

Award and Eligibility Criteria for the Challenge Scholars Scholarship

(Union HS classes of 2023 through 2028)



FOUR YEAR SCHOLARSHIP: 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 through 2028: The scholarship award is equivalent to the student's tuition and fees, minus their PELL award for four-years (8 semesters, excludes summer semester). Funds can be applied to the student's cost of attendance at any eligible Michigan college or university to be used towards earning a bachelor's degree, associate degree, or high-quality credential.
- Students whose family household income is 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 four-year 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.
- Do not have a 180-day expulsion.
- Submit financial aid paperwork, including Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
 - If the student is ineligible to submit the FAFSA, the student must complete the Federal Student Aid Estimator <https://studentaid.gov/aid-estimator/>
- Meet income guidelines (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).

TWO YEAR SCHOLARSHIP: Scholarship award for a portion of 2 years of tuition at Grand Rapids Community College

Award

This scholarship award and criteria applies to students who do not qualify for the GR Promise. The scholarship award includes tuition and fees after Federal Pell Grant for up to two academic years (4 semesters, excludes summer semester) of attendance at Grand Rapids Community College. 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 two-year 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.
- Submit financial aid paperwork, including Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). If the student is ineligible to submit FAFSA, the student must complete the Federal Student Aid Estimator <https://studentaid.gov/aid-estimator/>
- 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:

- Stay enrolled 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 your financial aid offer, this includes scholarships and grants. *Accepting loans are not required but may be needed.*
- Renew your Challenge Scholars status every semester by completing the required check-ins.
- Sign scholarship agreement and attend the annual scholarship orientation/Kickoff event.

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.

Scholarship Eligibility Statuses

We understand that special circumstances may arise. Using its sole discretion, Grand Rapids Community Foundation may make exceptions to eligibility requirements (including continued eligibility) or defer scholarship awards from time to time. These circumstances will determine an individual's status within the Challenge Scholars program. Those statuses are listed below.

High School Student Statuses:

- **Eligible-Full:** meets all eligibility criteria listed above under Initial Eligibility.
- **Eligible-Income Capped:** meets all eligibility criteria listed above under Initial Eligibility, but family income exceeds double the area median income as defined at www.census.gov. Verification of income may be required if the information provided suggests that household income may exceed \$90,000 per year.
- **Ineligible due to GPA or Disrupted Enrollment:** does not meet eligibility criteria listed above for GPA or inconsistent enrollment within the Challenge Scholars pipeline. Students may submit the Eligibility Reconsideration Request form for special consideration. The form is available from the College/Career Coordinator at Union High School or from the Challenge Scholars team at the Grand Rapids Community Foundation.
- **Ineligible due to Expulsion:** students with a 180-day expulsion will not be reconsidered for eligibility. Student will be placed in the disenrolled exit status (Refer to Exited Student Statuses section below).

College Student Statuses:

- **Enrolled:** A college student who is actively enrolled in classes at a Challenge Scholars eligible college or university and is meeting the annual criteria to maintain scholarship eligibility.
- **Postponed:** A college student who is not actively enrolled in classes at a Challenge Scholars eligible college or university but who has formally communicated with the Challenge Scholars team that they plan to re-enroll in classes within one year of postponing their scholarship.

Exited Student Statuses:

- **Completed:** Students who attained a degree or credential have completed the Challenge Scholars program. Challenge Scholars may request an exit interview and offer opportunities to stay engaged. Completed students who are interested in furthering their post-secondary education will be connected to other scholarship resources.
- **Disenrolled:** Individuals who have not been in contact with Challenge Scholars for 12 months or who have declined their scholarship will be disenrolled from the Challenge Scholars Scholarship program. Challenge Scholars will remove individuals from their contact list and cease further communication. Disenrolled individuals can no longer reactivate their scholarship.

Additional Educational Funding Request

The 4-year Challenge Scholars (CS) scholarship is designed to cover two semesters per year for a total of eight semesters. The 2-year CS scholarship is designed to cover a total of four semesters. Depending on the availability of scholarship funds, requests for scholarships to cover additional educational expenses will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Examples include: Study abroad and enrollment during the summer semester(s). The availability of additional funding is not guaranteed. Requests must be made by completing the [Experiential Learning Scholarship Form](#).

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.

Terms and Conditions

Additional details about scholarship requirements can be found in the Terms and Conditions document, available at challengescholars.org/resources.

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. Grand Rapids Community Foundation is not required to permit exceptions or deferments and makes such determinations in its sole discretion.

Contact Us

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 by [scheduling an appointment here](#), by email at ChallengeScholars@GRFoundation.org or call 616-284-4928.