



State of Connecticut Office of Higher Education

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, June 30, 2022

CONTACT: Noele Kidney
860-947-1800
Noele.kidney@ct.gov

CONNECTICUT OFFICE OF HIGHER EDUCATION LAUNCHES NEW SCHOLARSHIP SOFTWARE SYSTEM TO IMPROVE USER EXPERIENCE

HARTFORD – Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont and Office of Higher Education (OHE) Executive Director Tim Larson today announced that a new student financial aid processing system, to be known as CT Scholars, will go live this Friday, July 1st.

“After several years of effort, I’m thrilled that Connecticut’s largest scholarship program application process has been modernized to make it more secure, efficient and easier to navigate,” said **Lamont**, who along with other members of the State Bond Commission approved the funds in December 2021 to upgrade the decades-old system.

The new system will bring about significant improvements to the State’s ability to manage, administer and analyze all student financial aid programs offered through OHE. CT Scholars is replacing 5 separate Access databases that have been used to process applications for the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship, Minority Teacher Incentive, John R. Justice Loan Reimbursement and GEAR UP programs.

“This modernization effort is the result of several years of focused worked by the dedicated staff of our Student Financial Aid division,” said **Larson**. “This is a fantastic modernization process for Connecticut that will help make interacting with the Office of Higher Education easier for the thousands of students who receive financial assistance each year and the higher education institutions they attend.”

Larson added that CT Scholars is a cloud-based system through Nelnet, a national leader in the creation of custom financial aid management systems for states. The system will allow for student and institutional interactivity, as well as substantially enhance data security and data analysis capabilities.

Phase one goes into effect on July 1st and will allow student users to setup personal accounts via the Student Portal function. This portal will ultimately allow students to view all state aid programs they have received funds from during their collegiate career. Students will also be able to check the status of their financial aid to determine when funds will be sent to their school, a function that was not available to students through the old Access databases.

Ned Lamont, Governor • Timothy D. Larson, Executive Director
450 Columbus Boulevard • Suite 707 • Hartford, CT 06103-1841

www.ohe.ct.gov

An Equal Opportunity Employer

Connecticut's public and private non-profit colleges and university users will be able to setup user capabilities via the institutional portal. This institutional portal will also allow institutional users to certify student eligibility for state financial aid, monitor the status of student aid and run institutional specific data reports, resulting in this being the first time the State of Connecticut has been able to offer such flexible user interactivity for its state financial aid programs.

According to Larson, in August, the OHE Student Financial Aid staff will be holding an on-site training, in conjunction with staff from Nelnet, for financial aid representatives from the state's participating institutions of higher education. This training will provide the attendees with a comprehensive understanding of how CT Scholars will assist them in simplified processing of state student financial aid.

In addition to the above-mentioned scholarship programs, the Office of Higher Education also operates an accelerated hybrid Alternate Route to Certification program for mid-career adults who wish to join the teaching profession; provides support to higher education institutions for increased recruitment, retention and graduation rates of disadvantaged students; administers the state's AmeriCorps national service initiative; serves as the state approving agency for Veterans' education benefits and has oversight over all of the state's private institutions of higher education – which include more than 100 career schools.

END