DELAWARE · STATE AID REFERENCE

Delaware State Aid Cheat Sheet (2027-2028)

A two-page reference for counselors and families. Free to copy, print, and share.

Delaware runs its money through two doors that do not talk to each other. **SEED** and **Inspire**, the tuition-free programs, are confirmed by the colleges from the admission file and the FAFSA and have no state deadline. The nine smaller state scholarships run through the **Delaware Higher Education Office (DHEO) portal**, which opens December 1 and closes February 26 and May 17. Since 2021, Inspire is full tuition (not $3,000), SEED at Delaware Tech is open at any age, and both can carry into junior year or graduate school. Verified October 2026.

The Programs at a Glance

Program	What it pays and who qualifies
SEED, Delaware Tech (tuition-free, any age)	Full tuition after other grants for up to 10 semesters: associate degree, diploma, certificate, bachelor's, or workforce program. Delaware resident, Delaware high school graduate or GED, **2.5 GPA or 80%** (no GPA for workforce certificates; below-2.5 pathway exists), no violent felony, FAFSA and all non-loan aid accepted. Adults 25+ need five years of residency. Course fees and books not covered.
SEED, UD Flex Pathway (tuition-free, direct from high school)	Full tuition for the associate degree in SEED-eligible Flex programs at Wilmington, Dover, and Georgetown, plus up to **two semesters of junior year at Newark**. 2.5 GPA, Delaware resident, enter directly from high school, FAFSA. UD applies it only after the final transcript arrives. FAFSA priority April 1. Winter or summer terms by request through askSFS; the Newark semesters are fall and spring.
Inspire, Delaware State (tuition-free, four years)	**Full in-state tuition** ($10,169 in 2026-27) after other grants, for 8 consecutive fall and spring semesters. Delaware high school graduate, **2.75 GPA or 80%**, no felony, enroll full-time the fall right after graduation, FAFSA. Renews on 24 credits a year, 2.75, and **10 service hours each semester**. Leftover semesters usable for a DSU graduate degree within 10 years.
First State Promise, UD Newark (UD's own, income-based)	Tuition covered for Delaware freshmen with family income under **$75,000**; tuition, fees, standard housing and food under **$35,000**; partial grants above $75,000. No application beyond admission and a yearly FAFSA. Not on the DHEO page because UD runs it.
Scholarship Incentive Program (DHEO, need-based)	**$1,000 a year**, about 750 students, up to five awards. Reapply every year. Full-time at a Delaware college, or out of state in a degree not offered at UD, DSU, or Delaware Tech. Portal and FAFSA by May 17.
Barnes, Hebner, Holloway (DHEO, merit)	**Barnes** (UD) and **Holloway** (DSU): full tuition, fees, room, board, and books, one student each per year, 3.0 GPA, need, 1290 SAT (Barnes) or 1000 SAT (Holloway). **Hebner**: $1,250 a year, about 35 students, 3.0 and 1290 SAT, usable at any accredited college in or out of state, no FAFSA. All three: portal by February 26, renew three years at a 3.0.
Career-based and Educator Support (DHEO, need plus major)	Amount set each year from funding. Delaware residents with need in a bachelor's program at a Delaware college in a listed high-need major (nursing, computer science, accounting, finance, IT, data science, business concentrations) or a teacher shortage area (special education, math, science, world language, bilingual). Portal and FAFSA by May 17.
Also worth knowing	**Educational Benefits for Children of Deceased Veterans and Others**: tuition and fees up to four years for ages 16 to 24 whose parent died in military, state police, or DelDOT highway service; portal by May 17. **Academic Common Market**: in-state tuition at Southern public universities for degrees UD and DSU do not offer.

Deadlines to Post on Your Wall

Program	Deadline (2027-28 cycle)	Where it's submitted
UD Newark admission	November 1 early action and Honors; January 15 regular priority	Common App or Coalition + FAFSA
Barnes, Hebner, Holloway	February 26, 2027, 4:30 p.m. Opens December 1.	DHEO portal + FAFSA
SEED application, Delaware Tech	April 15 priority; FAFSA June 1; final transcript June 30	Campus financial aid office + admission application
Scholarship Incentive, Career, Educator, Veterans' dependents	May 17, 2027, 4:30 p.m. Opens December 1.	DHEO portal + FAFSA
UD Flex Pathway admission (SEED)	June 1 priority, then space-available	UD Online Application + FAFSA
Inspire acceptance	June 15, 2027 (offers November 2 through May 1)	DSU admission + FAFSA, school code 001428

SEED and Inspire have no state deadline, which is why families assume nothing in Delaware does. The DHEO portal does not accept late files. Delaware Tech's steps page still says the FAFSA opens January 1; it opens October 1.

The Rules That Trip Families Up

- **The state pays last.** SEED and Inspire cover only the tuition left after Pell and every other grant, and the student must accept all non-loan aid first. A Pell-eligible student can see the state pay $0 while the tuition line still reads zero. That is not a denial.
- **No FAFSA, no award, at any income.** Both statutes require the FAFSA. Middle-income families who skip it lose a full-tuition scholarship they had already earned.
- **24 credits a year, two semesters every year.** The GPA (2.5 SEED, 2.75 Inspire) is checked at the end of the first year, then held. Associate degree students may take one year off; the semester clock does not pause.
- **Inspire is for the fall right after graduation only**, with deferrals for military, full-time volunteer service, or documented medical reasons. Transfers and gap-year students are not eligible.
- **The Delaware Tech admission form does not trigger SEED.** The SEED Scholarship application is a separate step to the campus financial aid office, and the award cannot post until the final transcript shows the 2.5.

SEED and Inspire: Check These Things Early

1. Which door is your student eligible for?

- **2.5 cumulative GPA or 80%** on the final transcript opens SEED: Delaware Tech (any program, any age) or UD's Flex Pathway associate programs (direct from high school). Workforce certificates at Delaware Tech have no GPA line.
- **2.75 cumulative GPA or 80%** opens Inspire at Delaware State: full in-state tuition for eight semesters, no test score in the statute.
- Just under the line? The law lets the family ask the college to **recalculate** on the state conversion table (A 4.0, B 3.0, C 2.0, D 1.0). Homeschool graduates qualify under each college's equivalency rule. Former foster youth (16 to 18) are exempt from the GPA and the semester caps.

2. Did the family file the FAFSA? It is the eligibility test, not a need test. Every program on this sheet is rebuilt from it every year.

3. Is the student headed to Newark with a 2.75 to 3.4? UD's own merit is a partial award against $15,740 in tuition. Inspire at Delaware State and the Flex-to-Newark route are tuition-free. Run both numbers before the deposit.

What tuition-free is worth (2026-27 published tuition; 2027-28 will be somewhat higher)

Door	GPA line	Tuition covered	Not covered
SEED at Delaware Tech	2.5	$2,351.25 a semester at 15+ credits ($156.75 per credit)	About $370 a year in fees, course fees, books
SEED at UD Flex Pathway	2.5	$5,042 a year (2025-26 rate)	About $850 in fees, books, transportation
SEED carried into UD Newark	2.5 maintained	$15,740 a year, up to two semesters	$2,550 fees, $9,286 housing, $7,328 food
Inspire at Delaware State	2.75	$10,169 a year, eight semesters	$1,620 fees, $1,200 insurance (waivable), housing from $8,307, required freshman 19-meal plan $5,667

Counselor Calendar: What to Tell Students When

When	What has to happen
Junior year	Pull the cumulative GPA and compare it to 2.5 and 2.75. This is the year the doors get decided. A 2.6 is one strong semester from Inspire.
October to November, senior year	FSA IDs for parent and student, then the FAFSA. Apply to every Delaware college on the list; for SEED and Inspire, the admission application is the scholarship application. UD early action and Honors by November 1.
December 1	DHEO portal opens. Create the student account with a personal email; have the activities list and intended major ready.
January 15 to February 26	UD regular priority January 15. Barnes, Hebner, and Holloway close February 26 at 4:30 p.m. File all three; it is one form.
April 15 to June 1	Delaware Tech SEED application April 15. Scholarship Incentive, career, and educator awards May 17. Delaware Tech FAFSA and UD Flex priority June 1. Inspire acceptance June 15.
June 30	Final transcript to Delaware Tech financial aid (and to UD). No transcript, no SEED on the fall bill. Delaware Tech notices go out after July 16.
Every college year	New FAFSA in October. 12+ credits each fall and spring. Inspire: 10 service hours per semester. Reapply for Scholarship Incentive by May 17. Ask before dropping a class.

Three Mistakes That Cost Delaware Students Money

- **Believing Inspire is $3,000.** It has been full in-state tuition since 2021-22, about $10,169 a year. Families who trust an old handout choose a more expensive school over a $7,000-a-year misunderstanding.
- **Reading $0 as a rejection.** Pell paid first, as the statute requires. The family stops filing the FAFSA the following fall, and then the award really is gone.
- **Missing the February 26 portal deadline.** Two of Delaware's three full rides and the only portable state award close that day, and nothing about SEED or Inspire warns you it exists.

The pays-last rule

Delaware's tuition-free programs are written as last-dollar grants: the state pays the tuition left after Pell, DHEO scholarships, and the college's own grants, and the student must apply for and accept every one of them (loans excepted). The result is two students at the same college with the same zero tuition bill and very different state numbers on the letter. Teach families to read the *tuition owed* line, not the SEED or Inspire line. And because the award is locked to tuition, it can never produce a refund toward housing. Only First State Promise (under $35,000), Barnes, Holloway, DSU's Presidential, and UD's du Pont Scholars reach a dorm.

Free Resources: No Account, No Cost, No Data Collection

DHEO state scholarships, deadlines, and the portal link	scholarships.delawarestudentsuccess.org/state-scholarships-for-de-residents
Delaware Tech SEED steps and dates	dtcc.edu/seed
UD Flex Pathway and SEED	udel.edu/apply (Financing Your Degree)
Delaware State Inspire	desu.edu/inspire
Our full Delaware guide, with worked examples	collegereadyparent.org/delaware
Scholarships at 400+ colleges, all 50 states	collegereadyparent.org/college-scholarships

Produced by CollegeReadyParent.org, an independent, parent-built resource. No paywall, no accounts, no lead forms, no student data collection. Counselors and educators: you may freely copy, print, and distribute this sheet. Questions or corrections: leo@collegereadyparent.org. Verified against the Delaware Higher Education Office, Title 14 of the Delaware Code, Delaware Tech, the University of Delaware, and Delaware State University in October 2026. Tuition figures are 2026-27 published rates (UD Flex 2025-26). Rules change and DHEO funding is set each July 1; confirm details with the college financial aid office before making financial decisions.