



**READY TO
SUCCEED
SCHOLARSHIP**

**2016-17
PROGRAM
GUIDELINES**

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1.0	07/2016	2016-17 Initial Publication

Summary of Changes

Section	Description	Change
V.B	Academic Achievement	Added example to clarify that fluctuation in GPA during the academic year should not be reported to PHEAA. Only the GPA captured when the school checks Academic Progress should be reported for RTSS purposes.
V.E.1	Transfer Students	Added language and an example to clarify how to report GPA for transfer students.
V.F	Dual Enrollment Students	Added section to clarify how to report GPA and Academic Level for students who were in dual enrollment programs.
VIII.E	Income Verification and Institutional Responsibility	Added section to clarify that institutions should not certify or credit RTSS awards for students whose Income Verification review is not yet complete and to help schools identify which students are under review.
XII.C.2	Student Drops to Less-than-Half-Time	Added language to clarify the term “drop.”
XIX.C	Multiple Reconciliation Rosters	New Policy: PHEAA will automatically generate an additional reconciliation roster if the school has at least one certified, undisbursed award.
XXIV	Timeline for the RTSS Program	Updated for 2016-17 Award Year

I. ASSISTING HIGH-ACHIEVING, MIDDLE-INCOME STUDENTS

Under the traditional Pennsylvania State Grant (State Grant) Program, many middle-income students do not meet the financial need component and are thus precluded from the opportunity to receive State Grant awards. Policy makers realize that many of these students could still benefit from financial assistance when pursuing higher education, as indicated by the high levels of student loan indebtedness middle-income students may face. In response to this issue, legislative officials in Pennsylvania created a new program to target these middle-income students. Act 33 of 2015 authorized PHEAA to administer the Ready to Succeed Scholarship (RTSS) Program, which was originally created in HB 278 in 2014. RTSS is a program that generally follows the same guidelines and policies as the State Grant Program with a few modifications that are RTSS-specific.

These differences include the introduction of a merit component, clarification of the term “middle-income” through a maximum income requirement, and establishment of a minimum academic level for participating students, as well as the use of a new cash management model.

The goal of the award is to expand financial aid in order to assist in reducing debt burdens on high-achieving, middle-income students. Awards will be made on a first-come, first-served basis based upon the completion date of each student’s Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) and State Grant Form (SGF).

II. ELIGIBLE RTSS INSTITUTIONS

Institutions eligible to apply to participate in the RTSS Program include the following:

- Institutions approved to participate in the State Grant Program and domiciled and headquartered with their principal physical location in the Commonwealth no later than June 30, 2016. Physical location means a location with qualified on-site administrative staff responsible for the overall administrative operation of all educational activities including but not limited to instructional oversight, counseling, advising, library services, and maintenance of academic records.
- Postsecondary schools incorporated and headquartered within Pennsylvania that also meet the above criteria – but which are owned by a parent company – are also eligible, provided the parent company of the school is also domiciled and headquartered within Pennsylvania.

Once approved for participation in the RTSS Program, institutions must continue to meet the above criteria. PHEAA reserves the right to repeal program approval status based upon an institution’s change in status if the institution no longer meets all applicable criteria listed above.

Additionally, it should be noted that an approved RTSS institution is required to inform PHEAA if a change of ownership occurs within the institution. It should be noted that such a change of ownership may impact the participating institution’s RTSS eligibility.

III. INSTITUTIONAL APPLICATION

Institutions that are interested in participating in the RTSS Program are required to complete a one-time application in which they agree to abide by all of the terms, conditions, and guidelines provided for the Ready to Succeed Scholarship. The deadline for submission of a completed application for the 2016-17 Award Year is August 15, 2016. Applications are available on PHEAA’s website at PHEAA.org/rtss.

Institutions with branch campuses must submit separate applications for each campus unless the school is processed as a roll-up school by PHEAA for disbursement purposes.

Institutions will be notified regarding the status of their applications. Notification of approval or denial of an institution’s application will be mailed to the RTSS contact provided on the completed application. Notification of approval will also be sent to the institution via PageCenter.

In the event that PHEAA determines an institution’s application is incomplete, notification will be sent via PageCenter. A hard copy of this notification, along with the incomplete application, will also be mailed back to the institution in question to facilitate completion of the application.

PageCenter notification letters will be housed with regular State Grant Program communications in the Grants application of the institution's mailbox. RTSS application letters can be found with a Pageset beginning in "GCLGLTR" and a description of "College LTRS – PHEAA Letters."

IV. ELIGIBLE PROGRAMS OF STUDY

An eligible program of study for the RTSS Program must meet the same program guidelines for the length of program and the credential awarded that are currently applicable to the State Grant Program. Briefly, that means that the program of study must be at least two academic years in length and offered over a period of at least 15 months (no less than 60 weeks of instruction). Two academic years is defined as the equivalent of a minimum of 60 semester credits or 90 quarter credits for a degree program or at least 1,800 clock hours for a non-degree program. Programs leading to an Associate Degree in Specialized Technology or an Associate Degree in Specialized Business must have a minimum of 1,500 clock hours, 60 semester credits, or 90 quarter credits. All eligible programs must lead to a recognized certificate, diploma, or degree. Additionally, enrollment in any approved program of study must meet the minimum 50 percent classroom instruction requirement. Students who are nominated for RTSS are not eligible to be nominated for the State Grant Distance Education Pilot (SGDEPP). Additional details on eligible program for study requirements for the State Grant Program are available in the latest version of the *Pennsylvania State Grant Program Handbook*.

V. ELIGIBLE RTSS STUDENTS

All of the eligibility requirements for the State Grant Program apply to students receiving RTSS Program funds with three exceptions:

1. Students must demonstrate outstanding academic achievement by attaining a minimum cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.25 at the time the school checks academic progress for the State Grant Program,
2. Students must complete at least one academic year—defined as having earned at least 24 semester credits or their equivalent—by the time the school checks academic progress for the State Grant Program, and
3. Students' total annual family income may not exceed \$110,000.

In effect, students whose total family income might normally preclude their State Grant Program eligibility may now qualify to receive an award provided they meet certain income and academic achievement requirements.

Any student who does not meet all of the requirements outlined above will be determined ineligible. In addition, students not eligible to receive funds through the State Grant Program for reasons other than Reject E (Expected Family Contribution too High) or Reject M (Calculated Award Amount Below the Minimum) will also be considered ineligible for the RTSS Program. A third group of ineligible students will be those who receive \$1,501 or more in State Grant Program funds.

A. General Eligibility Requirements

Students who are eligible to benefit from the RTSS Program must have completed a FAFSA® and a SGF in order to be considered. Additionally, qualified individuals must be currently enrolled students for the 2016-17 Academic Year who meet the State Grant Program eligibility requirements (with the exception of the financial need component) including the minimum 50 percent in-classroom instruction enrollment requirement on a term-by-term basis. Students enrolling in programs that, by definition, are online programs are ineligible for RTSS funds. Students in an approved program of study must be enrolled at least half-time in order to be considered eligible to receive either RTSS Program or State Grant funds.

Students cannot have, nor can they have completed the requirements for, a first baccalaureate or professional degree from any institution.

B. Academic Achievement

Unique to the RTSS Program, outstanding academic achievement is defined as the attainment of a cumulative GPA of at least 3.25 as of the end of the Spring or Summer term of 2016—defined by when a school checks academic progress for the State Grant Program for the 2016-17 Award Year. This means that students attending institutions that check academic progress for the State Grant Program at the end of the spring term (“Summer headers”) must attain this minimum cumulative GPA by the end of the spring term immediately preceding the academic year for which funds are sought. Students attending institutions that check academic progress for the State Grant Program at the end of the summer term (“Summer trailers”) must attain this minimum cumulative GPA by the end of the summer term immediately preceding the academic year for which funds are sought.

State Grant Yearly Cycle Options					School Checks GPA:
Option 1 – Summer “Header”	Summer	Fall	Winter (if applicable)	Spring	End of Spring term
Option 2 – Summer “Trailer”	Fall	Winter (if applicable)	Spring	Summer	End of Summer term

Only the cumulative GPA earned as of the end of the award year immediately preceding the academic year in which the award is sought may be used to determine RTSS eligibility. This figure will be treated as a snapshot of a student’s achievement. Therefore, fluctuations in a student’s cumulative GPA after the time of review (the end of the spring term for “Summer headers” and the end of the summer term for “Summer trailers”) should not be reported during the subsequent award year, as they will not impact a student’s eligibility for that award year. The fact that students cannot make up academic progress to earn or reinstate an award later on in the academic year is a requirement unique to the RTSS Program.

The cumulative GPA indicated on the student’s academic transcript is the GPA that will be used for the RTSS Program. This GPA may include up to 12 remedial credits. Schools without traditional numeric grades must convert letter grades to numeric values using standard accepted practices in order to determine student eligibility for the RTSS Program.

GPA Conversion: Standard Accepted Practices	
A	4.0 quality points
A-	3.7 quality points
B+	3.3 quality points
B	3.0 quality points
B-	2.7 quality points
C+	2.3 quality points
C	2.0 quality points
D	1.0 quality points
F	0.0 quality points

Example: Reviewing GPA

Student A attends a school that checks progress at the end of the Spring 2016 term. At the time the school checks progress, the student has a 3.25 GPA. The student meets all other eligibility criteria and is nominated for the 2016-17 Award Year. By the start of the Spring 2017 term, the student’s GPA drops to a 3.17. The school should **NOT** report the change in the student’s GPA. The 3.25 captured when the school checked academic progress is the GPA that should be reported for RTSS purposes for the **entirety** of the 2016-17 Award Year.

C. Academic Level

Students cannot become eligible for the RTSS Program until the completion of at least one academic year, as defined by PHEAA. PHEAA defines the minimum academic year length as 24 semester credits for degree programs. Institutions operating on a quarter schedule and using semester credits would also need to meet the 24 semester credit minimum. However, for institutions using quarter credits, the minimum requirement is defined as 36 quarter credits. For non-degree institutions using clock hours, the minimum is 900 clock hours. For Hospital Schools of Nursing, the student must have achieved second year standing.

Credit Thresholds: Academic Year Level	
Institution Type	Minimum Academic Year Length
Semester Schools:	24 semester credits
Quarter Schools:	
Using Semester Credits	24 semester credits
Using Quarter Credits	36 quarter credits
Non-degree Institutions Using Clock Hours:	900 clock hours
Hospital Schools of Nursing:	Second year standing

All college credits that are indicated on a student's academic transcript as acceptable toward the student's current academic program may be applied toward the 24 credit minimum. This may be with the inclusion of up to 12 remedial credits, if the GPA for these credits is included in the student's cumulative GPA. Please note that Advanced Placement (AP) credits may also be applied toward the 24 credit minimum.

After a student has been verified as having achieved this minimum and, therefore, having attained at least second year status as defined by PHEAA, academic level may be institutionally defined. This means that academic levels of third year, fourth year, and, in some cases, fifth year will be institutionally defined.

Like the cumulative GPA requirement, the academic level/credit minimum must be met according to the annual institutional schedule for State Grant Program academic progress reviews.

State Grant Yearly Cycle Options					School Checks Academic Level/ Credits Earned:
Option 1 – Summer “Header”	Summer	Fall	Winter (if applicable)	Spring	End of Spring term
Option 2 – Summer “Trailer”	Fall	Winter (if applicable)	Spring	Summer	End of Summer term

D. Total Family Income

For 2016-17, an eligible student's total family income cannot exceed \$110,000. PHEAA will review the Consumer Price Index for Urban Consumers (CPI-U) and may adjust the maximum total family income on an annual basis, if warranted.

Students' total family income may be verified by PHEAA before students are considered fully eligible to receive an award. For dependent students, this total annual family income would include parents' taxable (AGI) and untaxed income and student's taxable (AGI) and untaxed income. For independent students, this would include the student's (and student's spouse, if married) taxable (AGI) and untaxed income. The income used to make this determination is that which is reflected in the student's State Grant file.

E. Transfer Students

For transfer students who have established a certifiable cumulative GPA at their new institution in time for the snapshot taken from the time their institution checks academic progress for the State Grant Program, schools should report each student's cumulative GPA and credits earned as described through the nomination process (see [VII A: The Nomination Process](#)).

In order to allow all other transfer students to participate in the RTSS Program, the following guidelines apply:

1. Transfers Beginning a New Academic Year

For a transfer student who has not yet established a certifiable GPA at his or her new institution in time for the snapshot taken at the end of either the spring or summer term—as determined by when the new institution checks academic progress for the State Grant Program, institutions may instead report the student's cumulative GPA(s) from prior institutions according to the following:

- If the student attended one previous institution from which credits are being accepted for transfer, report the cumulative GPA from the prior school's transcript as described through the nomination process (see [VII A: The Nomination Process](#)).
- If the student has attended more than one previous institution and the student has at least a 3.25 cumulative GPA at all schools from which credits are being accepted for transfer, review all of the student's transcripts from prior schools and report the **lowest** GPA that meets the RTSS requirements. Do not report an average of all GPAs.
- If the student has attended more than one previous institution and the student has less than a 3.25 cumulative GPA at any (at least one) school from which credits are being accepted for transfer, the student is not eligible to participate in the RTSS Program.

Schools must maintain all academic transcripts for transfer students in order to provide documentation of these students' eligibility or ineligibility for the RTSS Program. A transfer student's prior institutions do not have to be RTSS-eligible in order for his or her cumulative GPA to be considered for certification by the current institution.

The cumulative GPA obtained via a transfer student's transcript(s) and used for RTSS reporting purposes should not be updated later in the award year if the student's GPA fluctuates.

Example:

A student transfers to Institution A, has 42 credits accepted for transfer, and begins classes in Fall 2016. The student had not established a GPA at Institution A by the time the school reviewed academic progress. Institution A therefore reviewed the student's transcript from the student's prior school, and determined the student's cumulative GPA on the transcript was a 3.62. The school nominates the student for the RTSS Program. The student completes the Fall 2016 term and now has an established GPA of 2.80 at Institution A. Institution A should **NOT** update the student's reported RTSS GPA. Instead, for RTSS nomination and certification purposes, the student's reported cumulative GPA should remain 3.62 for the entire 2016-17 Award Year.

2. Mid-Year Transfers

A student's GPA as of the snapshot taken at the end of either the Spring or Summer term—as determined by when the nominating institution checks academic progress for the State Grant Program—is acceptable for the entire duration of the ensuing academic year if it is initially certified by a RTSS-eligible institution. Therefore, RTSS eligibility may transfer with a student, provided the student transfers from one participating RTSS institution to another. Students must be aware, however, that they may lose RTSS eligibility as a result of this transfer if there are subsequent changes in the student's academic level or State Grant Program eligibility. Specifically, students may lose eligibility for RTSS if their transferred credits total less than 24 semester credits (moving them back to first year status) or if the student's PA State Grant Program award at his or her new institution causes them to exceed the maximum combined award for RTSS and the State Grant Program for full-time or part-time students, depending upon enrollment. The maximum combined full-time award is \$2,000, and the maximum combined part-time award is \$1,000.

Schools should encourage transfer students to notify PHEAA of a mid-year transfer by updating their school of enrollment and enrollment statuses within Account Access.

F. Dual Enrollment Students

When determining cumulative GPA and academic level for the RTSS Program, students who participated in a dual enrollment program while in high school should be treated similar to transfer students who have not yet established a GPA at your institution. The cumulative GPA reported, however, should only be calculated based upon the dual enrollment/college credits the institution is accepting for transfer. If a student has dual enrollment credits being accepted from more than one institution, review all of the student's transcripts from prior schools and report the lowest cumulative GPA for the dual enrollment/college credits your institution is accepting for transfer. Report this GPA according to the criteria laid out in section [VII: Nomination](#), (subsection A.2.a: GPA). Academic level should still be determined as outlined in section [V: Eligible RTSS Students](#) (subsection C: Academic Level).

VI. STUDENT APPLICATION

There is no separate application for students to complete to receive RTSS funds. Students must follow the standard State Grant Program application process by annually completing a FAFSA® and a SGF, if necessary. It should be noted that State Grant Program applicants who receive a State Grant generally only need to complete the SGF once. The participating institutions, based upon a list of potentially eligible student candidates made available by PHEAA, will provide identification of students eligible for the Ready to Succeed Scholarship as determined by credits/grade level and cumulative GPA.

In order to facilitate communications with this specific group of students who have been identified as qualified participants by their school, a public website that addresses information about the RTSS Program will be made available. The website can be viewed in the Funding Opportunities section of PHEAA.org.

A. Students with Incomplete State Grant Program Applications

Schools can leverage the listing of incomplete State Grant applications that they have already received by reviewing each applicant's grade level, GPA, and reported income. This information can then be used to target specific students and encourage them to provide missing information to PHEAA in order to possibly become eligible to receive RTSS funds.

VII. NOMINATION

Nominations of qualified students for the current award year will open at a time designated by PHEAA (typically mid-to-late fall). It is recommended that schools nominate all eligible students prior to the first eligibility run of the award year. Nominations can still be submitted after this initial submission date; however, due to the first-come, first-served nature of the award, students nominated after this date are less likely to receive funding through the RTSS Program. If resources permit, there may be more than one processing and award cycle; however, this is not guaranteed. Schools may nominate students for individual terms as long as those students meet the RTSS eligibility criteria at the time required for the GPA and academic level snapshot.

A. The Nomination Process

The nomination process will involve multiple steps. All nomination reporting will take place through Partner Interface and Certification Transmissions.

1. PHEAA will screen all complete State Grant Program records for potentially eligible students and send a list of possible award candidates to the appropriate schools. These students will be selected based upon their reported total family income, their State Grant status, and, if applicable, their total State Grant award amount (due to RTSS award maximums). Student candidates include those who meet all other eligibility requirements and have a State Grant award of \$1,500 or less for full-time and \$500 or less for part-time enrollment. State Grant Program applicants that are Reject E and M are included in PHEAA's screening for RTSS student candidates.
2. Working only from the listing of PHEAA-screened RTSS student candidates, each school must then report back to PHEAA the following information for all currently enrolled students:

a. GPA

Schools must report the exact cumulative GPA for each academic level 2-5 student candidate with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above. The reporting of this entire population will be done in order to provide PHEAA with a correct snapshot of all potentially eligible students per the current RTSS eligibility requirements, plus a snapshot of potentially eligible students should these requirements be adjusted in future years.

PHEAA does not require the exact GPA information for those students with a cumulative GPA below a 3.0. In these cases, schools should simply report that the student is excluded from participating in the RTSS Program.

b. Credits/Academic Level

Schools must report the academic level (the minimum requirements are defined by PHEAA) for all students reported for GPA, regardless of eligibility. Students should be reported as an academic level 2 or above only if they meet or exceed the 24 semester credit minimum established by PHEAA. Institutions may define student grade levels above that of a 2. Levels should be reported numerically as 2, 3, 4, or 5 (though 5 must only be used for bona-fide five year programs).

Schools should indicate that any student not meeting the 24 credit minimum established by PHEAA—and therefore classified as an academic level 1—is excluded from participation in the RTSS Program. No other specific information is needed for this population.

c. Student Nomination Status

Schools must return the candidate list of eligible students to PHEAA with an indication of those students who are nominated to participate in the RTSS Program and those who are excluded. Students who meet all eligibility criteria may be nominated for multiple terms at once.

Schools should be aware that no data will need to be reported for the following students aside from an indication that they are excluded from participation in the RTSS Program:

- Students with fewer than 24 credits
- Students with a GPA below 3.0
- Students who received a baccalaureate degree or its equivalent
- Students who failed to meet State Grant Academic Progress requirements within the last 10 years, and who would meet the conditions necessary to be rejected due to Academic Progress for 2016-17, but who are currently a State Grant Reject E or M for all terms of the 2016-17 Academic Year.

Student names will remain on the candidate list until the school completes reporting on each student or excludes the students from the program. Students who have an Academic Level 2 or higher and a GPA of 3.0-3.24 must be reported, but may not be nominated or excluded. Reporting will be considered complete for this population of student candidates once a GPA and Academic Level are provided for each student.

Examples: Nomination

Reviewing and Reporting Student Candidates						
Credits	Academic Level	GPA	Report Academic Level?	Report GPA?	Student RTSS Eligible?	Status Indication
24 semester credits	2	3.25	Yes	Yes	Yes	Nominated
40 semester credits	Determined by Institution (Level 2 or Above)	3.5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Nominated
24 semester credits	2	3.0	Yes	Yes	No	N/A Complete reporting, but do not nominate or exclude.
15 semester credits	1	3.25	No	No	No	Excluded
40 semester credits	Determined by Institution (Level 2 or Above)	2.99	No	No	No	Excluded
15 semester credits	1	2.15	No	No	No	Excluded

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3. Throughout the nomination process, each school should verify that its PHEAA-screened student candidates are currently enrolled. RTSS data (including GPA, academic level, nominations, and exclusions) may not be reported for non-enrolled students.

- a. **Non-Enrolled State Grant Recipients**

For non-enrolled student candidates who are State Grant recipients, schools should cancel these students' State Grant awards. Once their State Grant awards are cancelled, these students will no longer appear as RTSS student candidates.

- b. **Non-Enrolled State Grant Reject E or Reject M Students**

For non-enrolled student candidates who are a Reject E or Reject M for the State Grant Program, schools should not report any RTSS information. These students should remain in the listing of RTSS student candidates. They must not be reported as excluded from the RTSS Program.

Additional information regarding general enrollment reporting for the RTSS Program can be found in Section XII: Reporting Requirements (subsection B: Enrollment).

B. Communication of Nomination

It is critical to note that a student who is simply nominated to receive RTSS funds is not yet guaranteed receipt of those funds. Therefore, schools are prohibited from communicating **potential** RTSS award amounts to students. This means that a RTSS award may only be indicated on the student's financial aid package when the award is announced by PHEAA. An award announced by PHEAA means that the student's SSN (or PHEAA Account Number), name, award amount, and date are captured in an 'acceptable notification' from PHEAA showing the RTSS award. Refer to the *Pennsylvania State Grant Program Handbook* for a list of documents that are classified as acceptable notifications. This would occur sometime after the student has been nominated by the school and reviewed by PHEAA for eligibility. As with the State Grant Program, an award that is presented to the student in the financial aid package as a deduction to the student's bill or 'preliminary credit' may be required to be removed under the conditions noted in the *Pennsylvania State Grant Program Handbook*.

VIII. INCOME VERIFICATION

PHEAA will use an income verification process to ensure that each award recipient's total annual household income is no greater than \$110,000.

A. Income Verification Overview

PHEAA will screen all complete State Grant Program records for students who meet the income eligibility guidelines. The RTSS Program income verification process differs from the traditional State Grant validation method in that only the total annual family income will be reviewed. In other words, RTSS income verification will not require a review of assets, family size, or the number of household members in college. PHEAA will work with the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue (PDR) to compare reported student income data in order to accomplish the income verification process.

B. Students Impacted

The income verification process will work with two populations of students: those who may receive a combination of RTSS funds and a State Grant award and those who may receive only RTSS funds. Given that the RTSS Program eligibility requirements differ from those of the State Grant Program concerning limits on student income, a student who is not eligible for a State Grant award may still be reviewed by PHEAA for validation of the family income for the Ready to Succeed Scholarship. For example, students who would get flagged as Reject E (Expected Family Contribution too High) or Reject M (Calculated State Grant Award Amount Below Minimum Requirement) for the State Grant Program might still fall within the \$110,000 income limit for the RTSS Program. Therefore, these students may be reviewed by PHEAA for possible participation in the RTSS Program.

1. Students Already Verified for Income

Those applicants who used the IRS Data Retrieval Tool when completing their FAFSA® and have not changed or altered their IRS data (ISIR Flag 02) can be considered verified and will not require any additional attention in the income verification process.

Additionally, those students who have already had their incomes verified through the State Grant validation process can be considered income-verified for RTSS as well.

C. Income Verification Process

The income verification process will occur after schools nominate potential students to receive RTSS funds. Briefly, this process will involve the following:

After receipt of the GPA and grade level-certified listing of nominated students, PHEAA will determine which students require income verification and will send a list of these students to PDR for confirmation of total family income. The following outcomes are possible:

- Those students without a discrepancy between the total annual household income reported on their FAFSA® and their PHEAA records may qualify to receive RTSS funds.
- Those students with a discrepancy between the total annual household income identified on their FAFSA® and their PHEAA records that does **not** cause them to exceed the income limit may still qualify to receive RTSS funds.
- Those students with a discrepancy between the total annual household income identified on their FAFSA® and their PHEAA records that could cause them to exceed the income limit may be rendered ineligible to receive RTSS funds. PHEAA will ask these students to further verify their income in order to possibly reestablish their award eligibility.
- Those students for whom PDR can find no record matches will continue to be reviewed until a record is found. If a student in this situation could be allocated a RTSS award, the student in question would be given the opportunity to verify that the total family income did not surpass the income limit before being awarded funds.

After completion of the PDR exchange, those students who are selected for further income verification will be given thirty days to respond to PHEAA's request for proof regarding total family income. Failure to respond to PHEAA's request within this given timeframe will result in the cancellation of the student's award. Funds will be held for students pending income verification review between each eligibility run and disbursement period until this cancellation occurs. This is done in order to give the students in question time to verify their income and thus retain their award. Cancellation will occur when verification is not satisfied at a certain point in order to allow funds to move to other eligible students for awards.

Depending upon the information submitted by the student, the income verification process may have any of the following results:

- If the student's total family income is determined to be no greater than \$110,000, the student will be informed that his or her record has been updated to indicate eligibility for RTSS funds.
- If the student's total family income is determined to be greater than \$110,000, the student will lose his or her RTSS award and instead receive a Reject X status for the RTSS Program.
- If the student fails to submit the necessary paperwork within the given timeframe, his or her award will be cancelled using cancel code V for the RTSS Program.

D. Changes in Income

Schools that believe a student's income is less than that reported on the FAFSA®, thus potentially rendering them eligible to participate in the RTSS Program, should notify both the student and PHEAA of the need to update either the FAFSA® or PHEAA records, or, if necessary, both. Reduced Income Forms will be accepted for those students whose family income has decreased in comparison to the original income reported on the FAFSA®. This form should be used to report:

- recent job loss or change of a supporting parent or stepparent (of at least 2 full months) of a dependent student, or of an independent student or the student's spouse
- recent retirement of a supporting parent or stepparent of a dependent student, or of an independent student or the student's spouse
- recent permanent and total disability of a supporting parent or stepparent of a dependent student, or of an independent student or the student's spouse
- recent death of a supporting parent or stepparent of a dependent student, or of an independent student's spouse

However, it is important to note that it is possible that all available RTSS funds may be exhausted prior to a student's submission of the Reduced Income Form. No funds will be reserved specifically for this potential population.

E. Income Verification and Institutional Responsibility

Institutions should not certify or credit RTSS awards for students whose Income Verification review is not yet complete. This will prevent any potential refunds from being owed to PHEAA in the event a student identified for Income Verification is cancelled for no response to PHEAA's review request or is determined ineligible for the RTSS award due to total family income.

Institutions have multiple ways to identify students actively under Income Verification review:

- Partner Interface will display a blue Special Message on the individual student record indicating that the student is in "RTSS Income Verification Review."
- The student will appear in the RTSS Income Verification section of the weekly *Validation and Other Reviews Report* (Description: Validation/Other Rvw; Pageset: LWS07) that prints to PageCenter.

The same tools can be used to determine when the Income Verification review is complete:

- Partner Interface will display a Special Message on the individual student record indicating "RTSS Income Verification Complete."
- The student will no longer appear in the RTSS section of the weekly *Validation and Other Reviews Report* (Description: Validation/Other Rvw; Pageset: LWS07) once his/her review is complete

IX. AWARDS FOR RTSS STUDENTS

The Ready to Succeed Scholarship will be awarded in conjunction with all other awards distributed through the State Grant Program. A student may be eligible to receive an award provided that the RTSS award, in combination with any award received under the State Grant Program for the same academic year, does not exceed the annually established RTSS maximum award amount, which will be determined with the passage of the Commonwealth budget. The maximum award amounts are \$2,000 for full-time students and \$1,000 for part-time students. As with the State Grant Program, the annual minimum award a student may be eligible to receive through the RTSS Program is \$500.

RTSS Award Calculation		
	Semester School	Quarter School
Full-Time Enrollment	$(\$2,000 - \text{Total State Grant}) / 2$	$(\$2,000 - \text{Total State Grant}) / 3$
Part-Time Enrollment	$(\$1,000 - \text{Total State Grant}) / 2$	$(\$1,000 - \text{Total State Grant}) / 3$

The special RTSS Program website, PHEAA.org/rtss, provides more detail about the scholarship program and the award.

Depending upon the number of awards and their value, it may be necessary to curtail the number of student awards at some point during the year. The first-come, first-served nature of the award will continue annually.

Students who do not receive an award due to resource limitations will receive a Reject N status and will be placed on a waitlist. As funds from cancellations or rejects are received throughout the year, additional awards may be provided to Reject N students based on the first-come, first-served criteria of the RTSS Program. Students with reject statuses will not initially be notified because there is no student application process, but their status will be updated on Account Access.

Additionally, if late awards are made for the State Grant Program by moving back the application deadline and thus removing Reject L (late) from a number of student records, these students may be screened to determine possible RTSS eligibility as well.

X. FLUCTUATION OF AWARDS

Because the Ready to Succeed Scholarship is awarded in conjunction with the State Grant, fluctuations in either award amount may occur. The aggregate amount a student may receive from both programs cannot exceed \$2,000 for a full-time student.

It should be noted that the individual amounts of a student's RTSS award and State Grant award may be subject to change due to fluctuations in the student's eligibility during the course of the academic year. This means that fluctuations in RTSS award values can occur even after disbursement and crediting of some or all of the student's RTSS award, State Grant award, or both. PHEAA may monitor any changes that occur and address them accordingly after each eligibility run for nominated RTSS students.

Please note that RTSS award fluctuations may be caused by, but are not limited to, any of the following:

RTSS Award Fluctuations	
Possible Cause	Example
Enrollment Change (one or more terms)	Updating enrollment to full-time, part-time, less than half-time, or less than 50% in-classroom attendance
Cost of Attendance Change	Transferring institutions or use of a cost override
PHEAA or School Review	State Grant Validation, domicile review, default review, etc.
Total State Grant Award Change	Cancellation, adjustment, or cost override to the State Grant award for one or more terms

Example: Fluctuation due to State Grant Cancellation (State Grant Cost Override)

	Disbursed Fall (Full-Time)	Initial Spring (Full-Time)	New Fall (Full-Time)	New Spring (Full-Time)
State Grant Award	\$500	\$500	\$500	Reject M
RTSS Award	\$500	\$500	\$750	\$750

A full-time recipient is awarded \$500 per term in State Grant funds and \$500 per term in RTSS funds for 2016-17. The school then informs PHEAA that the student is being charged \$0 tuition for the spring term. The school submits a cost override for the spring term, which causes the student's spring State Grant award to go to a Reject M status. The student is subsequently awarded \$750 per term for Fall 2016 and Spring 2017 in RTSS funds.

Original RTSS award calculation:

$\$2,000 - \$1,000 = \$1,000$
 $\$1,000 / 2 = \500 RTSS per eligible term (fall and spring)

Current RTSS award calculation:

$\$2,000 - \$500 = \$1,500$
 $\$1,500 / 2 = \750 RTSS per eligible term

A. Loss of Eligibility

If a student is awarded RTSS funds and then experiences a change in eligibility that results in the loss of the award in question, there is no guarantee that the award will be restored. For example, if an award is given to a student and an institution cancels that award and then attempts to reinstate it, there is no guarantee that there will still be funds available for the student impacted by the cancellation. This is due to the first-come, first-served nature of the program. Students who lose funds due to a situation involving a cancellation and attempted reinstatement will be given Reject N status and sent a letter informing them that funding is not available to support their award.

XI. AWARD COUNTER

Qualifying students may be eligible to receive RTSS funds if they have not yet acquired a baccalaureate degree, or its equivalent, and have not yet received the equivalent to four academic years of State Grant Program funding. Until these limits are met, RTSS-eligible students may receive up to three academic years of full-time RTSS funds. These funds may be awarded in concurrence with State Grant funds or in isolation; however, the receipt of RTSS funds cannot affect the number of years for which a student may be entitled to receive State Grant funds. Students are limited to this maximum number of RTSS awards even though some students may require additional terms to complete their program of study.

A. Students Enrolled in Four-Year Degree Programs

Students enrolled in regular four-year degree programs may receive up to three academic years of RTSS funds (3.0 award counter).

B. Students Not Enrolled in Four-Year Degree Programs

Students not enrolled in four-year programs may be subject to a different award counter.

1. Associate Degree, Certificate, and Diploma Programs

Students enrolled in an associate degree, certificate, or diploma programs are typically limited to one academic year of RTSS payments (1.0 award counter).

2. BTT Schools

Students enrolled in BTT schools are limited to the number of approved terms, beginning after their attainment of second-year status (24 semester credits or its equivalent).

3. Bona-Fide Five Year Degree Programs

Those students enrolled in a bona-fide 5-year degree program, as recognized by the State Grant Program, may qualify to receive up to four academic years (4.0 award counter) of RTSS Program awards instead of the standard three academic years.

C. Adjustments to the Award Counter

As with State Grant Program, if a student's term award counter would cause the grand total award counter to exceed 4.0, PHEAA will adjust (PHEAA Adjusted 'X') the term calculation of the student's need to take this difference into account for both the award and the associated term counter. The student will remain eligible to receive funds until that program's counter is exhausted or the student receives a baccalaureate degree (or the equivalent), whichever occurs first. In this case, the student may receive a prorated award if his or her maximum counter has not been reached and they would have at least the annual minimum award eligibility. For example, a student with a 2.75 RTSS

XII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

As with the State Grant, students must make satisfactory academic progress and maintain at least half-time enrollment in order to maintain eligibility for future award years. Reporting of academic progress will occur during the annual nomination process regarding student eligibility for the RTSS Program (see [VII: Nomination](#)). Enrollment, however, must be reviewed and reported according to current State Grant Program requirements.

A. Academic Progress

1. Definition

Students who did not make satisfactory academic progress for the last academic year during which the student received State Grant and/or RTSS funds are not eligible to receive RTSS funds for the current academic year of the RTSS Program. Credits earned in terms retroactive to the receipt of the RTSS or State Grant award(s) being viewed do not count toward academic progress.

Students who are currently a Reject E or M for the State Grant for the 2016-17 Academic Year and who did not receive RTSS funds for the prior academic year must still be reviewed for academic progress. This should be done by checking for a State Grant award or RTSS award within the last ten years and reviewing credits earned for the last academic year during which the student did receive a State Grant or RTSS award.

2. Timing of Review

In most cases, academic progress will be measured as a snapshot of achievement. In order to keep the RTSS Program as aligned with the State Grant Program as possible, institutions must time this snapshot to coincide with the time in which they determine academic progress for the State Grant Program. However, it should be noted that, unlike the State Grant Program, changes that impact a student's RTSS eligibility (positively or negatively) should not be reported if they take place after the time of this academic progress snapshot.

- **"Summer Headers"**: Schools that evaluate academic progress for the State Grant Program at the end of the spring term should do the same for RTSS.
- **"Summer Trailers"**: Schools that evaluate academic progress for the State Grant Program at the end of the summer term should do the same for RTSS.

State Grant Yearly Cycle Options					School Checks Progress:
Option 1 – Summer "Header"	Summer	Fall	Winter (if applicable)	Spring	End of Spring
Option 2 – Summer "Trailer"	Fall	Winter (if applicable)	Spring	Summer	End of Summer

3. Components of Academic Progress

Overall, academic progress for the RTSS Program consists of two major components: a qualitative measure of cumulative GPA and a quantitative measure of credits earned. Please refer to the *Pennsylvania State Grant Program Handbook* for the components of Academic Progress as they pertain to the State Grant, as these must be met for the RTSS Program as well.

a. GPA

Schools must report students' cumulative GPA as it is by the end of the spring or summer term (depending upon when they report academic progress for the State Grant Program) immediately preceding the academic year for which the RTSS award is sought. GPA reporting is a requirement specific to RTSS. This cumulative GPA must be reported on the nomination listing before the time of the first eligibility run each year.

b. Academic Level

Academic level should also be reported from the end of the spring or summer term immediately preceding the academic year for which a RTSS award is sought. This is timed so that both the quantitative and qualitative measures of a student's academic progress must be measured together. Schools should follow the same earned credits reporting guidelines as for the State Grant Program. Briefly, this means that schools should certify that, for the last academic year during which the student received a Ready to Succeed Scholarship, the student completed the minimum number of credits or clock hours for the term award. Schools must also electronically report students who fail to meet academic progress.

Minimum Number of Credits/Clock Hours That Must Be Successfully Completed		
For each:	Award Counter	Student must complete a minimum of:
Full-time semester award	.50	12 semester credits/450 clock hours
Full-time quarter award	.33/.34	12 quarter or 8 semester credits/300 clock hours
Half-time semester award	.25	6 semester credits/225 clock hours
Half-time quarter award	.16/.17	6 quarter credits or 4 semester credits/150 clock hours

4. Reporting Unsatisfactory Academic Progress

Students who do not make satisfactory academic progress for the last academic year during which the student received State Grant and/or RTSS funds should be reported as “excluded” from the RTSS Program during nomination reporting. If the student is nominated in error and processed for an award, the school must cancel the student’s RTSS award for academic progress. This may be reported via Partner Interface or the Certification Transmission. Please note that the reporting and cancellation of awards due to academic progress for the State Grant Program and the RTSS Program must take place separately.

Because the RTSS components of academic progress are measured as snapshots of achievement and therefore represent a point-in-time review of the student’s eligibility, academic progress for the RTSS Program may not be made up during the award year. In other words, those students who are ineligible for the RTSS Program due to academic progress will remain ineligible for the duration of the award year.

5. Academic Progress Appeals and Exceptions

In general, the RTSS Program will follow the State Grant Program academic progress exception policy and requirements (*2016-17 Pennsylvania State Grant Program Handbook: Ch. 2, Section D – Academic Progress*).

A student with an approved academic progress exception for the fall may also be nominated by the school to receive the RTSS award for the following winter (if applicable) and spring of the current academic year. However, these awards must be cancelled if the student does not achieve satisfactory academic progress (through earning sufficient credits) during the fall term in which the exception was granted. Such a cancellation must be reported to PHEAA via a Special Request.

B. Enrollment

In general, the RTSS Program will follow the State Grant Program enrollment reporting requirements (*2016-17 Pennsylvania State Grant Program Handbook: Ch. 2 – Student Certification of Eligibility*).

Schools must review the enrollment used in the award calculation versus the actual enrollment. Schools must correct any discrepancies before crediting the award.

More details on reporting requirements for the State Grant Program are available for review in the latest version of the *Pennsylvania State Grant Program Handbook*.

C. Withdrawals

When a student who receives a RTSS award withdraws partially or completely from school, schools must apply the same award adjustment procedures documented for the State Grant Program in the *Pennsylvania State Grant Program Handbook*.

In cases requiring award adjustment, if the student receives both RTSS and State Grant awards, each award must be adjusted separately. If refunds are required, those must be submitted to PHEAA separately: one for each program.

1. Student Completely Withdraws or Changes to a Non-Approved Program

When a student completely withdraws or changes to a non-approved program of study, the school must evaluate the timing of the change to determine whether to withhold RTSS nomination, cancel the RTSS award, or adjust the RTSS and, if applicable, State Grant award according to the steps outlined in the *State Grant Program Handbook*.

Example:

A recipient is awarded an annual award of \$500 in State Grant funds and \$1,500 in RTSS funds. This student therefore receives a \$250 fall semester State Grant and \$750 fall semester RTSS award. The student withdraws at the end of the second week of classes. According to the school's refund policy, the student receives a 75 percent refund of tuition charges. PHEAA expects a \$188 (75 percent, rounded) refund of the Fall term State Grant and a \$563 (75 percent, rounded) refund of the fall term RTSS award.

Student Withdraws or Changes to Non-Approved Program			
Have SG funds been credited?	Has RTSS nomination already occurred?	Has RTSS award been credited?	Necessary Action
No	No	N/A	Do not nominate for RTSS
No	Yes	No	Cancel RTSS award; do not certify
No	Yes	Yes	Follow <i>State Grant Program Handbook</i> "Adjustment Steps" for RTSS award
Yes	No	N/A	Do not nominate for RTSS
Yes	Yes	No	Do not certify RTSS award; submit a Special Request to cancel for reason "Other"
Yes	Yes	Yes	Follow <i>State Grant Program Handbook</i> "Adjustment Steps" for both awards

2. Student Drops to Less-than-Half-Time

Schools should follow the steps outlined in *Pennsylvania State Grant Program Handbook* when a student drops to less-than-half-time. As with the State Grant Program, the RTSS Program uses the term "drop" to describe a course or courses for which the student was registered but where the course(s) was/were removed from the student's schedule and thus no transcript or charges remain on the student's account. Drops must be treated separately from withdrawals. See the *State Grant Program Handbook: Ch. 4, Section C – Award Adjustments for Withdrawals, Drops, and Adds* for complete details.

Student Drops to Less-than-Half-Time			
Have SG funds been credited?	Has RTSS nomination already occurred?	Has RTSS award been credited?	Necessary Action
No or Yes	No	N/A	Regardless of timing, do not nominate for RTSS
No or Yes	Yes	No or Yes	Regardless of timing, report as less-than-half-time; refund may be owed

3. Student Partially Withdraws – Half-Time to Less-than-Half-Time

If a student initially enrolled part-time partially withdraws to less-than-half-time, schools must review the timing of the enrollment change to determine whether to follow the steps outlined in *Pennsylvania State Grant Program Handbook* to adjust the RTSS and, if applicable, State Grant award, or whether to remove the student's RTSS award entirely.

Example:

A recipient is awarded an annual award of \$500 in State Grant funds and \$500 in RTSS funds. The student dropped to less-than-half-time status for the fall term after the State Grant award had already been credited, but prior to the crediting of the RTSS award. The school must not certify the RTSS award, and should instead submit a Special Request via Partner Interface requesting that the fall RTSS award be cancelled for reason "Other."

Student Partially Withdraws: Half-Time to Less-than-Half-Time			
Have SG funds been credited?	Has RTSS nomination already occurred?	Has RTSS award been credited?	Necessary Action
No	No	N/A	Do not nominate for RTSS
No	Yes	No	Report as less-than-half-time
No	Yes	Yes	Follow <i>State Grant Program Handbook</i> "Adjustment Steps" for both awards
Yes	No	N/A	Do not nominate for RTSS
Yes	Yes	No	Do not certify RTSS award; submit a Special Request to cancel for reason "Other"
Yes	Yes	Yes	Follow <i>State Grant Program Handbook</i> "Adjustment Steps" for both awards

4. Student Partially Withdraws – Full-Time to Half-Time

In some cases, a student may partially withdraw from classes but still be entitled to a full-time State Grant award. This is based upon the timing of the withdrawal. Further details on determining such a case can be found in the *Pennsylvania State Grant Program Handbook*. In such a case, the student's RTSS award must be evaluated to determine whether or not the RTSS award alone should be adjusted to reflect part-time enrollment.

Example:

A full-time recipient is disbursed and credited a \$500 fall semester State Grant. The student then partially withdraws after the school's refund period. Based on the school's refund policy, the school does not adjust charges or report an enrollment change to PHEAA, and the student retains the full-time State Grant award. The school then nominates the student for the RTSS Program. Because enrollment is still reported as full-time, the student is awarded an annual, full-time award of \$1,000 in RTSS funds – \$500 per term. The school must submit a Special Request to notify PHEAA that the student is actually enrolled part-time for the fall and to request that the fall RTSS award be adjusted to the proper part-time amount (\$250).

Student Partially Withdraws: Full-Time to Half-Time			
Have SG funds been credited?	Has RTSS nomination already occurred?	Has RTSS award been credited?	Necessary Action
No	No	N/A	Nomination may occur; report as half-time
No	Yes	No	Report as half-time
No	Yes	Yes	Report as half time or follow State Grant adjustment procedures
Yes	No	N/A	RTSS nomination may occur; report State Grant and RTSS as half time OR submit a RTSS special request to report State Grant as full-time and RTSS as part-time*
Yes	Yes	No	Report State Grant and RTSS as half time OR submit a RTSS special request to report State Grant as full-time and RTSS as part-time*
Yes	Yes	Yes	Follow <i>State Grant Program Handbook</i> "Adjustment Steps" for both awards

*This choice must adhere to the State Grant withdrawal and adjustment policies.

XIII. ACCOUNTING AND CASH MANAGEMENT

The RTSS Program disburses later in the academic year than the State Grant Program. PHEAA Financial Management maintains a separate fund to receive appropriations and to disburse funds to schools.

Disbursement and cash management for RTSS funds are different than for the State Grant Program. It is critical to note that RTSS funds must be handled separately from any other program funds.

To ensure adequate cash management practices, a school must have a cash management system in place that adheres to all RTSS guidelines.

A. Maintaining and Accounting for Funds

Each RTSS-approved institution has a fiduciary responsibility to segregate RTSS funds from all other funds and to ensure that RTSS funds are used only for the benefit of RTSS-eligible students. Absent a separate bank account, the school must ensure that its accounting records clearly reflect that it segregates RTSS funds from other PHEAA programs and for specific award years. Under no circumstances may the school use RTSS funds for any other purpose, such as paying operating expenses, collateralizing or otherwise securing a loan, and earning interest or generating revenue.

1. Accounting

The school must maintain financial records that reflect all RTSS transactions. General ledger control accounts and related subsidiary accounts must identify all RTSS transactions and separate those transactions from all other transactions.

If a school does not maintain a separate account for RTSS funds, its accounting and internal control systems must identify the balance for the RTSS Program that is included in the school's bank account as readily as if those funds were in a separate account.

2. Bank Account Requirements

For each account that contains RTSS funds, a school must identify that RTSS funds are maintained in the account by including the term "RTSS" in the name of the account.

B. Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT)

As with the State Grant Program, PHEAA will only disburse funds on behalf of RTSS recipients by Automated Clearing House (ACH) transfer of funds. Once an institution is approved for participation in the RTSS program, the institution must request an ACH form be sent to the contact person specified on the institutional application. Requests should be submitted to fmftadmin@pheaa.org.

Institutions are responsible for completing this ACH form and submitting it to PHEAA's Treasury Management. Once the ACH form is completed, institutions should submit it via any of the following methods:

Fax: **717.720.7656**
(Please note that fax is the preferred method of ACH form submission).

Mail: PHEAA
Attn: EFT Admin, HQ 6B
1200 N. 7th Street
Harrisburg, PA 17102-1444

Email: fmftadmin@pheaa.org

Institutions that have already completed an ACH Form with PHEAA for a different program and wish to have RTSS funds transferred to the same account should email fmftadmin@pheaa.org to confirm that RTSS funds can be transferred to the bank account currently on file for the existing program.

Institutions must complete and submit ACH forms in order to allow for disbursement of RTSS funds. In other words, an institution cannot receive funds until PHEAA has received and processed that institution's ACH form. The deadline for submission of the ACH Form is **September 15, 2016**.

Please note that institutions must re-enroll in ACH when any of the following occur:

- the institution changes banks
- the payee or its bank changes the account number
- the depositor account is closed
- the bank closes – either voluntarily or involuntarily

XIV. INSTITUTIONAL COMPLIANCE WITH PHEAA TERM REQUIREMENTS

In order to be eligible for a RTSS payment, the student must be enrolled in a term that complies with the requirements set forth in Chapter 5 of the *Pennsylvania State Grant Program Handbook*. For RTSS purposes, the terminology “payment period” equates to a term as outlined in the aforementioned document. All schools’ terms must comply with PHEAA’s definitions and requirements for both minimum and maximum term lengths and term start date ranges.

These requirements also pertain to clock hour schools with non-standard terms or continuous enrollment. Therefore, schools without set terms must determine if the student’s enrollment meets PHEAA’s term requirements and for which “term” the student is eligible.

XV. STUDENT CERTIFICATION

Individual, student-level certification of eligibility and enrollment is required for students who have been nominated and awarded RTSS funds. PHEAA will only disburse funds for a particular student after his or her term award is marked as “Certified.”

Certification for term awards may not occur until that term begins. Institutions may certify student records on this term-by-term basis via Partner Interface or the Certification Transmission.

Since each student is certified in advance of the institution’s receipt of the disbursement roster and funds, schools are not required to return term roster certification for the RTSS Program. However, roster certification is still required for the annual RTSS Reconciliation Roster.

A. Certification Overview

By certifying a student’s award, the institution is verifying and documenting the following:

1. All necessary updates have been made to the student’s record for each term being certified.
2. The student is fully eligible per all RTSS eligibility and enrollment requirements to receive an award for each term being certified.
3. The student’s current award value is appropriate for each term being certified, given the student’s current enrollment and eligibility data.

If a student’s RTSS eligibility is in question for any term available to be certified, the institution may not certify that student until all possible issues have been resolved. If a student was incorrectly nominated for a term available for certification, the institution may not certify the award and should notify PHEAA.

Please note that PHEAA considers certification of an award to be confirmation by the institution of a student’s full eligibility to receive the award in question.

Examples of Appropriate Certification
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Verifying and updating the student’s enrollment (full-time, half-time, less than half-time, not enrolled, graduated) prior to certification (this includes cancelling all necessary awards prior to attempting to certify).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Verifying the student continues to meet the 50% in-classroom requirement prior to certification.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Withholding certification until a student is confirmed eligible after the completion of any review of which the school is aware (ex: withholding certification on a student recently reported as having <50% in-classroom enrollment to allow for a response to the 30 day ADA Accommodation letter).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continuing to monitor student eligibility and updating student records as necessary after certifying awards.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Withholding certification from a term for which the student was incorrectly/inappropriately nominated and notifying PHEAA of the mistaken nomination.

Examples of Inappropriate Certification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certifying students in mass without first performing complete, individual eligibility reviews on each record.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certifying a RTSS award and then nominating that same student for the SGDEPP before the RTSS award has been cancelled.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certifying or attempting to certify an award before the start of its applicable term, even if the award appears in the Awarded – Needs Certification listing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certifying an award for a term in which the student withdrew prior to RTSS nomination.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requesting that PHEAA (and not the institution) certify an award.

B. Award Cancellation due to Lack of Certification

Due to the fact that certification is required prior to disbursement, and because the RTSS Program has limited funding, PHEAA reserves the right to cancel awards that have been pending certification for a period of 60 days or more on a term basis.

Should term awards be cancelled by PHEAA, funds made available due to this cancellation will be redistributed in a subsequent eligibility run for other eligible students. Awards made possible by this eligibility run, along with any additional awards pending certification for the RTSS Program for the 2016-17 Academic Year, must then be certified no later than July 29, 2017.

XVI. CREDITING

A RTSS recipient is eligible for an award only for the term(s) during which the student is nominated and complies with all RTSS eligibility requirements. PHEAA makes RTSS eligibility determinations and requires school certification of such on a term-by-term basis. Therefore, PHEAA requires the crediting of funds on a term-by-term basis. Do not credit a payment designated by PHEAA for a specific term to the student's account for any other period of the academic or calendar year. The RTSS award of a student who becomes ineligible after an award has been credited may need to be adjusted. In sum, crediting must adhere to all of the following requirements:

- Must occur term-by-term
- Must occur after certification of all eligibility requirements
- Must be removed under the circumstances outlined in the *Pennsylvania State Grant Program Handbook*

A. Preliminary Credit

Before the school receives a term's disbursement, the school may choose to post a preliminary credit to the student's account. This means the school is permitting a deferment of payment (or bill deduction) of a portion of the term's bill based on notification of RTSS eligibility. The school may choose to defer the amount of the RTSS award on a term-by-term basis if BOTH of the following have occurred:

1. The school has received notification of RTSS eligibility for the term in question at its institution.

As with the State Grant, acceptable notification for preliminary crediting requires documentation that captures the student's Social Security Number (SSN) or PHEAA Account Number, name, award amount and date. For the RTSS Program, these conditions are met when the student appears in the "Awarded – Needs Certification" listing of Partner Interface or this listing's coinciding Disbursement Transmission.

2. School records indicate the student is or will be enrolled for the minimum credits commensurate with his or her award type (full-time or half-time) in an approved program of study for the term in question.

Schools may defer one-half of a full-time award to the account of an eligible half-time student. Please note that students at the minimum award levels, as well as students with mixed enrollment (one full-time and at least one half-time term) may be ineligible for a half-time award. PHEAA requires the school adjust the bill deduction, if necessary, for the reprocessed award.

B. Preliminary Credit Removal

As previously noted in these guidelines, RTSS awards are subject to fluctuation based upon several factors including, but not limited to, changes in RTSS recipient's State Grant award amount or the outcome of a PHEAA review. If PHEAA determines that a student with a previously announced RTSS award requires a reduction or cancellation, PHEAA will adjust the award. The adjusted award will require certification and the subsequent term disbursement roster will reflect the reduction or cancellation of the student's award. Institutions that have applied a preliminary credit must remove this credit in whole or in part for any of the following reasons:

- The school cancels or adjusts the student's award as part of the certification process prior to disbursement.
- The student does not appear with an award on the term's disbursement roster.
- The student appears on the disbursement roster with a reduced award.
- Further PHEAA review or institutional certification after the preliminary credit has been applied reveals that the student is ineligible for any reason (examples: PHEAA Income Verification or the student is a "no show").
- The student's enrollment status has changed prior to the date of the term disbursement roster.

Example:

A student appears in the "Awarded – Needs Certification" listing for the fall and spring terms and the school pays the student based upon this notification. It is later determined that the student is ineligible for a spring disbursement; therefore, the school cannot allow a spring term preliminary credit to stand. The fall credit was permissible, but if the student does not appear with a spring award on the subsequent disbursement roster, the spring term preliminary credit must be removed.

C. Prior to Final Credit

When signing the Rights and Responsibilities Certification Document as part of the State Grant application process, the student and parents specifically authorize the educational institution at which the student is enrolled to release to PHEAA any records or other information that have a bearing on RTSS eligibility. This authorization also extends to cases where the Agency questions a student's eligibility and requests information from the school. Do not credit the student's account when a student does not meet or does not appear to meet the enrollment or eligibility requirements set forth in these guidelines or the *Pennsylvania State Grant Program Handbook*. Rather, follow these steps:

1. Do not certify the award if it still remains uncertified.
2. Report electronically using the Special Request feature in Partner Interface with appropriate comments INCLUDING a notation this is a RTSS student.
3. Inform PHEAA of the potential discrepancy, all pertinent facts (including the RTSS and, if applicable, State Grant crediting status), and the date of the discrepancy.

Example 1:

If it becomes evident that there is a significant difference between 1) the financial information or family data (including family size and number enrolled) used by PHEAA in establishing RTSS and State Grant eligibility and 2) the data provided on other financial aid documents, the institution should not credit the student's account or apply a bill deduction.

Example 2:

PHEAA processes a student as financially independent but the school is aware of incorrect information provided to PHEAA. The institution should not credit the student's account or apply a bill deduction.

D. Final Credit

Final crediting of RTSS funds occurs when the school commits RTSS funds for a particular student for whom all eligibility requirements have been met. This is done by paying the RTSS award to the student's account.

The school may apply a final credit when the school has performed all the eligibility checks for the student as set forth in these procedures and the student appears on the term's disbursement or reconciliation roster with an award.

For additional information, please refer to the *Pennsylvania State Grant Program Handbook*.

E. Changes after Receipt of Roster

In cases of withdrawal, it is the school's responsibility to notify the Agency immediately if funds have been credited to the student's account. The school may be liable for the amount of the adjusted award if a "double" disbursement (a disbursement for the same term/period) to another institution occurs because the Agency was not informed that all or a portion of the award had already been credited.

XVII. DISBURSEMENT

Disbursed awards will display on a disbursement roster. Disbursement rosters are term reports that generate an EFT and that PHEAA labels as a term disbursement roster. These rosters are available securely through PageCenter, Partner Interface, and the RTSS Disbursement Transmission process.

For an overview of the disbursement cycle, please refer to [Appendix B](#) – RTSS Processing, Certification, and Disbursement Cycle.

A. Disbursement Prerequisites

The following steps must be completed prior to the student-level disbursement of RTSS funds.

- Nomination – Students must be nominated for any term for which the institution has determined they meet the RTSS eligibility criteria.
- RTSS Eligibility Run – Nominated students must then be processed by PHEAA to determine RTSS award eligibility. This process is accomplished through PHEAA's eligibility run. Students processed in an eligibility run will display a RTSS award amount or applicable reject code on Partner Interface and the State Grant Status Transmission.
- Student Certification – Disbursement may only occur for awards that have been certified. PHEAA will open certification for any eligible records based upon each institution's term start dates. Institutions may not certify records prior to the start of a term.

B. Schedule

PHEAA will disburse term funds on a pre-determined schedule. For additional schedule information, please refer to section [XXIV: Timeline for the RTSS Program](#). This will allow schools to receive funds only for students who were certified. It should be noted that multiple disbursement rosters may be run for the same term depending on the number of students included in the disbursement.

Student awards for the entire academic year are shown on each disbursement roster; however, funds accompanying the roster are only for terms that have already started and have already been certified. It should be noted that multiple terms may be disbursed with a single roster. For example, if the fall roster generation period is closed and the spring roster generation period has begun, the total amount disbursed for that student will include both fall and spring funds with the spring disbursement roster.

Example:

Semester School A did not receive a Fall term disbursement roster. The school's spring term began early January, and the school certifies awards for both the fall and spring terms. PHEAA runs a spring RTSS disbursement on January 15, 2017. Instead of running a separate Fall term disbursement roster, PHEAA runs a Spring term disbursement roster which will include payment for both Fall and Spring term awards.

C. Funds Availability

Since PHEAA must request funds from the Commonwealth Treasury, Electronic Fund Transfers occur approximately 14 business days after the date the roster is generated.

D. Excess Cash/Netting

PHEAA disburses RTSS funds after certification of RTSS funds has been completed. Excess cash may be created upon term certification when the school cancels or adjusts students' eligibility based upon program enrollment and eligibility requirements. Since disbursement and refunds occur on a student-by-student basis, a school may either refund excess cash or apply excess funds disbursed for a student to that same student's account within a subsequent, eligible term, as long as a subsequent term roster was already received. This process may be referred to as "offsetting" or "netting."

In sum, this means that if a student loses full or partial eligibility in a term for which that student's award has already been disbursed, the institution has two options:

1. Refund any excess cash subsequently identified by PHEAA as a "Refund Needed" (see section [XVIII: Refunds and Reimbursements](#) for further details); or
2. Retain the excess cash and allow the applicable refund amount to be offset by a subsequently disbursed, eligible term award, if all of the following conditions are met:
 - The offset funds are applied to a subsequent term award for the same student who generated the excess cash in question.
 - The student is eligible for an award in the term within which offset funds will be applied.
 - The student appears on the disbursement roster for the term within which offset funds will be applied.

Institutions should note that, unlike the State Grant Program, netting excess cash among different students is not permitted for the RTSS Program. All funds for cancelled or reduced awards must be returned to PHEAA. The school may not use excess funds for any other purpose.

A school may NOT...
• Use excess cash to pay another student.
• Use excess cash from a State Grant award to pay a RTSS award.
• Use excess cash from RTSS to pay a State Grant award.
• Use excess cash from an academic year to pay another academic year award (prior or subsequent).

Example 1: School does not remit payment for student prior to spring RTSS disbursement – “Student Offset”

When the school does not remit payment for the student prior to the spring term, PHEAA will automatically “offset” the student’s account.

Fall Roster				
Student	Fall Eligibility	Spring Eligibility	Funds Disbursed	School Update
Student A	\$500	\$500	\$500	Cancelled Fall: Not Enrolled

Spring Roster				
Student	Fall Eligibility	Spring Eligibility	Funds Disbursed	Refund Requests Received
Student A	CANCL	\$500	\$0	\$500

Example 2: School remits payment for student prior to spring RTSS disbursement

When the school remits payment for the student prior to the spring term, PHEAA will post the refund to the student’s account. If the student remains eligible for the spring term, the funds will then be disbursed with the spring term roster.

Fall Roster				
Student	Fall Eligibility	Spring Eligibility	Funds Disbursed	School Update
Student A	\$500	\$500	\$500	Cancelled Fall: Not Enrolled

Spring Roster				
Student	Fall Eligibility	Spring Eligibility	Funds Disbursed	Refund Requests Received
Student A	CANCL	\$500	\$500	\$500

E. Disbursement Holds

Failure to submit required reports or forms in a timely manner may prevent future disbursement of RTSS Program funds for all students. The issuance of funds for a particular term or period is contingent upon the institution’s compliance with PHEAA requirements for prior terms or periods. Examples of unresolved material that will cause an institution to be placed on a disbursement hold include, but are not limited to:

- Outstanding EFT agreements,
- Unreturned reconciliation rosters, and
- Refunds due to PHEAA for the RTSS Program from a previous academic year.

If a school is placed on a RTSS disbursement hold, that school will not receive further RTSS disbursements until the outstanding material(s) has been submitted and processed by PHEAA.

Additionally, PHEAA reserves the right to hold disbursement to an institution that is closing or is on a restriction or oversight by the United States Department of Education for participation in any Federal Title IV program. We also reserve the right to hold disbursements to an institution if the accrediting agency suspends or cancels accreditation for the school. PHEAA will exercise this right to determine the eligibility of the institution or recipients to receive further funding.

Any questions regarding disbursement holds should be directed to PHEAA via email at rtss@pheaa.org.

XVIII. REFUNDS AND REIMBURSEMENTS

Institutions may be required to return disbursed RTSS funds to PHEAA for a variety of reasons. These reasons may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Overaward/Overpayment:** When an award has been reduced (including those that are adjusted or cancelled for one or more terms as a result of the eligibility checks required of the institution, the school is responsible for refunding these funds to PHEAA. PHEAA provides crediting instructions for this procedure (refer to the *Pennsylvania State Grant Program Handbook*).
- **Program Review Findings:** A school may owe PHEAA for expenditures disallowed during a Program Review or audit. For more information, refer to the *Pennsylvania State Grant Program Handbook*.

As with certification and disbursement, refunds for the RTSS Program are managed on an individual student level. Schools cannot re-award new students with refund money due for other students. Instead, the funds must be returned and redistributed by PHEAA. Because offsetting is permitted for the same student between terms, a term's refund due for a student may be collected as an offset against a subsequent term award for the same student in the same award year.

Institutions may view all outstanding student-level refunds due to PHEAA via Partner Interface. Refund invoices must be created, submitted, and revised via Partner Interface or the Refund Transmission.

PHEAA will not collect any RTSS refunds directly from students. Unlike the State Grant Program, this means that PHEAA Collectables do not apply to the RTSS Program. All refunds for the RTSS Program must, therefore, be returned to PHEAA by the institution. When a refund is shown as being due to PHEAA, the institution must return this refund by term or at the time of reconciliation.

A. Refund Group (Invoice)

When PHEAA determines an institution owes a refund for any student(s), PHEAA generates a listing of outstanding refunds (funds due to PHEAA), identified as "Refunds Needed" on Partner Interface. Through this listing, PHEAA notifies the school of the total number of outstanding students for whom a refund is currently due to PHEAA. This listing provides the following information for all applicable students:

- Student name
- SSN
- Term amount due
- Total amount due

Prior to remitting payment to PHEAA, schools are required to review all Outstanding Refunds and create a "Refund Group" that includes each student for whom payment will be sent. This Refund Group is the equivalent of an invoice. Payment must be sent via ACH/wire transfer for all students listed on the Refund Group.

It should be noted that, when the institution is preparing to return funds to PHEAA, all students identified in the Refunds Needed listing do not need to be included in the same Refund Group. Instead, the institution, working from the Refunds Needed listing, may determine the students to place on any given Refund Group (invoice).

The school may create a Refund Group via Partner Interface or via the RTSS Refund Transmission process. It should be noted that an institution may only build and maintain one unprocessed Refund Group at a time. The institution may change or delete this group at any time until PHEAA processes the invoice and its respective refund payment.

B. Remittance

An institution may refund RTSS funds for ineligible students at any point during the academic year once those ineligible students have been identified in the Refunds Needed listing on Partner Interface.

In order to remit payment, schools must build a Refund Group and then send payment to PHEAA for all students listed on this Refund Group via ACH/ wire transfer. The funds returned to PHEAA must match the total amount of funds due to PHEAA within the Refund Group. PHEAA cannot complete the processing of a refund until the amount listed on the Refund Group matches the amount of the refund returned to PHEAA. PHEAA reserves the right to adjust the Refund Group or to require the school to adjust the Refund Group until the amount listed matches the refund payment received.

Please note that all refunds must be submitted to PHEAA in order for an institution to be considered reconciled for the year or period.

C. Reimbursement to RTSS Recipients

1. Credit Balances

In general, the credit balance policy and procedures outlined in Chapter 5 of the *Pennsylvania State Grant Program Handbook* also applies to the RTSS Program. However, it should be noted that certification and disbursement of the applicable RTSS award must have already occurred in order for the school to refund, within the appropriate term, the amount of the credit balance to the student. As with the State Grant, the school must label the refund check provided to the student as a refund of previously paid funds. Do not label this refund check as a payment of RTSS funds directly to the student. For example, do not label a refund check to the student as “RTSS” or “PHEAA Refund.”

2. Uncashed Student Refund Checks

When a school has correctly paid RTSS funds and issued a refund check based upon that payment and the refund check remains uncashed, schools must ensure compliance with the Commonwealth’s unclaimed property law. For further detail, please refer to the *Pennsylvania State Grant Program Handbook*.

XIX. RECONCILIATION

Reconciliation will occur at the end of the academic year. Institution reconciliation rosters will begin running May 2, 2017 and will be due back to PHEAA no later than June 30, 2017. Late return of refunds may adversely impact an institution’s ability to receive additional RTSS Program funds.

A. Reconciliation Roster

Reconciliation Rosters are annual reports that may generate an Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) and which PHEAA labels as a “reconciliation roster.” These rosters are available securely through the PageCenter Report Repository, the RTSS Disbursement Transmission process, and through a PDF in Partner Interface.

As with the State Grant Program, the annual reconciliation roster represents the final academic year closeout. It provides the school with a final opportunity to ensure that PHEAA and school records for the academic year are consistent with regard to 1) student eligibility, 2) disbursement, and 3) crediting and payment of RTSS funds. Even after the expiration of the enrollment period, schools are required to monitor and report changes that may impact a student’s eligibility and reconcile those changes.

Regular Reconciliation Roster Schedule	
Disbursement Period	Generation Period
Academic Year	May 2, 2017 through June 30, 2017
Late Reconciliation Roster Schedule	
Academic Year	July 3, 2017 through August 1, 2017*
*Payment will not be made after this disbursement deadline date.	

B. Reconciliation Overview

1. Definition

A school is considered reconciled for the RTSS Program when ALL of the following conditions are met:

- The school has made ALL corrections PRIOR to the generation of the Reconciliation Certification and Roster
- The “balance due PHEAA” and “balance due school” noted on the Reconciliation Roster are both zero
- There are no students requiring certification after the “Reconciliation Certification Needed” step is completed
- There are no students requiring a refund to PHEAA after the Reconciliation Disbursement Roster is generated
- The amount of funding the school received matches the funding disbursed by PHEAA
- Each student’s final RTSS status, as shown on the Reconciliation Roster, matches the school’s records
- All students who were credited funds were on the school’s final Reconciliation Roster

It is critical to note that the “balance due PHEAA” and “balance due school” both equaling zero alone does not equate to student-level reconciliation. As stated above, all listed conditions must be met.

2. Responsibility

Because each office of the institution has access to and expertise with data needed to facilitate the reconciliation and refund process, cooperation between the business and financial aid offices is essential if reconciliation of RTSS funds is to be successful. For example, the financial aid office will likely be the source of information regarding reporting and requesting refunds due to PHEAA, whereas the business office or bursar is generally responsible for remitting the payment to PHEAA. The financial aid office must communicate that late return of refunds to PHEAA will impact the school’s ability to receive additional funds.

3. Best Practices

A key factor in facilitating reconciliation is staying on top of the process. PHEAA encourages institutions to adhere to the following best practices:

- Define responsibilities of key individuals and offices
- Document your reconciliation
- Build in regular communication among your business office/bursar, financial aid office, and school’s technical staff
- Compare internal student accounts and business office/bursar records with financial aid office record and resolve any discrepancies
- Ensure all refund payments have been sent to and posted by PHEAA to the correct program, year, and period
- Continue to monitor balances on FG3S even after the expiration of the enrollment period
- Request any funds due to your school for the 2016-17 Academic Year prior to June 30, 2017 and absolutely no later than one week prior to the August 1, 2017 disbursement deadline.

C. Multiple Reconciliation Rosters

During the reconciliation period, PHEAA will monitor balances and automatically generate reconciliation rosters without institutional request under the following conditions:

- When running initial reconciliation rosters
- After the institution certifies a RTSS award (PHEAA will interpret the school's certification of a RTSS award as a request for those funds)
- When the school is due a "clean," zero-balance reconciliation roster

Any additional reconciliation rosters needed between a school's initial reconciliation roster and its final clean reconciliation roster must be requested by the school. PHEAA requires both the certification of the reconciliation roster within 30 days of receipt and the refund of any over-disbursements determined because of that certification. The institution must request additional reconciliation rosters when any of the following occurs after the generation of the most recent reconciliation roster:

- After a refund remitted by the school has been processed by PHEAA.
- After the school makes any changes to a student's record.
- If the information displaying on screen FG3S does not match the information displaying on Partner Interface.

Please note that, in order to meet the reconciliation deadline, it is best to request additional rosters as quickly as possible and no more than two weeks after any action to certify or change/correct a student record is taken or a refund is processed by PHEAA.

1. Academic Year Funds Due School

If the school determines funds are due from PHEAA, the school must request another reconciliation roster via email by contacting rtss@pheaa.org. For the 2016-17 Academic Year, these funds should be requested by June 30, 2017. It is the institution's responsibility to pursue additional funds due by PHEAA. In accordance with PHEAA policy regarding the disbursement deadline, PHEAA may generate additional reconciliation rosters after June 30, 2017 but no later than August 1, 2017. If the institution determines a reconciliation roster is needed by the August 1, 2017 deadline, the school is responsible for requesting payment at least a week in advance of this date. Please note that July 29, 2017 is the last day schools may certify awards to be disbursed by the August 1, 2017 deadline.

It is possible for 2016-17 RTSS records to continue to change after June 30, 2017, and PHEAA expects the school to reconcile student records. However, after August 1, 2017, if PHEAA records:

- Reflect "balance due school," the school will be expected to reconcile, reporting what students were not paid at all or not paid a balance, and PHEAA will cancel and/or adjust the student's award(s) to match the amounts that were disbursed on or before August 1, 2017.
- Reflect "balance due PHEAA," the school will be expected to reconcile and make a refund payment to PHEAA.

In sum, this means that, after the disbursement deadline (August 1, 2017 for the 2016-17 Academic Year) all remaining uncertified and/or undisbursed awards will be cancelled. Additionally, all remaining uncertified and/or undisbursed award increases will be re-adjusted down to the current disbursed amount of the award. The student's activity file will be updated to reflect the action taken.

Please remember that the lack of a PHEAA-processed EFT agreement from the institution will result in that school being placed on a disbursement hold and may place the institution at risk of having awards cancelled after the disbursement deadline.

For examples related to the disbursement deadline, please reference [Appendix E: Academic Year 2016-17 Reconciliation Examples](#).

D. Roster Certification

Because each student is certified prior to the school's receipt of any disbursement roster or funds, schools are not required to return signed term roster certification pages for the RTSS Program. However, a signed Roster Certification page is still required from the institution for Reconciliation Rosters.

Upon receipt of the signed Reconciliation Roster Certification page of the term's disbursement roster and absent any electronic status changes, PHEAA assumes that both final award eligibility confirmation and fund crediting have occurred. This certification also serves as final confirmation that the student's reject or cancellation status, as indicated on the roster, is correct.

The institution is responsible for completing all of the following steps when certifying a reconciliation roster:

- 1. Process certification prior to requesting funds for each term.**

Processing means completion of eligibility verification, submission of corrections, and award certification in accordance with these Procedures.

- 2. Report ineligibility and do not credit the student's account or allow a bill deduction if the student is not eligible for all or any portion of the payment for the term being reviewed.**

This may only be done after a complete review of the student's status according to the RTSS Program Guidelines and *State Grant Program Handbook*. A student should always be reported as ineligible if the school questions that student's RTSS eligibility for any reason.

- 3. Return the signed certification page of the Reconciliation Roster to the Agency after eligibility certification and fund crediting for each recipient occurs.**

PHEAA requires an online certification page accompany electronic student corrections. For further details, please refer to Appendix B of the *Pennsylvania State Grant Program Handbook*.

XX. OUTCOMES REPORTING

There is no institutional outcome reporting. The only outcome reporting PHEAA will conduct for the RTSS Program is a student survey. PHEAA will send a short, anonymous survey directly to RTSS recipients once awards have been disbursed. Participating institutions will be notified when the survey is sent to recipients. Institutions are strongly encouraged to remind their RTSS recipients to complete the survey. Results from the survey may impact program funding in future years.

XXI. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

As with the State Grant Program, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) accommodation policy is applicable to the RTSS Program.

In general, once a student who is enrolled in an eligible program but is reported as not meeting the 50 percent in-classroom enrollment requirement, the following will occur:

- 1.** An ADA Accommodation notice will be automatically sent to the student who will be given 30 days to reply. Do not cancel awards for students in this situation and do not credit funds to the student's account.
- 2.** For students who do not qualify for an exception or fail to respond within 30 days from the date that the school reports their status, cancellation of the award by PHEAA occurs. School notification is in the form of a weekly report.
- 3.** When a student replies and receives an ADA accommodation, PHEAA sends notification to both the student and the school.

XXII. APPEALS

As with the State Grant Program, any institution or recipient wishing to do so may submit a request for a formal appeal to the RTSS Program inbox at rtss@pheaa.org.

XXIII. INSTITUTIONAL WITHDRAWAL FROM RTSS PARTICIPATION

Any institution wishing to withdraw from participation in the RTSS Program must submit to PHEAA a formal letter requesting such a withdrawal. Because of the possibility that RTSS Student Candidates may become eligible for nomination or awarding at any point throughout the academic year, schools that are approved to participate in the RTSS Program and then later wish to withdraw will be required to participate in the program for the duration of the year for which the school applied and was approved to participate. Once approved by PHEAA, a requested withdrawal will become effective the subsequent award year.

XXIV. TIMELINE FOR THE RTSS PROGRAM

Date	Activity
May 1, 2016	School application becomes available
August 15, 2016	School application due date
September 12, 2016	Nominations begin; listing of potentially eligible Student Candidates made available to schools
September 15, 2016	ACH forms due to PHEAA Treasury Management
Late Fall 2016	Initial eligibility run
Late Fall 2016	Initial student notification of eligibility/ineligibility or income verification
Late Fall 2016	Award certification opens for all schools
Late Fall 2016	Initial disbursement to schools
May 2, 2017	Reconciliation Begins
June 30, 2017	School reconciliation rosters due
July 29, 2017	Award certification window closes for all schools
August 1, 2017	Disbursement deadline – No RTSS funds disbursed for 2016-17 after this date.

XXV. RECORD RETENTION

Institutions must retain all records used in the certification of student eligibility and disbursement for at least five years from the date the institution completes certification of the reconciliation roster. This information is used for program review and audit purposes.

XXVI. CONTENTS OF THIS DOCUMENT AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

There may be updates and changes to the information provided in these guidelines as policies evolve.

A special website is available to provide schools with all current and/or updated materials and information regarding the RTSS Program. The url is PHEAA.org/rtss.

Questions may be addressed to rtss@pheaa.org or by calling 800.443.0646.

APPENDIX A

RTSS REJECTION, CANCELLATION, & ADJUSTMENT CODES

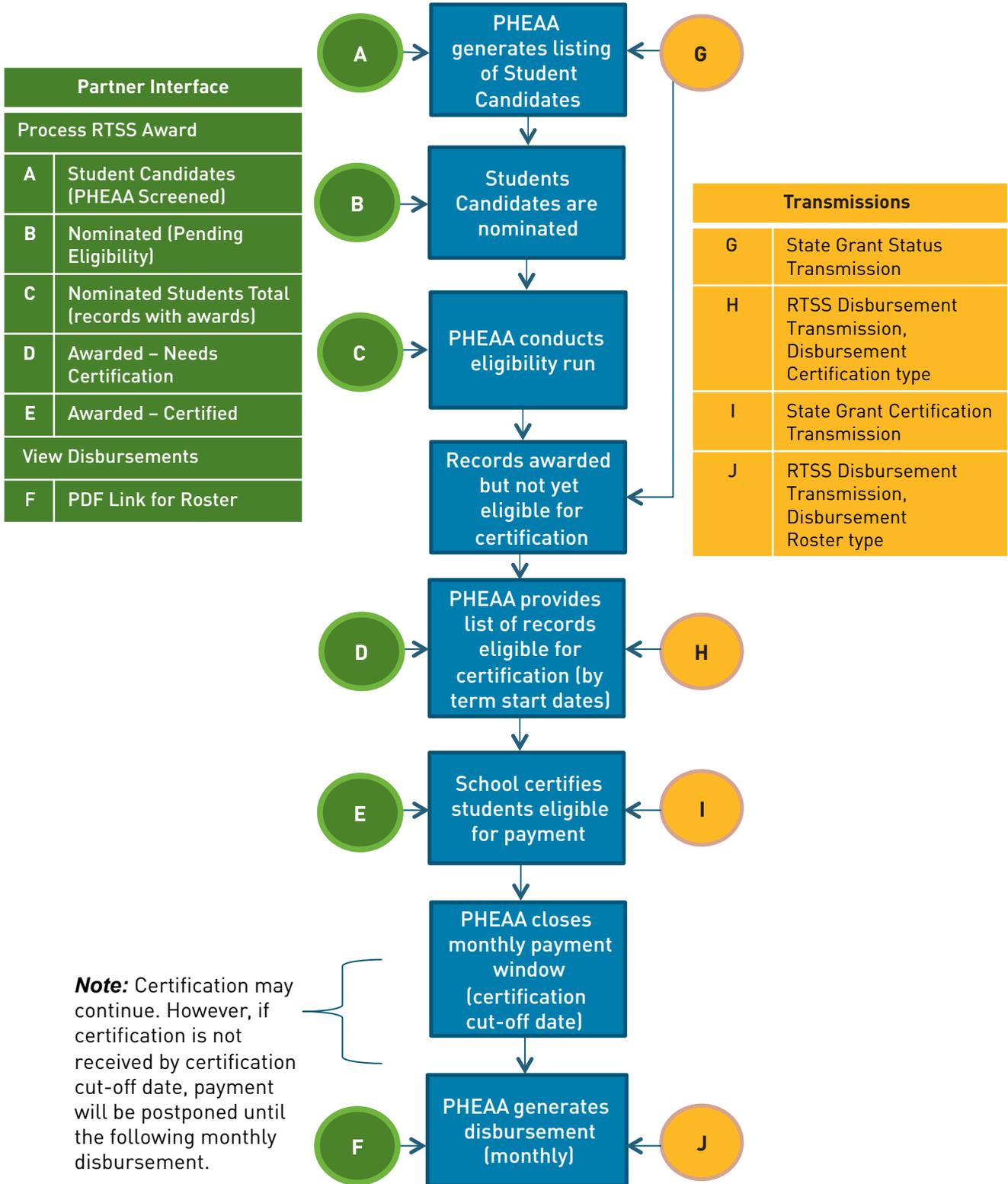
REJECTION CODES	
D	The student does not meet the residency requirements to qualify for the Ready to Succeed Scholarship. To qualify, the student must be a Pennsylvania resident for 12 consecutive months prior to applying for financial aid.
F	The student plans to attend a school that is not approved to participate in the Ready to Succeed Scholarship Program.
G	The student plans to enroll in a program of study not approved for the Ready to Succeed Scholarship Program.
I	The student is enrolled less than half-time according to PHEAA guidelines. To qualify for the Ready to Succeed Scholarship, the student must be taking at least 6 semester credits or the equivalent per term.
J	The student will be enrolled as a graduate student or the student has already received a baccalaureate degree or its equivalent. Only students pursuing an undergraduate degree for the first time are eligible for the Ready to Succeed Scholarship Program.
L	The student submitted the FAFSA® after the filing deadline.
M	The scholarship amount for which the student is eligible is below the minimum \$500 award requirement.
N	The student's school nominated the student for the Ready to Succeed Scholarship (RTSS); however, due to limited funding for this program, the student is currently ineligible for a RTSS award.
P	The student did not successfully complete a minimum number of credits (or clock hours) commensurate with the enrollment status for the last academic year (Fall, Winter, Spring and/or Summer) during which the Ready to Succeed Scholarship and/or State Grant was received. This may have been caused by failing or dropping one or more courses in a previous term.
Q	Our records indicate that the student is currently incarcerated.
R	The student has received the maximum number of Ready to Succeed* payments. Students are normally limited to the equivalent of 3 academic years of aid. <i>*Please Note: The student may also receive this reject status if his or her State Grant award counter has been exhausted. Please see section XI: Award Counter for further details.</i>
S	The student plans to attend an out-of-state school. Funds from the Ready to Succeed Program can only be used at eligible schools in Pennsylvania.
T	Our records indicate that the student does NOT meet the high school graduation requirements established under Pennsylvania statute.
U	Our records indicate that the student is either delinquent or in default on a Federal or State Educational Loan.
Y	The student has received the maximum number of Ready to Succeed payments any student may receive while enrolled in the program of study.
W	The student's school indicated that the student's cumulative GPA did not meet the 3.25 minimum to be eligible for the Ready to Succeed Scholarship.
X	The student's Total Household Income is above the \$110,000 threshold for the Ready To Succeed Scholarship.
Z	The student's school has notified us that the student is in his or her first academic year, and therefore, not eligible for the Ready to Succeed Scholarship.

CANCELLATION CODES	
A	The student has graduated or completed the program of study.
G	The student is not enrolled at the institution indicated.
L	The student's school has notified us that 50% or more of the student's instruction is being conducted outside of the classroom. If the student has a medical condition as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act, he or she may request a waiver to the 50% requirement by downloading and completing an ADA Accommodation request form. This form can be found by visiting the Pennsylvania State Grant Documents and Forms section of PHEAA.org .
O	Other - Miscellaneous
R	The student advised the Agency that the student no longer wished to be considered for Ready To Succeed aid.
U	The student has received the maximum number of Ready To Succeed payments for which the student is eligible.
V	PHEAA has not received the verification of the financial data submitted on the student's application, which we previously requested the student provide. If the student still wishes to be considered for the Ready to Succeed Scholarship, then please provide the requested data to PHEAA. If the student requires a new form, please contact PHEAA at 800.692.7392 .

ADJUSTMENT CODES	
A, Q	Contact RTSS staff at 800.443.0646 , a private number reserved for the use of financial aid administrators.
T	The Ready to Succeed Scholarship has been adjusted to reflect the amount for which the student is eligible as a fifth-year, undergraduate cooperative work-study student.
W	The Ready to Succeed Scholarship has been adjusted due to the student's withdrawal from school.

APPENDIX B

RTSS PROCESSING, CERTIFICATION, AND DISBURSEMENT CYCLE



APPENDIX C

RTSS ROSTER INTERPRETATION

INTRODUCTION

The following Appendix provides helpful information for locating and interpreting RTSS disbursement and reconciliation rosters.

ROSTER OUTPUT

RTSS Rosters will generate to two locations.

1. **PageCenter** – Rosters will be produced and stored in the school’s mailbox.
2. **Partner Interface PDF** – Links to rosters are available on the RTSS Dashboard in Partner Interface. When a link is selected, a PDF generates from roster data that is stored in the State Grant system.

There are some minor formatting differences between these rosters.

PageCenter	PDF
When the record is at another school for another term, the roster prints 'NONE' for that term.	When the record is at another school for another term, the term remains blank.
If, after the record is initially disbursed, the award increases but the school does not certify the increase and another roster runs, PageCenter report prints an 'N' along with the previously disbursed amount. Refer to the example under the Term Eligibility Columns section of this document.	PDF roster prints the previously certified amount but without the 'N' indicator.
When no money is due to the student, PageCenter roster prints 'None.'	When no money is due to the student, PDF prints '\$0.'
Actual Disbursement appears at the end of all the student level rosters with other totals.	There is no Actual Disbursement total on this page of the PDF. The amount is duplicative of the TOTAL DUE STUDENT amount.
When record is cancelled, PageCenter prints 'CANCL.'	When the record is cancelled, PDF roster prints '\$0.'
PageCenter roster prints newest to oldest date.	PDF roster summaries print in the reverse order - oldest to newest.
Prints PRIOR DISBURSEMENTS in ascending order (oldest to newest) on the Summary page.	Prints PRIOR DISBURSEMENTS in descending order (newest to oldest) on the Summary page.
State Grant Program PHEAA Collectables who also have RTSS sort to the top.	State Grant Program PHEAA Collectables who also have RTSS do not sort to the top.
For REFUNDS RETURNED TO PHEAA, the DATE RECEIVED prints the date the payment was processed by PHEAA.	For REFUNDS RETURNED TO PHEAA, the DATE RECEIVED prints the effective date of the payment received from the school.
During reconciliation, a certification page prints as the final page of the PageCenter reconciliation roster. Information about reconciliation prints on the penultimate page.	During reconciliation, a message prints on the final page of the PDF reconciliation roster that directs the user to certify the roster using the Online Web Certification tool.

STUDENT IDENTIFICATION

Rosters are sorted by the student's last name, then first name, then middle initial.

FIRST COLUMN

SSN is the Social Security Number of the student.

***(ASTERISK)** identifies students whose status has changed by printing a single asterisk to the left of their last name.

LAST NAME is the student's last name as it appears in the State Grant record.

FIRST NAME is the student's first name as it appears in the State Grant record.

RTSS PHEAA COLLECTABLE will always print blank. There are no PHEAA Collectables for the RTSS Program.

RTSS PRIOR GRANTS is the total number of award counters the student has previously received for the RTSS Program. If the student had no prior RTSS awards, the counter is 0.00.

RTSS REMEDIAL EXCEPTION is the counter that tracks when the student was awarded a RTSS award and used a remedial exception. The roster only prints the counter associated with the prior period for which a remedial exception was granted.

Example 1:

The student received a remedial exception in both the Fall and Spring terms of the 2015-16 Academic Year. The student has, therefore, historically used a counter of 1.00 remedial exceptions. However, because the roster only prints the prior period's counter, neither remedial exception granted will appear until the first Fall 2016 disbursement roster for the 2016-17 Academic Year.

Term	Remedial Exception Used	Term	Remedial Exception Used	Total Remedial Exception Used	Spring 2016 Roster: RTSS Remedial Exception	Fall 2016 Roster: RTSS Remedial Exception
Fall 2015	0.50	Spring 2016	0.50	1.00	0.00	1.00

Example 2:

The student received a remedial exception in the Spring 2016 term of the 2015-16 Academic Year, and again in the Spring 2017 term of the 2016-17 Academic Year. The student has therefore historically used a counter of 1.00 remedial exceptions. However, because the roster only prints the prior period's counter, the remedial exception used in the Spring 2016 term will not display until the Fall 2016 disbursement roster. The complete 1.00 remedial exception will appear in the Fall 2017 disbursement roster for the 2017-18 Academic Year.

Term	Remedial Exception Used	Term	Remedial Exception Used	Total Remedial Exception Used	Spring 2016 Roster: RTSS Remedial Exception	Fall 2016 Roster: RTSS Remedial Exception
Spring 2016	0.50	Spring 2017	0.50	1.00	0.00	0.50

RTSS ACADEMIC LEVEL is the one-position number that describes the Academic Level reported by the school.

RTSS GPA is the GPA reported by the school in the X.XX format.

TERM ELIGIBILITY COLUMNS (FALL TERM, WINTER TERM, SPRING TERM)

The status of each term at the time of roster generation is printed. Possible statuses are detailed below. Please note that only applicable statuses will display for each student and that statuses are determined on a case-by-case basis.

AWARD AMOUNT is the term award amount in \$ XXXX format. If a current term has been processed as a remedial exception term, then -REMEDIAL follows the amount.

REJECT REASON is either Reject N (funds depleted) or another reason that a previously awarded RTSS term is not eligible. Please see [Appendix A](#) – RTSS Rejection, Cancellation, & Adjustment Codes for a complete list of reject reasons.

CANCL indicates the RTSS award has been cancelled. This prints on the PageCenter version only. The PDF version prints '\$0.'

NOCRT means that the student's RTSS award was not certified prior to the roster. In this case, the uncertified RTSS award is not considered in the "Total Grant" column on the RTSS roster.

NOTE: Please be aware that, due to timing, NOCRT may print for a student recently awarded as a result of a RTSS eligibility run in the event that there was not enough time to make certification of the new award available prior to disbursement.

NONE (PageCenter) or **BLANK** (PDF) means the student is at another school for the term or the student was not processed for RTSS for that term.

PEND can mean either of the following:

- The student is pending eligibility for the SGDEPP for the term in question and is, therefore, not eligible for the RTSS Program.
- The student is pending disbursement for the RTSS Program due to a PHEAA review.

"N" DESIGNATION prints before an award amount (PageCenter version only). This means the student was previously disbursed the amount shown, but an increase to the award remains uncertified.

Example:

Fall Term	Spring Term	Total Grant
N \$456	\$912	\$1,368

P/T prints directly below the award amount if the student is enrolled part-time.

PROGRAM OF STUDY (2-position code) prints below the award amount and/or below the 'P/T' designation, if applicable, when the student is enrolled at a Business, Trade, or Technical (BTT) school.

ACADEMIC LEVEL (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.) prints below the award amount to show the year in school for Nursing Schools only.

LAST AWARD, DIFF. SCHOOL (meaning "last award at a different school" or "LADS") prints below the 'Due Student,' 'PHEAA Outstanding Refund,' and 'Requests Received' column data. The LADS designation means the last term prior to the disbursement reflects enrollment at a different school where RTSS was awarded. In certain circumstances, branches may be considered a different school.

Examples 1-3 (across years):

- The RTSS Program would not have Student A on a 2016-17 roster because the student is not nominated.
- The RTSS Program would have Student B on the 2016-17 RTSS roster; however, the LADS message would not print since there was no previous RTSS award.
- The RTSS Program would have Student C on the 2016-17 RTSS roster. The LADS message would print on the Fall 2016 roster since the Spring 2016 term was awarded RTSS at another school.

Example 1 – Student A				
Program	Fall 2015	Spring 2016	Fall 2016	Spring 2017
	School A	School A	School B	School B
State Grant	Reject M	Reject M	Reject M	Reject M
RTSS	\$	\$	Not Nominated	Not Nominated

Example 2 – Student B				
Program	Fall 2015	Spring 2016	Fall 2016	Spring 2017
	School A	School A	School B	School B
State Grant	Reject M	Reject M	\$	\$
RTSS	Reject N	Reject N	\$	\$

Example 3 – Student C				
Program	Fall 2015	Spring 2016	Fall 2016	Spring 2017
	School A	School A	School B	School B
State Grant	Reject E	Reject E	\$	\$
RTSS	\$	\$	\$	\$

Example 4 (within 2016-17 year):

- The LADS message will print on the 2016-17 Spring term RTSS roster because the Fall term RTSS award was at another school. Note: This also applies to Reconciliation.

Example 4 – Student D		
Program	Fall 2016	Spring 2017
	School A	School B
State Grant	\$	\$
RTSS	\$	\$

NON-SPONSORING prints below the DUE STUDENT, PHEAA OUTSTANDING REFUND and REQUESTS RECEIVED column data when the student is attending a Community College and has been reported as incurring the 'non-sponsoring' tuition rate. This is reported by the school using the codes 'Q' or 'P' in Program of Study.

Example:

Due Student	PHEAA Refund Outstanding	Requests Received
None	None	None
	Non-Sponsoring	

TOTAL GRANT COLUMN

TOTAL GRANT is the total of all RTSS awards on the roster for the student.

NOTE: If a term was eligible for disbursement certification but left uncertified, the Total Grant will subtract that term's amount.

Example:

- The student's Spring term was not certified and the Spring roster was generated.

Fall Term	Spring Term	Total Grant
\$992	NOCRT	\$992

DUE STUDENT COLUMN

DUE STUDENT is the amount disbursed to the student with the roster. This amount may be for a single term or for multiple terms.

PHEAA REFUND OUTSTANDING COLUMN

PHEAA REFUND OUTSTANDING is the amount of refunds due to PHEAA for the student at the time the roster was generated. All PHEAA REFUND OUTSTANDING values represent refunds due to PHEAA by the institution.

REQUESTS RECEIVED COLUMN

REQUESTS RECEIVED is the amount of refunds received and applied to the student. This amount can be from a school payment or from an offset of funds.

Example 1 – Inter-term Offset:

- This example illustrates a student whose Fall term award was reduced to part-time AFTER the Fall term full-time award was disbursed. Because the student was eligible for a full-time Spring award, PHEAA disbursed the balance of \$496 with the Spring term roster and also applied \$496 of the Spring term funds due to satisfy the over-disbursed Fall term funds.

	Fall Award	Spring Award	Total Grant	Due Student	PHEAA Outstanding Refunds	Requests Received
Fall Roster 11/20/2016	\$992	\$992	\$1,984	\$992	None	None
Spring Roster 2/9/2017	\$496	\$992	\$1,488	\$496	None	\$496

Example 2 – PHEAA Outstanding Refund:

- This example illustrates a student whose Fall term award was reduced to part-time AFTER the Fall term full-time award was disbursed. Additionally, the Spring term award was cancelled for not enrolled prior to the Spring term disbursement. Because the student was over-disbursed \$496 for the Fall term, there is no subsequent term to offset, and there is no record of payment applied to the student at the time of the Spring term roster, PHEAA expects the school to remit payment of \$496 for this student.

	Fall Award	Spring Award	Total Grant	Due Student	PHEAA Outstanding Refunds	Requests Received
Fall Roster 11/20/2016	\$992	\$992	\$1,984	\$992	None	None
Spring Roster 2/9/2017	\$496	\$0	\$496	\$0	\$496	\$0

TOTALS ROW

TOTALS are grand totals that appear at the end of the roster.

1. **TOTAL (Fall, Winter, Spring) TERM** is the grand total of each term’s award column.
2. **TOTAL GRANT AMOUNT** is the grand total of the TOTAL GRANT column.
3. **TOTAL DUE STUDENT** is the grand total of the DUE STUDENT column.
4. **ACTUAL DISBURSEMENT** (PageCenter roster only) is the total amount of funds that are disbursed with the roster. This is the same as the TOTAL DUE STUDENT amount.
5. **TOTAL REFUND OUTSTANDING** is the grand total of the PHEAA REFUND OUTSTANDING column.
6. **REQUESTS RECEIVED** is the grand total of the REQUESTS RECEIVED column.

SUMMARY PAGE

The final page of the roster presents a summary of information.

ACTUAL DISBURSMENT (ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER) is the total amount the school can expect to receive via EFT.

TOTAL AWARDS (AS OF THIS ROSTER) is the total amount of all term awards that are certified and eligible for payment or have already been paid at the time of roster generation. **Note: This does not include terms that have not been certified and are designated as ‘NOCERT.’**

Example – Fall Roster:

Totals	Total Fall Term	\$ 9,632
	Total Spring Term	\$15,733
	Total Grant Amount	\$25,365
Summary	Total Awards (As of this Roster)	\$ 9,632

Example – Spring Roster:

Totals	Total Fall Term	\$15,100
	Total Spring Term	\$ 3,293
	Total Grant Amount	\$18,393
Summary	Total Awards (As of this Roster)	\$18,393

- 1. PRIOR DISBURSEMENTS** lists each prior roster date and amount and provides a grand total of all prior disbursements. Prior rosters print in ascending order (oldest to newest) on the PageCenter version and descending order (newest to oldest) on the PDF version.
 - a. TOTAL PRIOR ACTUAL DISBURSEMENTS** displays the total sum of all prior disbursements. If the roster is the first roster for the academic year, the TOTAL PRIOR ACTUAL DISBURSEMENTS is zero.
- 2. REFUNDS RETURNED TO PHEAA** lists each refund payment received and processed by PHEAA. Processed refunds print in ascending order (oldest to newest).
 - a. DATE RECEIVED** will display a date if a refund payment from the school has been received and processed by PHEAA. PageCenter rosters display the date the refund was processed, and the PDF version displays the effective date of the payment. Note: This section does NOT include inter-term offsets.
 - b. TOTAL REFUNDS** is the total of all school payments that have been posted to the students' accounts at the time of roster generation. Note: This does NOT include inter-term offsets.
- 3. TOTAL NUMBER OF GRANT RECIPIENTS ON ROSTER** represents the number of students who have an award on the roster for any term.

Example:

When counting student by student, a fall roster has 19 students. However, one of those students shows cancellations for all terms. Therefore, the TOTAL NUMBER OF GRANT RECIPIENTS ON ROSTER reflects 18 students in this total.

ROSTER OUTPUT – RTSS DISBURSEMENT TRANSMISSIONS

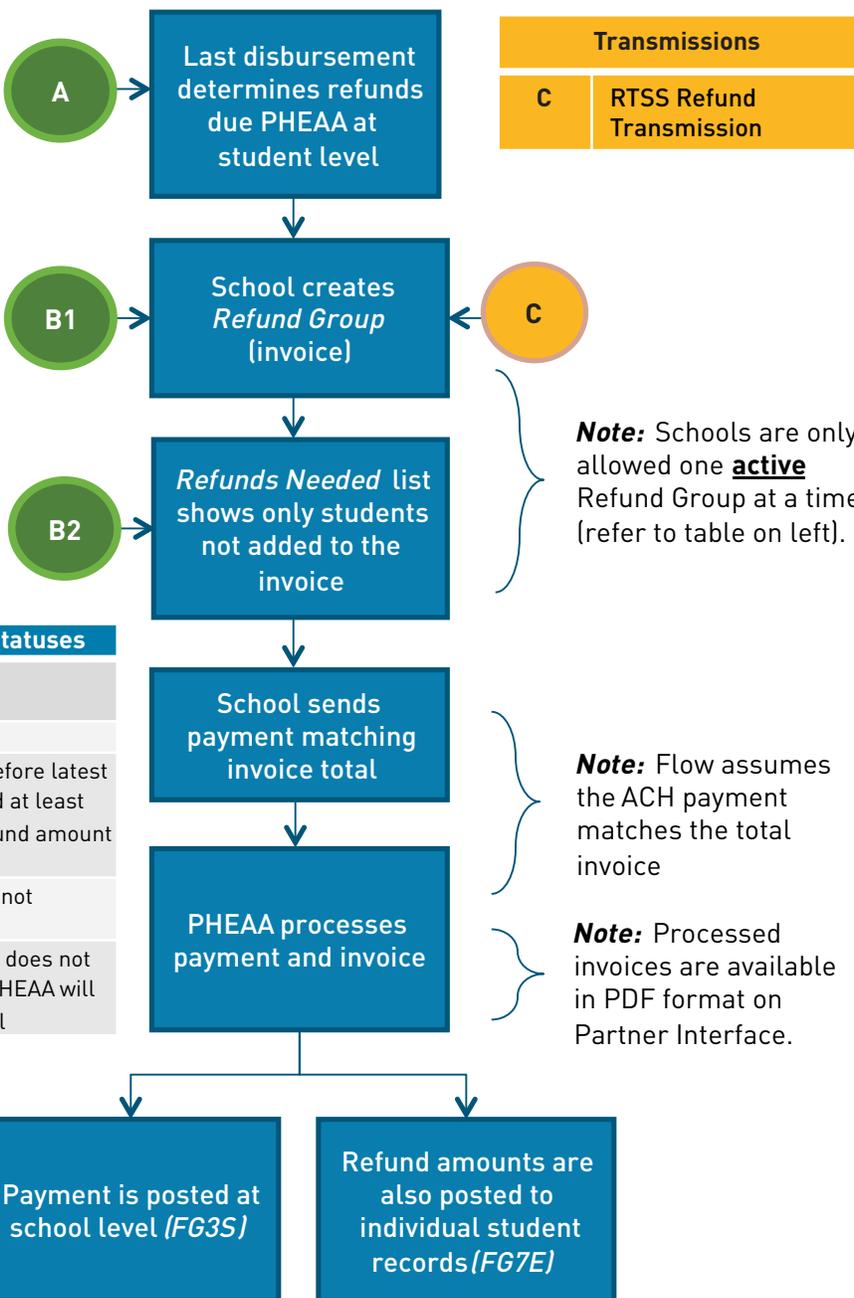
Schools may elect to receive disbursement roster information through an electronic transmission. The RTSS disbursement transmission is separate from the State Grant Program. Transmission users continue to have access to the rosters housed in PageCenter and on Partner Interface.

A layout and sample file of the Disbursement Transmission is available in the *Document Library* under State Grant Program/Technical and Processing Information. Please refer to this RTSS Disbursement Transmission layout for detail on transmission data explanations since these vary from actual roster prints.

Please contact Public Service Systems at **800.443.0646** to make arrangements to receive transmissions.

APPENDIX D RTSS REFUND CYCLE

Partner Interface	
Review Refunds for RTSS Awards	
A	Refunds Total
B1	Refunds Needed
View Refunds	
B2	Link to Refund Group (Active Group or Processed PDF)



Active Refund Group (Invoice) Statuses		
Current Display	Future Display	Description
Received	Pending	Invoice created
Changed	Changed	Invoice created before latest disbursement and at least one student's refund amount was impacted
N/A	Received	ACH received but not processed
Under Review	Under Review	ACH received and does not match invoice – PHEAA will contact the school

APPENDIX E

ACADEMIC YEAR 2016-17 RECONCILIATION & DISBURSEMENT DEADLINE EXAMPLES

IMPORTANT: For all examples, a request “in writing” means via email to rtss@pheaa.org.

Example 1

Student A never received a disbursement for the Spring 2017 term and the Reconciliation Roster date is August 2, 2017. PHEAA will not pay for this student on the Reconciliation Roster and will cancel Student A's 2017 Spring term award. In order to have been paid for Student A, the school should have made a written request for another Reconciliation Roster to be included in the final August 1, 2017 disbursement. To ensure adequate processing time, such a request should be submitted at least a week prior to the desired disbursement date.

Example 1		
Reconciliation Rosters	Eligibility Date Change	Student A Eligibility
June 30, 2017		NOCRT
	July 5, 2017	Certified – Spring term \$1,000
Student-level Amount Due School		\$1,000
Student-level Amount Due PHEAA		\$0
FG3S Amount Due School		\$1,000
FG3S Amount Due PHEAA		\$0
August 2, 2017*		\$0
	*\$0 in balance of funds sent with roster – student record must be updated to reflect \$0 eligibility.	
Can Payment be Applied?		No

Example 2A

Student A received a part-time award for Spring 2017, which was disbursed to the school prior to the reconciliation period for the 2016-17 Academic Year. The school reconciled funds and achieved a zero balance on June 30, 2017. The school subsequently made a post-reconciliation correction to Student A's enrollment, increasing the award from part-time to full-time.

On or Before August 1, 2017: A written request for another Reconciliation Roster is made in time to allow a Reconciliation Roster to run on or prior to August 1, 2017 and the school is eligible for payment of the student's award balance.

Example 2 – Scenario 1 – ON OR BEFORE August 1, 2017		
Reconciliation Rosters	Eligibility Date Change	Student A Eligibility
June 30, 2017		\$500 (part-time enrollment)
	July 8, 2017	\$1,000 (full-time enrollment)
Student-level Amount Due School		\$500
Student-level Amount Due PHEAA		\$0
FG3S Amount Due School		\$500
FG3S Amount Due PHEAA		\$0
July 29, 2017*		\$500
	*\$500 in balance of funds sent with roster	
Can Payment be Applied?		Yes

Example 2B

Student B received a part-time award for Spring 2017, which was disbursed to the school prior to the reconciliation period for the 2016-17 Academic Year. The school reconciled funds and achieved a zero balance on June 30, 2017. The school subsequently made a post-reconciliation correction to Student B's enrollment, increasing the award from part-time to full-time.

After August 1, 2017: The Reconciliation Roster lists the "balance due school" and lists the payment amount as \$0. The school reconciles and certifies that this student matches the "balance due school" and reports this information to PHEAA. PHEAA will then re-adjust the student's award to reflect a part-time amount and counter used from the original disbursement. No additional payment to the school of the student's award balance will be honored past the August 1, 2017 deadline.

Example 2 – Scenario 2 – AFTER August 1, 2017		
Reconciliation Rosters	Eligibility Date Change	Student B Eligibility
June 30, 2017	-	\$500 (part-time)
-	July 10, 2017	\$1,000 (full-time)
Student-level Amount Due School	-	\$500
Student-level Amount Due PHEAA	-	\$0
FG3S Amount Due School	-	\$500
FG3S Amount Due PHEAA	-	\$0
August 10, 2017*	-	\$0
-	*\$0 in balance of funds sent with roster – Student record must be updated to reflect \$500 eligibility	
Can Payment be Applied?		No

Created in 1963 by the Pennsylvania General Assembly, the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) has evolved into one of the nation's leading student aid organizations. Today, PHEAA is a national provider of student financial aid services, serving millions of students and thousands of schools through its loan guaranty, loan servicing, grant administration, outreach, and other student aid programs.

PHEAA's earnings are used to support its public service mission and to pay its operating costs, including the administration of the Pennsylvania State Grant and other state-funded student aid programs. PHEAA continues to devote its energy, resources and imagination to developing innovative ways to ease the financial burden of higher education for students, families, schools, and taxpayers.

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