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# Scholarships and Grant Funds Annual Report

October 1, 2025

**Authored by the Maryland Higher Education  
Commission**

**Executive Summary:** In accordance with Sections § 18-310(b)(7)(ii), 18-603.1(h)(7)(ii), 18-604(k)(3)(ii), 18-708(o)(6)(ii), 18-2901(i)(11) of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, the Maryland Higher Education Commission is required to provide an annual report on each scholarship/grant fund that includes an accounting of all financial receipts and expenditures. This report combines all of the required scholarship/grant reports into one single document and provides annual expenditures and number of recipient's data for the following programs:

1. Howard P. Rawlings Educational Excellence Awards Program
2. Charles W. Riley Firefighter and Ambulance and Rescue Squad Member Scholarship
3. Douglas J.J Peters Veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq Conflicts Scholarship
4. Workforce Shortage Student Assistance Grant Program
5. Maryland First Scholarship Program

The order in which each Scholarship and Grant Program is listed is the order it will appear in the report.

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## **Howard P. Rawlings Educational Excellence Awards Program 2025 Annual Report**

Pursuant to the Education Article § 18-310(b)(7)(ii), the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) presents the an annual report on the Fund that includes an accounting of all financial receipts and expenditures to and from the Fund. This report provides annual expenditures and number of recipients' data for the *Howard P. Rawlings Educational Excellence Awards Program*.

### **Overview of Scholarship/Grant Programs:**

The purpose of the Delegate Howard P. Rawlings Program of Educational Excellence Awards program is to provide need-based scholarship assistance. The State's neediest students will be guaranteed access to postsecondary education in Maryland through Delegate Howard P. Rawlings Guaranteed Access (GA) Grants. Low and middle-income students will be awarded financial assistance through Delegate Howard P. Rawlings Educational Assistance (EA) Grants. Students who miss the application deadline but still have demonstrated need are awarded financial assistance through the Delegate Howard P. Rawlings Campus Based Educational Assistance Grant Award (CBEAG).

For the most recent award cycle, the Howard P. Rawlings EEA Grant Program was allocated \$129.2 million in state funding, of which approximately \$119.6 million was disbursed to 15,641 students. This represents a disbursement rate of 92.5 percent, leaving an unexpended balance of \$9.6 million, or about 7.5 percent of the total appropriation. The average award across all recipients was approximately \$15,122, reflecting a significant per-student benefit relative to typical tuition and fee charges at Maryland's public institutions. The high expenditure rate demonstrates both the strong demand for the program and the effective distribution of funds, while the remaining unexpended balance points to opportunities for refining the award process.

In FY 2025, the expenditures and total number of recipients for each scholarship/grant program was as follows:

Program	Expenditures	Number of Recipients
Howard P. Rawlings Educational Excellence Awards	\$119,602,276	15,641

Of the **\$119.6 million disbursed** in the most recent award cycle, approximately **\$97.0 million (81%)** supported the **Guaranteed Access (GA) Grant**, while **\$20.6 million (17%)** supported the **Educational Assistance (EA) Grant**. The **remaining \$2.0 million (2%)** was directed to **campus-based awards**, which are distributed by institutions to eligible students. This breakdown highlights how the GA Grant overwhelmingly drives expenditures, reflecting its statutory guarantee of full tuition and fees for the state’s lowest-income students.

Since GA, EA, and campus-based awards all draw from the same statutory appropriation, the concentration of spending on GA has direct implications for the availability of resources for the EA and campus-based programs. As GA participation grows—driven by rising tuition, expanded eligibility, and shifts in student demographics—less funding remains available for EA, leading to smaller average awards and, in some cases, unfunded eligible applicants. Campus-based awards also remain constrained, limiting institutional flexibility in addressing students’ unique needs.

Looking ahead, future projections point to GA continuing to absorb an increasing share of the appropriation, which could further compress EA and campus-based resources. If overall appropriations do not keep pace with this growth, Maryland risks a widening gap in affordability for students who fall outside GA eligibility but still face substantial financial need. Policymakers may need to explore options such as segregating appropriations by program, increasing overall funding levels, or revising the award formulas to preserve the balance between serving the lowest-income students through GA and supporting broader access and persistence through EA and campus-based aid.

## **Charles W. Riley Firefighter and Ambulance and Rescue Squad Member Scholarship 2025 Annual Report**

Pursuant to the Education Article § 18-603.1(h)(7)(ii), MHEC presents the an annual report on the Fund that includes an accounting of all financial receipts and expenditures to and from the Fund. This report provides annual expenditures and number of recipients’ data for the *Charles W. Riley Firefighter and Ambulance and Rescue Squad Member Scholarship*.

### **Overview of Scholarship/Grant Programs:**

The purpose of the Charles W. Riley Firefighter and Ambulance and Rescue Squad Member Scholarship is to provide **state-funded financial assistance** to:

- **Career** firefighters, ambulance and rescue squad members in Maryland,

- **Volunteer** firefighters, ambulance and rescue squad members in Maryland, and
- Their **children and spouses**, if certain service conditions are met.

The scholarship is designed to:

1. **Encourage and support service** in Maryland fire departments, rescue squads, and ambulance companies.
2. **Recognize the critical public service** these individuals provide to their communities.
3. **Promote access to higher education** for first responders and their families by covering tuition and mandatory fees at eligible Maryland institutions.

For the most recent award cycle, the program was allocated \$358,000 in state funding. Of this amount, \$55,158 was disbursed to 8 students, leaving an unexpended balance of approximately \$302,842.

In FY 2025, the expenditures and total number of recipients for each scholarship/grant program was as follows:

<b>Program</b>	<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>Number of Recipients</b>
Charles W. Riley Firefighter and Ambulance and Rescue Squad Member Scholarship	\$55,158	8

**Key observations:**

- **Utilization rate:** The program expended only **15.4% of the allocated funds**, leaving more than **84% of dollars unspent**. Out of 176 applicants, only 8 qualified and received awards. The remaining applicants did not meet the program’s eligibility requirements, which include either earning at least 50 LOSAP points (with points in at least two categories), meeting equivalent point requirements in counties without LOSAP, or completing a minimum of 1,000 hours of service as a career member in the prior tax year.
- **Average award size:** The average award per recipient was about **\$6,895**, though actual awards would vary based on tuition, fees, and enrollment level.
- **Participation:** Just **8 students statewide** benefited, which is an extremely small portion of the likely eligible population.

**Assessment:**

- This program is **significantly underutilized** compared to its allocation, with a much higher level of unexpended funds than seen in similar state aid programs.

- The small number of recipients suggests potential **barriers to entry**, such as complex eligibility verification, low program awareness among volunteer firefighters and rescue squad members, or restrictive criteria.
- Although the per-student award size is meaningful, the low participation rate prevents the program from reaching its intended impact.

**Projection for the future:**

- Without major outreach or structural adjustments, the program is expected to continue **under-expending** appropriations.
- Efforts to **expand awareness** among fire/EMS departments, streamline the application process, and collaborate with local jurisdictions could improve participation.
- Policymakers may eventually review whether the program’s **eligibility or design needs to be broadened** to ensure that appropriated funds are being used effectively.

## **Douglas J.J. Peters Veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq Conflicts Scholarships 2025 Annual Report**

Pursuant to the Education Article § 18-604(k)(3)(ii), MHEC presents the an annual report on the Fund that includes an accounting of all financial receipts and expenditures to and from the Fund. This report provides annual expenditures and number of recipients’ data for the *Douglas J. J. Peters Veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq Conflicts Scholarship*.

In FY 2025, the expenditures and total number of recipients for each scholarship/grant program was as follows:

<b>Program</b>	<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>Number of Recipients</b>
Douglas J. J. Peters Veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq Conflicts Scholarship	\$507,032	84

**Overview of Scholarship/Grant Programs:**

The purpose of the Douglas J. J. Peters Veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq Conflicts Scholarship is to provide **state financial assistance** to:

- Veterans who served in the Afghanistan or Iraq conflicts,
- Their sons, daughters, or spouses, and

- The sons, daughters, or spouses of service members who either died or were disabled as a direct result of service in those conflicts.

For the most recent award cycle, the program was allocated **\$750,000** in state funding. Of this amount, **\$507,032** was disbursed to **84 students**, leaving an unexpended balance of approximately **\$242,968**.

### **Key observations:**

- **Utilization rate:** The program expended about **67.6% of the allocated funds**, indicating that nearly one-third of available dollars went unused. Out of a total of 276 applicants, only 84 were deemed eligible and received awards. The primary reason for this reduction was the submission of incomplete documentation, which rendered the majority of applicants ineligible for funding consideration.
- **Average award size:** The average award per recipient was roughly **\$6,036**, though actual award amounts likely varied depending on tuition/fees, enrollment level, and other aid. The average award of \$6,036 falls between the program's minimum award of \$5,067 and maximum award of \$8,699, positioning it near the midpoint of the allowable award range. While slightly closer to the minimum, the average demonstrates a balanced distribution of funding that reflects both program accessibility and equitable allocation across recipients
- **Participation:** 84 students benefited, which a modest participation level is given the statewide reach and eligible population.

### **Assessment:**

- The fact that only two-thirds of available funds were expended suggests either (1) lower than expected applicant demand, (2) barriers to application or eligibility documentation, or (3) award caps set at levels below the total appropriation need.
- The average award size is relatively high compared to some state aid programs, which indicates that recipients who did participate received meaningful support toward tuition and fees.
- If participation remains consistent at this level, future allocations may continue to result in a surplus unless outreach efforts expand the applicant pool.

### **Projection for the future:**

- Without changes, the program is likely to continue **under-expending** its appropriation.
- **Increasing outreach** to eligible veterans and active duty members, especially at community colleges and regional universities, could help bring participation closer to the allocation target.
- Policymakers may eventually consider **right-sizing appropriations** or **broadening eligibility criteria** if recurring underutilization continues.

# Workforce Shortage Assistance Grant Program 2025 Annual Report

Pursuant to the Education Article § 18-708(o)(6)(ii), MHEC presents the an annual report on the Fund that includes an accounting of all financial receipts and expenditures to and from the Fund. This report provides annual expenditures and number of recipients’ data for the *Workforce Shortage Student Assistance Grant*.

## **Overview of Scholarship/Grant Programs:**

The purpose of the Workforce Shortage Student Assistance Grant program is to address the workforce shortage needs of the State by providing financial assistance to students enrolled at institutions of higher education in the State.

For the most recent award cycle, the program was allocated **\$1,229,015** in state funding. Of this amount, **\$824,015** was disbursed to **267 students**, leaving an unexpended balance of approximately **\$405,000**

In FY 2025, the expenditures and total number of recipients for each scholarship/grant program was as follows:

<b>Program</b>	<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>Number of Recipients</b>
Workforce Shortage Student Assistance Grant	\$824,015	267

The top three workforce sectors that applied for funding under the program were Nursing, Human Services, and Social Work. Nursing represented the largest share, with 74 recipients receiving a combined total of \$211,250, reflecting both the strong demand and critical workforce need in this field. Human Services followed, with 48 recipients awarded \$151,000, highlighting the ongoing importance of supporting professionals who provide essential community-based services. Social Work also emerged as a leading sector, with 41 recipients receiving \$142,500, underscoring the continued need to invest in individuals preparing to enter this vital field. Together, these three areas accounted for the highest number of applicants and funding allocations, demonstrating the program’s role in strengthening Maryland’s human services and healthcare workforce pipeline.

## **Key observations:**

- **Utilization rate:** The program expended about **67% of the allocated funds**, with roughly one-third unspent.
- **Average award size:** The average award per recipient was approximately **\$3,086**, making this program’s per-student award amount lower than the Peters or Riley scholarships, but supporting a **larger student population**.
- **Participation:** With **267 students served**, the program reached a significantly larger group than many targeted scholarships, indicating stronger demand.

**Assessment:**

- The Workforce Shortage Grant provides **broad-based access**, but the unexpended balance highlights challenges in fully matching appropriations with actual student demand or award distribution rules.
- The relatively modest award size suggests the program spreads funding across a wide base, which maximizes reach but may dilute the per-student financial impact compared to higher-dollar, smaller-population programs.
- Demand appears steady, but the program’s complex career/field-specific eligibility requirements may limit growth in participation.

**Projection for the future:**

- The program is likely to remain **moderately utilized** at about two-thirds of allocation unless additional outreach or adjustments increase applicant demand.
- There is potential to **optimize award distribution** by reassessing how awards are calculated or by broadening eligible fields to absorb more of the allocated funds.
- Given its reach (hundreds of students), this program may remain a **priority for continuation and possible refinement**, though recurring underutilization could invite future funding adjustments.

## Maryland First Scholarship Program 2025 Annual Report

Pursuant to the Education Article § 18-2901(i)(11), MHEC presents the an annual report on the Fund that includes an accounting of all financial receipts and expenditures to and from the Fund. This report provides annual expenditures and number of recipients’ data for the *Maryland First Scholarship*.

The Maryland First Scholarship provides financial assistance to select Maryland residents attending accredited Maryland postsecondary institutions. This scholarship is awarded to first-generation students whose parents have not earned a degree from an institution of higher education. In FY 2025, the scholarship was unfunded and no awards were granted.

**Fund Balance Summary**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Beginning Fund Balance (July 1, 2024)	<b>\$0.00</b>
General Fund Appropriation (FY 2025)	<b>\$0.00</b>
Other Receipts (donations, interest, etc.)	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

<b>Item</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Expenditures – Scholarship Awards	<b>\$0.00</b>
Expenditures – Administrative Costs	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Ending Fund Balance (June 30, 2025)</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

If you have any questions regarding this report, please contact Ms. Meghan Music, Executive Director of External and Legislative Relations at (667) 234-0783 or [meghan.music2@maryland.gov](mailto:meghan.music2@maryland.gov).