



GEAR UP VIRGINIA SCHOLARSHIP

Quick Guide

GEAR UP VIRGINIA SCHOLARSHIP

A competitive college financial aid program available to eligible GEAR UP students who demonstrate high financial need. Scholarships are contingent upon available funding and changes to federal guidelines and are not guaranteed.

INITIAL SCHOLARSHIP ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for consideration for a GEAR UP VA Scholarship, a student must:

- Have been an original member of the 7th grade GEAR UP class in 2006-07
- Have a signed student information release form on file at SCHEV
- Be an active participant in GEAR UP-endorsed activities
- Graduate with a high school diploma from a participating GEAR UP high school by August 31, 2012 and have a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or above as of the end of fall 2011
- Submit a completed GEAR UP Virginia award application and all required documents by the determined deadline
- Be accepted and enrolled at least half-time in a degree, diploma, or certificate program at an eligible institution no later than the fall 2013 term
- Be eligible for the Pell grant as determined by the U.S. Department of Education
- Successfully complete a FAFSA and be awarded a Pell grant

DEFINITION OF AN ELIGIBLE INSTITUTION

An eligible institution is one that:	2 Exceptions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – is physically located in the state of Virginia, accredited, and recognized by SCHEV – participates in Title IV federal student financial aid programs – agrees to participate in the GEAR UP Virginia Scholarship program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Students may receive the scholarship at an eligible institution located in a state that borders Virginia – NC, TN, KY, WV and MD (including DC) and otherwise meets the eligible institution requirements. – Students interested in academic programs not offered in Virginia may receive the scholarship at an institution that participates in the Academic Common Market (ACM) program and otherwise meets the eligible institution requirements. For more information about ACM, visit www.schev.edu.

SCHOLARSHIP SELECTION PROCESS

<p>Applications will be available during senior year. All students who submit an application with required documents will first be considered for a scholarship.</p> <p>A scholarship committee will review each complete application packet and take into consideration each student’s financial need, cumulative GPA through fall 2011, participation, essay, and recommendation letter to determine recipients.</p> <p>Scholarship award letters will be mailed to each recipient.</p>	Selection Components
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Financial need – Grade point average – Participation – Student Essay – Recommendation letter

SCHOLARSHIP LENGTH

An eligible recipient may only use this scholarship for up to 5 years or the granting of their first bachelor’s degree, whichever comes first.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARD AMOUNT

Students may be eligible to receive a scholarship equal to the maximum Pell grant award as determined by Congress each academic year. This award amount will vary depending on the student’s enrollment and financial aid information.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SCHOLARSHIP

How do students know if they are eligible for the federal Pell grant?

Pell grant eligibility is determined by the information the students provides on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The Expected Family Contribution (EFC) determines the student’s eligibility.

Are non-Pell student eligible for this scholarship?

Only students who are eligible to receive a Pell grant are eligible for consideration for a scholarship; however, all students are encouraged to apply as they may be eligible for a GEAR UP Virginia Achievement Grant.

How is the scholarship awarded?

Scholarship awards will be forwarded directly to participating institutions on behalf of the eligible student shortly after verification of enrollment and financial aid information is received from the institution each academic term.

Is the scholarship renewable?

The GEAR UP Virginia Scholarship is renewable each academic year based on the availability of funds, provided that students enroll at least half-time in a degree, diploma, or certificate program at an eligible institution by the fall 2013 academic term. To be eligible to renew the scholarship, students must meet all renewal requirements, which will be included in the initial scholarship award packets mailed to students. Students who wish to renew their scholarship must submit a completed GEAR UP Scholarship renewal application along with other required documents each year by the determined deadline.

GEAR UP VIRGINIA ACHIEVEMENT GRANT

Quick Guide

GEAR UP VIRGINIA ACHIEVEMENT GRANT	
The GEAR UP Virginia Achievement Grant is a financial aid program available to eligible GEAR UP students who are not eligible to receive the GEAR UP Virginia Scholarship. Financial need is considered, but not required to receive this grant. Grants are contingent upon available funding and changes to federal guidelines and are not guaranteed.	
GRANT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AND DEFINITION OF ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS	
The Achievement Grant requirements are the same as the scholarship, except that students do not have to be eligible for a Pell grant to receive the award. See reverse side for requirements and definition of eligible institutions.	
GRANT SELECTION PROCESS	
Applications will be available during senior year. Students who apply but are not eligible for a GEAR UP Virginia Scholarship will automatically be considered for a one-time GEAR UP Virginia Achievement Grant. A scholarship committee will review each complete application packet and take into consideration each student's financial need, cumulative GPA through fall 2011, participation, essay, and recommendation letter to determine recipients. Grant award letters will be mailed to each recipient.	Selection Components <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Financial need (not required)– Grade point average– Participation– Student Essay– Recommendation letter
GRANT LENGTH AND AWARD AMOUNT	
Students who are eligible to receive the GEAR UP Virginia Achievement Grant could receive an estimated \$750 one-time award to use during the 2012-13 or 2013-14 academic year in postsecondary education. The award amount may vary depending on financial aid information verified by the institution. The award is contingent upon fund availability and changes to the federal guidelines.	
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE GRANT	
Does the grant have to be paid back? No, the Achievement Grant does not have to be repaid.	
How is the grant awarded? Grant awards will be forwarded directly to participating institutions on behalf of the eligible student shortly after verification of enrollment and financial aid information.	
What is the difference between the GEAR UP Virginia Achievement Grant and the Scholarship? The Achievement Grant is a one-time award that is not dependent on financial need. The Scholarship is based on financial need and is renewable provided that students continue to meet eligibility requirements.	

NOTE: The number of scholarships and grants that are awarded will depend on the number of eligible students who apply and the availability of funds.

HELPFUL LINKS

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia – www.schev.edu

Student Aid on the Web – www.studentaid.ed.gov

Free Application for Federal Student Aid – www.fafsa.ed.gov

FinAid – www.finaid.org

Fast Web – www.fastweb.com

I am the One – www.i-am-the-one.com

Virginia Wizard – www.vawizard.org

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information about the GEAR UP Virginia Scholarship or Achievement Grant programs, contact the GEAR UP Virginia Scholarship administrator.

Mailing Address: State Council of Higher Education for Virginia
GEAR UP Scholarship Administrator
101 N. 14th Street
James Monroe Building, 10th Fl.
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Phone: (804)225-2600

Email: GEARUPscholarship@schev.edu

Website: www.gearupva.com