

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
WEST VIRGINIA HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY COMMISSION**

February 16, 2022 | 9:30 a.m. | Zoom Video Conference

1-646-558-8656 and enter meeting ID 843 5854 0373

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Approval of Eligibility Requirements, Annual Award Amount, and Summer Awards for the Promise Scholarship Program**
- III. Approval of Fiscal Year 2023 Distribution Plan for the West Virginia Higher Education Grant Program**
- IV. Approval of Conveyance by Deed of Property within the West Virginia Regional Technology Park to the West Virginia Department of Transportation, Division of Highways**
- V. Additional Board Action and Comment**
- VI. Adjournment**

**West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission
Special Meeting of February 16, 2022**

ITEM: Approval of Eligibility Requirements, Annual Award Amount, and Summer Awards for the Promise Scholarship Program

INSTITUTIONS: All

RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION: *Resolved*, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves proposed eligibility requirements, the annual award amount, and summer awards for the Promise Scholarship Program

STAFF MEMBER: Brian Weingart

BACKGROUND:

The Promise Scholarship is a merit-based financial aid program for West Virginia residents. Students who achieve certain academic goals are eligible to receive annual awards to help offset the cost of tuition and mandatory fees at public or independent institutions in West Virginia.

Eligibility Requirements

The current scholarship eligibility requirements for high school and homeschooled applicants require a 3.00 core and overall high school grade point average (GPA) and a 22 ACT composite score with a 20 in each of the four subject areas (English, mathematics, reading, and science) or a 1100 SAT combined score with a 530 score in evidenced based reading and writing and a 520 score in mathematics.

Eligibility requirements for those attending an out-of-state high school but reside in West Virginia must meet the academic eligibility criteria above and the high school must verify that the student commuted on a daily basis from West Virginia the entire time the student attended the out-of-state high school.

Test Score Requirement

Staff recommends lowering the test score requirement for a student to receive Promise for the first time for the Class of 2022 and the Class of 2023.

| | Current | Proposed |
|-------------------------------------|---------|----------|
| ACT (composite) | 22 | 21 |
| English | 20 | 19 |
| Reading | 20 | 19 |
| Science | 20 | 19 |
| Math | 20 | 19 |
| SAT (composite) | 1100 | 1080 |
| Evidenced-Based Reading and Writing | 530 | 510 |
| Math | 520 | 510 |

Superscore

Staff recommends allowing students to superscore to achieve the minimum standardized scores necessary to qualify for the Promise Scholarship. This allows a student to take subscores from different test administrations to get an overall score that would be higher than what they scored on any individual test. This provision would apply to the Class of 2023. It has already been approved for the Class of 2022.

Annual Award Amount

Due to the current budget projections, staff proposes to increase the award level for the 2022-23 academic year at the lesser of tuition and mandatory fees, or \$5,000 annually. This would be the first increase to the award amount since the floor of \$4,750 was set in 2009.

Summer Awards

The Promise Scholarship Program provides summer school awards for eligible students. Summer awards were initially offered during Summer 2010. Student acceptance of a summer award counts toward the maximum eight semesters of eligibility with priority given to students who can utilize the summer term to graduate by year's end. Below is a chart on Promise awarded in the summer. Staff proposes to continue summer Promise awards based upon available funding for Summer 2022.

| Year | Recipients | Total Awards |
|------|------------|--------------|
| 2021 | 136 | \$269,717 |
| 2020 | 152 | \$312,473 |
| 2019 | 139 | \$292,697 |

**West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission
Special Meeting of February 16, 2022**

ITEM: Approval of Fiscal Year 2023 Distribution Plan for the West Virginia Higher Education Grant Program

INSTITUTIONS: All

RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION: *Resolved*, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves the proposed Fiscal Year 2023 Distribution Plan for the West Virginia Higher Education Grant Program.

STAFF MEMBER: Tana Pendell

BACKGROUND:

The West Virginia Higher Education Grant Program, the state's long-standing need-based financial aid program, provides opportunities for full-time, undergraduate students with demonstrated financial need to pursue a postsecondary education at qualified institutions.

Modifications to Series 42, the legislative rule that regulates the program, have provided staff with policy latitude to determine award distribution frameworks.

Financial aid has been increased through a commitment from the Governor, the Legislature, and the Commission so that higher education can be affordable for West Virginia students. The following provides an overview of the proposed distribution plan for the 2022-23 academic year.

Revenue

The West Virginia Higher Education Grant Program receives funding from general revenue and carry-forward balances. Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 funding, not including carry-forward, should total just over \$40.6 million:

- *State Appropriation - \$40,619,864.* The Legislature annually appropriates funds directly to the Higher Education Grant Program. The estimated FY 2023 appropriation is the same as the FY 2022 appropriation.

Based upon current projections, funding may be used to increase the award amount for the 2022-23 award year.

The Higher Education Student Financial Aid Advisory Board proposes to increase the award amount during the 2022-23 year to \$3,200 up to a 12,000 EFC and have one award level in order to simplify the award process for institutions and students. The maximum award amount for 2021-22 is \$3,000. Staff propose being able to award past the April 15, 2022 deadline if funding is available.

Non-Traditional Students (adults over the age of 25)

Application deadlines that occur well before the beginning of an academic year negatively impact the participation rate of non-traditional students, especially since a deadline is not part of the federal financial aid application process. To provide greater programmatic access and to increase adult college participation rates, the Advisory Board proposes for the 2022-23 academic year a priority application date of July 1, 2022 for:

- 1) students 25 years of age or older,
- 2) students who have not previously received the Higher Education Grant, and
- 3) have an EFC under 12,000.

Staff proposes a secondary application deadline of July 31, 2022 for the late filing non – traditional population if funding allows, to better utilize the funding that is set aside for this subgroup.

**West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission
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ITEM: Approval of Conveyance by Deed of Property within the West Virginia Regional Technology Park to the West Virginia Department of Transportation, Division of Highways

INSTITUTIONS: West Virginia Regional Technology Park

RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION: *Resolved*, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission accepts the offer of the West Virginia Department of Transportation, Division of Highways to transfer to it certain rights in approximately 3.95 acres of property at the West Virginia Regional Technology Park in exchange for \$225,000.

Further Resolved, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission authorizes the Chancellor to execute the deed and any other legal documentation necessary to effectuate this transfer.

STAFF MEMBER: Kristin Boggs

BACKGROUND:

In order to successfully complete the Jefferson Road Expansion Project in South Charleston, West Virginia, the West Virginia Department of Transportation, Division of Highways (DOH) determined that it needed to acquire noncontrolled access right-of-way for public road purposes over, through, across, and upon certain parcels of land owned by the Commission that comprise part of the West Virginia Regional Technology Park (Tech Park) property. In exchange for transferring these rights to DOH, DOH has agreed to pay the Commission \$225,000. Based on appraisals conducted by both DOH and an appraiser on behalf of the Tech Park, this offer is fair and reasonable and reflects the market value of the property. Further, completion of the Jefferson Road expansion project would contribute to the Tech Park's mission to facilitate economic development in the region.

It is recommended that the Commission accept DOH's offer and authorize the Chancellor to execute the deed and any ancillary documentation necessary to complete this transaction.