ABOUT FORWARD STEPS

The Forward Steps Guardian Scholars program supports Colorado current and former foster youth as they pursue a postsecondary education. Our program provides financial, social and life-skills support to foster youth who are currently enrolled, or will be enrolled, in an associate, bachelor, trade or certificate program.

Guardian Scholars will receive financial support each semester tailored to their particular circumstances including: (1) a $500 baseline stipend split between the beginning and end of each semester and (2) up to $2,500 in additional support to cover emergency/urgent needs, housing, and childcare expenses as needed on a case-by-case basis, dependent on available funding. All financial support goes directly to the scholar. This revised financial support structure was put into place during the Fall 2022 semester as a result of the passing of SB22-008 by the Colorado Legislature, and allows us to tailor financial support to best meet the needs of each scholar’s circumstance and serve as many scholars as possible.

In addition to financial assistance, Guardian Scholars receive one-on-one mentoring, academic and career coaching, opportunities for personal and professional development, access to tutoring, and community support.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Applicants must have verifiable experience in the foster care system. At this time, we cannot accept individuals who have been adopted into our program.
- First time applicants must apply before their 26th birthday.
- Applicants must be residents of Colorado and plan to attend, or are currently attending a public Colorado postsecondary institution (i.e. a community college, trade school, or 4-year university).
- Scholars must have a high school diploma or a GED before beginning their first semester of college.
- Applicants must meet federal financial aid requirements and must qualify for the Pell Grant.

If you would like to discuss how to obtain documentation to demonstrate eligibility or have any questions about your eligibility please contact us at scholarship@forwardsteps.org.
WHAT ARE THE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS TO MAINTAIN ELIGIBILITY?

To remain eligible, scholars must meet the following expectations:

- Maintain good standing as defined by their school and by our program.
- Maintain and successfully complete all credit hours agreed upon with Forward Steps.
- Maintain eligibility for the federal Pell Grant in order to display unmet financial need as determined by FASFA.
- Achieve and maintain at least a 2.0 GPA both cumulatively and per semester.
- Meet with the Scholar Mentor a minimum of once per month; additional meetings appointments are scheduled depending on scholar needs.
- Attend the College Prep 101 workshop during your first semester as a Guardian Scholar if coming in as a Freshman.
- Participate in interactive personal and professional development opportunities organized by the Guardian Scholars Program. We typically have 2 required personal and professional development opportunities per semester that are focused on areas of scholar interest as well as individual career coaching sessions.
- Complete self-assessments and program evaluations, as requested.
- Submit grades and transcripts as requested along with any other requested documentation, per the communicated deadlines.

HOW TO APPLY AND NEXT STEPS

Complete the following application form and provide all necessary supporting documentation on the application checklist by our **priority deadline of May 31 for Fall semester and October 31 for Spring semester**. Mailed documents must be postmarked by the deadline.

Please email your completed application packet to scholarship@forwardsteps.org or mail to:

P.O. Box 3484  
Boulder, CO 80307-3484

Eligible applicants will be contacted to schedule an interview. The executive director and our review committee, which may include members outside of our organization, will then review eligible packets. Applicants will be informed of the review committee’s final decision regarding program admittance by email.

*If you do not meet the priority deadline, please note that we do accept applications throughout the year. Applications received after the priority deadline may be considered for the upcoming semester depending on the date of submission, applicant eligibility and available funding.*

QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions, please contact us at scholarship@forwardsteps.org or 303.404.9966.

*We look forward to reviewing your application!*
APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- Completed application form

- Official high school transcripts (or GED) and, if applicable, transcripts from any previously attended college. If official transcripts are not currently available, unofficial transcripts can be substituted until official transcripts are available.

- FAFSA Student Aid Report (SAR)

- Signed "Confirmation of Foster Care Dependency Form." Please contact us if you have questions about how to obtain this documentation.

- One brief essay (typed, double-spaced, and in paragraph form)
  
  - Describe an obstacle you previously encountered in school and how you were able to overcome it. What personal strengths did you use to overcome that obstacle? What do you think your biggest obstacle(s) will be in school this year, and how will you approach these obstacle(s)? (1-2 pages).
PERSONAL DETAILS

First Name: ___________________________  Last Name: ___________________________

Any other name that you go by: ___________________________

Phone: ___________________________  E-Mail: ___________________________

Best way to contact you:  
☐ Phone  ☐ E-mail  ☐ Text

Current Address: ___________________________

City ___________________________  State ________  ZIP ___________________________

Date of Birth: ___________________________  Current Age: ___________________________

Dates in foster care: ___________________________

Who is/was your most recent caseworker? From which county?

Phone Number: ___________________________  E-Mail: ___________________________

Do you have a Chafee worker? If yes, Chafee worker name and county:

Phone Number: ___________________________  E-Mail: ___________________________

Emergency Contact:

Phone Number: ___________________________  E-Mail: ___________________________

How did you hear about Forward Steps?

Have you applied for this scholarship in the past?  
☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Not sure
Which semester are you applying for?  
☐ Fall 2023  ☐ Spring 2024

Are you a current college student, or have you completed any college courses in the past?  
☐ Yes  ☐ No

College you plan to attend (if you are unsure, list your top 3 choices):

Are you planning on attending school full-time or part-time?  
☐ Full-time  ☐ Part-time

How many credits are you planning to enroll in (a typical class is 3 credits)?

What do you plan to study?

Are you currently employed?  
☐ Yes  ☐ No

List any activities in which you have participated that demonstrate community involvement and/or leadership (volunteering, clubs, extracurricular activities, work, sports, music, youth groups, caring for family members, etc.)

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<th>Date (from-to)</th>
<th>Time Commitment: Hours per week and week per year</th>
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List any honors, awards, or other special recognition you have received.

APPLICATION SIGNATURE

Please read the following statement carefully before signing: Our review committee, which may include members outside of our organization, will review eligible packets, and their decisions will be communicated with applicants. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed. By signing below, I certify that I understand this information, and I certify that all of the information in this application is accurate.

Signature ___________________________  Date ____________
ELIGIBILITY CHECKLIST

All of the following must be met in order to be eligible to apply to the Guardian Scholars Program:

☐ Student is enrolling or currently enrolled in a public Colorado university, college, certificate or trade program
  o *At this time, the Guardian Scholars program is not able to consider applications from students at private institutions or institutions outside of Colorado.

☐ Student has verifiable experience in the foster care system
  o *A signed “Confirmation of Foster Care Dependency Form” is required with submission of this application. More information about this form can be found here. Please contact us if you have any questions about obtaining this.

☐ The student has not been adopted.
  o *At this time, the Guardian Scholars program is not able to consider applications from students that have been adopted.

☐ If the student is a first-time applicant, they must apply before their 26th birthday.

☐ Student qualifies or will qualify for the Federal Pell Grant, through FASFA.
  o *More information about applying to the Pell Grant can be found here.