



POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT

Last Dollar/Last Mile Financial Aid

Provide dedicated state financial aid to qualifying learners that fills in gaps in federal assistance (last dollar) and promotes attainment for learners just shy of completing a degree (last mile).



Rhode Island

The Rhode Island Promise, a plan introduced by the state's governor in 2017 and codified in Rhode Island Code, is a last-dollar scholarship that is distributed to the Community College of Rhode Island and is applied to students' bills for tuition and mandatory fees for two years. This program will not apply funds to certain additional costs including the cost for textbooks, late registration fees, and fees associated with particular academic programs and particular courses, as well as travel costs associated with attendance. Students must maintain a 2.5 grade point average, enroll full time and be recent high school graduates. A student may receive these funds up to age 21; however, the student must provide a documented reason for late graduation. This program has resulted in an increase in enrollment and graduation rates at Rhode Island community colleges.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

The governor created this program in 2017, but the statute includes a sunset clause that ends the program after the fall 2020 semester. While it appears this program was continued, recent news indicates that unless this program receives future funding, the high school class of 2021 will be the last Rhode Island Promise class. Rhode Island can continue the program with a sustaining funding source.

RESOURCES

- [Community College of Rhode Island Rhode Island Promise](#)
- [Council on Postsecondary Education Rhode Island Promise](#)
- [Rhode Island Promise Policy Manual](#)

POLICIES

- [RI Code 16-107](#). Rhode Island Promise Scholarship



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Tennessee

Tennessee provides dedicated funding, through the Tennessee Promise Scholarship, to cover the remaining costs associated with tuition and other required fees for students seeking an associate degree, certificate or diploma from an eligible postsecondary institution; this includes those costs not met already by the Pell Grant, Tennessee HOPE Scholarship or Tennessee Student Assistance Award. To be eligible for the Promise Scholarship, recipients must be Tennessee residents, have recently graduated from high school or received a GED, and enrolled in an eligible postsecondary institution full time in the term immediately following graduation. Recipients must maintain a grade point average of 2.0 and participate in mentoring and community service programs, among other requirements. Students are eligible for this scholarship until a diploma or an associate degree is achieved or the student has been a Tennessee Promise Scholarship student for five semesters.

Tennessee also has a last dollar (last mile) grant—Tennessee Reconnect—for eligible adults. The Tennessee Reconnect grant is available for adults who want to pursue an associate degree, a technical degree or a technical diploma at a Tennessee community college or technical college and have not started or completed requirements for a postsecondary degree. In 2020 Tennessee passed the Financial Aid Simplification for Tennesseans Act, making a student who receives a Reconnect grant immediately eligible for the Tennessee HOPE Non-Traditional Scholarship, which provides students with supplemental funds to cover additional expenses such as housing.

(Note: Both the Tennessee Promise and Tennessee Reconnect fall under the statewide umbrella initiative of the Drive to 55 postsecondary attainment goal.)

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Tennessee's last dollar and last mile programs are pioneers nationally. Tennessee can continue to analyze the outcomes data on student persistence to help drive decision-making on additional student financial supports, such as supplemental funds for books and travel, that fall outside the funds provided for tuition.

RESOURCES

- [Tennessee Promise](#)
- [Tennessee Reconnect](#)
- [Tennessee HOPE Non-Traditional Scholarship](#)
- [TN Achieves](#)

POLICIES

- [TN Code Annotated 49-4-708](#). Tennessee Promise Scholarship Act of 2014
- [TN Code Annotated 49-4-944](#). Tennessee Reconnect Grant
- [PC 794](#). The Financial Aid Simplification for Tennesseans Act



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Utah

The University of Utah promotes a For Utah Scholarship that combines federal, state and university funds to cover tuition and fees for academically qualified, Pell Grant-eligible first-time freshmen who are Utah residents. Students who are eligible can attend with no tuition or fees. The Access Utah Promise Scholarship, offered through the Utah System of Higher Education, and Pell Grant funding are used to cover the first two years of attendance. The For Utah Scholarship and Pell Grant money are applied to tuition and fees during the final two years of enrollment. To qualify, students must be Utah residents and first-time freshmen with a grade point average of at least 3.2 in high school, and they must annually complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and meet subsequent Pell Grant eligibility.

Utah also promotes an Access Utah Promise Scholarship, which covers the first two years of college for all eligible students. The program is similar to other states' last dollar promise scholarships.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Utah can continue to analyze the outcomes data in regard to persistence to help drive decision-making and expand additional supports, such as supplemental funds for books and travel, that fall outside the funds provided for tuition. Utah can also consider a “last mile” scholarship for students who are within 25 percent of completing their degrees.

RESOURCES

- [For Utah Scholarship Program](#)

POLICIES

- [USB E R620](#). Access Utah Promise Scholarship
- [UT Code § 53B-8-3-302](#). Access Utah Promise Scholarship