



## Scholarship Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Updated 1/22/2025

As a GEAR UP CT participant, you are eligible for a GEAR UP CT scholarship in addition to other outside scholarships you may receive. It is the responsibility of the student and parent to complete all parent/student GEAR UP consent forms that allow students to participate in the GEAR UP CT program that is being conducted in East Hartford, Meriden, and Waterbury.

### **To receive the GEAR UP CT Scholarship, EVERY STUDENT MUST:**

1. Be a participant in the GU-CT program that services East Hartford, Meriden, and Waterbury.
2. Earn a high school diploma or recognized equivalent of a GED
3. Enroll in an eligible community college, 2 or 4-year college or university **before they are 22 years old.**
4. Must **complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).**

**Please note: As part of our due diligence, all students are asked to complete the GEAR UP Scholarship and Postsecondary Supports Application available through their local GEAR UP program to ensure the necessary student information can be processed to receive the GEAR UP scholarship regardless of postsecondary option. To be eligible for the GU CT Scholarship, a student must attend a Title IV (Title 4) institution.** You can search for Title IV institutions by copy/paste: [Title IV Institution Codes \(finaid.org\)](https://www.finaid.org/TitleIV/)

### **YEAR 1 GEAR UP SCHOLARSHIP DISBURSEMENT**

- Each student that is eligible (based upon the items above) in the GEAR UP Cohort Class of 2025 will receive **\$1,500 disbursement in Fall 2025 (pro-rated for part-time students) for their first year** of postsecondary education.
- The CT Office of Higher Education will disburse the GEAR UP Scholarship directly to each student's Institution of Higher Education (IHE), Financial Aid Office based on their FAFSA.
- If a student **does not enroll/register in the Fall 2025 and instead begins their postsecondary education in Spring 2026, the student will ONLY receive \$750 (half of the eligible scholarship).**
- **Each Fall** of a student's postsecondary education. The CT Office of Higher Education will disburse the GEAR UP Scholarship directly to that student's college.
- **If the student attends college out of the State of CT, it is the student's responsibility to contact the CT Office of Higher Education directly to inform them of their postsecondary attendance.**



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### HOW DO I APPLY FOR THE GU CT SCHOLARSHIP?

- Fill out the “Free Application for Federal Student” (FAFSA) by going to [FAFSA® Application | Federal Student Aid](#) or [attend a GEAR UP Technical Workshop in 2024-2025](#)
- **ALL students must complete the FAFSA beginning in Grade 12 of high school.**
- The **FAFSA is the federal application required for all types of college financial aid, including the GEAR UP CT Scholarship.**
- **NOTE: ALL students must complete the FAFSA to be eligible to receive the GEAR UP CT scholarship.**
- **If a student does not complete this requirement, they will not receive the GEAR UP CT Scholarship.**

### HOW MUCH WILL THE GU CT SCHOLARSHIP BE?

- The GEAR UP Class of 2025 will be eligible for the GEAR UP scholarship for four (4) years beginning fall 2025. During Year 1, the scholarship will be \$1,500. The exact amount of the GEAR UP CT Scholarship for the remainder Years 2-4 will vary depending on the number of GEAR UP students who complete the FAFSA and enroll and attend college in Year 1 and subsequent years thereafter.
- The **amount a student may receive cannot exceed the cost of attendance at the college they attend** – that means that the amount of the scholarship, added to other grants and scholarships a student may receive, cannot exceed the total cost of attendance.
- The cost of attendance is determined by the college a student attends and includes items such as transportation that go beyond tuition and fees.
- The GU CT **scholarship amount will be at least equal to the minimum Federal Pell Grant** award for the corresponding postsecondary academic year(s).

### WHAT IF I MOVE OUT OF MY CURRENT SCHOOL DISTRICT TO ANOTHER DISTRICT IN CT? AM I ELIGIBLE?

- **YES**, the GEAR UP scholarship follows the students provided they are a resident of CT and graduate from high school in CT.
- It is the responsibility of the student and/or parent/guardian to contact their local GEAR UP program or state team. Please refer to the GU CT website for more information at: <https://www.gearupct.com/>

### WHAT IF I MOVE OUT OF CT TO ANOTHER STATE BEFORE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION? AM I ELIGIBLE?

- **NO**, the GU CT Scholarship is **only for CT students** who **are residents and graduate from high school in CT.**



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### CAN I ATTEND ANY 2-YR OR 4-YR COLLEGE OUTSIDE OF CT?

- **YES, if the college is eligible**, you can receive a GEAR UP Connecticut Scholarship.
- To be eligible for the GU CT Scholarship, a student must attend a Title IV (Title 4) institution.
- A Title IV institution is one that participates in Federal Student Aid programs.

### WHAT IS TITLE IV FUNDING?

- Title IV funds are **federal student aid funds, which are from federal student aid programs administered by the U.S. Department of Education**. The U.S. Department of Education regulations only allow schools to use your Federal Student Aid to pay for current academic year institutional charges.
- You can search for Title IV institutions by copy/paste: [Title IV Institution Codes \(finaid.org\)](https://finaid.org)
- Enter the name of the college in the “search” box OR scroll through the list.

### WHAT IS TITLE IV FUNDING?

- If your college appears in the Search Results, then it is a Title IV college, and you can receive GEAR UP CT Scholarship funds while you are enrolled there.
- If you have questions, contact your local GEAR UP office.

### WHAT ELSE AM I RESPONSIBLE FOR AS A STUDENT TO RECEIVE THE GU CT SCHOLARSHIP?

- In addition to being eligible to the college, a student must be enrolled in a degree or certificate program that is Title IV eligible and have submitted their FAFSA.

### HOW WILL THE SCHOLARSHIP GET TO MY COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY?

- The GEAR UP CT **Scholarship will be administered by the CT Office of Higher Education** once the college/university **confirms that the student is registered and enrolled**.
- A **one-time disbursement will occur every Fall** of the student’s postsecondary education regardless of attending a 2- or 4-year or certificate program.
- If a **student registers and attends a college/university outside of CT**, the **student must contact the CT Office of Higher Education for scholarship disbursement and confirmation**.
- **CONTACT: Michael Criscuolo at [michael.criscuolo@ct.gov](mailto:michael.criscuolo@ct.gov)** to inform this office of where to distribute the GU CT scholarship.

### WHAT EXPENSES CAN I USE THE SCHOLARSHIP FOR WHILE IN COLLEGE?

- The GEAR UP CT Scholarship can be used for tuition, fees, books and supplies, room and board, and personal expenses that are included in the Cost of Attendance. Money will first be applied toward any outstanding balance a student has with the college.
- If the balance is paid in full, any leftover GEAR UP CT Scholarship money can be refunded to the student in accordance with the college's refund policy and will be issued by the CT Office of Higher Education. No student can receive any funds greater than the costs of attendance.



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### WHAT IF I TAKE A “GAP-YEAR” AFTER HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION?

- GEAR UP CT Scholarship funds will be available, but the student will receive \$1,500 (the first-year allotment).

### IS PARENT INCOME USED TO DETERMINE MY SCHOLARSHIP?

- **NO, a family's income is not used to determine eligibility** for the GEAR UP CT Scholarship.

### WHAT IF I HAD A LOW GPA IN HIGH SCHOOL?

- **High school G.P.A. is not considered** when awarding the GEAR UP CT Scholarship.

### CAN I USE THIS SCHOLARSHIP FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL/MASTER'S DEGREE?

- **NO, the GEAR UP CT scholarship is only for undergraduate studies.**

### CAN I USE THIS SCHOLARSHIP IF I GO INTO THE MILITARY AFTER HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION?

- If a student registers for the military and leaves the military for any reason in the timeframe of eligibility of 2025-2029, the student is eligible to receive their GEAR UP CT Scholarship. **The student must attend a Title IV institution and meet other requirements of eligibility (FAFSA, etc.).**
- The student MUST contact CT Office of Higher Education, Michael Criscuolo at [michael.criscuolo@ct.gov](mailto:michael.criscuolo@ct.gov)

### WHAT IF I MOVE OUT OF CT WHILE ATTENDING COLLEGE? AM I ELIGIBLE?

- **YES a student is eligible and may contact GEAR UP for further details.**
- **The student MUST check with BOTH the financial aid office at the college they are leaving and the institution a student is transferring to** for the appropriate steps to be taken to maintain the scholarship at the new postsecondary.
- **It is the responsibility of the student to contact the CT Office of Higher Education and notify them** of the change of schools to ensure the GEAR UP CT scholarship will be disbursed to the new institution.
- **Contact CT Office of Higher Education, Michael Criscuolo at [michael.criscuolo@ct.gov](mailto:michael.criscuolo@ct.gov)**



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### WHAT IF I GO TO COLLEGE PART-TIME? AM I ELIGIBLE?

- **YES**, the GEAR UP CT Scholarship amount will be pro-rated to reflect your part-time status.
- **If a student is less than half-time (see chart below), a student will NOT receive any GEAR UP CT Scholarship.**
- The CT Office of Higher Education will pro-rate the GEAR UP CT Scholarship based on student status if half-time or three-quarters time.
- **Below is an outline of how many credits per semester a student needs to stay on track to graduate with a 2- or 4-year degree or certificate.**
  - Full time status = 15 credits per semester (Fall / Spring)
  - Part time status = 12 credits per semester or 6-8 credits per semester
  - Three-Quarter status = 9-11 credits per semester
  - Less than ½ time = under 6 credits per semester
  - Total credits required for a bachelor's degree = 120 credits (depending on specific program)
  - Total credits required for an associate degree = 60 credits
  - Total credits required for Certificate Programs = depends on certificate
- **A student is eligible for the GEAR UP scholarship up through 2029. No exceptions to this rule.**

### WHAT IF I DON'T REMAIN IN GOOD ACADEMIC STANDING AT COLLEGE, CAN I STILL RECEIVE MY GEAR UP CT SCHOLARSHIP?

- The purpose of the GEAR UP CT Scholarship is for all students to complete a path of learning within a degree or certificate program that furthers their education into a career.
- Once a student attends a postsecondary institution, **it is the responsibility of the student to maintain a good academic standing and be responsible for their grades while in college.**
- **Should a student fail out of college or a program, they will not receive any GEAR UP CT Scholarship.**
- **It is the responsibility of the student to work directly with the college they are attending to improve upon academic status/standing.**

### CAN I ATTEND POSTSECONDARY ONLINE OR ONSITE/HYBRID?

- **YES**, students can attend online or onsite or a combination of hybrid and still receive their GEAR UP CT Scholarship, **as long as they attend a Title IV institution.**
- **YES**, students can work part-time and attend postsecondary part-time (but not less than half-time) and still receive their GEAR UP CT Scholarship.

### ELIGIBILITY TO CLAIM THE GEAR UP CT SCHOLARSHIP

- Students will be eligible to claim the scholarship during the 4-year window of this grant from Fall 2025 through Spring 2029 by reaching out directly to the CT Office of Higher Education.
- **Contact CT Office of Higher Education, Michael Criscuolo at [michael.criscuolo@ct.gov](mailto:michael.criscuolo@ct.gov)**

# GEARUPCT

- The GEAR UP CT Scholarship will be offered as follows: 2025-26, 2026-27, 2027-28 and 2028-29.
- **If a student does not claim their scholarship for any reason, but then needs the scholarship after 2025, they are eligible for the scholarship up to 2029. No exceptions to this rule.**