Primary State Financial Aid and Tuition Assistance Programs

Virginia Commonwealth Award

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Visit www.schev.edu/financialaid for more information and updates.

STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA

Virginia Commonwealth Award
Fact Sheet

General Description and Purpose

The purpose of the Virginia Commonwealth Award is to assist undergraduate students with financial need and graduate students to pay part of their college costs. The funds are appropriated directly to each state-supported institution. Funds may be used for need-based grants to Virginia resident undergraduates or for grants or assistantships to graduate students (both in-state and out-of-state). The law requires that the awards to undergraduates be proportional to need so that the students with the greatest need receive the largest awards.

Application Process

This program does not have a separate application; students must complete the FAFSA at www.fafsa.ed.gov to be considered. The application and awarding processes are administered by the financial aid office at each Virginia public college or university. Contact the financial aid office at the college you plan to attend for application procedures and deadlines.

Eligibility

In order for an undergraduate student to be eligible for the award, a student must:

- Be admitted into a Virginia public two or four year college or university;
- Be enrolled at least half-time in an approved degree, certificate, or diploma program;
- Be a domiciliary resident of Virginia as defined by the Code of Virginia §23.1-502; and
- Be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen;
- Demonstrate financial need as determined by the institution

In order for a graduate student to be eligible for an award, a student must:

- Be enrolled full-time in an approved graduate degree program at a participating public Virginia college or university; and
- Meet requirements established by the granting institution.

Awards

Undergraduate: The actual awards will vary by institution and are subject to available funding. The awards may not exceed tuition and required fees.

Graduate: The actual awards will vary by institution and are subject to available funding. The institution will determine the award.

Renewal

Pending the availability of funds, awards may be renewed provided that the student:

- Maintains satisfactory academic progress;
- Continues to meet all of the requirements of the Virginia Student Financial Aid Program regulations; and
- If a graduate student, meets the eligibility requirements for graduate students established by the granting institution.

Virginia Guaranteed Assistance Program
Fact Sheet

General Description and Purpose

The purpose of the Virginia Guaranteed Assistance Program (VGAP) is to provide an incentive to financially needy students now attending elementary and secondary school in Virginia to raise their expectations and their academic performance and to consider higher education an achievable objective in their future. The law requires that the awards to undergraduates be proportional to need so that the students with the greatest need receive the largest awards.

Application Process

This program does not have a separate application; students must complete the FAFSA at www.fafsa.ed.gov to be considered. The application and awarding processes are administered by the financial aid office at each Virginia public college or university. Contact the financial aid office at the college you plan to attend for application procedures and deadlines.

Eligibility

While this document does not cover all of the eligibility requirements, the basic criteria are:

- Be admitted into a Virginia public two or four year college or university;
- Be enrolled full-time in an approved degree, certificate, or diploma program;
- Be a domiciliary resident of Virginia as defined by the Code of Virginia §23.1-502;
- Demonstrate financial need as determined by the institution;
- Be a graduate from a Virginia high school or complete a program of home school instruction in accordance with §22.1-254.1 (students who obtain a GED are not eligible);
- Have at least a cumulative high school grade point average of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale (or its equivalent);
- If a home school completer: achieve a SAT verbal and math combined score of at least 980 or ACT Composite score of at least 19; and
- Have complied with federal selective service registration requirements, if applicable.

Awards

The actual awards will vary by institution; however, those students found to be in the neediest category will receive awards of at least tuition. The maximum award is the cost of tuition, required fees, and a book allowance. Limit of one year of award per class level.

Renewal

Awards may be renewed for up to three additional years provided that the student:

- Continues to be enrolled full-time in an eligible program on or after the term's census date;
- Continues to be a domiciliary residency in Virginia;
- Continues to demonstrate financial need;
- Maintains a grade point average of at least 2.0 on a 4.0 scale, or its equivalent;
- Maintains the satisfactory academic progress; and
- Has advanced class levels upon completion of each full year of award received (VGAP is restricted to no more than one year - 12 months - per class level – FR, SO, JR, SR).

Two-Year College Transfer Grant
Fact Sheet

General Description and Purpose

The purpose of the Two-Year College Transfer Grant Program is to provide financial assistance to eligible students who have completed their associate's degree at a Virginia two-year public institution and transfer to a participating four-year institution. Funds are disbursed to the participating institution.

Process

Students are responsible for notifying their four-year institution that they may be eligible for the award. To assist and raise awareness, the two-year colleges notify potentially eligible students via email as the student nears completion of their Associate's degree.

NOTE: The email from the two-year college is not a confirmation of eligibility or that the student has met all of the two-year college eligibility criteria. It serves only to inform potentially eligible students.

Complete instructions will be included in the email (the email itself is not required) but all potential students must:
- Apply for financial aid by completing the FAFSA (www.fafsa.ed.gov) by the four-year institution's deadline.
- Notify the financial aid office of their four-year institution of their potential eligibility, and
- Submit a final academic transcript to the four-year institution as soon as their Associate's degree is posted.

The four-year institution will verify eligibility utilizing the student's final academic transcript and institutional data as of the institution's Census date. In most instances, final eligibility will not be established until well after the four-year college's semester is in session. Funding for awards will be made directly to the four-year institution on behalf of the student.

Eligibility

In order to be eligible, a student must:
- Be admitted into a Virginia public two or four year college or university
- Be a first-time entering freshman no earlier than fall 2007
- Be a domiciliary resident of Virginia as defined by the Code of Virginia § 23.1-502
- Meet selective service requirements
- Have received an Associate's degree at a Virginia two-year public institution
- Have cumulative GPA of 3.0 on a scale of 4.0 for the Associate's degree
- Enroll full-time into a Virginia four-year public or Virginia four-year private nonprofit college or university by the fall following completion of Associate's degree
- Enroll into a degree program not for religious training or theological education
- Have applied for financial aid by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by the four-year institution's deadline
- Have financial need: defined as a federally calculated Expected Family Contribution (EFC) of 12,000, or less.

Award Amount

- Awarded to students enrolled at a participating four-year institution
- Maximum annual standard award is $1,000
- Additional $1,000 for students enrolled into a degree program in: science, teaching, engineering, mathematics, or nursing
- Reduced only if it results in an over award (total financial assistance is greater than the student's cost of Attendance) but can affect eligibility for state need-based aid

Renewal Criteria and Limitations

- Limited to three years (six semesters)
- Must maintain domicile in Virginia and full-time enrollment in an approved course of study
- Must have applied for financial aid by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by the institution's published deadline
- Continued eligibility based on college GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale and continued financial need, defined as a federally calculated Expected Family Contribution (EFC) of 12,000, or less.
- Must maintain satisfactory academic progress

Virginia Tuition Assistance Grant Program
Fact Sheet

General Description and Purpose

Established in 1972, the Tuition Assistance Grant Program (VTAG) is designed to assist Virginia residents who attend accredited private, nonprofit colleges and universities in Virginia for other than religious training or theological education. The VTAG is authorized in Chapter 6 Section 23.1-628 through 635 of the Code of Virginia as the Tuition Assistance Grant Act.

Application Process

Applications may be acquired from the financial aid office of the private institution the student plans to attend.

Completed applications must be submitted to the financial aid office of the institution on, or before, July 31 prior to the fall semester of enrollment. Applications submitted after July 31, but no later than December 1, will be considered for an award only if funds are available.

Eligibility

While this document does not cover all of the eligibility requirements, the basic criteria are:

- Be a domiciliary resident of Virginia as defined by the Code of Virginia §23.1-502 and augmented by the Domicile Guidelines;
- Be enrolled full-time as an undergraduate, graduate, or professional student; and
- Be enrolled at an eligible institution pursuing an eligible degree that is not in religious training or theological education. Eligible graduate programs are limited to those in a health-related professional program, designated by the 51 series of programs under the NCES Classification of Instructional Programs.

Eligible Institutions

Appalachian College of Pharmacy
Averett University
Bluefield College
Bridgewater College
Christendom College
Eastern Mennonite University
Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine
Emory & Henry College
Ferrum College
George Washington University

Hampden-Sydney College
Hampton University
Hollins University
Jefferson College of Health Sciences
Liberty University
Lynchburg College
Mary Baldwin University
Marymount University
Randolph College
Randolph-Macon College
Regent University

Roanoke College
Shenandoah University
Southern Virginia University
Sweet Briar College
University of Richmond
Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine
Virginia Union University
Virginia Wesleyan University
Washington & Lee University

Awards

The award amount is based on the number of eligible students and the amount of funds appropriated by the General Assembly. Maximum 2017-18 Annual Award: Undergraduate= $3,300; Graduate= $1,650.

Renewal

Awards are renewed provided that the student continues to meet eligibility requirements and has not exceeded the maximum number of years of eligibility.

STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA

Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program Tier 2 Stipend Fact Sheet

General Description and Purpose

The Tier 2 Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP) is a Commonwealth of Virginia program that provides education benefits to spouses and children of military service members killed, missing in action, taken prisoner, or who became totally and permanently disabled or at least 90 percent permanently disabled as a result of military service in an armed conflict. Military service includes service in the United States Armed Forces, United States Armed Forces Reserves, or the Virginia National Guard. Armed conflict includes military operations against terrorism or as the result of a terrorist act, a peacekeeping mission, or any armed conflict.

> *NOTE: A Veteran's 90-100% permanent disability must have been directly caused by the Veteran's involvement in: 1) military operations against terrorism; 2) a peacekeeping mission; 3) a terrorist act; 4) an armed conflict. The service-connected disability cannot have been incurred during active duty that coincides with, but was not the direct result of, one of the listed events/missions.*

The purpose of the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program is to provide undergraduate or other postsecondary education free of tuition and all required fees. A stipend to offset the cost of room, board, books, and supplies also may be available, contingent on funding. Benefits are available for up to four academic years.

Eligibility

The eligible student must be:

1) Accepted by and enrolled in a Virginia public college or university; and
2) a. A spouse of a qualifying military service member; or
    b. A child, between the ages of 16 and 29, inclusive, of a qualifying military service member.

The qualifying military service member is one who meets at least one criterion in each of the following <u>four</u> areas.

1) **Served on active duty in:**

    a.   US Armed Forces;
    b.   US Armed Forces Reserve; or
    c.   Virginia National Guard.

2) **Must have total and permanent or at least 90% permanent service-connected disability that coincides with:**

    a.   Military operations against terrorism;
    b.   A peacekeeping mission;
    c.   Active duty as a result of a terrorist act; or
    d.   Any armed conflict.

3) **While serving active duty*:**

    a.   Was killed;
    b.   Was missing in action;
    c.   Was prisoner of war; or
    d.   Became permanently disabled or at least 90 percent disabled due to such service and is now a veteran.
    * Please refer to the note listed under "General Description and Purpose"

4) **Have one of the following qualifying statuses:**

   a. Virginia domicile at time of entering service or called up from reserves;
   b. Virginia domicile or physical presence in Virginia for at least five years immediately prior to student applying for admission to the institution;
   c. If deceased, was a Virginia domicile or had physical presence in Virginia on, and for at least five years prior to, his death;
   d. In the case of a qualifying child, is deceased and the surviving parent had been, at some point previous to marrying the deceased military member, a Virginia domicile for at least five years or is and has been a Virginia domicile or has had physical presence in Virginia for at least five years prior to student's application for admission; or
   e. In the case of a qualified spouse, is deceased and the surviving spouse had been, at some time previous to marrying the deceased military spouse, a Virginia domicile for at least five years or is and has been a Virginia domicile or has had physical presence in Virginia for at least five years prior to his or her admission application.

Benefits

Tuition/fee waiver

Eligible students, as confirmed by the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS), are guaranteed waiver of all tuition and mandatory fees at a Virginia public college or university regardless of degree program or enrollment level. *Note: Mandatory fees are those fees incurred after tuition is charged and does not include application or enrollment fees.*

Stipend for eligible Tier 2 Students

In addition, as funds are available, eligible Tier 2 students may receive a stipend to offset other educational expenses incurred by the student, such as room, board, books, and supplies. Please note that the stipend is not available for the advance purchase of books.

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) administers the stipend benefit in conjunction with DVS and participating Virginia public institutions of higher education.

Enrollment Level	Credit Hours as of census date (end of add/drop)		Term Amount
	Undergraduate	Graduate	
Full-Time	12+	9+	$600
3/4-Time	9-11	7-8	$450
Half-Time	6-8	5-6	$300
<Half-Time	1-5	1-4	$150

The current maximum annual stipend amount is $1,200, allocated to fall and spring terms according to the stipend schedule above.

Stipend priority funding system for fall and spring stipends

Because there may not be sufficient funding to make full VMSDEP stipends to all eligible students, a priority funding system will be used to determine the order and amount of stipends. Students in the Priority 1 category will receive term amounts based on enrollment level as specified in the stipend schedule shown above. If funds are available after Priority 1 students are awarded, Priority 2 students will be considered for either a full or reduced stipend, depending on funding levels. Each subsequent priority level of students then will be accordingly considered accordingly for a stipend, if funding is available.

The priority categories and dates are as follows:

- **Priority 1 Date: December 31**
  Includes students enrolled for the fall term whose enrollment confirmation was entered into the VMSDEP portal by their home institution by December 31 of the award year; these students will receive an amount based on the above stipend schedule.

- **Priority 2 Date: February 1**
  Includes students enrolled for the fall or spring term whose enrollment confirmation was entered into the VMSDEP portal by their home institution between January 1 of the award year and February 1 of the award year; these students will receive an amount based on enrollment level and available funding.

- **Priority 3 Date: March 15**
  Includes students enrolled for the fall or spring term whose enrollment confirmation was entered into the VMSDEP portal by their home institution between February 2 and March 15 of the award year; these students will receive an amount based on enrollment level and available funding.

- **Priority 4 Date: May 1**
  Includes students enrolled for the fall or spring term whose enrollment confirmation was entered into the VMSDEP portal by their home institution between March 16 and May 1 of the award year; these students will be considered if funding is available and in order of institutional enrollment confirmation.

- **Priority 5 Date: May 1**
  Includes students enrolled for the summer term whose enrollment confirmation was entered into the VMSDEP portal by their home institution between March 16 and May 1 of the award year; these students will be considered if funding is available and in order of institutional enrollment confirmation. Students receiving summer stipends must have remaining eligibility (e.g., the student must not have been awarded the full annual stipend during the fall and spring terms).

If funding is insufficient to provide the full stipend amount based on student and enrollment levels, stipends will be reduced proportionately for all students within the same priority level. SCHEV anticipates awarding Priority 1 and 2 students in 2021-22; SCHEV also anticipates stipends for Priority 3 and/or Priority 4 students will not be funded or the stipend amount will be severely reduced. Finally, SCHEV does not anticipate funding Priority 5 (summer) stipends, but will review in April to make a final determination.

No stipends can be funded once the annual deadline for requesting disbursement of funds to institutions has passed or once program funding has been exhausted, whichever comes first.

Stipend restrictions

The following restrictions apply to the stipend:
1) Stipends are based on available funding and are awarded according to the above priority system.
2) The stipend is not available for noncredit courses, which include courses taken for audit.
3) For purposes of determining the stipend amount, the enrollment level is determined as of the end of the institution's census date (end of add/drop period); credit hours added after that date may not be included in the student's enrollment level.
4) A student may receive the stipend through one institution only – the home institution selected by the student in the portal; the stipend amount is based on the combined enrollment. Note that the student remains eligible for the waiver of tuition and fees at each institution even if enrolled at multiple participating institutions.

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5) The maximum amount of the VMSDEP stipend, when combined with "other scholarships, grants, and waivers" (i.e. other gift aid), cannot exceed the student's cost of attendance (tuition, fees, room, board, books, supplies, etc.). Other gift aid includes but is not limited to athletic or academic scholarships, tuition waivers, veteran's benefits, etc.

    Example: John Smith is enrolled full-time for both fall and spring terms. His room, board, book, supply, and other expenses total $15,000. He expects to receive a $5,000 VMSDEP tuition and fee waiver, a $5,550 Pell Grant, a $450 SEOG Grant, and a $3,000 institutional grant – a total of $14,000 in gift aid. Expenses ($15,000) minus expected gift aid ($14,000) equals $1,000. Because the amount of the VMSDEP stipend combined with other gift aid cannot exceed expenses, his annual VMSDEP stipend would be reduced to $1,000.

6) If a student withdraws from college after the census date, the stipend is adjusted by a percentage equivalent to the tuition refund policy in effect at the institution.

    Example: John Smith is receiving a $480 stipend for the spring term. He withdraws from the institution at the point where a student would be liable for 50% of charges. John is eligible to retain 50% of his stipend, or $240.

7) If a student is allowed to retroactively drop one or more courses after the census date, the student's stipend amount is recalculated based on the current number of enrolled credit hours.

8) No stipends will be awarded after the cut off for fiscal year disbursement requests has passed.

Renewal

Benefits are limited to a total of eight semesters, equivalent to four academic years; however, benefits do not have to be used in four consecutive years, allowing for a break or breaks in a student's education. The stipend is contingent upon available annual funding and the student's eligibility status as reflected in the portal.

Stipend Process

1) The student submits to DVS their VMSDEP application using the myVMSDEP portal.
    Information about the program and the link to the portal can be found online at:
    http://www.dvs.virginia.gov/veterans-benefits.shtml; contact information:

    VMSDEP Office
    Phone: (804) 225-2083
    Hours: Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

2) DVS reviews the application, determines eligibility, and updates the portal with the student's status.

3) The student's institution confirms the student's enrollment information as of the term's drop/add date in the portal and enters the information necessary to determine stipend eligibility.

4) SCHEV confirms the student's final stipend amount for the term, and requests disbursement of funds to the institution approximately four to six weeks into the term.

5) The institution applies the funds to the student's account.

6) Funds are first applied to institutional direct charges, such as room and board. Disbursements made by the institution to the student, if applicable, are then subject to the institution's student refund policy.

7) If the student withdraws after the census date, the stipend amount will be prorated based on the institution's tuition refund policy.

8) If a student is allowed to retroactively drop one or more courses after the census date, the student's stipend amount is recalculated based on the current number of enrolled credit hours.

Authorizing Language

Code of Virginia § *23.1-608:* https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title23.1/chapter6/section23.1-608/

2021 Virginia Act of Assembly, Chapter 552

Item 150

E.1. Out of this appropriation, $2,130,000 the first year and $2,280,000 the second year from the general fund is designated to support the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents program, § 23.1-608, Code of Virginia, to provide up to a $2,200 annual stipend to offset the costs of room, board, books and supplies for qualified survivors and dependents of military service members.

2. The amount of the stipend is an estimate depending on the number of students eligible under § 23.1-608, Code of Virginia. Changes that increase or decrease the grant amount shall be determined by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia.

3. The Director, State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, shall allocate these funds to public institutions of higher education on behalf of students qualifying under this provision.

4. Each institution of higher education shall report the number of recipients for this program to the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia by April 1 of each year. The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia shall report this information to the Chairmen of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees by May 15 of each year.

5. The Department of Veterans Services shall consult with the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia prior to the dissemination of any information related to the financial benefits provided under this program.

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C.1. Notwithstanding § 23.1-608, Code of Virginia, the department shall provide the State Council of Higher Education in Virginia the information these schools need to administer the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependent Education Program. The department shall retain the responsibility to certify the eligibility of those who apply for financial aid under this program.

2. No surviving spouse or child may receive the education benefits provided by § 23.1-608, Code of Virginia, and funded by this or similar state appropriations, for more than four years or its equivalent.

Workforce Credential Grant
Fact Sheet

General Description and Purpose

The Workforce Credential Grant is designed to provide low-cost opportunities for students to receive training in a high demand field and receive an industry-based certification or state licensure. The program was initiated in 2016 by the General Assembly. Students pay only 1/3 of the cost of the program upon enrollment. Students must complete the training program in order to avoid paying an additional 1/3 of the cost.

Eligibility and Application

In order for a student to be eligible for an award, a student must meet the requirements for domicile (in-state residency) in Virginia as defined by the Code of Virginia §23.1-502. More information on Virginia domicile, please refer to in-state residency page at www.schev.edu/index/tuition-aid/in-state-residency.

The application process is managed by the participating institutions. Please contact your local community college for more information on how to apply and who to contact or visit www.vccs.edu/workforce/workforce-credential-grant/.

Participating Institutions

Virginia community colleges across the state and the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center offer the program through their workforce development offices. Some additional higher education centers may offer programs at a later time.

Blue Ridge Community College	Patrick Henry Community College
Central Virginia Community College	Paul D. Camp Community College
Dabney S. Lancaster Community College	Piedmont Virginia Community College
Danville Community College	Rappahannock Community College
Eastern Shore Community College	Southside Virginia Community College
Germanna Community College	Southwest Virginia Community College
J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College	Thomas Nelson Community College
John Tyler Community College	Tidewater Community College
Lord Fairfax Community College	Virginia Highlands Community College
Mountain Empire Community College	Virginia Western Community College
New River Community College	Wytheville Community College
Northern Virginia Community College	Southern Virginia Higher Education Center

For more information on this program, please visit the workforce credential page of the Elevate Virginia website: www.elevatevirginia.org/wcg/

Academic Common Market Program
Fact Sheet

General Description and Purpose

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) and the state higher education agencies of the participating states administer the Academic Common Market (ACM) program. The program operates on the premise that if public institutions in a student's home state do not offer a degree program (undergraduate or graduate) that a student intends on pursuing, then he/she may attend a participating out-of-state institution offering the degree of interest and be granted a waiver of out-of-state tuition charges. Private institutions do not participate in the ACM program.

Eligibility

To be eligible for the Academic Common Market:

The academic major must:

- Not be offered at a Virginia public institution; and
- Be approved by the Virginia ACM Coordinator and the out-of-state institution.

The student must:

- Be a domiciliary resident of Virginia as defined by the Code of Virginia §23.1-502;
- Be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen; and
- Be unconditionally admitted and enrolled full-time in an approved ACM major available to Virginia residents at a participating out-of-state institution.

Participating States*

Alabama	Florida	Mississippi	Tennessee	West Virginia**
Arkansas	Georgia	Oklahoma	Texas	
Delaware	Maryland	South Carolina	Virginia	

* Florida and Texas participate in the ACM at the graduate level only. Also, not all institutions participate and some place restrictions on ACM access. **West Virginia will no longer participate in the ACM at the undergraduate level beginning summer 2020.

Popular ACM Programs

Undergraduate	Graduate
Aerospace Engineering/Mechanical Engineering	Human Resources
Digital Media	Library and Information Science
Marine Science	Mass Communications
Recording Industry	Medical Illustration
Retail Management	Nursing Informatics
Risk Management and Insurance	Public Health
Sport & Exercise Psychology	
Supply Chain Management	

Next Steps

Determine if your program is offered through the ACM and available to Virginia residents:

- Go to www.schev.edu/acm
- Select the "Programs Available for Virginians" tab to search for eligible programs at participating institutions.
- If you find your program, complete the "Application for Participation" using the link on the ACM homepage. Make sure to thoroughly review the application process and supporting documentation sections of the application.

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