

New York Governor Announces ‘Tuition-free Public College’ Initiative

By Don Sutherland

On Tuesday, January 3, 2016, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo [announced](#) an initiative aimed at allowing middle class New York students to attend any SUNY or CUNY college tuition-free. The details of the Excelsior Scholarship plan are as follows:

Family Income Eligibility: 2017: \$100,000; 2018: \$110,000; 2019: \$125,000

Student Eligibility: Must be a resident of New York State

Student Attendance: Must attend a SUNY or CUNY institution full-time

Student funding under the program would be calculated as follows: Tuition – (Tuition Assistance Program funding + Federal Grants). Any excess of tuition would be covered by the Excelsior Scholarship.

In announcing the initiative, Governor Cuomo declared, “A college education is not a luxury – it is an absolute necessity for any chance at economic mobility, and with these first-in-the-nation Excelsior Scholarships, we’re providing the opportunity for New Yorkers to succeed, no matter what zip code they come from and without the anchor of student debt weighing them down.”

The latest employment and earnings data reveal that full-time workers with a college degree enjoy higher earnings and lower unemployment rates than those without a degree. The below chart was published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics:

