and female scholarship recipients were almost equal. As shown in [Figure 1.5.8](#) on the next page, 87.2% of the female scholarship recipients and 87.8% of the males who received scholarship continued on to college.
- [Figure 1.5.8](#) also shows how the college continuation rates of the public high school seniors who received ACE scholarships in 2007–2008 compare to the percentages of other public high school graduates who continued on to college.
- As shown in [Figure 1.5.8](#), the college continuation rates for public high school seniors who received ACE scholarships in 2007–2008 were significantly higher than the college continuation rates of other low-income graduates from Nebraska's public schools.<sup>1</sup>
  - Whereas 87.4% of the ACE scholarship recipients went to college after they left high school, only 50.3% of the other low-income graduates of Nebraska's public high schools continued on to college.

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<sup>1</sup>To calculate the college continuation rates for other low-income graduates, the 2007–2008 recipients of ACE scholarships were assumed to be included among the male and female low-income graduates that the Nebraska Department of Education reported to the Coordinating Commission. The numbers of other low income graduates were determined by subtracting the numbers of male and female ACE scholarship recipients from the total numbers of male and female low income graduates reported by the Nebraska Department of Education.

- Of the other low-income graduates, 55.2% were females and 44.8% were males.
- Among the low-income students who did not receive ACE scholarships in 2007–2008, 53.0% of the female graduates continued on to college, compared to 47.3% of the males.
- **Figure 1.5.8** also shows that the ACE scholarship recipients who were in the 2007–2008 graduating class had higher college continuation rates than non-low-income students who graduated from public high schools.
  - Compared to 87.4% of the ACE scholarship recipients who continued on to college, the college continuation rate for non-low-income graduates of Nebraska public high schools was 74.1%, or 13.3% points lower.
  - Males and females accounted for almost equal percentages of the graduates from non-low-income households. Specifically, 49.5% were females; 50.5% were males.
  - Like the low-income graduates who did not receive ACE scholarships, the female graduates from non-low-income households had higher college continuation rates than the non-low-income males. As shown in **Figure 1.5.8**, 77.3% of the non-low-income female graduates continued on to college, compared to 70.9% of the males in the same income category.
- See **Table A8.4** and **Table A8.5** for supporting data.

**Figure 1.5.8**  
**College Continuation Rates**  
**for Public High School Seniors Who Received Access Early (ACE) Scholarships**  
**and Other 2007–2008 Graduates of Nebraska Public High Schools**  
**by Gender and Student Income Status<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup>Data Sources: Nebraska’s Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education and National Student Clearinghouse records for ACE scholarship recipient records, July 15, 2009, and Nebraska Department of Education and National Student Clearinghouse enrollment records for all other Nebraska public high school graduates, April 7, 2009. See **Table A8.5** in **Appendix 8** for supporting data and explanatory footnotes.