WEST VIRGINIA · STATE AID REFERENCE

West Virginia State Aid: Class of 2027

PROMISE, the Higher Education Grant, WV Invests, and the March 1 date that ties them together

West Virginia aid comes through two front doors: the **FAFSA** (studentaid.gov), which is the whole application for the Higher Education Grant, and the state's site **cfwv.com**, where students file the PROMISE application in a WVSAM account plus the separate WV Invests, Underwood-Smith and WV STEM applications. **What changed in 2026:** PROMISE dropped its section-score minimums, removed science from the ACT, and dropped the core-course GPA for the Class of 2027. HB 5212 opened the Higher Education Grant to part-time students and capped WV Invests at six semesters.

The Programs at a Glance

Program	What it pays and who qualifies
PROMISE Scholarship	$5,500 a year or tuition and mandatory fees, whichever is less. 3.0 overall GPA plus 21 ACT (English, reading, math) or 1080 SAT, superscores allowed. 12 months WV residency. No income test. Tuition and fees only.
WV Higher Education Grant	Need-based; HEPC estimated $3,400 for 2026-27 (no 2027-28 figure yet). 2.0 GPA, admission, financial need, 12 months residency. Full-time or part-time. Never more than tuition and required fees. Usable at participating WV and PA colleges.
WV Invests Grant	Last-dollar: tuition, mandatory and approved program fees left after other grants, for approved certificate and associate programs. 6+ credit hours a semester, 2.0 GPA, up to 6 semesters. Repay if living outside WV within 2 years after finishing or leaving.
Underwood-Smith Teaching Scholars	Up to $10,000 a year for 4 years, up to 25 students a year, for future math, science, elementary or special education teachers. Five years of teaching in a WV public school or repay.
WV STEM Scholarship	Up to $3,000 a year for engineering, science and technology students. One year of WV STEM work per year received.
Future Workforce Grant	Up to $2,000 for short certificate or credential programs in demand fields. Need-based, rolling from July 1, first come, first served. Not combinable with the Higher Education Grant.

Deadlines to Post on Your Wall

Date	What is due	Notes
Now	FSA IDs, 2027-28 FAFSA, WVSAM account, PROMISE application	All open as of October 2026
March 1, 2027	PROMISE application + FAFSA; Underwood-Smith preliminary; WV STEM	Miss it and PROMISE is spring-only at best
April 15, 2027	FAFSA for the Higher Education Grant; WV Invests priority date	The FAFSA is the grant application
June 2027 / July 2027	Last SAT / last ACT that count for PROMISE	Scores attach to the application on file
July 1, 2027	Future Workforce Grant rolling window opens	First come, first served

The Rules That Trip Families Up

- **PROMISE needs two applications.** The FAFSA alone is not a PROMISE application. File both in the state portal and at studentaid.gov by March 1.
- **The old four-section rule is gone.** For the Class of 2027, a 21 ACT composite from English, reading and math is enough. Science does not count, and no section has a minimum.
- **Apply before the score.** Students without a 21 yet should still file by March 1. ACT scores count through July 2027, SAT through June 2027.
- **Send individual score reports** to ACT code 4539 or SAT code 3456, not a superscore report. The state builds the superscore itself.
- **The GPA has to hold.** A sixth- or seventh-semester 3.0 can qualify, but the award is revoked if the eighth-semester GPA drops below 3.0.

PROMISE: Check These Things Early

- **GPA:** 3.0 overall on a 4.0 scale, county grading policy, weighted grades allowed. No separate core GPA for the Class of 2027.
- **Test:** 21 ACT composite (English, reading, math) or 1080 SAT. Superscores combine dates within one test; ACT and SAT cannot be mixed.
- **Residency:** student and FAFSA parent in West Virginia 12 straight months before March 1, 2027; graduate from a WV high school with at least half the credits earned in WV.
- **Homeschool:** Grade Verification Form, transcript, and county letter showing homeschool registration in 11th and 12th grade.
- **Enrollment:** full-time, first-year student in the first term after selection; apply within two years of graduation.

PROMISE for 2027-28	Rule
Award	$5,500 or tuition and mandatory fees, whichever is less. Not housing, meals, books or program fees
Length	8 semesters for a bachelor's degree; 4 semesters for an associate degree
Renewal	2.75 college GPA and 30 earned credit hours each academic year (fall through summer)
If lost	Second Chance Promise Renewal, once. Catch-up terms count against the 8 semesters
Stacking	Pell counts first, PROMISE next, then the Higher Education Grant or WV Invests. Total aid cannot exceed cost of attendance

Counselor Calendar: What to Tell Students When

When	Tell students
October to December	Make FSA IDs and a WVSAM account. File the FAFSA and the PROMISE application now, score or no score.
January to February	Check every senior's PROMISE status. Below 21? Book a spring ACT or SAT. Future teachers: finish Underwood-Smith.
March 1	Hard deadline: PROMISE application, FAFSA, Underwood-Smith preliminary, WV STEM.
March to April	No FAFSA yet? It still counts for the Higher Education Grant through April 15. CTC-bound? File WV Invests by April 15.
May to July	Final GPA must hold at 3.0. Last SAT in June, last ACT in July. Before college: plan a 30-hour year.

Three Mistakes That Cost West Virginia Students Money

- **Planning a gap year.** Initial PROMISE awards go to full-time first-year students who enroll the first term after selection. Ask the state before deferring.
- **Treating April 15 as the FAFSA deadline.** That date is for the need-based grant. For PROMISE, the FAFSA is due March 1.
- **Low dual credit grades.** Every college grade from high school counts in the renewal GPA, but those hours do not count toward the 30.

The 30-Hour Year

Colleges call 12 hours a semester full-time. PROMISE wants **30 earned hours a year**, so a student on a 12 + 12 schedule finishes the year at 24 and loses the award. Summer can close the gap, but PROMISE does not pay for summer catch-up, and Second Chance renewal works only once. Plan 15 + 15.

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

Resource	Where
Full West Virginia guide (this sheet, expanded)	collegereadyparent.org/west-virginia/#cheat-sheet
State aid help line and official rules	(877) 987-7664 · promise@wvhepc.edu · wvinvests@wvctcs.edu · cfwv.com
FAFSA and FSA IDs	studentaid.gov

Independent and free. No paywall, no accounts, no lead forms, no student data collection. **Counselors and educators: you may freely copy, print, and distribute this sheet.** Corrections: leo@collegereadyparent.org. Verified October 29, 2026 against WVHEPC, CFWV, state rules and HB 5212. Pending: the 2027-28 grant amount and WV Invests drug-screening and service-hour rules. Rules change; confirm on cfwv.com before making financial decisions. Not legal or financial advice.