



# FORWARD STEPS GUARDIAN SCHOLARS PROGRAM



## What is the Forward Steps Guardian Scholars Program?

The Guardian Scholars Program supports Colorado's current and former foster youth as they pursue a post-secondary education. Our program provides financial, social and life-skills support to foster youth who are currently enrolled, or will be enrolled, in an associate, bachelor, trade or certificate program from a public educational institution.

Full-time Guardian Scholars can receive up to \$6,000 per academic year for unmet financial need related to cost of attendance, with the potential for additional summer funding. The program can accommodate part-time enrollment.

In addition to financial assistance, Guardian Scholars receive one-on-one mentoring, academic and career coaching, opportunities for personal and professional development, access to tutoring, and community support.

## Who is eligible to apply?

- Applicants must have verifiable experience in the foster care system. At this time, we cannot accept individuals who have been adopted into our program.
- First time applicants must apply before their 26th birthday.
- Applicants must be residents of Colorado and plan to attend (or are currently attending) one of the following public institutions. Please note that other public Colorado colleges will be considered.
  - Aims Community College
  - Arapahoe Community College
  - Colorado Mesa University
  - Colorado State University, Fort Collins
  - Community College of Aurora
  - Community College of Denver
  - Emily Griffith Technical College
  - Front Range Community College – Westminster, Boulder & Larimer campuses
  - Metropolitan State University of Denver
  - Pickens Technical College
  - Red Rocks Community College
  - University of Colorado – Denver, Boulder & Anschutz campuses
  - University of Northern Colorado, Greeley
- Scholars must have a high school diploma or a GED before beginning their first semester of college.
- Applicants must meet federal financial aid requirements and must qualify for the Pell Grant.

If you have any questions about whether an individual may or may not be eligible, or about how to obtain documentation to demonstrate eligibility, contact [scholarship@forwardsteps.org](mailto:scholarship@forwardsteps.org).

## What is the application process?

Interested candidates can complete the application on our website and submit it via email or mail. **Priority consideration is given to applications received by May 31st, 2022**; however, we do accept applications throughout the school year. Applications received after the priority deadline may be considered for the upcoming semester depending on the date the application is submitted, applicant eligibility and available funding. The Guardian Scholars Program accepts applicants for both Fall and Spring semesters.

Eligible applicants will be contacted to schedule an interview. Our review committee, which may include members outside of our organization, will then review eligible application packets. Applicants will be informed of the review committee's final decision regarding program admittance by email.

## What is expected of scholars who are accepted into the program?

To remain eligible, scholars must meet the following expectations:

- Maintain good standing as defined by their school.
- Maintain and successfully complete all credit hours as agreed upon with the Guardian Scholars Program.
- Maintain eligibility for the federal Pell Grant in order to display unmet financial need as determined by FASFA.
- Achieve and maintain at least a 2.0 GPA both cumulatively and per semester.
- Meet with the Scholar Mentor a minimum of once per month; additional meetings are scheduled depending on scholar needs.
- Attend the College Prep 101 workshop during your first semester as a Guardian Scholar.
- Participate in at least two personal/professional development opportunities per semester.
- Complete two surveys per semester.
- Submit grades and transcripts as requested, along with any other requested documentation, per the communicated deadlines.

## How does Forward Steps partner with professionals?

The Guardian Scholars Program at Forward Steps exists to help former foster youth develop meaningful post-secondary skills which will enhance their independence. Our approach is individualized and specific to the needs and interests of our scholars. Partnerships are of utmost importance in setting up our scholars to succeed.

We are committed to partnering with the agencies and individuals who have been crucial in managing the students' cases and who have valuable insight into how we can best serve our scholars. The Guardian Scholars Program's goal is to provide programming and services that would be most useful to the scholars without replicating services. We aim to have a clear and open line of communication with all relevant parties.

## Can applicants who were previously declined re-apply for the scholarship?

Yes, we encourage any applicants who were previously declined to reapply to our program. Admittance decisions often depend on the number of applicants and amount of available funding for a given semester. Individuals who would like to reapply will only need to fill out our application form and provide any updated documentation as requested.

If you have any questions, contact Sarah Zakerski, at [scholarship@forwardsteps.org](mailto:scholarship@forwardsteps.org) or 720-446-9672.