

Affordable Pathways Partnership Grant Request for Proposals - Round One

Grant Application Deadline:	October 21, 2016
Awards Announced:	December 1, 2016
Performance Period:	January 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018 (18 months)

1. Purpose of Grants

Through the support of Governor McAuliffe and funding from the General Assembly, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) announces an Affordable Pathways Partnership Grant competition for the period of January 1, 2017, through June 30, 2018.

These one-time grants are funded through the Fund for Excellence and Innovation that was established during the 2016 General Assembly session to focus on two primary activities: (1) *to stimulate collaborations among public school divisions, community colleges and universities and to expand affordable student pathways and (2) to pursue shared services and other efficiency initiatives at colleges and universities that lead to measurable cost reductions.* This grant opportunity targets the first activity of affordable pathways and collaboration/partnership development.

Development of affordable pathways partnerships is a component of the [Virginia Plan for Higher Education](#), the statewide strategic plan, and supports the commonwealth's objective to be the best-educated state by 2030.

SCHEV defines affordable student pathways as sequential academic courses or learning experiences with connected support services designed to result in a cost savings to the student while in the pursuit of a degree and/or workforce credential. Grants awarded in this first round will target the expansion and creation of sustainable affordable pathways programs that focus primarily on high school to college-age students; strengthen PK-12 partnerships with higher education; implement or expand pathways that support cost savings to students such as opportunities for early college credit, improve time-to-degree/credential or completion rates, particularly for underrepresented populations; and lead to a degree, certificate or workforce credential. Underrepresented populations are defined by SCHEV as students who are a racial/ethnic minority, from a low-income background and/or are from areas of the state with low degree attainment rates, based on census data.

2. Award Amount

In the first round of SCHEV's Fund for Excellence and Innovation, grants will be awarded in amounts up to \$140,000 for up to four successful applicants (Note: Awards are subject to fund availability.).

3. Eligible Organizations

In order to help stimulate collaboration between PK-12 and higher education, proposed programs must include a partnership between: (1) at least one public high school, school division or regional school consortium and (2) a degree-granting public institution of higher education (IHE). A Virginia public higher-education institution must be the fiscal agent and applicant. In order to enhance the proposed affordable pathways model and students' success, partnerships with additional organizations are encouraged.

4. Pre-Proposal Webinar

A pre-proposal webinar is scheduled on August 25, 2016, 10–11 a.m. EDT. The pre-proposal webinar will be recorded and available on a SCHEV grant resource page at:

<http://www.schev.edu/index/institutional/grants/affordable-pathways>.

Characteristics and Examples of Affordable Student Pathways Programs

Characteristics of an affordable pathways program may include a combination of the following or other similar practices that result in student cost savings:

- Reduce time to degree/credential.
- Utilize formal articulation agreements that define and ease the transition between education levels (e.g., 2-4 year, high school to community college, etc.).
- Create alignment between coursework leading to credentials across educational entities/industry.
- Provide financial aid/scholarships.
- Assist with the application and enrollment process in higher education.
- Offer accelerated coursework and/or flexible terms.
- Offer college credit during high school.
- Offer stipends/wages during programming (e.g. apprenticeship programs).
- Provide accurate and timely academic and career advising.
- Align and connect education with the business sector.
- Result in a degree/credential in a field of demand.
- Provide programming that helps students meet state learning standards and grad. requirements.
- Reduce need for academic remediation.

As mentioned, there are many examples of affordable pathways programs in the commonwealth. Some offer opportunities for early-college-credit while in high school and others can provide opportunities that reduce time-to-degree and increase graduation rates once in higher education. Following are examples:

- The [Pathways to Baccalaureate](#) program led by Northern Virginia Community College which partners with other IHEs and PK-12 to support students on their path to college and career success.
- Early college initiatives at [John Tyler Community College](#) and [Reynolds Community College](#) partnering with area high schools.
- The [Community College Access Program](#) (CCAP) administered by Virginia Western Community College where students from select h.s. can attend tuition free if they meet program commitments.
- Summer Bridge programs that offer students opportunities to work in cohorts and earn college credit, including [SPARC](#) at Norfolk State University.
- Development of living-learning communities to support cohort models for student success, including those at [Virginia Commonwealth University](#).
- Accountability and incentive programming, like [GAP](#) at New River Community College.
- Retention programming, powered by data for student support customization, such as the [Exceptional Student Experience](#) program at Richard Bland Community College.
- [Patriot's Promise Summer Program](#) at George Mason University, where low-income students receive funding to take summer course while also receiving college success skills training.
- [Valley Scholars](#) and [Rappahannock Scholars](#) programs at James Madison University and University of Mary Washington that partner with high schools in their region and provide college preparation skills development and scholarships once in postsecondary education.

Some affordable pathways programs have strong PK-12 partnership imbedded in the program, particularly those that offer early-college-credit and the scholars programs. Programs that do not have a PK-12 partnership imbedded in the program, must develop a partnership that provides services to better inform students of affordable pathways programs opportunities and help prepare students for higher education in order to make more informed decisions to receive the resources needed for student success. An active partnership between an IHE and PK-12 through awareness building and support services can provide opportunities for middle- and high-school students to learn about the benefits of and preparation for higher education while introducing them, and their families, to affordable college pathways opportunities.