

First Year Campus Engagement Grant

Request for Proposals

Submission Deadline:
July 25, 2025

West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission
West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education
2001 Union Carbide Drive, Building 2000
South Charleston, WV 25303
Phone: (304) 558-0655

I. Section A: Purpose

Under this competitive grant process, funds will be awarded to public colleges and universities, or research corporations thereof, that meet the eligibility requirements.

Proposals must focus on a First Year Campus Engagement Program that aims to ease the transition to university life and foster a sense of belonging for all students new to the institution. These programs often combine academic support with social and personal development opportunities. Key components should include orientation programs, first year seminars, mentoring, and opportunities to connect with the broader campus community. The targeted outcomes of this engagement program should include increased student retention, improved academic performance, enhanced sense of belonging, greater student success, and positive impact on student well-being.

First Year Campus Engagement Grant – Guiding principles for this grant program include the expectation that education is essential; we must support the efforts of all students to prepare them to live, work, and thrive in today’s world; investment is necessary; and collaboration is paramount. Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 funds will be awarded to sponsor comprehensive projects which must meaningfully encompass each of the following categories:

- Implementation of extraordinary campus-based initiatives, events, services, or supports designed to address the unique challenges that students, new to your institution, face upon their first year of enrollment;
- Implementation of events, initiatives, or services committed to supporting student engagement and involvement across the campus community;
- Implementation of events, initiatives, or services aimed at increasing academic achievement and retention for first year students;
- Development or enhancement of research, evaluation, assessment and data collection strategies and practices for the purpose of measuring outcomes for first year students who participated in grant programming.

II. Section B: Application Process

Dates and Transmittal

To be considered for the First Year Campus Engagement Grant, your application/proposals are to be submitted via email in a Microsoft Word or PDF document at or before 5:00 p.m., July 25, 2025, to the following:

Jason Luyster
Senior Director of Student Affairs
West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission
West Virginia Council for Community & Technical College Education
jason.luyster@wvhepc.edu

The initial review will begin after July 25, 2025.

Eligibility Requirements

West Virginia public two-year and four-year colleges and universities, or research corporations thereof, are eligible to apply.

Institutional Grant Protocol

It is important that the applicant coordinates with the institution’s advancement office before submitting a grant application.

Estimated Range of Awards

The amount of an award under the RFP will depend upon the quality of the application and the amount of funds allocated to support this category. Institutions are encouraged to seek external funding sources and engage in cooperative arrangements with public and private entities to enhance funding. The maximum single award during FY 2026 will not exceed \$25,000. A total of approximately \$125,000 in grants will be awarded, **pending Commission and Council approval of the FY 2026 budget.**

Reporting Requirements

Each funded institution will submit to the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission or West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education the required First Year Campus Engagement Grant end of year program report. This report is designed to capture sponsored programming information, event objectives, evaluation of sponsored events, and end-of-year expenditure information. A specific reporting format will be provided to all grant recipients.

III. Section C: Application Content

Each submitted application must address all required content in order to be considered for funding, and **may not exceed twelve pages total, including the budget sheet and fillable contact information/signature page.**

Required Content

The required content for each application is as follows:

1. **Abstract:** A brief abstract of no more than one page summarizing major components and planned activities.
2. **Rationale:** A description and explanation of how the proposed initiative(s), event(s), and/or activit(ies) collectively address each of the First Year Campus Engagement Grant objectives.
3. **Goals:** A statement of measurable goals with expected outcomes and time frames for completion.
4. **Activities:** A description of each activity that is to be conducted including time frames for completion, required budgetary expenditures, faculty/staff requirements (new or existing) and anticipated number of participants served.
5. **Evaluation:** A description of the method of evaluation that will be used to collect assessment data relative to the proposed project's goals.
6. **Sustainability plan:** A description of how you plan to sustain your efforts once funding expires.
7. **Budget:** A projected budget including brief descriptions of anticipated expenditures by category. Proposal must include completed Excel budget sheet (provided). Note: This grant *does not* allow an indirect cost option or funds to pay salaries, wages, or employee benefits.
8. **Completed Contact Information/Signature Page:** A completed form (see page 4), including identification of an authorizing official for the proposed project.

IV. Sub-Grant Agreement Document

Successful applicants will be required to complete a “sub-grant agreement document” as part of the transfer of funds process. The sub-grant agreement requires the signature of an authorizing official of the institution or research corporation to be submitted at a later date. Please note, this is not necessarily the person submitting the RFP.

First Year Campus Engagement Grant

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FY 2026

Institution: _____

Address: _____

Principal Investigator for Proposed Project: _____

Principal Investigator's Title: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please mark the appropriate box. If funded, this First Year Campus Engagement Grant award will be managed by the:

☐

Institution

☐

Research Corporation

I hereby certify that the requested grant funds will be utilized as indicated and agree to supply all requested information and reports to the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission or West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education. By typing your name below, you are providing a signature and agreeing to comply with the guidelines outlined in this RFP.

Note: Institutions submitting more than one application must provide a priority ranking of applications.

Typed Name & Title of Authorizing Official

Email Address of Authorizing Official

Date

Please include this page as part of your submission in a PDF format.

Jason Luyster
Senior Director of Student Affairs
West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission
West Virginia Council for Community & Technical College Education jason.luyster@wvhepc.edu