



November 25, 2024

Ms. Amy Atkinson
Executive Director
Commission on Youth
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Via email: aatkinson@vcoy.virginia.gov

Dear Ms. Atkinson,

Thank you for your work with the Commission on Youth to improve the lives of Virginia's children and families and your focus on improving foster care in the Commonwealth. As you know, Virginia's Community Colleges has been working for 16 years to help young people who have experienced foster care earn a college credential through its Great Expectations program.

Now at all of Virginia's 23 community colleges, we have helped thousands of students through postsecondary education and workforce development to a better life. We are grateful for the philanthropic support that we have received and for the recent annual appropriation that has allowed us to expand and sustain the program so that we can serve even more students in the future.

Please find the attached PDF which includes our expenditures so far as well as performance measures. Let me know if you have any questions and again, thank you.

With warm regards,

Rachel Mayes Strawn, Ph.D.





November 26,2024

Division of Legislative Automated Services (DLAS)
Old City Hall, Suite 210
101 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Attention: Legislative Documents and Reports Processing

As required by Item 200(X), Chapter 2, 2024 Acts of Assembly, Special Session 1, we respectively submit the Annual Report on the outcomes of the state funded grant program to support the Great Expectations Program, as submitted to the Virginia Commission on Youth.

If you have questions regarding these reports, please contact me at (804) 819-4912 or wjohnson@vccs.edu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William M. Johnson".

William M. Johnson
Interim Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance

Attachment
(Electronic Submission Only)

Great Expectations Program Grants

Virginia Community College System (260)

Background: Need/Problem/Desire Addressed by Initiative

Virginia ranks 47th out of 50 states for the rate at which youth age out of the foster care system without a permanent family or the associated support and resources. Unfortunately, young people who have experienced foster care face many challenges in accessing and succeeding in higher education, which can lead to poor outcomes: low wages, use of public assistance, homelessness, and incarceration. Though 80% of young people with experience in foster care hope to attend college, less than 8% ever graduate. Virginia's Community Colleges' Great Expectations program has been working to change that for its participants for 16 years, and having great results, with 22% of our over 4800 students earning 2290 credentials, degrees and transfers. The program has been supported with private funds, but that is not sustainable.

Appropriation

FY 2023 GF:	\$500,000	FY 2023 NGF:	\$0
FY 2024 GF:	\$500,000	FY 2024 NGF:	\$0

Actual FY 2024 GF Expenditures \$412,824

Actual FY 2024 NGF Expenditures

Organization and Staffing

Virginia's Community Colleges provides administrative support, training, expertise, and guidance for the Great Expectations programs at its 23 colleges. Each college has a specially trained coach who works with Great Expectations students, providing assistance with application, financial aid, mentoring, career coaching, activities, advising and connection with college and community resources. The Virginia Foundation for Community College Education provides fundraising support and administers stipends for special initiatives.

Status of Implementation

The program has existed for 16 years, growing from initially serving 5 colleges in its first years, to now serving all 23 colleges in 2023. However, with privately raised dollars being the sole support prior to this grant, colleges at times lacked resources to support the program, causing gaps in service. The state support of the the program through this appropriation is allowing the colleges to institutionalize the program and provide ongoing support to their students with experience in foster care.

Great Expectations Program Grants

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Barriers/Roadblocks to Implementation

Colleges have worked this year to put systems in place to allow them to use state funds to provide direct support to students for housing, transportation and childcare which has increased the use of the funds.

FY 2023 Anticipated and Actual Results (including clients served, if applicable)

We have enrolled 635 Great Expectations students at Virginia's 23 community colleges between Fall 2023 and Fall 2024. 267 of these students were served directly with these funds. Through September 15, 2024 the colleges have been able to use the funds for coaching (\$318,377), mentoring (\$5875), transportation (\$32,418), housing (\$52,753), and childcare (\$4842). Funds expended since 9/24 will be reflected in the next reporting cycle.

Program Performance Measures and Performance Results (if available)

In Fall of 2023, 348 Great Expectations students were enrolled in courses at our 23 colleges, taking an average of 9 credit hours a semester. In Fall of 2024, 147 of these students were still enrolled, 82 had graduated with an associate degree, 1 had transferred, and 12 had earned workforce credentials, resulting in an overall persistence rate of 60%.