



Financial Aid Programs Available at MECC

Federal Programs

Federal Pell Grant: Federal Pell Grants are awarded to eligible undergraduate students who have not earned a bachelor's or a professional degree. Eligibility is primarily based on the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) from the Student Aid Report (SAR), but is also affected by enrollment status. The EFC must be 5328 or less. The maximum award for the 2017-2018 academic year is \$5,920, with a minimum of \$606. A minimum of 12 credit hours each semester is required to receive full eligibility, with pro-rated awards going to students with less than 12 credit hours. Eligible students will be awarded once the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#) and any required documentation have been received.

FSEOG (Federal Supplemental Opportunity Grant): FSEOG is for undergraduate Federal Pell Grant recipients with exceptional financial need (i.e., students with the lowest EFCs). FSEOG awards generally are for \$400. Eligible students will be awarded once the FAFSA and any required documentation have been received on a first-come, first-served basis until funds have been exhausted.

Federal Work Study: Federal Work-Study (FWS) provides part-time jobs for undergraduate students with financial need, allowing them to earn money to help pay education expenses. The program encourages community service work and work related to the recipient's course of study. Students are paid by the hour usually twice per month. Wages for the program must equal at least the current federal minimum wage but might be higher, depending on the type of work and the skills required. The amount earned cannot exceed the total FWS award. When assigning work hours, consideration will be given to the student's award amount, class schedule, and academic progress. Eligible students who have already been awarded other aid and wish to be considered for FWS are advised to contact the College.

State Programs

**Priority for state programs is given to students who do not already possess a bachelor's or professional degree and have met the college's priority date for applying for financial aid. Eligible students will be awarded once the FAFSA and any required documentation have been received on a first-come, first-served basis until funds have been exhausted.*

COMA (Commonwealth Grant): Students receiving COMA must be domiciled in Virginia, show financial need by means of needs analysis and be enrolled on at least a half-time basis (at least six credits). Funding is provided solely by the Commonwealth of Virginia. Individual awards vary dependent upon need and funding level. Awards Range from \$800 to \$2,000 and can be used for tuition, fees, and books.

VGAP (Virginia Guaranteed Assistance Program): Students receiving VGAP must meet requirements similar to COMA recipients. However, students must have achieved a 2.5 G.P.A in high school, have exceptional financial need and maintain full-time enrollment as a dependent student. Awards vary from \$900 to \$2,100 for tuition, fees and books. Renewal students must maintain a 2.0 G.P.A. and continuous full-time enrollment (summer terms are excluded).

Part-Time Tuition Assistance Program (PTAP) - This VCCS-funded grant provides tuition assistance only (no fees) to students in a degree or certificate program who enroll for at least 1 but less than 8 credits. Students must show need.

MECC Programs

Presidential Honor Scholarships - Awarded by the President and Local Advisory Board of MECC to enrolled students who are valedictorians and salutatorians of public or private high schools in MECC's service region. Public high schools must be accredited by the State Department of Education and private high schools must be accredited by an accreditation association approved by the Virginia Council for Private Education. The student must enroll during the fall semester following high school graduation to receive this scholarship. Awards are for full tuition and fees, and are renewable for the second year based on the student's GPA.

Mary Marshall Nursing Scholarship - Established by the General Assembly for Virginia residents who show financial need. The deadline for applications from new nursing students is June 21. Completed Applications must be returned to the financial aid office by June 15. Awards vary. Application is available online at <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/OMHHE/primarycare/incentives/nursing/index.htm>.

Virginia Tobacco Settlement Program - This program assists Virginia resident tobacco producers, quota owners, their family members (descendants), and former employees of the tobacco processing industry with the cost of attending credit classes. Students must file a FAFSA to be considered for this program. More information is available at <http://www.mecc.edu/students/paying-for-college/scholarships/>.

AIMS Scholarship - The AIMS Scholarship is funded by the Virginia Tobacco Commission. Graduating high school seniors are eligible for this scholarship, which guarantees that the student pays no tuition and/or fees at MECC for up to three years (or 72 credit hours), if they meet the qualifications. For specific information please visit <http://www.mecc.edu/aims/>.

Restricted Scholarships

There are also restricted scholarships provided by industries and organizations. Students should apply directly to each organization for consideration. Enrollment Services/Financial Aid encourages students to apply early, particularly while still in high school. Examples of restricted scholarships include Westmoreland Coal, Westmoreland/Penn Virginia, Slemp Foundation, Wellmont/Lonesome Pine Hospital Auxiliary, Wal-Mart, and the John or Lillian Richmond Education Trust Fund.

MECC Foundation, Inc.

The MECC Foundation, Inc. has been established to assist the College in providing student aid. The Foundation is a charitable, nonprofit corporation which provides an appropriate means for individuals, organizations, business and industry to contribute to the College. Online applications can be made at <http://www.mecc.edu/students/paying-for-college/scholarships/>.

VCCS Programs

VCCS Grant - The VCCS Grant provides assistance to Virginia residents at Virginia's Community Colleges who demonstrate financial need. Award amounts cannot exceed tuition, fees, and books per academic year. This grant may not be awarded as part of the initial aid package. It may be awarded during the repackaging process that takes place after the end of the add/drop period where aid is based on actual enrollment.

Great Expectations Program - The Great Expectations Program provides tuition and fees at any Virginia community college for high school graduates or general education development (GED) completers in foster care, in the custody of a social services agency, or considered a special needs adoption. More information is available at <http://www.mecc.edu/great-expectations/>.

Eligibility Requirements for Federal, State, and VCCS Programs

Eligibility for federal, state, and VCCS programs is based on financial need and several other factors. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) must be filed at www.fafsa.gov. Many financial aid programs are awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis so it is important to apply early. The financial aid administrator at the College will determine eligibility. Basic eligibility requirements require that students:

- Demonstrate financial need (except for certain loans)
- Have a valid high school diploma or a General Education Development (GED) certificate or complete a highschool education in a home school setting that is treated as such under state law (Note: Ability-to-benefit (ATB) alternatives may qualify students without a valid high school diploma or its equivalent. Alternatives include passing an ability-to-benefit test approved by the U.S. Department of Education, meeting other standards the state establishes that the Department approves, or satisfactorily completing six credit hours or the equivalent course work toward a degree or certificate. Students that did not qualify under these alternatives prior to July 1, 2012 can use them to qualify for aid beginning with the 2014-2015 academic year although they must now also be enrolled in an eligible career pathways program.)
- Be enrolled or accepted for enrollment as a regular student working toward a degree or certificate in an eligible program
- Be a U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen
- Have a valid Social Security Number
- Register with the Selective Service (if male and if required)
- Maintain satisfactory academic progress once in school
- Certify that they are not in default on a federal student loan and do not owe money on a federal student grant
- Certify that they will use financial aid only for educational purposes

You may also find the links below helpful in finding additional resources:

- [Student Guide to Federal Aid](#) - From the U.S. Department of Education
- [Students.gov](#) - Providing answers to your questions on education, career, government and more
- [Collegeboard.org](#) - College Search, SAT Registration, SAT Prep, College Guides
- [FinAid.org](#) - Guide to Financial Aid
 - [Fin Aid's Financial Aid Calculator](#)
- [Fastweb.com](#) - Search engine for national scholarships
- [Collegenet.com](#) - Online college applications and free financial aid search
- [Schoolsoup.com](#) - Online Free Scholarship Search
- [Scholarships.com](#) - Online Free Scholarship Search