

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

March 8, 2023 | 1:30 p.m. | Zoom Video Conference

1-646-558-8656 and enter meeting 824 3567 6604

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Approval of Eligibility Requirements, Annual Award Amount, Extending Deadline and Summer Awards for the Promise Scholarship Program**
- III. Approval of Fiscal Year 2024 Distribution Plan for the West Virginia Higher Education Grant Program**
- IV. Additional Board Action and Comment**
- V. Adjournment**

**West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission
Special Meeting of March 8, 2023**

ITEM: Approval of Eligibility Requirements, Annual Award Amount, Extending Deadline 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, extending the deadline 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 21 ACT composite score with a 19 in each of the four subject areas (English, mathematics, reading, and science) or a 1080 SAT combined score with a 510 score in evidenced based reading and writing and a 510 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 maintaining the test score requirement for a student to receive Promise for the first time for the Class of 2024.

	Current	Proposed
ACT (composite)	21	21
English	19	19
Reading	19	19
Science	19	19
Math	19	19
SAT (composite)	1080	1080
Evidenced-Based Reading and Writing	510	510
Math	510	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 2024. It has already been approved for the Class of 2023.

Annual Award Amount

Due to the current budget projections, staff proposes to increase the award level for the 2023-24 academic year at the lesser of tuition and mandatory fees, or \$5,200 annually. The current award amount is \$5,000 for an academic year.

Extend Promise and FAFSA Deadline

Staff recommend extending the deadline to May 1, 2023 for the Class of 2023 to complete the Promise application and FAFSA. There have been challenges with converting to a new application system and also challenges where counselors have had to adopt WVEIS 2.0.

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 2023.

Year	Recipients	Total Awards
2022	114	\$227,033
2021	136	\$269,717
2020	152	\$312,473
2019	139	\$292,697

**West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission
Special Meeting of March 8, 2023**

ITEM:	Approval of Fiscal Year 2024 Distribution Plan for the West Virginia Higher Education Grant Program
INSTITUTIONS:	All
RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION:	<i>Resolved</i> , That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves the proposed Fiscal Year 2024 Distribution Plan for the West Virginia Higher Education Grant.
STAFF MEMBER:	Brian Weingart

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 2023-24 academic year.

Revenue

The Higher Education Grant Program receives funding from general revenue and carry forward balances. Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 funding, not including carry forward, should total just over \$40.6 million:

- *State Appropriation - \$40,619,864.* The Legislature appropriates funds annually directly to the Higher Education Grant Program. The estimated FY 2024 appropriation is the same as the FY 2023 appropriation.

Based upon current projections, funding may be used to increase the award amount for the 2023-24 award year.

The Higher Education Student Financial Aid Advisory Board (Advisory Board) proposes increasing the award amount during the 2023-24 year to \$3,300 up to a 13,000 EFC and

have one award level in order to simplify the award process for institutions and students. The maximum award amount for 2022-23 is \$3,200. Staff propose being able to award past the April 15, 2023 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 2023-24 academic year a priority application date of July 1, 2023 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 13,000.

Staff proposes a secondary application deadline of July 31, 2023 for the late filing non-traditional population if funding allows, to better utilize the funding that is set aside for this subgroup.