



GRANT INFORMATION GUIDE

Next Generation Scholars of Maryland

Maryland Higher Education Commission

217 East Redwood Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Deadline

July 1, 2025
No later than 5:00 p.m. EDT

MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

Sanjay Rai, Ph.D.

Secretary of Maryland Higher Education Commission

Elena Quiroz-Livanis

Deputy Secretary of Maryland Higher Education Commission

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Governor

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Program Description

The Next Generation Scholars of Maryland (NGS) Program is a college access program established by the Maryland General Assembly in 2016 that supports low-income students in high poverty school systems by providing access to postsecondary educational opportunities. NGS programs provide a cohort-based model of support, mentoring, and college guidance for first generation students. Cohorts are identified as early as 7th grade and receive support through high school graduation and into college.

AUTHORIZATION

Next Generation Scholars of Maryland 2016 [HB 1403](#)

GRANT OVERVIEW

Name of Grant Program

Next Generation Scholars of Maryland FY26

Purpose

Next Generation Scholars of Maryland Fiscal Year 2026 grant funds will be awarded to nonprofit organizations to provide guidance and services to cohort students who pre-qualify for the Guaranteed Access Grant in eligible school districts. Students are expected to successfully transition to college and continue to receive support in their first year of college.

Dissemination

This Grant Information Guide (GIG) was released on June 2, 2025.

Deadline

Proposals are due no later than 5pm on July 1, 2025

Grant Period

July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

Funding Amount Available

\$5,000,000

Estimated Number of Grants

11-15

Eligibility

This grant funding is available to nonprofit organizations.

Nonprofits must support grade 7-12 students in one or more of the following school systems:

- Allegany County Public Schools
- Baltimore City Public Schools
- Caroline County Public Schools
- Dorchester County Public Schools

- Kent County Public Schools
- Prince George’s County Public Schools
- Somerset County Public Schools
- Wicomico County Public Schools

Submission Instructions

Grant applications must be submitted by 5:00pm July 1, 2025 via email to tiffany.majors1@maryland.gov

PROGRAM CONTACT**Tiffany Majors**

Chief of Staff- Grant Officer
Maryland Higher Education Commission
(410) 767-7269

tiffany.majors1@maryland.gov

State Responsibilities

MHEC will provide information and technical assistance to facilitate the grantee’s implementation of the NGS program. MHEC will monitor grantee progress through statewide meetings, project updates, financial reports, and monitoring visits.

Use of Funds

The following are examples of approved uses for the grant funds in accordance with the purpose of the grant. Other costs not listed here may be presented to the grant manager for determination of allowable expenditures.

Funds may be used for:

- Salaries;
- Stipends;
- Paid student internships
- Student transportation
- Materials and supplies;
- Travel;
- Equipment; and
- Other costs approved by MHEC.

Funds may not be used for:

- Supplanting existing program funds.
- Capital improvements.
- Purchase of gift cards.
- Cost(s) incurred prior to the approval of the grant.

Application Requirements

PROPOSAL COVER PAGE

Proposals must include a completed Proposal Cover Page provided in the application for participation. The cover page must be signed by the Superintendent of Schools/ Head of Grantee Agency.

PROJECT ABSTRACT

The project statement should briefly describe the project's outcome(s) and strategies (i.e., what the project will do and how it will be done.)

EXTENT OF NEED

Based on an evaluation of the program implementation, include cohort-specific needs for the FY26 grant period.

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

Discuss your history of impact on the target population, what has worked, what has not worked, and your track record in effectuating change. Document current or past efforts to address the problem. Show why those efforts failed or are inadequate to address the total need. Discuss how past performance has informed the proposed activities, and the future impact your proposed key activities are likely to have on the target population. Briefly identify new or other proposed evidence-based strategies that will be implemented and how they will be measured to determine the impact on the target population.

GOALS, MEASURABLE OUTCOMES, AND MILESTONES

Goals, measurable outcomes, and milestones must include **all** of the following statutory requirements:

- A high school graduation plan;
- Summer work or internship opportunities;
- Financial aid literacy assistance;
- Career interest assessments;
- Mentorship and one-on-one counseling;
- Visits to college campuses and workplaces;
- An intensive summer bridge program for students entering an institution of higher education directly from high school; and
- A plan to matriculate and graduate from an institution of higher education

Eligible nonprofit organizations are expected to clearly identify a series of goals, outcomes, and milestones that align with all requirements of the Next Generation Scholars legislation. Goals should address the main problems and issues identified when assessing the needs of the target low-income student population. Goals must be developed in consultation with the students' LEA(s).

The goals should be clear, and objectives must be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely (S.M.A.R.T). Applicants are encouraged to include additional high leverage strategies that address college access for low-income students. Further, proposals that include targeted supports for young men and boys, who are often disproportionately impacted by poverty, are strongly encouraged.

Additionally, applicants must align goals to Pillar 3 of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, College and Career Readiness, preparing graduates for success in college and the workforce by ensuring they have the knowledge and skills to complete entry-level credit-bearing college courses and work in high-wage and high-demand industries.

The Next Generation Scholars program mandates measurable outcomes, including prequalification for the Guaranteed Access Grant, other financial aid awards, high school graduation, institutions of higher education matriculation, retention rates, and graduation. Additional measurable outcomes specific to the nonprofit organization's program must be directly aligned to the legislation and the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

The legislation requires ongoing evaluation and reporting. As some goals and outcomes for students in a cohort are not evaluated until the end of the Next Generation Scholars program, milestones must be established to measure progress during the year. Milestones should be evaluated during the year, either quarterly or semiannually.

MANAGEMENT PLAN

It is critical that Next Generation Scholars Programs meet all requirements and deadlines established by the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) to ensure that students prequalify for and receive the Guaranteed Access Grant and other financial aid. In the Plan of Operation, design the program and discuss the activities to be used to meet requirements and accomplish the objectives for each goal. Include the specific activities designed to accomplish the project objectives and involve direct service to students and parents. Examples include specific parent nights and mentoring sessions. They may take place on a single date (e.g., a field trip) or over a period of time (e.g., the use of an innovative career exploration tool). Identify who will be serviced and how many by each activity.

Actions outlined in the management plan, such as purchasing equipment or conducting steering committee meetings, are not activities for the purposes of the Plan of Operation. Do not address the elements of the management plan in this section.

Submit a detailed and time-specific management plan with pre-assigned responsibilities. In this section, present a clear discussion of partners, respective roles in the project, the benefits each expects to receive, and the specific contributions each will make to the project (financial, equipment, personnel, or other resources).

List the staff or personnel involved in the project's implementation. What are their individual qualifications? Append résumés of key personnel. How much of the Project Director's time is devoted to this project? Are there sufficient staff hours devoted to the project to ensure proper implementation? What plans are in place to ensure the project will continue if there are problems with staff turnover?

Applicants will be asked to complete the following management plan chart as part of the proposal:

Management Plan Worksheet

Key Activities	Individual Responsible	Time Frame

EVALUATION

Grantees are required to submit annual evaluation reports and quarterly progress reports that are consistent with the project's goal and objective(s). An effective ongoing evaluation plan should evaluate milestones quarterly and allow for making informed decisions about needed changes to achieve project goals.

Performance Measures

Each grantee must evaluate the project and provide a detailed description of measures and instruments used to evaluate program implementation. For each project goal, provide at least one performance measure.

Example:

Goal: The program will provide an effective summer bridge program for students entering an institution of higher education.

Performance measure: 100% of program participants are prepared to enter their freshman year of postsecondary education. Data: Feedback from student evaluation survey, 1st semester grades.

Data: The type of data and method of data collection will depend upon the nature of the program, the questions, and the evaluation strategy. What measurement instruments will be used? How will the baseline be established? There should be a combination of quantitative and qualitative data identified. How will project staff collect data from the various sites and organizations involved in the project? When considering data collection techniques, ensure that the resources are sufficient to use the proposed data collection techniques. Include information on how the following data will be used and collected:

- the number and percentage of students in each cohort;
- the number and percentage of students who have completed the FAFSA;
- the number and percentage of students participating in services; •
- the number and percentage of students earning a 2.5 or better GPA; •
- the number and percentage of students who have participated in rigorous college preparatory coursework (AP, IB, Honors level courses);
- the number and percentage of students earning CCR status by the end of grade 10; and
- the number and percentage of students who have been accepted to college

Budget and Budget Narrative

The project's budget should be submitted on the budget summary form. The budget narrative should detail all related project expenses in a separate itemized budget. It should demonstrate the extent to which the budget is reasonable, cost-effective, and integrates other sources of funding. All costs described in the project narrative should appear in the budget narrative and must have a corresponding entry in the itemized budget for that year.

Each line must be detailed and specific. General expenses should be broken down into specific line items. For example, "meeting expenses" can be broken down into room rental, photocopying and refreshments. There is no page limit for the budget, so be as detailed as possible.

Clearly show the requested funds and in-kind contributions for each line item if applicable. Indicate the source of the in-kind contribution. Both requested and in-kind funds must be reasonable with current market prices. Show how the expenses were calculated for each line item. Reviewers will use this information to determine if the budget is reasonable and cost-effective. See a sample budget below:

Salaries and Wages (list separately for each position)

Line item	Calculation	Requested	In-Kind	Total
Project Manager	\$50/hr. x 40 hrs. per week x 52 weeks	\$83,200	\$20,800	\$104,000
Total for salaries & wages:		\$83,200	\$20,800	\$104,000

Appendices

The following appendices must be included. Include other appendices as deemed necessary.

Appendix A: Cover Page

Appendix B: Budget form and Summary signed

Appendix C: Statement of Assurances

Please also provide: Evidence of status of a [non-profit 501\(c\)\(3\) organization](#) and Key Personnel Resumes

The review committee will evaluate applications using the scoring rubric and confirm that the proposal includes all required components.

Review Committee

The committee will be composed of representatives from the Maryland State Department of Education and Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) only reviewers will evaluate each proposal based on the criteria on the evaluation rubric.

Next Generation Scholars of Maryland Scoring Rubric

EXTENT OF NEED

Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
A needs assessment or existing program evaluation was conducted that identifies multiple related problems. Multiple data sources are used, including both quantitative and qualitative data. These data are presented and clearly identify	There is a clear description of the extent of need. Problems are identified that the grant funds will be used to address.	The extent of need is not clearly identified.

Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
areas of growth that connect to clear implementation strategies.		

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
The application describes how the proposed program implementation will lead to the desired goals. The application includes a detailed description of the program's experience in implementing an effective college access program and the impact the proposed activities are likely to have on the target population. The application goes further, citing data and research specific to high impact strategies to like planned programming to a likely impact on student success in post-secondary education.	There is a summary of the efficacy of the program. Proposed outcomes are supported by research data and/or previous program data.	The evidence of impact or efficacy is not clearly defined or identified.

GOALS, MEASURABLE OUTCOMES, AND MILESTONES

Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
The application contains more than one goal and objective that aligns with the requirements of the Next Generation Scholars Program. The goals are clear, and objectives are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely (S.M.A.R.T) The application goes further, including goal(s) aligned to Pillar 3 of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and additional high leverage strategies	A complete list of goals, outcomes and milestones are included. The goals and outcomes are aligned to the extent of need and program requirements	The goals, outcomes, and milestones are not clearly identified, not measurable, and/or not aligned to the requirements of the Next Generation Scholars Program.

MANAGEMENT PLAN

Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
In addition to meeting all previously mentioned criteria, the submission provides a detailed operational plan that anticipates potential challenges and offers contingency plans. The roles and qualifications of key personnel are comprehensively described, demonstrating how their unique skills and experiences will contribute to the project's success. The project timeline is detailed, realistic, and accounts for potential delays, indicating thoughtful planning. The submission also includes a risk management plan and outlines strategies for monitoring progress and making necessary adjustments, showing a commitment to effective project management and continuous improvement.	A detailed plan of operation is included that addresses all items identified in the statement of need. Key personnel are listed along with % FTE and summary of their experience with grant management and program specific knowledge. Project timeline is detailed and lists who is assigned to complete each phase of the project.	The plan of operation provided does not address the items identified in the statement of need

EVALUATION AND DISSEMINATION

Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
In addition to meeting all previously mentioned criteria, the application identifies advanced metrics and utilizes sophisticated data analysis methods. The methodology for data collection, evaluation, and reporting is in-depth, innovative, and ensures effective use of data. The data dissemination plan is extensive, ensuring that all stakeholders can access and understand the data. The application also outlines a clear process for using data and feedback to continually refine and improve the program. The application provides a plan for program evaluation to ensure	The application provides a plan for program evaluation to ensure continuous improvement and inform future decisions. The plan identifies data and instruments, and the method that will be used to collect, evaluate, and report on the data.	The application does not include a clear plan for program and continuous improvement. There is a limited plan to report on outcomes.

Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
continuous improvement and inform future decisions.		

BUDGET AND BUDGET NARRATIVE

Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
All the requirements in meets criteria are satisfied. The applicant provides additional information and justification related to costs in each budget category and how they will support program goals and student success.	The application includes MHEC's C-1-25 budget, and a detailed budget narrative. The budget narrative lists budget items showing how the cost of each item was calculated, there are no errors, and all line-item costs are justified. The budget narrative aligns with the proposed activities.	The application includes budget expenses with limited justification and/or does not align with the prescribed categories or the proposed activities. Cost may not be reasonable or allowable. Budget contains errors and/or missing calculations.

Reporting Requirements

Grantees must comply with the following reporting requirements:

Date	Reporting Requirements for Each Year
Ongoing	Fiscal and program monitoring; all invoices must be accompanied with supporting documentation utilizing the reporting forms.
October 15, 2025 January 15, 2026 April 15, 2026	First interim progress report reflecting the months of July-September, due October 15 th . October-December due January 15 th , January-March is due April 15 th .
On or before 60 days after the grants ends	A final project evaluation (see evaluation section) must be received by MHEC on or before 60 days after the grant end date, June 30, 2026 and will reflect April-June and full year project.

Notes: Any requests for amendments must be submitted at least 45 days before the grant period ends, and must be submitted using the Project Amendment Request Form found on the [MHEC grants webpage](#). (MHEC) Final invoices must be submitted no later than 60 days after the grant period ends.

Grant Application Timeline

This funding opportunity, including all attachments and updates, can be downloaded from the [MHEC Office of Grants Administration and Compliance website](#)

Date	Timeline Event
June 2, 2025	The Grant Information Guide and the application for participating are released.
July 1, 2025	The grant application period closes.
July 2-9, 2025	MHEC Review Committee will evaluate proposals.
July 10-18, 2025	MHEC will notify applicants of the award status.
July 1, 2025	The grant period begins.
June 30, 2026	The grant period ends.

Non-Discrimination Statement

The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry/national origin, color, disability, gender identity/expression, marital status, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation in matters affecting employment or in providing access to programs and activities and provides equal access to various youth groups.

The General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) Sect 427

Each application must develop and describe the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the project or activity to be conducted with such assistance, by addressing the special needs of students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries to overcome barriers to equitable participation.

Customer Service Support

MHEC staff will be available to provide technical assistance throughout the grant application process. If you have questions about the application or the process, please contact:

PROGRAM CONTACT

Tiffany Majors

Chief of Staff

410-767-7269

tiffany.majors1@maryland.gov

This funding opportunity, including all attachments and updates, can be downloaded from the [MHEC Office of Grants Administration and Management website](#).