



District of Columbia
Office of the State Superintendent of Education

DC FUTURES PROGRAM APPLICANT HANDBOOK

Spring/Summer 2023 Award Period

Oct. 26, 2022

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Introduction

This Applicant Handbook offers information for individuals who are invited to apply to the DC Futures Program (DC Futures). It includes sections on [applicant eligibility requirements](#), the [application process](#), [student participant responsibilities](#), and points of contact.

Once you have reviewed the handbook, if you have additional questions about the DC Futures program, please contact Melanie Fleming at Melanie.Fleming@dc.gov or (202) 727-2824. Your input will help the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) improve information offered to future applicants.

What is DC Futures?

DC Futures is an application-based program that offers DC residents a variety of supports to ensure their success at the university of their choice - **DC Futures is SO much more than a scholarship.**



A Scholarship – all DC Futures participants are eligible for a last-dollar scholarship of up to \$8,000 a year to attend one of three approved local universities if they major in specific program areas or majors. Participants in spring/summer award periods will be eligible for up to \$4,000.

AND



College Coaching – all DC Futures participants are required to participate in a college coaching program – with either designated DC Futures College Coaching providers or an approved program such as DC Public Schools (DCPS) Persists. This support comes with a coaching stipend of up to \$125 per month, separate from any scholarship award.



Access to additional funds – DC Futures recipients who enroll in their university are eligible to request up to \$2,000 annually in emergency funds for those expenses that come up on a rainy day. DC Futures recipients are also eligible to request up to \$1,500 one-time for prior year tuition payments. Both types of requests will be based on need and fund availability and will be managed by the recipient’s university.

Whether you are interested the scholarship, coaching, or career advice – explore the sections below, determine if you are eligible for the DC Futures program, and then apply!

Please note: Participants in partial award periods (e.g., spring/summer 2023) will not be eligible for the maximum stipend amount, since the number of months with coaching participation will be fewer than those of a participant in the full academic year. For example, a full academic year – fall, spring, summer would include up to twelve months of coaching stipends totaling \$1,500 (12 months at \$125 per month). Participants who begin coaching in January for spring/summer could receive up to \$875 for their participation (seven months at \$125 per month). Regardless of time period, the monthly stipend is based on participation and disbursement is managed by the designated DC Futures College Coaching providers.

Eligibility Requirements

- ✓ **You have been a resident of the District of Columbia for the last 12 months**

Note: For most students younger than age 24, your residency is determined by your parents. See [here](#) for exceptions.

- ✓ **You are accepted or enrolled part- or full-time at one of the following eligible universities**

The Catholic University of America
Trinity Washington University
University of the District of Columbia – Community College
University of the District of Columbia

- ✓ **You are seeking your first associate or bachelor’s degree**

Individuals who have previously received a bachelor’s degree are not eligible to apply for the DC Futures program. Individuals who hold an associate or bachelor’s degree that is not recognized in the US are eligible to participate in this program.

- ✓ **You are majoring in a high-demand field**

A list of eligible majors is available on the [OSSE website](#). Please make sure you are reviewing the most recent version.

- ✓ **You can demonstrate financial need based on annual household income**

Your household income aligns with this table. For families/households with more than eight persons, add \$18,160 for each additional person.

Household Size	Maximum Annual Income
3 or fewer	\$100,000
4	\$106,000
5	\$124,160
6	\$142,320
7	\$160,480
8	\$178,640

Applicants will be asked to provide documentation to verify eligibility (see application for additional details). All enrollment information will be confirmed with the applicant’s university prior to awards being disbursed.

If you have questions about eligibility, please contact Melanie Fleming at Melanie.Fleming@dc.gov or (202) 727-2824.

Renewal Criteria

Applicants seeking funding in subsequent years are expected to meet the following program participation terms. You will remain eligible for DC futures if:

- ✓ **You continue to meet eligibility requirements detailed above**

- ✓ **You participate regularly in required College Coaching**

DC Futures participants will be required to participate in college coaching with a designated coaching provider assigned by OSSE, unless you are already in an approved college coaching program (see below). Either option will help you navigate structural and academic barriers to college persistence and completion and can help you plan for your future career. If you don't engage with your coach, your eligibility for future DC Futures participation is jeopardized.

- ✓ **You are on track to earn your degree**

As a DC Futures participant you are expected to maintain satisfactory academic progress (SAP) as determined by the university you attend, as well as satisfy the minimum credit requirements outlined below each semester in the award year/period.

Generally, this means a part-time student would enroll in at least six credits in the fall semester and at least six credits in the spring semester, and a full-time student would enroll in at least 12 credits in the fall semester and 12 credits in the spring semester.

Please note: For the spring/summer 2023 award period, a part-time student would enroll in at least six credits in spring 2023, while a full-time student would enroll in at least 12 credits in spring 2023.

- ✓ **Complete annual application to provide updated information and documentation**

The application for the spring/summer 2023 award period will open in October 2022, and applicants from the pilot period who did not apply for the 2022-23 award period and believe they are eligible may reapply.

Application Process & Documents

The DC Futures program application is online. Before you create an account and complete that application, it is helpful to take care of a few things first.

1. Before you apply

- ✓ Complete the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid](#) (FAFSA) for the 2022-23 school year, if eligible and get a copy of your Student Aid Report (SAR).
- ✓ Document DC residency and financial need by:
 - Use the table below to identify the documents you will need to provide (if you choose this option, please provide each document you need in one of the following formats: .doc, .docx, .pdf, .jpeg)
 - Note: Partial award period applicants (e.g., spring/summer 2023) will not be required to have a completed Mayor’s Scholars Undergraduate Program (MSUP) or DC Tuition Assistance Grant (DCTAG) applications on-file. However, if they do have an application on-file that was deemed eligible, the applicant can indicate this and will not have to upload additional documents.

Please choose one from Column A **AND** one from Column B:

Column A	Column B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2021 Certified D-40 Tax Return from the DC Office of Tax & Revenue • 2021 Certified D-40 Tax Extension with 2020 Certified D-40 Tax Return from the DC Office of Tax & Revenue • 2021 Filed/Processed D-40 Tax Return (signed & dated by the parent/legal guardian) • 2021 Filed/Processed D-40 Tax Extension (FR-127) with 2020 Filed/Processed D-40 Tax Return (signed & dated by the parent/legal guardian) • 12-month (January-December 2021) Child Support Statement • 12-month (January-December 2021) Retirement/Annuity Statement • 12-month (January-December 2021) Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) or Social Security Income (SSI) • 12-month (January-December 2021) TANF/SNAP/Food Stamp Statement or ‘TANF/SNAP Authorization Request’ Form • 12-month (January-December 2021) Unemployment Benefits or Workers’ Compensation Disability • Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Documentation of Independent Student Status (dated for 2022) • Ward of the Court Letter (dated for 2022) 	<p><i>(These documents may be no older than 45 days, and must include parent/legal guardian’s name, date, and address)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bank or Mortgage Statement (Name, Date and Address Section) • Pay Stub (Name, Date and Address Section) • Utility Bill (gas, water, cable, electric, land line phone) – no cell phone bills will be accepted • Utility Letter (from landlord or on rental office letterhead, stating utilities are included in rent)

2. Complete DC Futures online application

To complete the application, please:

- ✓ Create an account.
- ✓ Submit your personal information (name, contact information, parent/guardian information, if applicable) as well as planned university enrollment information through the online scholarship application.
- ✓ Provide the documents that show you meet the residency, academic, and financial requirements (applicants are expected to submit all documents electronically and will only be able to submit documents in-person in the case of an extenuating circumstance), or indicate they were already included in your DCTAG or MSUP application that was deemed eligible for 2022-23.
- ✓ Provide permission for OSSE to share relevant data with DC Futures partners to make sure you receive services in an efficient manner.
- ✓ Look for a confirmation email stating that your application is complete.

For application support, please contact Melanie Fleming at Melanie.Fleming@dc.gov or (202) 727-2824.

Application Timeline

All applications (including all supporting documents) must be submitted before the appropriate deadline.

The spring/summer 2023 application will open in October 2022 and funds will begin being released the following spring semester (on or after January 2023). For example, if you apply in October 2022 and are eligible, you will receive the scholarship and other supports in the spring and summer semesters of the 2022-23 school year.

All applicants will be notified of their program eligibility via email before Jan. 15, 2023 (this includes notification of denial because of ineligibility for any reason).

Applicants on the waitlist who are granted an award will be notified via email.

OSSE will work with your university to process your scholarship in a timely manner. The actual scholarship amount will be determined by your university and funds may not be disbursed if your tuition and fees will be covered by other funding sources (e.g., Pell Grant, other scholarships, etc.). **Please note: If your tuition and fees are covered by other sources, you are STILL eligible for other components of this program including coaching and coaching stipends, as well as emergency funds.**

DC Futures Award Details

DC Futures is so much more than a scholarship. Scholarships and supports for spring/summer 2023 will begin in spring 2023 and continue through summer 2023.

This section provides additional information on [DC Futures College Coaching – substitutions](#) and the [coaching stipend](#), [scholarship amounts](#), [costs covered by the scholarship](#), [program time limits](#), [student responsibilities](#), [transfers](#), and [changes in majors](#).

DC Futures College Coaching & Stipend

You will be required to participate in college coaching with a designated DC Futures College Coaching provider assigned by OSSE, unless you are already in an approved college coaching program (see [below](#)). This provider will help you navigate structural and academic burdens to college persistence and completion and can help you plan for your future career. If you don't engage with appropriate coaching, your eligibility for future DC Futures scholarships and supports will be jeopardized.

DC Futures College Coaching Substitutions

Participants who are also DCPS Persists participants may apply to substitute their DCPS Persists coach in place of their DC Futures coach. To request a substitution, you must submit a substitution form to your DC Futures Coaching provider. Unless you submit a substitution form and that request is approved, you are required to participate with your designated DC Futures College Coaching provider.

If your substitution is approved, you are STILL eligible for other elements of this program including scholarship funds, emergency fund access, and coaching stipends.

DC Futures College Coaching Stipends

DC Futures College Coaching providers also provide the program's participation incentives. Even if your substitution is approved, your DC Futures College Coaching provider will manage the coaching stipend.

The coaching stipend will be administrated by your designated DC Futures College Coaching provider on a monthly basis, depending on engagement. To receive the stipend, you must be engaged at least monthly with your provider. Each provider may have their own process for disbursing these funds.

Degree Type	Annual Stipend Cap	Lifetime Stipend Cap
Associate or two-year degree	\$1,500	\$6,000
Bachelor's or four-year degree	\$1,500	\$9,000

The stipend is intended to be divided evenly by the months in an academic year – fall, spring, summer – over twelve months. So, participants in partial award periods (e.g., spring/summer 2023) will not be eligible for the maximum stipend amount, since the number of months with coaching participation will be fewer than those of a participant in the full academic year.

For example, a full academic year – fall, spring, summer would include up to twelve months of coaching stipends totaling \$1,500 (12 months at \$125 per month). Participants who begin coaching in January for spring/summer could receive up to \$875 for their participation (seven months at \$125 per month). Regardless of time period, the monthly stipend is based on participation and disbursement is managed by the designated DC Futures College Coaching providers.

DC Futures Emergency Funds

Emergency funds may be applied towards unexpected expenses related to cost of attendance (such as food, housing, course materials, technology, healthcare, and childcare). These funds are capped at \$2,000 annually regardless of your program type (two- or four-year degree) or award period.

If you apply for this funding, you will be expected to document the expense and explanation of why it was unexpected. Each partner university will determine eligibility, describe the request process for their participating students, and disburse funds as available based on materials provided. College coaching providers should be able to help you access this information as needed.

In addition to annual emergency funds students can apply to their partner university to receive one-time funds to pay a previous year's unpaid balance at another college or university. These funds are intended to enable DC Futures participants to access transcripts and credits that can be applied to their current program. Students can receive up to \$1,500 in total for these purposes, while funds last. This amount can be applied across multiple institutions. Students will be required to submit documents demonstrating their need in order to access these funds, based on the process outlined by their university.

DC Futures Scholarship

Once you meet eligibility requirements for the DC Futures program, you may receive a last dollar scholarship on a first-come, first-served basis and as outlined under the program's priorities, which are subject to change. OSSE reserves the right to make final funding determinations based on available funds. Eligible applicants who are not granted funding because of funding restrictions or space in a designated DC Futures College Coaching program will be placed on a waitlist managed by OSSE. Applicants on the waitlist will be notified via email if an award becomes available.

Maximum Scholarship Amounts

DC Futures provides funding to participants pursuing their first associate degree or their first bachelor’s degrees as detailed below:

Degree Type	Semester Award Cap*	Annual Award Cap ¹	Lifetime Award Cap
Associate or two-year degree	\$4,000	\$8,000	\$32,000
Bachelor’s or four-year degree	\$4,000	\$8,000	\$48,000
*Spring/summer award periods will follow semester award caps, and any amount received will count toward their lifetime award cap.			

The annual scholarship award caps include tuition and fees for participants enrolled in coursework during the fall, spring, winter, and/or summer semester of a given academic year. Funding may cover developmental and remedial courses. Only summer tuition for courses taken at the student’s home institution (one of the three eligible institutions) may be funded by these remaining funds.

If you transfer from an associate degree program to a bachelor’s degree program, award caps (both annual and lifetime) will reflect the bachelor’s caps.

Costs Covered by the DC Futures Scholarship

The award will pay for tuition and fees, until maximum award amount is reached.

OSSE will provide funding directly to your university, to cover tuition and fee costs, and you will not receive a reimbursement or overage check from this funding. Your university will be required to submit a payment request each semester, with detailed cost breakdown. OSSE will communicate with the financial aid office at your university with this deadline and payment request information.

DC Futures Program Time Limit

No DC Futures recipient may participate in the program for more than six years if pursuing a bachelor’s degree or three years if pursuing an associate degree (the time limit represents years of receiving awards not the time since the first award was received). Partial award periods (beginning with spring/summer 2023) will be counted towards the program time limit. For participants who earn an associate degree and choose to pursue a bachelor’s, OSSE will subtract the total received from the new maximum (bachelor’s level).

¹ Participants awarded in a partial award period (e.g., spring/summer 2023) will not be eligible to receive the full annual award cap – rather they may receive the semester award cap for the spring, and any remainder for the summer semester.

Student Participant Responsibilities

The DC Futures program includes a coaching component as well as the scholarships. As you apply for the program each year, please review these responsibilities.

1. Notify OSSE whether you will accept or reject the program.

Applicants have two weeks to notify OSSE via email if they will accept or deny the award and the terms of the program.

2. Take a copy of your DC Futures program award letter to your university financial aid office as soon as possible, so it can be applied to your invoice. You may want to keep the original for your records.

Please note: It is the participant's responsibility to work with their university to ensure payment requests are submitted in a timely manner. Untimely or improperly submitted payment requests may prevent an eligible participant from receiving DC Futures funding or from receiving funding in a timely fashion.

3. Stay focused on your academic goals. Remember, DC Futures participation is conditional and may be canceled at any time if eligibility or program requirements are not met.

Participants who joined the spring and summer 2023 award period must enroll in a minimum of six credits for the term of the award (at least six credits for spring semester) if enrolled part-time and a minimum of 12 credits if enrolled full-time (students may choose to distribute the 12 credits across spring and summer). Participants who join in fall 2022 must enroll in a minimum of 12 credits per semester (fall and spring) if enrolled full-time.

If your circumstances vary, please contact Melanie.Fleming@dc.gov or (202) 727-2824.

4. Stay engaged with the DC Futures College Coaching provider you are assigned to each year.

Your coach is there to help support you throughout your college journey. If you do not engage with your designated DC Futures College Coaching provider, your eligibility for future DC Futures scholarships and supports (scholarship funds, coaching stipends, and emergency fund access) will be jeopardized.

Participants granted a DCPS Persists substitution are still expected to engage with their approved college coaching program.

Stipends are dependent upon monthly participation.

5. If you need help – coaching stipends or academic support – reach out to your designated DC Futures College Coaching provider.

DC Futures College Coaching providers manage the coaching stipends. Even if you have approved substitutions, your DC Futures College Coaching provider will manage the stipend.

The main goal is to complete your degree and your coach can help address any challenges that come your way.

6. Notify your DC Futures College Coaching provider and the DC Futures Program Manager if there is any change in your enrollment – such as associate to bachelor’s, change in major, transfer to another college or university, or academic withdrawal.

There are forms for most circumstances and the program staff’s main goal is to support you so that you can complete your degree. If a participant withdraws from their postsecondary enrollment entirely, they should notify DC Futures Program Manager Melanie Fleming at Melanie.Fleming@dc.gov or (202) 727-2824 as well as their approved DC Futures coach. The program manager, coaching staff, and PCE assistant superintendent will consider the student’s coaching participation and any events relative to the academic withdrawal to determine whether the student may continue their participation in DC Futures coaching services.

The coach will notify the participant of their status with the program, within 30 days receiving the withdrawal notification.

Transfers and Withdrawals

Transfers

While participating in DC Futures, there are several considerations around transfers that might be relevant to you.

DC Futures requires enrollment at one of the three eligible universities. If you transfer between semesters, you should notify Melanie Fleming at Melanie.Fleming@dc.gov or (202) 727-2824.

Regardless of timing, if you are transferring to one of the other DC Futures eligible universities, you will provide a financial aid letter from your new university (also called a receiving institution). However, if you are transferring to a college or university that is not eligible for DC Futures, you are no longer eligible for DC Futures and should contact Melanie Fleming at Melanie.Fleming@dc.gov or (202) 727-2824 to formally withdraw from the program.

DC Futures staff will also have an opportunity to review for potential transfer students at each university upon receiving the next semester’s invoice. If a transfer student is inaccurately listed on the university’s invoice, DC Futures staff will remove that student prior to disbursement.

If you transfer from an associate degree program to a bachelor's degree program, award caps (both annual and lifetime), as well as award time limits, will reflect the highest limits and caps (bachelor's level). For additional information, review the section on [Maximum Scholarship Amounts and Time Limits](#).

Withdrawals

If a participant withdraws from their postsecondary enrollment entirely, they should notify DC Futures Program Manager Melanie Fleming at Melanie.Fleming@dc.gov or (202) 727-2824 as well as their approved DC Futures coach. The program manager, coaching staff, and PCE assistant superintendent will consider the student's coaching participation and any events relative to the academic withdrawal to determine whether the student may continue their participation in DC Futures coaching services.

The coach will notify the participant of their status with the program, within 30 days of receiving the withdrawal notification.

Changes in Major or Program of Study

Applicants will be asked to indicate their intent to pursue a major associated with a high-demand field when applying for DC Futures (see [Academic Requirements](#)). Your enrollment in an approved program for the current year will be verified by your university after you apply. OSSE will update approved fields and related programs annually. You may transfer between approved programs without penalty.

DC Futures offers support to applicants pursuing majors on the approved list. If you change to a major not on this list, you will no longer be eligible for DC Futures programming and you should contact Melanie Fleming at Melanie.Fleming@dc.gov or (202) 727-2824 to formally withdraw from the program.

If an eligible major is removed from the list of approved programs after your first award year, participants remain eligible if the following criteria are met:

- You remain enrolled in the **same university, program, and major**.
- You apply for DC Futures each consecutive year.
- You continue to meet all other eligibility criteria.

Student Participant Reconsideration Process

If you apply and the DC Futures Program staff determine you are ineligible, you may request that DC Futures reconsider the decision by sending a letter stating the reason(s) you believe you were eligible for the funding. In addition to the letter, you should include all supporting documentation in your appeal packet. All reconsideration requests must be submitted via email or regular mail within 15 business days from the date of the ineligibility email that included the notification letter.

A designated OSSE team will review the documentation and provide you with a written response documenting the results of the reconsideration process via email within 10 business days of an appeal being received. The results of the reconsideration process are final.

Reconsideration request packets (letter and supporting documentation) must be sent to the DC Futures program manager (email is preferred).

Melanie.Fleming@dc.gov

OR

DC Futures Program
OSSE Postsecondary and Career Education
1050 First St. NE, Fifth Floor
Washington, DC 20002

As additional information becomes available, this document and related content will be updated.

Appendix A: Questions & Answers

Can I get money from the DC Tuition Assistance Grant (DCTAG), Mayor’s Scholars Undergraduate Program, and DC Futures?

Yes, if you meet the eligibility criteria and funds are available for all three programs, you are able to receive awards from all three programs.

Do I have to have a coach? Can I choose my coach? What if I already have a coach? What if my coach is not responding to me (complaints)?

If you choose to participate in DC Futures, you are required to have a college coach. You will be assigned a coach from a designated DC Futures College Coaching provider. If you experience issues or concerns with coaching providers, you should reach out to Alexis Miller at Alexis.Miller@dc.gov.

If you already have a coach through another college coaching program you should reach out to your designated DC College Coaching provider to see if you qualify for an exemption to participate in that coaching program rather than designated DC Futures College Coaching.

I just graduated from high school and I do not have a major yet. Can I get this scholarship? Do I have to pay the money back if I change my major?

DC Futures is designed to support participants pursuing high-demand careers. Because of this focus, the program only provides support for participants in certain majors. If you have not declared a major on the DC Futures approved list, then you would not be eligible for funding. Reach out to your university regarding rules and requirements for declaring your major.

Do I really need to reapply again each year if I want funding for the following school year?

Yes, continued support requires application updates annually to verify you are still eligible. Because the pilot application is only for part of the school year, the gap between applications is short this year.

I participated in the Pilot for spring 2022 but did not re-apply in 2022 – what should I do?

Continued support requires students to complete an annual application to verify you are still eligible. A spring/summer 2023 application will open in October 2022, and you should complete the application at that time, if you believe you continue to meet all eligibility requirements.

Does participating in the pilot program count against max annual or total awards?

Pilot program participation does count against *lifetime award limits*. Because funding was only available for part of the academic year, 2022 pilot participation will not count as a year against your *program time limit*. However, spring/summer 2023 awards will count toward the program time limit.

If I don’t need the full scholarship amount for tuition and fees, will I receive a refund check?

No, because the scholarship component of the DC Futures program is a last dollar award, you will not receive an overage check.

Can you help with books, parking, etc.? Can you buy me a computer?

DC Futures scholarship funds can only be used for tuition and required fees. Your coaching stipend can be used for other educational expenses as needed.

I am returning to college, what supports are there for adult learners?

Designated DC Futures College Coaching providers have been selected to best serve a range of student needs, including those of adult learners. If you are found eligible for this program, please reach out to your DC Futures College Coaching provider to support you on your postsecondary journey.

How do I get my coaching stipend?

Each coaching provider may define this process for their DC Futures students. Please discuss this with your coach. Receiving the stipend is conditional upon regular participation in coaching sessions.

How do I get my emergency funds?

DC Futures students should receive directions from their university regarding the process used to request and receive these funds. You may request up to \$2,000 in emergency funds each year you participate in the program to cover unexpected emergency expenses that would impact their ability to remain enrolled at the university they attend (i.e., food, housing, child care, transportation, health, safety and security, and learning resources).

You may also submit a one-time request to pay a previously unpaid balance at a college or university (up to \$1,500). These funds are intended to enable you to access transcripts and credit(s) that can be applied to their current program.

Your assigned coach may provide support around your requests for emergency funds and previously unpaid balances, but those requests must be submitted through your university according to its directions.

If you have questions or need support completing the application, please reach out our DC Futures staff to help you through that process (Melanie.Fleming@dc.gov).