



December 4, 2025

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 725, 2025 Acts of Assembly, 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](mailto:wjohnson@vccs.edu).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William M. Johnson", with a stylized flourish at the end.

William M. Johnson  
Vice Chancellor for Finance and Capital Resources

Attachment  
(Electronic Submission Only)



November 24, 2025

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

Via email: [aatkinson@vcoy.virginia.gov](mailto: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 17 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 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.



# Great Expectations Program Grants

## Virginia Community College System (260)

### Background: Need/Problem/Desire Addressed by Initiative

Over 450 young Virginians aged out of foster care last year without a permanent family or the associated support and resources. These young people, while remarkably resilient, often face 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 17 years, and having positive results, with 22% of our students receiving a credential, a degree, or transferring. Until 2023, most of our funding was private, which was not sustainable.

### Appropriation

FY 2025 GF:	\$500,000	FY 2025 NGF:	\$0
FY 2026 GF:	\$500,000	FY 2026 NGF:	\$0

Actual FY 2024 GF Expenditures	\$422,036
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Actual FY 2024 NGF Expenditures	
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### 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 17 years, growing from initially serving 5 colleges in its first years, to now serving all 23 colleges. However, with privately raised dollars being the sole support prior to this appropriation, 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.

### Barriers/Roadblocks to Implementation

## Great Expectations Program Grants

### Virginia Community College System (260)

Additional guidance was issued this year which is making it easier for colleges to put systems in place to allow them to use state funds to provide direct support to students for housing, transportation and childcare. This has increased the use of the funds in these areas.

#### **FY 2025 Anticipated and Actual Results (including clients served, if applicable)**

We have enrolled 634 Great Expectations students at Virginia's 23 community colleges between Fall 2024 and Fall 2025. 383 of these students were served directly with these funds. Through September 2025 the colleges have been able to use the funds for coaching (\$285,862), mentoring (\$3665.23), transportation (\$45,186), housing (\$84,432), and childcare (\$2890). Funds expended since 9/25 will be reflected in the next reporting cycle.

#### **Program Performance Measures and Performance Results (if available)**

In Fall of 2024, 376 Great Expectations students were enrolled in courses at our 23 colleges, taking an average of 9 credit hours a semester. In Fall of 2025, 186 of these students were still enrolled, 47 had graduated with an associate degree, 19 had transferred, 1 had graduated after transferring, and 9 had earned Fast Forward credentials, resulting in an overall persistence rate of 68%.