

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia

Pell Initiative for Virginia Annual Report

November 2025



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Background	2
Institution Overviews	4
Christopher Newport University	5
George Mason University	6
James Madison University	8
Longwood University	9
Norfolk State University	9
Old Dominion University	10
Radford University	11
University of Mary Washington	12
University of Virginia	14
University of Virginia's College at Wise	16
Virginia Commonwealth University	17
Virginia Military Institute	18
Virginia State University	20
Virginia Tech	21
William & Mary	22
Richard Bland College	24
Virginia Community College System	25
Next Steps	27
Conclusion	29

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Now in its third year of implementation, the Pell Initiative for Virginia (PIV) is a natural longitudinal experiment to alter both institutional and student behavior to increase the enrollment and retention of Pell-eligible students at Virginia's institutions of higher education. Since 2023, the General Assembly of Virginia has appropriated a total of \$112.5 million toward the initiative, designating the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) as its administering agency.

[Chapter 725](#) of the 2025 Session of the General Assembly outlines SCHEV's responsibilities under PIV:

"The Council shall establish eligibility criteria, evaluate proposals, determine award sizes, establish performance outcomes and monitor performance in consultation with staff from the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees, the Office of the Secretary of Education, and the Department of Planning and Budget. [...] The Council shall report periodically on activities related to this initiative and make recommendations for any potential future support to institutions that successfully meet their defined outcomes, Additionally, by November 1 of each year within the performance period of any awarded institutional grant, the Council shall report to the Chairs of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees and the Secretary of Education on the outcomes and effectiveness of the awarded funds."

The following presents a review of activities undertaken both by SCHEV and the 17 public two- and four-year institutions in FY 2025, year two of PIV. In addition to an overview of the program's history and its development between years one and two, this report outlines SCHEV's administrative activities and summarizes spending, performance data and narratives submitted by each participating institution, select supplemental information to the FY 2024 Report and goals set forth for FY 2026 and the remainder of the initiative.

While FY 2025 represents the second year of appropriations and grants awarded under PIV, it represents the first full year of program implementation for several institutions due to a combination of factors, including the staggered distribution of award funds in year one and the resulting challenges this imposed in implementing certain interventions. FY 2025 also marks the first year in which at least some Virginia institutions, previously insulated from the impacts of a declining population of U.S. high school graduates, have begun to see an effect in their Fall census figures. SCHEV has accounted for both of these factors in its broader analysis of the degree of variation in program effectiveness across institutions this past year. However,



SCHEV also has found interventions whose design, implementation or goals have demonstrated minimal effectiveness.

Over the course of FY 2025 and using observations from FY 2024, SCHEV developed a more rigorous assessment process and introduced a universal model for institutions to expand the scope of PIV's intended impact beyond treatment groups. Staff intensified collaboration with team leaders at each institution to provide program guidance and technical support, as well as to establish mutually agreed-upon goals and targets by which to measure short- and long-term progress beginning in FY 2026. The summary section of this report includes the overarching goals of each institution for additional context.

As the initiative progresses toward the conclusion of its first round of four-year awards, set to expire June 30, 2026, SCHEV has begun working with institutions to refine future intervention plans, narrowing the scope of some activities and focusing resources away from less impactful efforts where appropriate. For FY 2026 and the out-years, SCHEV has shifted to an award model that, when paired with the implementation of defined goals and the findings of institution-wide barrier reviews, will allow team leads to scale up more effective treatments while phasing out less effective ones. The conclusion of this report outlines next steps in these efforts.

BACKGROUND

The launch of the Pell Initiative for Virginia in FY 2024 followed roughly 18 months of collaborative effort by the General Assembly, the Secretary of Education, SCHEV, representatives from the public four-year institutions and HCM Strategies, an outside consulting group. [Chapter 2](#) of 2022, Special Session I of the General Assembly appropriated \$250,000 for an external review of enrollment and retention rates of in-state, Pell-eligible baccalaureate students across the Commonwealth. The subsequent [2023 report](#) identified the degree to which each institution had either enrolled or graduated a lower percentage of Pell-eligible students than the total share of such students served across Virginia. State partners used these findings to develop PIV's preliminary design and initial call for proposals to support a first-of-its-kind longitudinal study to identify effective, scalable interventions to more effectively serve Pell-eligible students amid shifting demographic trends.



The following table outlines each institution's identified area(s) of focus, as determined by performance against Virginia's statewide ratio of Pell-eligible postsecondary students (26.4%) and Pell-eligible graduates (72%) from the 2020-2021 academic year.

Table 1. Enrollment and Retention Rates of In-State Pell-Eligible Students, FY 2021

Institution	Pell Grant Recipients as Share of Undergraduate Students	Six-Year Completion Rate for Pell Recipients	PIV Concentration
Statewide Average	26%	72%	
Christopher Newport University	14%	66%	Enrollment
George Mason University	31%	68%	Completion
James Madison University	15%	81%	Enrollment
Longwood University	26%	66%	Completion
Norfolk State University	67%	38%	Completion
Old Dominion University	38%	45%	Completion
Radford University	39%	52%	Completion
University of Mary Washington	21%	67%	Both
University of Virginia	15%	95%	Enrollment
University of Virginia's College at Wise	38%	42%	Completion
Virginia Commonwealth University	31%	64%	Completion
Virginia Military Institute	14%	77%	Enrollment
Virginia State University	69%	36%	Completion
Virginia Tech	15%	86%	Enrollment
William & Mary	13%	91%	Enrollment

The General Assembly originally appropriated \$25 million to award four-year grants to each public four-year institution beginning in FY 2024. However, the General Assembly subsequently appropriated an additional \$12.5 million to include Virginia's public two-year institutions. SCHEV assigned both Richard Bland College and the Virginia Community College System, supporting 23 two-year institutions, to the Completion category.

Having funded a total of \$36.9 million in awards for FY 2024, the General Assembly continued to grow PIV by appropriating \$37.5 million in each of the following two fiscal years. Awards granted from this additional investment have allowed institutions to scale up year one activities, incorporate activities implemented by other institutions and introduce new activities.



INSTITUTION OVERVIEWS

As of the submission of this report, SCHEV has awarded \$104.2 million in grants, supporting a combined total of 471 interventions, summarized below. Based on preliminary findings from year one, SCHEV staff developed and implemented changes to the structure, assessment and awarding methods for PIV. Designed to further maximize the initiative’s effectiveness, these changes also allow both SCHEV and stakeholders to more easily identify those interventions with the widest impacts that also may be applied or modified across other institutions.

Table 2. Summary of PIV Awards to Date, FY 2024 to FY 2026

Item	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	Total
Submitting Institutions	17	15	16	32
Proposals Submitted	36	27	17	63
Proposals Funded	31	19	17	50
Activities Funded	137	144	190	471
Total Dollars Awarded	\$36,868,995	\$36,614,692	\$30,724,009	\$104,207,696

SCHEV implemented several key administrative changes in year two, starting with the convening of PIV’s first annual in-person meeting in October 2024. Held in Lynchburg at Central Virginia Community College, this one-day gathering allowed team leaders across institutions to share preliminary successes, challenges and insights from year one. Since this meeting, SCHEV has intensified its work with individual institutions to provide ongoing weekly – and, in some cases, daily – guidance around strategy, budget and program delivery.

SCHEV also has developed a framework for each institution to conduct an in depth, institution-wide barrier review (IwBR) – as required by law - to identify administrative, procedural, cultural or otherwise existing challenges that either could or already do negatively impact enrollment or completion of Pell-eligible students. Conducted over several months by panels of administrators, faculty, senior leadership and, in some cases, students, these IwBRs were designed to transcend campus or departmental information silos to identify and implement systemic change with lasting benefits for both Pell-eligible and non-Pell students. Each institution must submit a report on the findings of its IwBR to SCHEV no later than December 19, 2025. SCHEV, in turn, will present these findings in a report in Spring 2026.

In the long term, SCHEV intends the findings of both the individual and collective IwBR reports to provide an array of benefits. The incorporation of formal reviews such as these into



each institution's standard practice will allow for more timely, responsive approaches to a more rapid pace of change in the higher education landscape. The findings of these reports will support the development and review of clear, quantifiable, mutually agreed-upon short- and long-term goals, along with corresponding measures of success, for PIV activities. To this end, SCHEV introduced new requirements when launching the FY 2026 request for proposals in the winter of 2025, including direct and formal program approval by the president, superintendent or chancellor of each institution via the FY 2026 Memorandum of Understanding and a further refined budget submission and reporting process.

These new requirements further support PIV's shift from a four-year grant model to a one-year grant model, wherein institutions that participated in the previous year's award cycle no longer must submit a full proposal for new awards. Rather, the award of grants moving forward will be based on a more collaborative process between institutions and SCHEV. Under this framework, SCHEV will make determinations about future awards based on performance, the scalability of existing or proposed activities and any new or shifting trends an institution may experience. SCHEV intends this new model to support institutions in prioritizing their efforts as multi-year grants from years one and two expire. Finally, moving to single-year grants will continue to allow for the "right-sizing" of awards over time to reflect each institution's undergraduate enrollment factored by the intensity of its shortfall of enrollment or completion.

Christopher Newport University

Concentration: Enrollment

Total PIV Distributions, Years One and Two: \$398,445

Christopher Newport University (CNU) appears to be on schedule to complete its IwBR report by December 19, 2025. The institution is also well-positioned to coordinate and combine their PIV activities across the four series grants.

As an enrollment institution, CNU's Pell-eligible enrollment increased by 6% from Fall 2022 to Fall 2024, where "...25% of first-time-in-college (FTIC) students are Pell-eligible." CNU has developed real-time dashboards to track enrollment status by student category, including Pell status and TRIO participants, as funded by PIV.

CNU offers direct admission to qualified students identified as low-income and first-generation from target high schools through the Common Application. Based on Fall 2025 Census reporting, submitted admission applications (+24%), offers of Fall freshman



admission (+19%), and new FTIC enrollments all increased over last year. This follows gains in applications (+24%), admits (+17%) and enrollments (+22%) in year one over Fall 2023.

During year two, PIV grant funds provided on-campus programming for students, which resulted in a 21% increase in special group participants over 2023-24. During "...the 2024-2025 academic year, the CNU Transfer Center hosted 109 students and 16 counselors, exceeding the office's goal of hosting at least 30 students."

Preliminary Overarching Goals (new for FY 2026):

1. Increase first-time-in-college Pell-eligible (PE) enrollment to 26.4% from AY 2022-23 baseline of 15% (11.4% difference) by AY 2027-28.
2. Decrease the completion gap between first-time full-time PE and non-PE students by at least 0.5% each year over four years, from 5.3 points to 3.3 points.

George Mason University

Concentration: Completion

Total PIV Distributions, Years One and Two: \$1,039,479

George Mason University (GMU) is ahead of schedule in completing its IwBR, having submitted a satisfactorily completed report to SCHEV in August 2025.

GMU engages in a wide assortment of PIV-related activities including an Early Identification Program (EIP), the Access to Excellence initiative (A2E), success coaching and basic needs support including other externally funded efforts such as Knack "Moonshot" funding for additional Pell-eligible student tutoring and a grant from the Capital Area Food Bank for food security. The institution has increased institutional funding for EIP in addition to philanthropic grants and gifts of more than \$900,000.

New student Pell-eligible enrollment increased to 43.5% in Fall 2024. PIV funds have enabled GMU to strengthen programming and various support mechanisms for Pell-eligible students. The GMU High School Direct Admissions program fosters local high school partnerships with higher concentrations of free and reduced lunch students to provide A2E services including application completion and FAFSA completion workshops. During Spring 2025, EIP engaged more than 1,400 students with 22 separate presentations on topics such as 'Demystifying College Admissions', 'Connecting Majors to Careers' and 'Financial Aid 101'.

Peer mentors have proven to be an effective intervention in many different areas of student recruitment and retention. GMU's Financial Well-Being effort utilizes peer mentors including those who have been trained to work with A2E pre-collegiate programming. In a similar vein,



one-on-one interventions by success coaches, dedicated to supporting Pell-eligible students, have resulted in a 90% Fall-to-Fall retention rate for those students who met with a success coach during Fall or Spring terms.

The cost of higher education across the nation is a concern of many parents and students. While there are well-designed financial aid programs, seldom is their funding level sufficient to meet all student needs. Except well-endowed schools, unmet financial need is a major challenge to enrollment but can be more devastating to retention and completion. A portion of GMU's PIV funding supports emergency grants to mitigate the unusually high cost of living in northern Virginia, housing and food insecurity, transportation costs and the unexpected expenses of life. As part of this effort, GMU piloted a single stop platform where students can register and receive insights and estimates of benefits that may be available. A full rollout is planned for Fall 2025.

In general, cohort performance has demonstrated limited consistency. The 2022-23 first-to-second year cohort gap between Pell-eligible (PE) and non-Pell-eligible (NPE) has varied each year, as demonstrated as shown in the table below.

Table 3. Gap in GMU Retention as Displayed in Single Years, by Cohort

Cohort	PE	Non-PE	Gap
2022-23	88%	86%	+2%
2023-24	85%	86%	-1%
2024-25	87%	88%	-1%

However, if we follow the single 2022-23 cohort through 2024-25, this cohort has demonstrated improving results:

Table 4. Gap in GMU Retention as Displayed from Fall to Fall, by Cohort

Cohort	PE	Non-PE	Gap
Fall 2022 to Fall 2023	88%	86%	+2%
Fall 2023 to Fall 2024	87%	90%	-3%
Fall 2024 to Fall 2025	90%	88%	+2%

This variation of the 2022-23 cohort may reflect the fact that most PIV institutions experienced various issues in starting up their PIV interventions, be they hiring and training staff or building program infrastructure, as well as programming. GMU retention efforts do not center on one or two entering cohorts but cut across all entering undergraduate cohorts and the



cohort exposed to the interventions for the longest period would logically benefit the most from those efforts.

Preliminary Overarching Goal (new for FY 2026):

Increase enrollment of Pell-eligible students and improve Fall-to-Fall retention rates and six-year graduation rates for freshmen and transfers. The 2022-2023 baseline for Pell enrollment was 8,365, the first-year retention rate was 85.1% and the six-year graduation rate was 72.6%. The long-term goal is to achieve a Pell enrollment of 10,000 students, 87% first-year retention rate and 74% graduation rate by 2028.

James Madison University

Concentration: Enrollment

Total PIV Distributions, Years One and Two: \$583,334

Previews of James Madison University's (JMU) IwBR activities indicate a thorough study is underway and the final report should be on time in December.

The institution's PIV activities are compact. The initial fiscal 2024 PIV grant expands the existing JMU program, the Centennial Scholars Program (CPS). CPS is a long-standing JMU recruitment program designed to attract and graduate low-income first-generation students and includes a generous full financial aid package and enhanced support services. In addition to the financial aid package, services include:

- Dedicated Advisors:
- Mandatory Study Hours and Academic Monitoring
- Peer Mentorship and Community Building
- Leadership and Service
- Workshops and Enrichment Programs
- Supportive Staff and Open-Door Policy

Recruitment activity for these grants appears to be folded into regular admissions recruitment protocol for CPS. The fiscal 2025 PIV grant funds student grants for a similar, less extensive program to attract Pell-eligible students.

JMU has refrained from offering these PIV-funded student grants in advance until they have the funds in hand. This has handicapped the institution in that they effectively started the program a year behind the other institutions. From their October 3, 2025, report, it appears JMU has enrolled 10% fewer Pell-eligible students than last year.



Preliminary Overarching Goal (new for FY 2026):

Increase Pell-eligible enrollment by 2% from base 2022-23 of 14.2% to 16.2% by 2026-27.

Longwood University

Concentration: Completion

Total PIV Distributions, Years One and Two: \$1,111,042

Longwood University (LU) appears to be well on its way to completing the December 2025 report. The institution is participating in all four series of PIV grants. The first fiscal 2024 grants concentrated on enrollment by hiring an admissions counselor dedicated to targeted, rural, low-income areas. They also awarded grants for in-state students for both recruitment and retention. “For the Fall 2024 cohort amount Pell students from the targeted areas were two percentage points higher than among Pell students from outside the area.”

For fiscal 2025, Longwood hired a parent engagement coordinator to help guide and advise parents of students through the application, acceptance and transition to college process. Additional student success personnel have been hired. The addition of these positions has improved keeping students apprised of the support service available. An external evaluation reported students held a positive view of the support services available “... and 78% ...indicated they were well informed about the services available.”

In terms of retention, the base 2022-23 cohort, which started before Longwood was funded, has shown a steadily increasing retention gap between Pell and non-Pell students. Longwood has pointed out that the three-year average six-year graduation rate for 2014-16 Virginia four-year publics with 25% or greater Pell enrollment ranges from 34% to 66%. At 57%, Longwood is in the upper third quadrant of that range.

Preliminary Overarching Goal (new for FY 2026):

Reduce the retention gap between Pell-eligible and non-Pell-eligible students using 2022 Fall gap of 2.95% as the baseline to 2.45% by cohort using the interim measure of students in academic difficulty at the end of the first semester.

Norfolk State University

Concentration: Completion

Total PIV Distributions, Years One and Two: \$1,232,989

Norfolk State University (NSU) is on its way to completing the IwBR report by December 2025. As a completion institution, NSU faces multiple challenges, including crafting and



coordinating many different university departments and offices to implement PIV activities in a timely and well-integrated manner. A major impediment to many higher education institutions is simply too many isolated departments and inadequate communication between individuals and departments.

The Spartan Pathfinders encompasses the student life cycle and consists of “...three prongs: Attract, Support and Connect.” The institution has identified weaknesses, but the difficulty is transforming those weaknesses into strengths. Implementation involves a shared goal, dedication, creativity and collaboration across all areas of the university.

The Student Pathways Professional and Empowerment Academy is an example of an underutilized support service. This service involves connecting “...classroom lessons with workforce skill development and expectations.” However, during Fall 2024, only 57 Pell recipients took part. At the end of the Fall term, the average GPA was 3.13 and the Fall-to-Fall retention rate was 88%. Again, during Fall 2025, 228 Pell students took part in the learning communities effort and averaged a 2.72 GPA at the end of Fall 2024 and had an 88% Fall-to-Fall retention rate. Another activity is the Spartan Pathfinder program, which included 62 students from all four undergraduate class years in Fall 2024. The average GPA at the end of the term was 3.14 and the Fall-to-Fall retention rate was 89%.

These gains were not reflected in the institution-wide retention measures. The 2022-23 cohort retention Fall 2022 to Fall 2023 was 72%; from Fall 2023 to Fall 2024, it was 53%, a drop of 19 points. Retention does appear to be improving with the 2023-24 and 2024-25 cohorts, with the 2024-25 cohort Fall-to-Fall retention improving to 77%.

In general, SCHEV will work with NSU during the coming year to explore advising protocols and the transition from second year to third year studies.

Preliminary Overarching Goal (new for FY 2026):

Increase Pell-eligible transfer student retention from a base of 71.9% to 76.9% (5% increase) by 2028-29 through integrated Pathfinders/Passport programming requiring: advising (3x/semester), mentoring (2x/semester), academic supports (2x/semester), experiential learning (1x before graduation).

Old Dominion University

Concentration: Completion

Total PIV Distributions, Years One and Two: \$4,419,101



Old Dominion University (ODU) appears to be on track to complete their IwBR report by December 19, 2025. As a completion concentration institution, during 2023-24 and 2024-25 ODU has conducted four distinct PIV interventions entailing both enrollment and completion foci, each involving relatively small populations. Their first activities targeted a self-selecting cohort of students and provided engagement and support for both the students and the students' families toward retention and completion. During FY 2024, ODU hired a success coach (i.e., mentor/supervisor) to provide one-on-one holistic support to the target population.

“Retention for the [self-selected] ... cohort was 90.4% from Fall 2024 to Spring 2025 and 76% from Fall 2024 to Fall 2025.”

ODU contracted with Campus ESP, a family engagement platform, to increase parent and family communication and support. There are currently more than 5,000 current family users in ODU's CampusESP platform.

The institution hired the Advantage Design Group (ADG) to develop online orientation modules. This structure ensured that participating students received timely, relevant content throughout the transition process—from admission confirmation through their arrival and adjustment on campus. The “Explore Your Kingdom” modules launched in April 2025, followed by the “Rule Your Dominion” modules in August 2025, advancing the division's strategic priority to modernize and personalize the new student experience. To date, 3,174 students have interacted with the ADG orientation modules.

For FY 2025, ODU focused more on enrollment and retention with a combination of recruitment and emergency retention grants. Retention appears to be varied from the base 2022-23 entering cohort gap between non-Pell-eligible and Pell-eligible students of 13.8% to substantial 3.48% gap for the 2024-25 cohort, a substantial improvement over the 2022-23 cohort.

Preliminary Overarching Goal (new for FY 2026):

Increase Pell-eligible six-year graduation rate from AY 2024-25 baseline of 42% to 44% by summer 2026 and maintain full-time Pell-eligible enrollment at 91%.

Radford University

Concentration: Completion

Total PIV Distributions, Years One and Two: \$968,320

Radford University has participated in all four series of PIV grants and appears to be on schedule to complete its IwBR report by December 19, 2025. Retention increased from Fall 2022



to Fall 2024 by a rate of 71.3% to 74.2%, respectively. The institution embarked on a new trajectory with the fiscal 2025 grant funding staff positions in the Compass program called Student Success Advocates. These advocates assist Pell-eligible students in navigating the many often arcane policies, procedures, forms and customs often found on a college campus.

Radford has a substantial population of Pell-eligible students. For Spring 2025, Radford had 2,446 Pell-eligible students consisting of 54% first-generation (1,117) and included 11% (296) age 25 or older along with 30% (806) transfer students. Similar numbers were enrolled during Fall 2024. A survey of Pell-eligible students not returning provided the following responses:

5 students (33%) cited family/personal reasons;

3 students (20%) cited academic reasons;

2 students (13%) cited financial reasons; and

5 students (33%) cited another reason.

Many such surveys show that ‘financial concerns’ are the most often cited reason for not enrolling. As seen above, these financial concerns are not solely about paying for college.

Preliminary Overarching Goal (new for FY 2026):

Achieve a retention rate of 75% by 2028 and a six-year graduation rate of 50% by 2031 from the 2024 baseline of 41%.

University of Mary Washington

Concentrations: Enrollment and Completion

Total PIV Distributions, Years One and Two: \$1,991,612

The University of Mary Washington (UMW) appears to be pursuing their IwBR in a consistent but less than broad inclusive review structure. They have identified common barriers such as financial aid and financial aid literacy, past due student account balances, minimal proactive academic advising, lack of market exposure and barriers to summer enrollment to encourage progression. A 360-degree structure for conducting an IwBR would prominently include students, alumni and faculty.

UMW faces a double challenge having prior shortfalls in both concentrations. The various interventions funded by PIV are sound activities to bolster both enrollment and completion. Their PIV activities during the 2024-25 academic year have yielded progress in retention but a decline in new Pell-eligible students.



The institution has engaged in a targeted marketing effort to high schools with free and reduced lunch designations through admissions outreach, as well as focusing on low-income zip code areas along with paid digital advertising with Meta and Instagram. From the description of select activities in their October 3, 2025, report, UMW has a major tuition promise campaign scheduled from November through January and are planning a mailing effort in January.

Persistence appears to be improving for Pell-eligible students across three cohorts of Fall-to-Fall retention from 2022-23 to 2024-25. The gap magnitude between the Pell-eligible cohort and non-Pell-eligible cohorts vary for those three years but the gap between 2022-23 and 2024-25 decreased by two percentage points. Students participating in their STARS (Student Transition, Access and Retention Services) Center, funded by PIV, show mixed, but promising results over three cohorts. Below is a quote from a STARS participant.

“Because of them, I was given a second chance to succeed here at UMW, and I carry that gift with me every single day. I don’t take any of it for granted. STARS has not only provided me with opportunities but also it has given me a sense of belonging, and a reminder that even in the hardest moments, there are people who truly care.”

Class of 2028

The “Call Me Mister” (CMM) Program has now completed its first full year of operation. CMM recruits and prepares students from low-income backgrounds for the K-12 teaching profession. Students in this program demonstrate GPAs ranging from 3.15 to 3.77 and appear to be progressing on schedule toward program completion.

UMW’s suite of PIV activities are broad and multifaceted as are their challenges in both Pell-eligible enrollment and completion. The number of freshmen decreased by 4% from Fall 2024 to Fall 2025. In that population, the number of Pell-eligible students decreased by 10% over Fall 2024 for a 1% decrease in year-to-year freshman Pell-eligible enrollment.

SCHEV is aware UMW is intensifying its recruitment activities with their fiscal 2026 PIV grant by developing partnerships with select high schools to create a pipeline supply of freshmen. The institution is also counting on the CMM Program to increase Pell-eligible enrollment. While demographics are shifting nationwide, the institution may wish to explore their freshman production by geographic region or high school and concentrate on the markets that have a higher production of new freshmen.



Preliminary Overarching Goal (new for FY 2026):

Increase PE enrollment from the 2022-23 rate of 22.1% to 25% or greater by 2030 through grades 8-12 partnerships with 5-10 select regional high schools; (b) increase six-year PE graduation rate from 67.4% to equal or exceed 69% by 2030.

University of Virginia

Concentration: Enrollment

Total PIV Distributions, Years One and Two: \$2,084,450

The University of Virginia (UVA) appears to be well into producing their IwBR report by the December 2025 deadline. UVA recently expanded the intensity of their barrier discovery and examination by establishing sub-groups “...dedicated...” to key areas of improvement involving transfer recruitment along with access and outreach in their continuous improvement effort.

The 2025 application pool increased from 58,967 for Fall 2024 to 64,489, approximately a 9% increase but with 2% fewer overall offers of admission. This included a 2% decrease in the number of Pell-eligible offers. UVA’s Fall-to-Fall first-year retention is variable ranging from 96.7% to 97.5%. The institution consistently seeks other outside funding sources to support various access and success efforts.

PIV funds access activities through two avenues. AdviseVA, formerly the College Advising Corps, a non-UVA-centric enterprise, served 5,251 potentially Pell-eligible students by taking them on campus tours including those public in-state institutions with less than average Pell-eligible enrollments to support the Commonwealth’s initiative to increase Pell-eligible student enrollment. PIV funds AdviseVA advisor training in 2024-25 so they could serve 13,889 high schools seniors in 22,285 individual advising sessions and helped students complete 5,251 FAFSA applications leading to approximately \$82 million in financial aid. Just as important, advisors engaged 2,554 family members in the college going culture and facilitated the submission of 30,630 college admission applications.

One student served by AdviseVA counselors observed:

“Through organized field trips and constant guidance, my adviser has expanded my understanding of the possibilities that await and helped me discover new pathways for my future.”

UVA also receives PIV funds to support their All Virginia Pilot (AVA) to increase Pell-eligible enrollment from 40 Virginia high schools by visiting the schools to meet with students and



communicating with school counselors and principals about the admissions process and any obstacles in getting students through admission. They have bolstered efforts to increase the accessibility of UVA staff to high need schools, created a monthly newsletter highlighting the opportunities at UVA in addition to opportunities at other Virginia institutions. As noted with AdviseVA efforts, a campus visit can be crucial in attracting students, so UVA has allocated PIV funding for no-cost transportation to and from the University Grounds for 37 high-need high schools.

The recently fully functional One-Stop Enrollment Care Center has been funded by PIV to combine the outward-facing student enrollment-related services of admission counseling, the Office of the University Registrar and Student Financial Services, so often needed in concert with one another with Pell-eligible students. These funds have enabled UVA to train the care center's staff, collect and analyze student needs in the design of the care center and engage the stakeholders through focus groups and individual meetings. These efforts have included the purchase of a customer relationship management system, personnel alignment, cross-training and technology integration.

UVA's newly restructured enrollment unit firmly ensconces PIV principles and practices within the overall administrative structure of the institution. This unit acts to develop, coordinate and analyze enrollment activities, including expansion of its VCCS partnership opportunities by adding a financial aid outreach coordinator, a transfer initiatives and partnerships specialist and a grounds visit coordinator to organize and oversee increased visits to the Grounds and to visits to VCCS partner campuses.

Preceding the advent of the Pell Initiative for Virginia, UVA had recognized its performance in enrolling more Pell-eligible students and was studying ways to embed more certainty into admissions and financial aid including reducing or eliminating student loans from the financial aid package. Further study is underway on the possibility of simplifying both admissions and financial processes with a Virginia form for admissions and an institutional questionnaire in place of the CSS Profile form. The forthcoming IwBR report should contain further developments in simplification.

Preliminary Overarching Goal (new for FY 2026):

Increase Pell-eligible enrollment from 14.3% to 23% by 2030.



University of Virginia's College at Wise

Concentration: Completion

Total PIV Distributions, Years One and Two: \$313,667

The University of Virginia's College at Wise (UVA-W) has a comparatively healthy Pell-eligible enrollment baseline in 2021-22 of 38% compared to the state public average of 26%. However, Pell-eligible completion at UVA-W is 42% compared to the state public average of 72%. Work is underway on the December 2025 IwBR Report. UVA-W did not apply for PIV grants in fiscal 2025 or 2026.

The institution experienced personnel changes during the inaugural PIV year of 2023-24 resulting in re-assignment of the PIV efforts to a full-time faculty member assisted by a PIV coordinator. Activities centered on a peer mentoring program, labeled as MAP, coupled with a freshman orientation program. An Academic Success Center (ASC) was formed at UVA-W before the existence of PIV.

As with any new program such as PIV, there were some activities that needed adjustments. One of the adjustments involved a shift to change the focus of MAP from all Pell-eligible students to those Pell-eligible students on academic warning or probation. UVA-W requested and was approved for a re-purposing of prior unspent PIV funds to a Pathway Forward Grant Program whereby students attending summer 2025 coursework were awarded grants to assist with tuition and fees. These students were Pell-eligible with differing academic standing from academic probation to good standing and with satisfactory attendance at MAP events. After finishing their summer study, six had improved their GPA while three had GPAs in good standing but slightly diminished.

Table 5. Breakout of UVA-W Students on Academic Warning

Item	Total	PE	% PE	% of Cohort
# of students at end of Fall 2024	82	43	52.44%	52.44%
# of students who returned Spring 2025	42	33	78.57%	40.24%
# of students who met with peer mentors from the ASC	30	26	86.67%	31.71%
# of students who rehabilitated to Academic Good Standing	10	8	80.00%	9.76%
# of students who rehabilitated with PIV peer mentors	9	8	88.89%	9.76%
# of students who returned Spring 2025	6	3	50.00%	33.33%
# of students who met with peer mentors from the ASC	2	0	0.00%	0.00%
# of students who rehabilitated with PIV peer mentors	0	0	0.00%	0.00%

The institution is in continued development of a Freshman Success Seminar. Both instructors and peer leaders are compensated. The second iteration of this seminar is currently under governance review. Under this second iteration, UVA-W staff provides training for both instructors and peer leaders. Satisfactory completion of the seminar awards the student three credit hours. This is also incorporated as a formal component of the instructor's full-time instruction course-load with a "...focus on student engagement and resilience..." and project-based learning. Instructors also act as the student's advisor.

Recitation previously used at UVA-W in General Chemistry was introduced in Fall 2024 in two sections each of Elementary Spanish and Pre-calculus with mixed success. The Pre-calculus recitation appears to be more successful than for Spanish. However, it does appear in both curricula the recitation may enhance engagement thus retention.

Preliminary Overarching Goal (new for FY 2026):

UVA-W has not submitted a 2025 or 2026 proposal which required an overarching goal. They have experienced another change in staff, and the new staff has had only a superficial exposure to PIV. SCHEV staff are working with the new staff on proposal and goal formulation for fiscal 2027.

Virginia Commonwealth University

Concentration: Completion

Total PIV Distributions, Years One and Two: \$882,826

As a completion institution, VCU is eight points shy of the state 2016-17 baseline of 72% Pell-eligible completion. At 31% Pell-eligible enrollment, five points above the 26% state enrollment average, the large undergraduate population is impressive yet challenging to move the needle on completion. First year Pell-eligible retention is approximately 86%. The institution submitted its IwBR report on October 3, 2025, and SCHEV staff is currently reviewing. The Fall-to-Fall first-year retention rates are improving for Pell-eligible students where Fall-to-Fall retention rates for non-Pell-eligible students are declining. The retention gap between Pell-eligible and non-Pell-eligible students has declined in the past three years from 3.6 points to 1.0 points.

Building on an activity that dates back to the pre-PIV 1990s, VCU has implemented a summer jump start program for low-income students. Due to the slow rollout of PIV during the summer of 2023, the institution postponed the expansion of the first summer jump start session to the summer of 2024 and did not compete in the Series II PIV competition during the latter half of 2023. They resumed participation in fiscal 2025 with two proposals, both of which were funded.



Fiscal 2025 witnessed an expansion of the Richmond Talent Pathway (RTP) and an innovative one-year pilot of an alternate College Transfer Grant 2.5 (CTG 2.5). Fiscal 2026 saw a funded proposal to totally restructure their career planning division including a small cohort with expansive career exploration/planning activities beginning the first freshman year of study.

As noted above, VCU postponed the expansion of the prior summer jump start program until the summer of 2024. In this residential program, VCU recruits low-income students to 'jump start' the traditional Fall freshman semester starts studies during the summer. The Summer Scholars program includes introductory coursework geared to student regimen and success, core course credit and social skills. The program served 98 students in the summer of 2024 and 123 students in the summer of 2025. A student survey of those attending 2024 Summer Scholars reveals that 89.4% agreed or strongly agreed that, "I am glad I participated in Summer Scholars."

The College Transfer Grant 2.5 builds on the existing state Two-Year College Transfer Grant (CTG) framework and existing framework between the Virginia Community College System and all four-year colleges in Virginia. However, the CTG 2.5 does not require as stringent an academic record as does the CTG. For fiscal 2025, 58 students have been awarded between entering in Fall 2024 or Spring 2025. Forty-two students were awarded these CTG 2.5 grants; 42 (97.7%) persisted from Fall-to-Spring; 38 (84.8%) persisted from Fall 2024 to Fall 2025. An additional 15 were awarded for Spring 2025 of which 14 (93.3%) persisted from Spring to Fall 2025. Fifty-two are currently in good academic standing and five are on academic warning/probation.

Preliminary Overarching Goals (new for FY 2026):

1. Increase the four-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time Pell recipients from the 2021-22 rate (2018-19 cohort) of 39% to 43% by 2026-2027 (2022-2023 cohort).
2. Minimize student debt to ensure persistence and graduation.
3. 100% of pilot cohort (n=25) will have membership to a professional association; b) 100% of the pilot cohort will have completed one employer site visit per semester and one professional networking event per year; c) 100% of the pilot cohort will have an assigned employer/alumni mentor and have met with them at least twice per year; d) 100% of the pilot cohort will complete all year one Milestones in VCU's Career Works.
4. Increase work-based learning opportunities.

Virginia Military Institute

Concentration: Enrollment



Total PIV Distributions, Years One and Two: \$1,868,653

As an enrollment concentration, the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) had base Pell-eligible enrollment for 2020-21 at 14% versus the state average of 26%. Completion is 77% compared with the 2020-21 base state average of 72%. VMI is on schedule to submit their IwBR report in December 2025.

Since 2022-23, VMI Pell-eligible student FAFSA applications increased from approximately 26% to 35%. Prior to implementing the PIV initiatives, there was a 3% approximate increase in these applications at VMI between 2022-23, under the old Expected Family Contribution formula, and 2023-24, the first year of the formula change. Compare these results with an approximate 5% increase from 2023-24 and the first complete year in which VMI has PIV funds to finance efforts to increase its Pell-eligible students, 2% of that 5% increase may attributable to PIV interventions.

VMI's count of 2025 complete Pell-eligible admissions applications increased numerically from 448 to 465 but reflected a small decrease in percent of completed applications from 21.0% to 19.8%. At the same time, fewer Pell-eligible applicants were admitted from 29.0% to 27.2% and new Pell-eligible students enrolling decreased slightly from 121 to 115.

As demonstrated in Table 6, the retention gap between Pell-eligible students and non-eligible students reduced by 18.4 points from 2022-23 to 2024-25. A decrease in this gap can be an indication of future retention in general, i.e., an increase in enrollment.

Table 6. Fall-toFall Persistence among VMI Students

VMI Evaluation Element	All Students		Non-PE Students		PE Students		Retention Gap from Non-Pell to Pell-eligible
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	
Number of Students in 2022-23 Cohort persisting from Fall 2022 to Fall 2023	293	100.00%	248	88.26%	45	68.18%	-20.07%
Number of Students in 2023-24 Cohort persisting from Fall 2023 to Fall 2024	362	100.00%	291	82.67%	71	74.74%	-7.93%
Number of Students in 2024-25 Cohort persisting from Fall 2024 to Fall 2025	364	100.00%	274	82.75%	90	81.08%	-1.67%



The initial Series I PIV grant allocated significant funding to restructure the disparate enrollment areas of the institute's administration into an enrollment management division. Such restructuring requires careful planning and staffing and VMI chose to stand down on Series II and III PIV grants but entered the competition again for fiscal 2026.

As any comprehensive enrollment management division should contain, VMI's enrollment management division also houses student success and retention. Increasing retention can increase Pell-eligible enrollment modestly in most circumstances. Along this line of building an effective division, there must first be an assessment of the student learning characteristics. To accomplish this, PIV has funded the purchase of the widely used LASSI (Learning and Student Strategies Inventory) for new students to assist in appropriate course placement.

On the recruitment side, VMI embarked on a complete overhaul of their website through PIV funding. To minimize new student melt, PIV funds have been used to develop an online cadet orientation program and a virtual tour. The institution has expanded its geodemographic recruiting through purchasing names of potential students from targeted low-income areas. To assist with recruitment, communications and engagement, VMI has used PIV funds to purchase a sophisticated customer relationship management system (CRM).

Preliminary Overarching Goal (new for FY 2026):

Increase PE enrollment from the 2022-23 base of 16% by 4%-5% by 2032.

Virginia State University

Concentration: Completion

Total PIV Distributions, Years One and Two: \$1,413,700

The IwBR continues to mature at Virginia State University (VSU) with a new chairperson for the Student Success Committee and interventions in technology, curricular reform and improved advising structures. VSU utilizes predictive analytics and has developed the Trojan Data Hub to track retention. The professional advising model has been expanded to include all first-year students and select second-year students. Military-affiliated students receive expanded support. Cohort trajectory shows measurable progress.

Retention of Cohort 2 (2023) is significantly stronger than Cohort 1 (2022) at comparable points. By Fall 2025, approximately 55% of Pell students remain enrolled, a six-to-eight point improvement over Cohort 1. In Cohort 3 (2024) early outcomes are highly encouraging: after



one year, approximately 75% of Pell students remain well above the comparable trajectory for Cohorts 1 and 2. This suggests institutional changes and targeted supports are beginning to close persistence gaps.

GRTR 101, Trojan Boot Camp, is an on-line pre-college introductory program that continues providing VSU resource information through orientation, including community building. Eighty-two percent of participating students felt ‘more prepared’ for college than before. Parents reacted positively as did VSU staff since more students arrived on campus more prepared than those in entering classes before this resource was offered. First-time freshmen’s unpaid bills dropped from 1,062 to 700.

Supplemental Instruction, a structured peer-led tutoring effort developed in the 1970s, has proven to be successful. Additionally, VSU has implemented an Academic Recovery class. To date, 71 students have participated. The mean term GPA of the students prior to the workshop was 1.49. The mean term GPA of the students after the workshop was 2.24.

The fiscal 2025 PIV grant includes the Freshman Focus Mentoring Program specifically for a cohort of Pell-eligible students. The Fall 2024 cohort reflects both diversity and promise: 50 sophomore through senior mentors, averaging a 3.12 GPA, matched with 186 mentees—122 women and 64 men— who demonstrated an average high school GPA of 3.16 completed an average of 15 credits during their first semester. For AY 2024–2025, the program achieved a Fall-to-Fall retention rate of 82.8% among participants, well above the institutional average. Students earned an average GPA of 2.67 and 26 credits, with nearly half (47%) achieving a GPA of 3.0 or higher. These results confirm both stable academic performance and strong persistence among a high-need, Pell-eligible population.

Preliminary Overarching Goal (new for FY 2026):

Increase completion by 4% or more by 2030 using 2018 cohort achieving 39.4% in 2023-24.

Virginia Tech

Concentration: Enrollment

Total PIV Distributions, Years One and Two: \$2,742,727

Virginia Tech (VT) has progressed in its IwBR through proactively involving governance. VT is in the process of consolidating all its PIV activities under the umbrella of the College Access Collaborative, a distinct administrative branch of the institution that “...aims to increase



academic preparation, access and affordability for first-generation and low-income students from rural and inner-city communities.” Most of these efforts are centered on creating partnerships with urban and rural high schools with populations of low-income and first-generation students.

These activities include fiscal year 2024 and 2025 Initiative grants, VT GPS, Go to College, Pathways to STEM Success and Summer Start; and eleVaTed Engineering Scholars. For FY 2026, the Engineering Scholars PIV grant has changed administrative oversight. In this division, staff are studying strategies to serve more students through economies of scale by having all such activities merged and centralized under one administrative unit thereby breaking down administrative silos.

The VT GPS grant funds more than 70 programs across the Commonwealth serving 10,820 students, demonstrating a 6.63% increase from fiscal 2024 to 2025. All scholarships awarded were for in-state students. Applications from partner high schools were up 7.8%, admission offers increased 14.5% and students’ acceptance of those offers were up 25.6%. First-time Pell-eligible freshmen enrolling at VT in Fall 2025 increased to 1,257 compared to 1,098 for Fall 2024.

SCHEV has recently worked with the institution to implement a change in grant supervision and the principal investigator.

Preliminary Overarching Goals (new for FY 2026):

1. Increase Pell-eligible enrollment from 2022-23 baseline of 14.77%, 30,434 degree-seeking undergrads by a minimum of 1.10% (304) annually by Fall census FY 2025, FY 2026 & FY 2027 to a goal of 18.08% by FY 2027 Fall census; increase school partnerships.
2. Increase opportunity exposure in Pell-eligible communities (parents & family, students and community leaders).

William & Mary

Concentration: Enrollment

Total PIV Distributions, Years One and Two: \$667,374

As an enrollment concentration institution, William & Mary (W&M) has a 2020-21 base Pell enrollment of 13% compared to the state base Pell enrollment of 26%. The institution has formed the First-Generation Low-Income Board (FGLI) to shepherd the IwBR and plan to submit their IwBR report in December 2025.



W&M has used PIV funds to craft the Commonwealth Impact Program (CIP) and hire a dedicated admissions counselor to work with high school and school counselors at targeted Virginia high schools with significant populations of low-income students and apprise both school counselors and students of the availability of the William & Mary Scholar program, that provides scholarships to fully fund tuition and fees, along with one-on-one support during the application process, as well as the offer of admission. W&M Scholars also receive retention and graduation support along with undergraduate research opportunities. These enhanced partnerships with high schools have produced results. Notable is the 2% increase in applications for admission from students who are Pell-eligible or from free or reduced lunch high schools and the 1% increase in offers of admission in the chart below.

Table 7. Year-to-Year Admissions Data, Fall 2024 to Fall 2025

Evaluation Element	Base Count Fall 2024	Base Fall 2024 Students PE or from FRL* Schools		Base Count, Fall 2025, as of September 15, 2025	Fall 2025 Students PE or from FRL* Schools as of September 15, 2025	
		Count	%		Count	%
Count of All Admissions Applications (Complete & Incomplete)	7,945	1,515	19%	7,822	1,669	21%
Count of Complete Admissions Applications	7,945	1,515	19%	7,822	1,669	21%
Count of Complete Admissions Applications Offered Full Acceptance for Enrollment	2,660	516	19%	2,922	597	20%

Professional relationships nurtured by the PIV-funded admission counselor with high school counselors are central to the W&M Scholar program through their nomination of candidates for the award. In addition to a scholarship for tuition and fees, nominees are eligible to receive a full need financial aid package. W&M officials state, “the number of W&M Scholar Awards offered increased by 47%, reflecting 98 additional offers made over the prior year.”

In the first year following the launch of PIV, W&M saw its first year, in-state Pell student population increase by 26% from 155 to 194.

The undergraduate research opportunities mentioned above are part of the WMSURE effort with partial PIV funding involving summer pre-calculus program, course undergraduate research, peer mentorship, weekly workshops, summer research, community service, field experiences, co-curricular programming, and faculty and student fellow cohorts. PIV funds have supported prospective Pell-eligible student and family travel and housing to experience

the W&M campus and its many benefits to undergraduate students. PIV funds have enabled the dedicated admissions counselors to increase the number of participating Virginia high schools by 40% focusing on free and reduced lunch high schools. PIV funding has ramped up the W&M Scholars awards as well as application fee waivers. The institution includes the following in its reporting:

“This scaling up of recruitment via PIV [and the increased institutional funding of the Pell Grant Scholarship Guarantee] enabled W&M to see it’s entering first-year, in-state Pell enrollment increase by 26% (154 to 194) in the FY24, and similarly, saw 191 first-year, in-state Pell students in FY25.”

PIV funding supports collateral admissions material to assist with garnering attention to the benefits of enrolling at W&M. In addition, the institution supports food and basic needs assistance efforts, as well as the TutorZone free tutoring service to all students and the Health Emergency and Resources for the Tribe program designed to help with basic human needs including food, housing, medical needs and necessary transportation.

Preliminary Overarching Goal (new for FY 2026):

Increase in-state Pell-grant recipients from Fall 2022 base of 758 students (17%) to 1,020 students (23%) by Fall 2027.

Richard Bland College

Concentration: Enrollment

Total PIV Distributions, Years One and Two: \$1,298,857

Richard Bland College (RBC) is progressing on its IwBR by identifying the need for enhanced professional development and networking. Upon close examination, select data from RBC may contain students in dual enrollment coursework, without a high school diploma therefore not eligible for the Pell Grant. Thus, the data submitted for this report may not be accurate and will not be used in this report. SCHEV is pursuing clarification to be sure the data does not include students not yet graduated from high school or without a GED.

The institution recently joined the “First Scholars” network, an organization dedicated to supporting first-generation students and now has a First Scholars Team to oversee orientation and other activities as part of their PIV IwBR findings. The institution has received an National Science Foundation grant to enhance student math abilities toward a stem-related career pathway.



The mobile unit, funded by PIV, appears to be used primarily for instruction and community outreach using AI and drone technology. While the initial PIV grant focused on rural recruitment, there is no mention of student recruitment in 'REACH Mobile Unit – Implementation plan Fall 2025, a portion extracted below.

Goals and Objectives

1. Expand Access: Provide mobile STEM learning and environmental experiences for rural and low-income populations.
2. Hands-On Education: Integrate field-based experiments, data collection and analysis.
3. Empower Pell-Eligible Students: Increase engagement, retention and career pathways for underrepresented learners in STEM.
4. Community Impact: Partner with local schools, industry partners and community-based organizations.

Staff are consulting with RBC to clarify statistics submitted for this report as well as to encourage more effort on enrollment efforts.

Preliminary Overarching Goal (new for FY 2026):

Increase Pell-eligible enrollment from 2022-23 baseline of 17.3% by 9% by FY 2029.

Virginia Community College System

Concentration: Completion

Total PIV Distributions, Years One and Two: \$3,120,035

The Virginia Community College System (VCCS) commenced participation in this Pell Initiative for Virginia on July 1, 2024, a year after the four-year institutions with a Series II PIV Grant. They participated in Series III and IV grant competitions. 2024-25 was consumed by hiring and developing training materials. As of September 2025, most of the positions have been filled and training has commenced.

As a completion concentration entity, the VCCS serves a wide range of students pursuing a wide range of goals. Given that many of their students are considered 'non-traditional,' they are challenged by frequent interruptions in their studies. The system enrolls approximately 50,000 Pell Grant recipients comprising about 33% of their total degree-seeking enrollment. Their Fall-to-Fall first year Pell-eligible population retention gap ranges from approximately 11 points to



seven points, based on two cohorts, 2022-23 and 2023-24. Unlike their four-year colleagues and Richard Bland College, the VCCS had not completed their census as of September 15, 2025, so the 2024-25 retention information is not yet available. However, there is a four-point decrease in first year Fall-to-Fall retention gap for the two cohorts for which data is available.

In place of the Institution-wide Barrier Review, the VCCS is completing a System-wide Barrier Review, SwBR, structured in five phases. They are currently in Phase Four and are on schedule to produce their report by December 2025. Phase Five includes continued monitoring, refinement and reporting. Ongoing activities include Caring Campus follow-up and the student needs assessment.

Their PIV activities have been labeled the Pell Boost and consist of recruiting, hiring and training a Pell Boost Liaison for each constituent institution. Once trained, the liaisons act as a resource to the institution and the institution's service area to for the many benefits and support mechanisms available by from the institution and its BOOST Liaison. Additionally, Pell Boost liaisons meet with students in one-on-one appointments. During these appointments, Pell BOOST liaisons provide personalized support to help students navigate every aspect of the financial aid process and connect with essential resources.

In short, the liaisons are trained like social workers acting as a resource for all types of support services that prospective students and enrolled students alike may need in pursuit of a post high school education. Not only admission/financial aid information and guidance, but financial literacy, community services, other available government programs, academic counseling and the list goes on of resources that can assist a student when 'life happens.'

The elegance of this approach rests in the development of training materials that can eventually be shared with the entire Commonwealth's higher education community. SCHEV staff are coordinating with the VCCS central office to pilot a joint training session in Spring 2026. SCHEV is exploring the possibility of scheduling the joint sessions as an annual event. Eventually, formal online self-paced training modules will be available. Certification possibilities are being considered.

Select PIV activities include:

- Working within the institution's service area high schools to boost the FAFSA completion rate to 60%;
- Conducting high school financial aid nights;
- Exploring opportunities to coordinate BOOST activities with community college access organizations;



- Organizing campaigns to remind students to complete their FAFSA;
- Offering FAFSA workshops within “Dinner and Dollars” events;
- Contacting previously enrolled students not registered for upcoming semester to encourage them to register;
- Conducting financial aid satisfactory academic progress workshops including appeal assistance;
- Providing training for Caring Campus focusing on appropriate presentation of self by frontline staff to create a welcoming environment; and
- Developing certification standards.

Preliminary Overarching Goal (new for FY 2026):

1. Year-over-year improvement in Pell student retention and completion.
2. Demonstrate a 20% Increase in pre and post-training assessment scores of Boost Academy (training platform for Liaison & Success Staff providing services to PE students) attendees.
3. Train 200+ staff completing the four-part training program and receiving BOOST certified Student Success Coach designation.

NEXT STEPS

As noted, SCHEV changed the grant duration from up to four years to one year. This will enable SCHEV and the institutions to consolidate and strengthen their existing productive PIV interventions rather than producing a new set of interventions each year. Institutions will submit renewal requests. In submitting these renewal requests, SCHEV will guide institutions on what interventions are most promising and productive. This guidance could include discontinuing an intervention that doesn’t appear to have an acceptable rate of return on the investment as well as scaling up a productive intervention. Determining ‘promising interventions’ will entail consideration for each institution’s mission, its demographic and past performance in PIV.

As mentioned in the Executive Summary, a demographic cliff has arrived for the higher education enterprise with a reduction in the number of graduating high school students. While Virginia will experience a net increase in high school graduates, institutions recruiting out-of-state students, especially from the northeast, will probably see a decrease in new out-of-state students. SCHEV’s enrollment projections show mixed changes for different public colleges, some decreasing, some modestly increasing and some holding steady. As high school graduates



decrease nationwide, competition between and among colleges and universities will increase confounding the actual impact on Virginia's public post-secondary sector. The most severe challenges will be faced by our regional public institutions along with our independent colleagues, further localizing the competition.

Virginia's public colleges and universities must be prepared to compete to maintain current enrollment levels. The high cost of postsecondary education can also complicate college enrollments, especially in the Pell Grant eligible population.

Although anecdotal, not all colleges and universities appear to be using data analytics to their best advantage. PIV's institutional reporting requirements entail a complete picture of the recruiting/enrollment stages of the student life cycle at each institution. SCHEV also requires each institution to conduct and report on an Institution-wide Barrier Review which covers the remaining stages of the student life cycle. Institutions should use the data collected in these two reports to analyze their enrollment and retention outcomes, if they are not already engaged in such an exercise, regardless of the PIV concentration designation, enrollment or completion. It is important for institutions to be sure their data is accurate and complete and used in building both tactical and strategic enrollment and completion efforts.

SCHEV will further intensify outreach and assistance to PIV institutions in fiscal 2026 through the following

- Complete an on-site review of each PIV institution;
- Establish a SCHEV-hosted website for PIV;
- Produce a quarterly PIV newsletter;
- Review all PIV IwBR reports and publish a compendium of the results;
- Explore approaches to encourage institutional sharing of 'lessons learned' in PIV administration;
- Explore the creation of a PIV advisory group;
- Develop and implement a new grant 'renewal' process;
- Collaborate closely with each PIV institution in preparation for PIV activity/intervention consolidation considering the 2027 expiration of the fiscal 2024 PIV grants and the 2028 expiration of the fiscal 2025 PIV grants;
- Continue to improve the timely processing of PIV budget adjustments and delivery of PIV disbursements to institutions;
- Enhance the exposure of PIV through presentations at state, regional and national professional conferences; and
- Produce a set of policies and procedures for PIV.



CONCLUSION

Each year of the program provides a fresh opportunity to evaluate and refine PIV funding and activities. SCHEV and the PIV institutions will need to be prepared to be forward-thinking yet responsive to changes in the higher education environment. Fiscal 2025 has overall been successful. Institutions have implemented their programs with varying levels of effectiveness, with some performing better than others. SCHEV has responded by requiring changes at institutions as well as given compliments and further encouragement to institutions.

Critical to the evaluation of PIV, each year SCHEV should be able to take better advantage of the normal SCHEV data collection calendar and subsequent reports. This will enable SCHEV to perform much more in-depth analysis on PIV to the benefit of students, institutions, policy makers and the Commonwealth in general. A subsequent report is scheduled to be published in Spring 2026 with IwBR results from each institution. This report also will contain further data from fiscal 2025 PIV operations.

