

# Making Sense of Excelsior



**The idea of free college tuition sounds great on paper, but do you have all of the facts when it comes to your eligibility for an Excelsior Scholarships from NY State?**

New York's Excelsior Scholarship Program comes with both "fine print" and funding restrictions that mean students may be taking a significant risk in betting on "free tuition" to guide their decision about where to attend college. Important details about the Excelsior Scholarship Program should signal caution:

## Eligibility is limited.

If demand for the program outpaces the available funding (\$87 million in its first year, expanding to \$163 million by 2019), the state will determine which eligible students receive an award. It is projected that funding will be sufficient to accommodate just 32,000 students of 940,000 eligible families, giving students a three percent chance of receiving an award.

## Free doesn't mean free.

The "free tuition" plan offered by the Excelsior Scholarship Program does not cover room, board, or other fees that will continue to be charged to students who select a public college or university. These expenses average approximately \$13,000, twice the tuition charged at New York's public colleges and universities.

## A reward or a loan?

To qualify for Excelsior, students must attend school full time (30 credits per year) and be on track to graduate within four years. After graduation, scholarship recipients must live and work in New York for as many years as they received a tuition award. If they break that commitment, the tuition grant becomes a loan that must be repaid.

**Villa is where your college education is within reach.**

.....  
**99%**

*of Villa students receive financial aid.*

.....  
**96%**

*of students receive Villa funded grants and scholarships.*

.....  
**Looking for more information?**

The Office of Financial Aid is here to help answer your questions.

Contact **Aimee Murch, Director of Financial Aid: MURCHA@VILLA.EDU** or **716.961.1849**