

**NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM**

*Dr. William S. Carver, II*

*Interim President*

September 10, 2020

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Senior Continuing Education Administrators  
Chief Student Development Administrators  
Chief Academic Officers  
Chief Business Officers

**FROM:** Kimberly Gold, Senior Vice President/Chief Academic Officer

**RE:** **Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Scholarship Program**

The purpose of this memo is to provide guidance on implementing the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Scholarship Program. Under the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER Fund), the U.S. Department of Education awards grants to Governors to provide local educational agencies (LEAs), institutions of higher education (IHEs), and other education-related entities with emergency assistance as a result of the Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID19). Following the “Certification and Agreement for Funding under the Education Stabilization Fund Program Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund” (CFDA Numbers: 84.425C), the Governor of N.C. established the GEER Scholarships for N.C. Community College Workforce Continuing Education (WCE) students. The Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Funds Scholarship provides scholarships for eligible community college workforce continuing education students pursuing high-demand workforce training programs within ten workforce pathways leading to a State or industry-recognized credential. Colleges have local flexibility to add additional Pathways if necessary, to meet local workforce needs.

**Eligibility Criteria**

Scholarship awards are determined locally based on student need, local industry needs, number of eligible students, and cost of course, up to a maximum of either \$750 per course or the cost of the course fee(s) if the fee(s) exceed \$750. The scholarships help cover the cost of tuition, fees, books, supplies, credentialing tests, transportation, childcare, and other components of the total cost of attendance for students enrolled in the following ten workforce continuing education programs of study:

- Automotive
- Aircraft Maintenance
- Construction
- Criminal Justice
- Emergency Medical Services
- Healthcare
- Industrial/Manufacturing
- Information Technology
- Transportation
- Fire and Rescue Services

*Note: Colleges have local flexibility to add additional Pathways to meet local workforce needs.*

Eligible students applying for this Scholarship must reside in North Carolina, be enrolling in Workforce Continuing Education (WCE) pathways/courses offered for 96 hours or more, and leading to a State or industry-recognized credential. These pathways may consist of a single WCE course or a series of courses.

Colleges *must* process scholarship awards through their financial aid office to ensure correct awarding, coding, and reporting of aid to students. These funds shall not be processed using sponsorship or third-party payer workflows sometimes used for WCE students. While this reflects a change for some colleges, it is critical to the ongoing monitoring and reporting requirements of this program. A job aid to assist colleges is provided as an attachment to this memorandum. As a resource to colleges, a revision to the [2020-2021 Scholarship Guide](#) is live on the System Office website and includes student application materials. Additionally, a frequently asked questions (FAQ) document is attached.

Funding is made available through the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER Fund) as authorized by Section 18002 of Division B of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), Pub. L. No. 116-136 and awarded to North Carolina Office of the Governor by the U.S. Department of Education. These funds are contingent upon certification and transfer by the Office of State Budget and Management and remain available through September 30, 2022.

If you have questions about this new program, please contact:

- Nate Humphrey, Associate Vice President for Workforce & Continuing Education
  - [humphreyn@nccommunitycolleges.edu](mailto:humphreyn@nccommunitycolleges.edu)
- James "J.W." Kelley, Associate Vice President for Student Services
  - [kelleyj@nccommunitycolleges.edu](mailto:kelleyj@nccommunitycolleges.edu)
- Monty Hickman, Associate Director for Enrollment Management
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- Brandi Massey, Financial Aid SME
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CC: Financial Aid Directors  
Continuing Education Registrars

Attachments:

- GEER Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
- GEER Scholarship Application
- GEER Scholarship Allocation Memorandum

**Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Scholarship Program  
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

**Q: Do colleges have to work through their Financial Aid Office to award these funds?**

**A:** Yes. It is critical awarding, coding, and reporting of this program be completed through the college's Financial Aid Office.

**Q: Can colleges process GEER Scholarships as sponsorships or third-party payers?**

**A:** No. It is critical awarding, coding, and reporting of this program be completed through the college's Financial Aid Office.

**Q: When can colleges begin awarding GEER Scholarships to students?**

**A:** Immediately. The State Board of Community Colleges authorized the program effective August 24, 2020. Recipients meeting eligibility requirements on or after this date may receive scholarship funds.

**Q: Can colleges award more than one GEER Scholarship to a student on a pathway?**

**A:** Yes. Colleges may award up to a maximum of either \$750 *per course* or the cost of the course fee(s) if the fee(s) exceed \$750 for each course within an identified WCE Pathway.

**Q: Are degree-seeking or curriculum students eligible for these funds?**

**A:** No. The GEER Scholarship Program is targeted only to eligible students pursuing an approved WCE Pathway.

## **North Carolina Community Colleges Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Scholarship Fund**

The Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Funds Scholarship will provide scholarships for eligible community college students pursuing high-demand workforce training programs within ten workforce pathways leading to a State or industry-recognized credential. Colleges would have local flexibility to add additional Pathways if necessary to meet local workforce needs.

### **Use of Scholarship Funds**

Scholarship awards are determined by each college based on student need, local industry needs, number of eligible students, and cost of course, up to a maximum of either \$750 per course or the cost of the course fee(s) if the fee(s) exceed \$750. The scholarships help cover the cost of tuition, fees, books, supplies, credentialing tests, transportation, childcare, and other components of the total cost of attendance for August 24, 2020, through September 30, 2022.

### **Student Eligibility Requirements**

Eligible students applying for this scholarship must:

1. Resident of North Carolina
2. Students enrolling in Workforce Continuing Education (WCE) pathways/courses offered for 96 hours or more and leading to a State or industry-recognized credential. These pathways may consist of a single WCE course or a series of courses.
3. Students applying for the scholarship must be enrolled in one of the following ten programs of study<sup>1</sup>:
  - Automotive
  - Aircraft Maintenance
  - Construction
  - Criminal Justice
  - Emergency Medical Services
  - Healthcare
  - Industrial/Manufacturing
  - Information Technology
  - Transportation
  - Fire and Rescue Services

### **Application Process**

#### **Application Process**

- The System Office will promote and conduct outreach for the scholarship among the community colleges.
- Students will complete the GEER Scholarship application for the targeted academic year. Applications will be filed with the college financial aid office, Workforce Continuing Education department, or another college-designated office.
- Applicants bear full responsibility for completing the GEER application before each deadline, as established by the college.

<sup>1</sup> Colleges have local flexibility to add additional Pathways if necessary to meet local workforce needs.

### **Reporting**

- The System Office will send the Colleague Financial Aid patch to Community College System Administrators. The System Office will be required to report monthly on these funds. The Financial Aid patch automates this data collection. The Financial Aid patch must be installed as soon as possible and no later than September 18, 2020, in order to meet the first reporting deadline.
- Also, since the funding source for this GEER Scholarship is federal COVID funding under Section 18002 of Division B of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), Pub. L. No. 116-136, each college is required to report monthly to the North Carolina Pandemic Office (NCPRO) as they are already doing for other COVID funds allocated by the System Office.