

NEW YORK OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS

INTRODUCTION

STUDENTS WHO ATTEND COLLEGE IN NEW YORK STATE HAVE ACCESS TO A GROUP OF PROGRAMS CALLED “OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS”.

If you are eligible, it is a good idea to apply to Opportunity Programs because of the **benefits** that these programs provide, which include:

- 1. Admissions to the college for students whose applications would normally be rejected**
- 2. Additional funding (type and amount varies by school)**
- 3. Connections to supportive adults**
- 4. Academic tutoring and career support**
- 5. A summer program to help students get oriented to the school**

Opportunity programs are very similar across colleges, but they have different names like SEEK, CD, EOP, or HEOP depending on the type of college where the program is located (see below).

Type of College:

City University of New York (CUNY) 2-Year Colleges
City University of New York (CUNY) 4-Year Colleges
State University of New York (SUNY) All Colleges
Private Colleges (i.e. Colgate, Columbia, Cornell)

Name of Opportunity Program:

CD (College Discovery)
SEEK (Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge)
EOP (Educational Opportunity Program)
HEOP (Higher Education Opportunity Program)

TIP!

CUNY has other outstanding program offerings outside of its Opportunity Programs, including ASAP, ACE, and Start. Students cannot be in SEEK/CD and ASAP/ACE/Start at the same time - for more information about these programs and how to choose between them, see our guide to [Appendix G9 CUNY Support and Opportunity Programs](#).

WHO QUALIFIES FOR OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS?

OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS ARE OPEN TO INCOMING FRESHMEN WHO MEET THE PROGRAM'S FINANCIAL AND ACADEMIC CRITERIA.

In order to be in an Opportunity Program, a student needs to demonstrate **financial need**, usually by showing that their family income is below a certain level.

In addition to having financial need, a student applying for an Opportunity Program needs to be **academically inadmissible** to the college. This means that the student would ordinarily be rejected from the school because their grades or test scores were too low.

If you are applying to a school where your grades and test scores are too high for the Opportunity Program, don't worry! This just means that you will be put into the regular admissions pool and considered with all of the other applicants to the college.



You might want to add some schools to your list that are harder to get into, because you have a chance to be admitted through their Opportunity Program.

HOW TO APPLY FOR OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS

In order to be a part of an Opportunity Program, you need to join as a **first-time freshman**.

If you have attended any college before, you are not eligible to join an Opportunity Program **unless** you were already in an Opportunity Program at your previous college*.

Opportunity Programs usually only admit new freshmen students in the **Fall semester**. If you are applying to start college in the Spring, you will probably not be able to join an Opportunity Program.

YOU CAN APPLY TO OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS AS PART OF THE REGULAR APPLICATION PROCESS.

Here's how to apply for the Opportunity Programs in each of New York's college systems:

At **CUNY**, apply for **SEEK** and **COLLEGE DISCOVERY (CD)** by: Filling out the **Special Programs section of the CUNY application** and **filing FAFSA**. When you file FAFSA, you should list all of the CUNY colleges you have applied to.

At **SUNY**, apply for **EOP** by: Checking the **EOP option** on the **SUNY application**. Next, send a **SUNY EOP Financial Information Form** to the college to confirm your financial eligibility for EOP (this should be done as soon as possible after you apply). [Click here for SUNY EOP Financial Information Forms](#).

Each **private college** has a different system for considering students for their **HEOP PROGRAMS**.

To apply for **HEOP** at a private college: Select the **HEOP option** on the **Common Application** for that school. Then, contact the college's HEOP office to learn about their application process and any required supplemental information. [Click here for a list of private colleges with HEOP programs and contact information](#).

Always apply early if you want to be in an Opportunity Program - do not wait for the admissions deadline!

Opportunity programs have extremely limited space, especially at 4-year colleges; a large school like SUNY Albany or SUNY Buffalo will generally only take 200 new EOP students per year. Opportunity program spaces are typically filled on a first-come, first-serve basis, and spaces often run out before the school's posted admissions deadline.

*If you are already in an Opportunity Program and you transfer to a new school, you can enroll in the Opportunity Program at your new school (for instance, if you were in College Discovery at La Guardia Community College and you transfer to Queens College, you can be in the SEEK program there). Contact the HEOP, EOP, SEEK, or CD office at your new school to arrange a transfer of your Opportunity Program status.

TIPS FOR SUCCEEDING IN OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS

Apply to “reach” schools in New York.

One of the best things about Opportunity Programs is that they give you a chance to go to a college you wouldn't have otherwise been able to get into. If you have a New York school on your list that you really want to go to, but you're not sure if you can get in, apply anyway! You might get in through the Opportunity Program.

Apply really early!

Remember that Opportunity Program spaces fill up before the usual admissions deadline. Finish your college applications and any required eligibility worksheets by Halloween if you can, and by Thanksgiving at the absolute latest, to give yourself the best chance of getting in.

Make sure you complete the financial eligibility forms right away.

Some schools won't consider your Opportunity Program application complete until you've verified your financial eligibility. At CUNY, this means filing FAFSA around the same time as you complete your college application. At SUNY, this means sending the SUNY or campus EOP financial information form. If you're not sure if they received your information, you should call the admissions office at your target school to confirm that they got it.

Always go to the summer program.

Opportunity Programs typically offer a summer bridge program before the start of school. In addition to helping with the transition to college, these programs are usually mandatory, meaning that if you don't attend, you might lose your chance to attend the school. If you're admitted to an Opportunity Program, you should check your email regularly for information about the summer program and make sure to attend!

Meet with your counselor regularly and take advantage of the resources the program has to offer.

College is an important and challenging time and your Opportunity Program counselor is there to help you succeed.

If you transfer to another college in New York, remember to transfer your Opportunity Program status as well. You can do this by contacting the SEEK, CD, EOP, or HEOP office at your new college.

LINKS TO RESOURCES

[CUNY Freshman Profile](#): shows grades and SAT scores for freshmen who got in through regular admissions and through SEEK or College Discovery.

[SUNY EOP Information](#): shows grades and SAT scores and numbers of students in each of the SUNY EOP programs.

[List of NY State Private Colleges with HEOP Programs](#) and contact information for each program.

SPECIAL NOTES FOR YOUTH WITH EXPERIENCE IN FOSTER CARE

If you are or have been in foster care at any point since you turned 13, you are an independent student for the purposes of Opportunity Program eligibility and you should not report income from anyone but yourself. If you didn't make any money in the previous year, your family income would be \$0. Students currently or formerly in foster care are almost always financially eligible for Opportunity Programs.

If you're willing to do so, it's a good idea to let them know you are/were in foster care.

Many Opportunity Programs offer additional resources to students currently or formerly in foster care.