

Award and Eligibility Criteria for the Challenge Scholars Scholarship



Path A: Scholarship award for a portion of 4 years of tuition at 46+ Michigan college or university

Award

- For eligible students graduating Union High School in 2023 and beyond: The Path A scholarship award includes tuition and fees after Federal Pell Grant for four academic years (8 semesters) of attendance at any eligible Michigan college or university to be used towards earning a bachelor's degree, associate's degree, or high-quality credential.
- For eligible students graduating Union High School in 2020, 2021 or 2022: The Path A scholarship includes tuition, fees, room and board (less \$2,500 per year), books, and supplies after Federal Pell Grant, TIP (Tuition Incentive Program), and/or institutional aid (not including loans) for four academic years (8 semesters) of attendance at any eligible Michigan college or university.
- Students whose families make more than double the area median income (roughly \$90,000 per household) will receive a reduced scholarship amount, capped at \$1,500 per year.

Initial Eligibility Criteria*

To receive a Path A scholarship award, a student must meet the initial eligibility requirements below:

- Enroll as a Challenge Scholar in 6th grade.
- Attend Harrison Park or Westwood Middle School continually from 6th grade through 8th grade.
- Attend Union High School continually from 9th grade through 12th grade.
- For students graduating in 2023 and beyond: have a GPA of 2.5 or above at graduation; for students graduating in 2020, 2021 or 2022, a 2.0 GPA or above is required at graduation.
- Have an average attendance rate of 95% between 9th and 12th grade
- Do not have a 180-day expulsion.
- Register with the Challenge Scholars Online College Portal ("CS Portal"), GradSnapp.
- Submit financial aid paperwork, including Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). If the student is ineligible to submit the FAFSA, an alternative form will be provided by GRCF.
- Meet income guideline (household income does not exceed double the area median income)
- Enroll at and attend an eligible Michigan college or university within six months after graduating high school, unless a deferment is approved (a full list is available here <https://www.challengescholars.org/resources>)
- Accept any financial aid offered by college or university (not including loans).

Path B: Scholarship award for a portion of 4 years of college tuition, starting at Grand Rapids Community College

Award

The Path B scholarship award includes tuition and fees after Federal Pell Grant for up to four academic years (8 semesters) of attendance at an eligible Michigan college or university to be used towards earning a bachelor's degree, starting at Grand Rapids Community College, with the option to transfer after the first two years (4 semesters). Students whose families make more than double the area median income (roughly \$90,000 per household) will receive a reduced scholarship amount, capped at \$1,500 per year.

Initial Eligibility Criteria*

To receive a Path B scholarship award, a student must meet the initial eligibility requirements below:

- Enroll as a Challenge Scholar in 6th grade.
- Attend Harrison Park or Westwood Middle School continually from 6th grade through 8th grade.
- Attend Union High School continually from 9th grade through 12th grade.
- Have a GPA of 2.0 or above at graduation.
- Have an average attendance rate of 95% between 9th and 12th grade.
- Do not have a 180-day expulsion.
- Register with the Challenge Scholars Online College Portal ("CS Portal"), GradSnapp.
- Submit financial aid paperwork, including Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). If the student is ineligible to submit the FAFSA, an alternative form will be provided by GRCF.
- Meet income guideline (household income does not exceed double the area median income)

- Enroll at and attend Grand Rapids Community College within six months after graduating high school, unless a deferment is approved.
- Accept any financial aid offered by college or university (not including loans).

Path C: Scholarship award for a portion of 2 years of college tuition at Grand Rapids Community College

Award

This scholarship award and criteria applies to students who do not qualify for the GRPromise. The Path C scholarship award includes tuition and fees after Federal Pell Grant for up to two academic years (4 semesters) of attendance at Grand Rapids Community College to be used towards earning a bachelor's degree. Students whose families make more than double the area median income (roughly \$90,000 per household) will receive a reduced scholarship amount, capped at \$1,500 per year.

Initial Eligibility Criteria*

To receive a Path C scholarship award, a student must:

- Attend Union High School continually from 9th grade through 12th grade.
- Have a GPA of 2.0 or above at graduation.
- Do not have a 180-day expulsion.
- Register with the Challenge Scholars Online College Portal ("CS Portal"), GradSnapp.
- Submit financial aid paperwork, including Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). If the student is ineligible to submit the FAFSA, an alternative form will be provided by GRCF.
- Meet income guideline (household income does not exceed double the area median income)
- Enroll at and attend Grand Rapids Community College within six months after graduating high school unless a deferment is approved.

Maintaining Scholarship Eligibility in College*

To continue to receive any Challenge Scholars scholarship, a student must:

- Continue to exhibit the personal qualities that reflect the high standards established by GRCF and conduct yourself in a manner befitting a Challenge Scholar.
- Stay enrolled full time (at least 12 credits per semester) in good standing at the eligible college or university.
- Make satisfactory academic progress (SAP; as defined by the college or university) toward earning your degree, including maintaining a grade level that permits progress toward graduation on a normal schedule
- Submit a FAFSA annually and accept financial aid offers (not including loans)
- Maintain an active CS Portal account
- Renew your Challenge Scholars status every semester by completing required surveys.
- Only use scholarship dollars for approved expenses incurred in the course of study at the eligible college or university.
- Attend annual workshop and sign scholarship agreement.

Failure to meet the continued eligibility criteria above may result in revocation of your scholarship award. Prior to revocation, Grand Rapids Community Foundation may, but is not required to, place you on probation and suspend your scholarship award to give you the opportunity to correct your ineligibility. However, if deficiencies are not corrected within one academic semester, your scholarship may be revoked, and you will forfeit your right to any additional funds.

*Special Circumstances

We understand that special circumstances may arise, Grand Rapids Community Foundation may make exceptions to eligibility requirements (including continued eligibility) or defer scholarship awards from time to time. Below are some examples of situations in which we may reconsider eligibility or deferment; however, Grand Rapids Community Foundation is not required to permit exceptions or deferments and makes such determinations in its sole discretion.

Eligibility reconsideration

- High school students:
 - A high school student who fails to meet eligibility criteria listed above for GPA, attendance rate, or continuous enrollment may submit an appropriate Eligibility Reconsideration Request form for special consideration. The form is available from the College/Career Coordinator at Union High School or from Challenge Scholars staff at the Grand Rapids Community Foundation.

- Verification of income may be required if information provided suggests that household income may exceed double the area median income as defined at www.census.gov
- Note that a high school student who has a 180 expulsion will not be reconsidered for eligibility.
- College students:
 - A college student who fails to maintain scholarship eligibility criteria listed above should contact the Challenge Scholars team for special consideration.

Scholarship deferment

- A scholarship award may be deferred for up to up to one academic year before starting at the eligible college or university with prior approval before high school graduation.
- A college student who does not enroll in full time classes or who takes a semester off may have their scholarship deferred, but it is important that the student meets with the Challenge Scholars point person and academic advisor at the institution first, to outline a plan. Once a plan is established, students should contact the Challenge Scholars staff at the Grand Rapids Community Foundation for special consideration.

Summer classes

- The 4-year CS scholarship is designed to cover two semesters per year, for a total of eight semesters. Depending on the availability of scholarship funds, requests for scholarships to cover summer classes (tuition and fees) will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Requests must be made by email.

Transferring

- College students who plan to transfer to another institution must meet with the Challenge Scholars point person at their institution and academic advisor first, to determine a transfer plan. Notify the Challenge Scholars team at Grand Rapids Community Foundation about your transfer plans as soon as possible.

If you have questions regarding eligibility requirements or would like to request an exception or deferment, contact the Challenge Scholars team at the Grand Rapids Community Foundation at gestrada@grfoundation.org or 616-284-4928.