

Budget for a Better Minnesota

Rahel's Story: Why the State Grant Program Matters

Rahel Theodros is a full-time college student from Columbia Heights studying business marketing education at the University of Minnesota. In addition to her studies, Rahel works 15-20 hours per week as a waitress and is heavily involved in volunteering and numerous campus activities.

Rahel has a younger sister and an older brother who are also attending college right now. She is one of nearly 100,000 Minnesota students who rely on the Minnesota State Grant program to pay for college.

In addition to the State Grant funding she receives, Rahel has also had to take out \$5,000 to \$6,000 in student loans each year. She anticipates that she will graduate with more than \$20,000 in student debt. "Without the Minnesota State Grant Program," she said, "I would not have been able to afford tuition."

Under Governor Dayton's budget proposal, Rahel's State Grant award would increase by an estimated \$1,200.



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Helping Thousands of Students Like Rahel

State financial assistance has not kept pace with rising tuition and other increased costs of higher education. Over the last decade, tuition and fees have increased by three times the rate of inflation. Meanwhile, Minnesota students are taking out loans at one of the highest rates in the nation, with the average graduate leaving school with \$29,800 in student debt.

That is why Governor Dayton's budget proposal would \$80 million in the Minnesota State Grant Program to make higher education more affordable for Minnesota students – the largest increase in student aid in more than 25 years. His budget would help over 5,000 more Minnesotans achieve the dream of a higher education, and increase aid to 100,000 students by an average of \$300.

Minnesota is at its best, and our economy is at its strongest, when our students have access to an affordable, world-class education. By 2018, an estimated 70 percent of jobs in Minnesota will require some education beyond high school, but only 40 percent of Minnesotans hold post-secondary degrees.

We cannot let out-of-control costs prevent Minnesota students from pursuing a higher education. Now is the time to make college more affordable for students like Rahel.



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