

GEAR UP CT Scholarship: Steps to Receive Your Scholarship

Class of 2025 | Eligible Through April 2029

PRIMARY CONTACT for the GEAR UP scholarship will be disbursed through:

The CT Office of Higher Education (OHE)



Primary OHE Contact: Michael Criscuolo

EMAIL: michael.criscuolo@ct.gov



Every student MUST email Michael Criscuolo at OHE every August to:

- Confirm where you are attending college (college name + state)
- Verify your email address
- Ensure your scholarship is released on time and to the correct institution.



What You Can Receive

- **Up to 4 years of scholarship** (Fall 2025 – April 2029) for college (2 or 4 year, in-state or out-of-state) or trade school
- **Year 1 (2025–2026): \$1,500**
 - Pro-rated (reduced) for part-time students
 - If you start in Spring 2026 (instead of Fall 2025): **\$750 or prorated based on number of credits**
- **Years 2 - 4: Amount will vary based on students who contact OHE every year**
 - The GEAR UP will be the **minimum Federal Pell Grant**
 - The GEAR UP award cannot exceed your college's total Cost of Attendance



GEAR UP awards can pay for: tuition, college fees, books, housing, transportation, and other approved education expenses.



The GEAR UP Award is sent **directly to your college's Financial Aid Office each FALL and applied to your college student account.**

To Receive the Scholarship, You MUST:

1. Must have been a GEAR UP CT participant (East Hartford, Meriden, or Waterbury) and a Connecticut resident.
2. Graduated from a CT high school in 2025 (or earned GED equivalent)
3. Enroll in a Title IV eligible 2-year, 4-year, or certificate program before the age of 22
4. Complete the **FAFSA every year** <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>
5. Email **Michael Criscuolo every August at: michael.criscuolo@ct.gov**
6. **If you have not received a GEAR UP scholarship, you must text GEAR UP @ 860-783-6605**



NO FAFSA

NO SCHOLARSHIP



Where Can You Use the GEAR UP Award?

- Any Title IV eligible college <https://finaid.org/fafsa/tiv/>
- 2-year, 4-year, or certificate programs (in CT or out-of-state)
- Online, hybrid, or on-campus programs
- **You may attend part-time. Less than half-time enrollment = NOT eligible.**
- **If you are unsure, email OHE directly @ Michael.Criscuolo@ct.gov**



IMPORTANT

- The GEAR UP CT scholarship is disbursed **ONE TIME EACH FALL.**
- Eligible through **Spring 2029 (no extensions)**
- You must maintain good academic standing
- The GEAR UP award cannot exceed your cost of attendance



Common Questions

Does family income matter?

Does high school GPA matter?

NO

YES

Can I take a gap year?.

Can I join the military first?

Can I transfer colleges or move out of CT?

IF YOU ARE UNSURE, EMAIL OHE @ michael.criscuolo@ct.gov



Action Steps **EVERY YEAR AS YOUR STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY**

- Complete the FAFSA every year
- Email Michael Criscuolo @ michael.criscuolo@ct.gov every August
- Stay enrolled at least half-time
- Maintain good academic standing
- Complete the **required GEAR UP consent form ONLY if you have NOT received a scholarship. TEXT GEAR UP @ 860-783-6605**

THE GEAR UP Scholarship does not activate automatically.
IT IS YOUR STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY TO contact OHE each year to receive the award.