



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF
**LABOR & ECONOMIC
OPPORTUNITY**

**WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT**

This document serves as a practical guide for the eligible institutions accepting Michigan's new state scholarship program, **Futures for Frontliners**. This guide will be continually updated as feedback is received and the program evolves.



FUTURES
FOR FRONTLINERS
PATH 2

**Handbook for Path 2
High School Completion**

Last updated October 2021

The Futures for Frontliners-Path 2 (F4F-Path 2) scholarship program is administered by the Office of Adult Education within the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity, Workforce Development (LEO-WD).

Support for F4F-Path 2 Participants

For questions on the F4F-Path 2 scholarship, continued eligibility requirements, postsecondary training and education, and federal student aid, participants can be referred to the following resources:

- [FAQ page](#) on the F4F [website](#)
- **Email F4F-Path 2:** LEO-AdultEd@michigan.gov
- [Admissions contacts for Michigan's community colleges](#)
- [Michigan Training Connect \(MiTC\)](#)
- **Call or Text:** Michigan College Access Network (MCAN) College Advising Hotline: 810-373-5385 (serving Michiganders 18-24 years old)
- [Federal Student Aid Contact Center](#)

Support for Adult Education Providers

- **Email:** LEO-AdultEd@michigan.gov
- [Keywe](#) (F4F meeting recordings, career navigator professional development, etc.)
- Michigan Works! regional F4F contact list

Support for Community Colleges

For questions regarding F4F-Path 1 guidelines, requirements, and participants:

- **Email F4F-Path 1:** LEO-FuturesforFrontliners@michigan.gov
- **Email Treasury:** MIStudentAid@michigan.gov
- **Call:** 1-888-447-2687 (Treasury Customer Care Center)
- [F4F-Path 1 Handbook](#)

For questions regarding F4F-Path 2 guidelines, requirements, and participants:

- **Email F4F-Path 2:** LEO-AdultEd@michigan.gov

Media Inquiries

- **Email:** Elyse Walter (WalterE@michigan.gov)

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Program Description

Futures for Frontliners (F4F) is a State of Michigan scholarship program to provide last-dollar, tuition-free access to community college for Michiganders without college degrees, who worked as frontline workers in essential industries between April 1 – June 30, 2020, to pursue an associate degree or industry-recognized certificate or credential. Using the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER) fund established in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, the program is intended to give thanks to those who put themselves at risk during our state’s COVID-19 shutdown to help keep our state running.

F4F offers two pathways to community college:

- **Path 1:** For frontline workers who already have their high school diploma or equivalent.
- **Path 2:** For frontline workers who still need to complete their high school diploma or equivalent.

The F4F-Path 2 scholarship supports frontline workers in their attainment of a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent by enrolling with a state-approved adult education provider, as well as in the pursuit of an in-demand, industry-recognized certificate or credential available at a Michigan Training Connect (MiTC) skills training program or associate degree through one of Michigan’s community colleges. F4F-Path 2 participants may be enrolled in adult education classes either before or while enrolled at a community college or postsecondary training program, if permitted by the institution.

F4F-Path 2 is administered by the Office of Adult Education within the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity, Workforce Development (LEO-WD). This handbook outlines the guidelines to be followed by any adult education provider, community college, or approved training program that receives F4F-Path 2 grant funds, as applicable.

Initial Eligibility Requirements

An applicant must have satisfied all the following criteria for initial eligibility:

- Must have completed and submitted a F4F-Path 2 scholarship application by 11:59 pm on December 31, 2020.
- Must be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen, as defined by [Federal Student Aid](#).
 - Individuals under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) are not eligible.
- Must be a Michigan resident since July 1, 2019.
 - The parent/guardian’s residency determines eligibility for dependents under the age of 24.

- Must have been employed in an essential industry as defined in the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) on the website.
- Must have worked at least half-time for 11 of the 13 weeks during the second quarter of 2020.
 - *Half-time* was defined as an average of at least 20 hours per week.
 - *Second quarter* was April 1 – June 30, 2020.
- Must have worked in a job that required them to work at least some of the time outside of their home.
 - *Some of the time* was defined as not every day, but as regularly or on a substantial basis.
 - Note: An exception to this rule was for frontline workers whose qualifying jobs were home-based and who were at risk of COVID-19 exposure by having individuals in their home (e.g., home-based childcare providers).
- Must not have had a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent at the time of application.
 - Individuals who were already enrolled in a state-approved adult education program but *would not* have earned their diploma or equivalent by December 31, 2020, were eligible to apply for F4F-Path 2.
 - Individuals who were enrolled in an adult education program and *would* earn their diploma or equivalent by December 31, 2020, were advised to apply for F4F-Path 1 upon attainment of their diploma or equivalent.
- Must have been at least 18 years of age by December 31, 2020.
- Must not have been enrolled in high school at the time of application.

Path 2 participants that choose to dual enroll in adult education and the community college or training program may be eligible for federal student aid under the [Ability to Benefit \(ATB\) alternatives](#). ATB allows students without a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent to receive aid if enrolled in a qualified career pathway program and in adult education. A student must prove their “ability to benefit” in one of the following ways:

1. Complete six credits (or its equivalent) toward a degree or certificate; or
2. Pass an exam approved by the U.S. Department of Education (ED).

The F4F-Path 2 scholarship can be used to cover the first six credits toward a degree or certificate before ATB has been met.

Application and Initial Eligibility Verification

The F4F-Path 2 application period was from September 10, 2020 through December 31, 2020. The one-time online application was submitted to and reviewed by LEO-WD to evaluate the participant's initial eligibility.

The State of Michigan's Unemployment Insurance wage records database was used to verify employment as an eligible frontline worker between April 1 – June 30, 2020. If employment could not be verified with wage records, the applicant was emailed an Employment Verification Form to complete with their employer.

- Employment verification forms were due to LEO-WD by February 1, 2021.
- LEO-WD staff followed up with the applicant or employer, if needed, prior to determining the applicant's final application status.
- In cases where a demonstrated effort to obtain the verification from the employer was unsuccessful, the applicant was permitted to complete the Self-Attestation Form.

All applicants were sent an eligibility determination email from "State of Michigan, LEO, no-reply@michigan.gov" with the subject **Futures for Frontliners Application Notification**. A formal appeals process was not utilized, but applicants were encouraged to contact LEO-AdultEd@michigan.gov if they had questions regarding the determination.

Individuals meeting the eligibility requirements were asked to retain the tentative program acceptance email to provide as verification to the adult education provider. State-approved adult education providers can also verify the participant's acceptance in the Michigan Adult Education Reporting System (MAERS). Providers are asked to notify LEO-WD if they discover that a participant provided inaccurate or misleading information on their application for the scholarship program.

Institution Requirements

F4F-Path 2 participants must enroll with an adult education provider in the State of Michigan that receives State School Aid, Section 107 and/or Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Title II funding from LEO-WD.

F4F-Path 2 participants may also enroll in a qualifying degree or training program offered by one of the following:

- A state-approved adult education provider;
- A training provider on [MiTC](#); or
- An accredited Michigan public community college, including Michigan's three tribal colleges.

F4F-Path 2 participants may be enrolled in adult education classes either before or while enrolled at a community college or postsecondary training program, if permitted by the institution.

An F4F-Path 2 participant may transfer from one eligible institution to another without loss of the scholarship so long as the participant continues to meet all eligibility requirements for the scholarship. If applicable, the new institution should confer with the previous institution to determine whether the participant meets the [continued eligibility requirements](#) for the scholarship.

By accepting F4F-Path 2 scholarship funds, the adult education provider agrees to:

- Designate an individual employed by the adult education provider as the primary contact with LEO-WD for administering the F4F-Path 2 scholarship.
- Provide individualized career advising and navigation services to F4F-Path 2 participants (either directly or in partnership with Michigan Works!).
- Include the local Michigan Works! Agency (MWA) in the selection of a training program on MiTC to ensure the program is cost-effective and leads to a meaningful credential and in-demand job in the region.
- Participate in data collection and quality assurance protocols established by LEO-WD for the purpose of accurately tracking participant outcomes.
- Submit invoices to LEO-WD for qualifying tuition and fees.
- Establish arrangements and send [tuition payments](#) to the community college or training program for credit to the participant's account.

[Michigan's 28 community colleges and tribal colleges](#) are a primary partner in this effort and have provided a clear point of contact at the college for assistance. The admissions and advising offices have tools to assist in decision making and program selection.

Michigan Works! Partnership

MWAs are key partners in the effort to provide a no wrong door approach to connecting these participants to in-demand training and providing the support necessary to ensure successful program completion and placement into high quality employment opportunities.

In an effort to ensure that F4F-Path 2 participants are guided to programs that are in-demand, a MiTC program may only be selected after receiving career navigation assistance from a local MWA. The assistance may be a direct service (i.e., career counseling with the participant) or indirect (e.g., meetings with the adult education provider to discuss the current employment opportunities). [Policy Issuance \(PI\) 20-31](#) was published on October 15, 2020, with guidance for the MWAs on their role in F4F-Path 2. The policy issuance also provides guidance for how other state and federal funding sources can be leveraged for supportive services, case management, and follow-up services for F4F-Path 2 participants, as allowable.

The MWA may assist with payment of training providers for F4F-Path 2 participants if the local adult education provider is unable to perform this function. If this is necessary, a contractual agreement between the adult education provider and the MWA shall prescribe the process of funding flowing through the adult education provider to the MWA. The adult education provider would continue to be the entity to invoice LEO-WD.

Each MW region has designated a point of contact for adult education staff to consult regarding the local labor market, training programs, and supportive services. A contact list is maintained and distributed by LEO-WD.

Postsecondary Program Requirements

The postsecondary education or training program must:

- Be offered by an eligible institution, and
- Lead to an associate degree or in-demand industry-recognized certificate or credential.

The F4F-Path 2 scholarship will cover the allowable expenses for one (1) of the following options:

- A state-approved integrated education and training (IET) program.
- A skills-based training program.
- A qualifying training program *and* the associate degree program to which it directly leads.
- An associate degree program.

The participant's financial aid must go through the eligible institution. Therefore, participants may not register as guest/visiting students.

Associate degree or training programs selected by F4F-Path 2 participants are not required to be Pell-eligible.

Program Awards and Payments

For eligible participants, the F4F-Path 2 scholarship may include the following, paid to the state-approved adult education provider:

- High school completion or equivalency preparation classes and career navigation services:
 - A one-time payment of \$250 for enrollment after that participant has one hour of attendance or more after their F4F-Path 2 application date.

- Postsecondary education referral and scholarship payments made on behalf of the participant:
 - For participants that earn a high school diploma or equivalent by June 30, 2021, a one-time payment of \$500 will be paid to the adult education provider upon attainment of the diploma or equivalent.
 - For participants that earn a high school diploma or equivalent after June 30, 2021, the one-time payment of \$500 will be paid upon attainment of a high school diploma or equivalent and registration for and/or enrollment in community college or a skills training program.

The preceding payments can be used as needed to support F4F-Path 2, including administration and participant supports.

- High school equivalency (HSE) testing (i.e., GED® or HiSET®) fees, as applicable:
 - The participant must not be eligible for a voucher under the [HSE-to-School program](#).
 - The participant must pass the official practice test (for GED®) or be deemed likely to pass by the adult education provider (for HiSET®).
 - Up to \$174 for testing at one of the HSE testing centers in Michigan.
 - Fees are limited to the cost of one attempt per subject area.
 - Virtually proctored HSE testing options (i.e., GED® Online Proctoring and *HiSET® at Home*) are allowable.
 - At this time, vouchers are not available for HiSET® at Home. Therefore, F4F-Path 2 funds may be used for first-time testers opting for HiSET® at Home.

A grant agreement will be executed from LEO-WD to each state-approved adult education provider that enrolls one or more F4F-Path 2 participants. The grant award will be based on anticipated program payments and the number of approved F4F-Path 2 participants registered in MAERS with that provider that have Futures for Frontliners selected as the funding source.

Upon execution of the grant agreement, the adult education provider may begin to submit invoices to LEO-AdultEd@michigan.gov to request F4F-Path 2 funds on an as-needed basis. Providers are encouraged to submit F4F-Path 2 invoices monthly. Payments from LEO-WD will be made to the adult education provider through the Statewide Integrated Governmental Management Application (SIGMA) within 45 days from the receipt of the invoice.

Primary lists for establishing the payment arrangements with the community colleges for the F4F-Path 2 program will be provided by LEO-WD. Contact information for the eligible training providers can be found on [MiTC](#), or obtained from the local MWA. A postsecondary education referral form has been distributed to the adult education providers by LEO-WD to

facilitate the communication process. Providers may modify the communication tool to suit their needs and preferences.

Prior to, or upon enrollment, the adult education provider shall establish the following with the community college or training institution:

- Where/to whom the institution will send the tuition bill.
- The billing and payment timeline.

Throughout the life of the grant, LEO-WD will monitor the funds remaining and amend the grant awards to each adult education provider, as needed. The adult education provider will not be responsible for any participant tuition or fees that exceed the final grant award.

Allowable Expenses – Postsecondary

The F4F scholarship is a last-dollar scholarship limited to specific expenses required for the attainment of an industry-recognized certificate or credential or associate degree. As applicable, allowable expenses may include the following, paid by the adult education provider to the [eligible postsecondary institution](#):

- In-district tuition for required courses.
 - If a participant chooses or is required to attend an out-of-district community college, the participant will have to pay the difference between the in-district tuition rate and out-of-district rate.
 - F4F funding may not be used for elective courses.
 - May be for the maximum number of credits allowed per semester by the postsecondary institution.
 - May be remedial or developmental education courses.
 - The community college may approve enrollment in a Michigan Colleges Online (MCO) course that meets a course requirement.
 - MCO would bill the community college, not the adult education provider.
- Contact hours.
 - Defined as the time in which a participant receives active instruction as part of a course of study. Institutions may have a different name for these hours, but these costs will be covered by F4F.
- Mandatory fees.
 - Must be specified in the institution's course catalog as mandatory for all participants as a condition of enrollment at that institution.
 - Mandatory fees do not include the following:
 - Course-specific fees.
 - Lab fees.
 - Athletic fees.
 - Parking fees.

- Any 'one-time' fees (e.g., application, graduation/commencement).
- Certification testing fees.

F4F funding follows the federal aid rule on repeating coursework.

Scholarship Packaging Guidelines – Postsecondary

Packaging refers to awarding multiple awards at one time to create a financial aid award package for a participant. Although the adult education provider should have a general understanding of the packaging guidelines, it is the responsibility of the postsecondary institution to follow the guidelines and request clarification by contacting LEO and/or the Michigan Department of Treasury as needed.

The F4F program is a last-dollar scholarship, which is equal to the difference between allowable expenses and any Pell Grant and any tuition-restricted scholarships or awards (excluding TIP) that a participant receives. WIOA funds are last dollar after F4F funding. If a participant is not awarded (or has exhausted) any Pell Grant funding and has no other scholarships or award funding, F4F funding may pay all allowable expenses; there is no maximum.

F4F participants may not also be recipients of a Michigan Reconnect scholarship nor participants in the 23+ High School Diploma Program. If an F4F participant loses eligibility for the F4F scholarship program, they may apply to Reconnect.

The [F4F-Path 1 handbook](#) includes additional details and considerations regarding the packaging order.

Continued Eligibility Requirements - Secondary

To maintain eligibility prior to the obtainment of a diploma or its equivalent, the participant must satisfy all the following criteria:

- Enroll in and begin adult education classes by December 1, 2021.
- Maintain residency in Michigan.
- Satisfy the adult education attendance requirements.

If the participant is system exited in MAERS due to no attendance for 90 days or more, then the participant will be considered to not have met the continued eligibility requirement.

Continued eligibility requirements must be verified by the adult education provider prior to submitting an invoice requesting funds for that participant.

If a F4F-Path 2 participant does not meet one or more of the above continued eligibility requirements, they will permanently lose the scholarship award. Once a participant loses

their scholarship because they failed to meet the continued eligibility requirements, their award cannot be reinstated.

Continued Eligibility Requirements - Postsecondary

For participants in postsecondary education or training, the adult education provider will obtain confirmation of continued eligibility from the postsecondary institution to document in their F4F-Path 2 program files.

To maintain eligibility for postsecondary funding, the participant must:

- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and verification process (if required) prior to postsecondary enrollment and annually thereafter.
 - F4F participants must meet the basic FAFSA eligibility requirements to submit a FAFSA application (e.g., selective service, not in default on a federal student loan) **except for Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)**.
 - If the ED determines the participant is ineligible to be awarded federal aid, they may still receive the F4F scholarship.
 - Some training programs on MiTC are eligible for federal student aid.
 - If a participant is eligible for the Pell Grant and chooses to decline it, they will not be able to use their F4F award.
- Maintain Michigan residency.
- Maintain continuous enrollment at least half-time in the agreed-upon degree or training program, unless a leave of absence is granted.
 - *Continuous enrollment* is defined as enrolled in at least two (2) semesters or the equivalent in terms or quarters, as determined by LEO, during each 12-month period for a number of consecutive years.
 - The two or more semesters, terms, or quarters of enrollment within a 12-month period need not be consecutive.
 - The first 12-month period begins at the start of their first semester of postsecondary education or training as an F4F participant, in which they are enrolled at least half-time.
 - Example: If the first semester of their 12-month period is Summer, their 12-month period would end at the end of the Winter/Spring semester of the following calendar year (e.g., Summer '21 through Winter/Spring '22).
 - *Half-time enrollment* is defined as enrolled in at least six (6) credit hours in an academic semester or the equivalent number of credit or contact hours in a term or quarter, as determined by LEO.
 - Earn at least 12 credits within a 12-month period.
 - Elective courses not covered by F4F funding do not count toward this minimum.
 - If the participant enrolls in less than 6 credits in a semester that does not impact their continuous enrollment, F4F will not cover the costs, but those

credits can be applied toward the 12 credits the participant needs to earn within their 12-month period and should also be included in the participant's GPA calculation.

- This also applies if a participant ends the semester with less than 6 credits due to withdrawing from a course after the add/drop period.
- Maintain a cumulative 2.0 grade point average (GPA) at the community college, in the courses taken toward the agreed-upon degree or industry-recognized certificate, if applicable.
 - Grades earned prior to receiving an F4F scholarship are not to be factored into the required cumulative 2.0 GPA calculation.
 - The GPA should be calculated at the end of each of the participant's 12-month periods.
- Make satisfactory progress and be in good standing, as defined by the training provider, if applicable.

Declining an F4F-Path 2 Award

- If an approved applicant chooses not to be an F4F participant, they may decline the scholarship. However, once it has been declined, it cannot be reinstated.
 - Example: A participant may not want to meet the scholarship's continued eligibility requirements.
 - A participant's decision to decline their F4F award must be documented in the adult education provider's program records. The provider is encouraged to have the participant submit their decision to decline the award in writing.
 - If the award is declined prior to any payments being made to the adult education provider for that participant, the provider shall:
 - Verify that the funding source is not selected in MAERS.
 - Notify LEO-WD.
- A participant can choose to not utilize F4F funds in any postsecondary semester if they have other scholarships or awards that fit their financial needs better. However, the participant must maintain the program's continued eligibility requirements to take advantage of the scholarship in future semesters.

Course Withdrawals - Postsecondary

The F4F-Path 2 program will utilize a tiered approach to determining who is liable for the cost of the postsecondary education or training if the participant withdraws from a course or receives a No Show (NS) grade. At no time will the adult education provider be responsible for these costs.

- **For the first 12-month period of postsecondary enrollment**, the scholarship will cover the cost of any courses a participant withdraws from after a college or training program's "add/drop" period (i.e., deadline to withdraw and receive a full refund).

- The State recognizes this is a learning and adjustment period for adults transitioning to postsecondary education; they could find themselves in a class that exceeds their academic proficiencies or encounter barriers to attendance. Given the State’s strong interest in helping participants adjust and persist, it is reasonable to ask the taxpayers to cover the cost of any withdrawn courses during a participant’s first year.
- **For the first semester of the 2nd 12-month period (i.e., months 13-18) of postsecondary enrollment**, the college will cover the cost of any withdrawn courses after the “add/drop” period, meaning neither the state nor the participant can be charged.
 - Any earlier withdrawals should have raised a red flag for the college academic advisor to help the participant to create a schedule that is manageable and keep the participant on track.
- **From the second semester of the 2nd 12-month period (i.e., months 19-24) of postsecondary enrollment and beyond**, all withdrawn course costs after the “add/drop” period are to be covered by the participant.
 - Michigan taxpayers, many with only a high school education or less, are subsidizing fellow citizens to obtain postsecondary education and training. At some point, it is reasonable to ask the beneficiaries of this gift to assume some of the responsibility of completing their courses.

Regardless of who is liable for the cost of the withdrawals, the participant must still satisfy the continued eligibility requirements to maintain their scholarship.

The community colleges should not request payment from the adult education provider until after the “add/drop” period has ended. The payment schedule for Path 2 participants should align with the [payment schedule](#) for other state financial aid programs administered by the Michigan Department of Treasury.

Leave of Absence

A participant who has an approved medical or personal leave of absence may continue to receive the F4F-Path 2 scholarship upon resuming their education, provided there is continued program funding and the participant meets the remaining continued eligibility requirements. A leave of absence does not count toward the program’s four-year time limit for that participant.

Allowable medical, personal, or academic reasons shall include, but not be limited to:

- Illness of the participant.
- Illness or death of an immediate family member.
- Extreme financial hardship of the participant or participant’s immediate family.

- Fulfilment of a religious commitment expected of all participants of that faith.
- Other extraordinary circumstances beyond the participant's control where continued attendance by the participant creates a substantial hardship.
- Participation in an internship or co-op program that is required or encouraged as part of the academic program in which they are enrolled.
- Participants who become waitlisted for the remainder of their program after pre-requisite courses are completed.

More guidance will be provided soon about how the participant, training provider, or community college, can inform the adult education provider and/or LEO about the leave of absence to prevent or overturn the participant being ineligible for the scholarship.

Program Limits

If an F4F-Path 2 participant maintains eligibility for their award, they can continue to receive F4F-Path 2 funding until the occurrence of either the following, whichever occurs first:

- Four years have passed since the participant's first day of attendance in an adult education class after acceptance to F4F-Path 2;
- The participant has earned an associate degree; or
- The participant has earned an industry-recognized certificate or credential.
 - Exception: A participant who has earned a certificate or credential at an eligible institution remains eligible for the F4F-Path 2 scholarship if they have not yet earned an associate degree and the completion of the certificate or credential directly leads to an associate degree program.
 - The combination of time to earn the certificate and an associate degree cannot exceed the four-year limit for an F4F-Path 2 scholarship; the participant will be responsible for covering the remaining cost of their academic program.
 - F4F-Path 2 funding will only cover the cost of one postsecondary training or degree program at any given time.

Reporting Requirements

Adult education providers are required to report on F4F-Path 2 participants in MAERS. The **Futures for Frontliners** funding source must be selected on the Funding tab of the Eligibility module to designate the adult education participant as an F4F-Path 2 program participant.

In accordance with standard reporting requirements, the participant's class enrollment, assessment, attendance, and achievement data must be entered into MAERS on a monthly basis, at a minimum. MAERS data will be consulted prior to approving F4F-Path 2 invoices. Therefore, data entry must be completed prior to invoice submission.

Participant follow-up, including enrollment in postsecondary education or training and postsecondary credential attainment data must be collected and entered into MAERS, as required for all adult education participants under the National Reporting System (NRS) guidelines. The F4F-Path 2 invoice will also collect minimal postsecondary enrollment information, such as program name and anticipated completion date.

Community colleges and training providers routinely report participant outcomes and performance in State data systems. To enable LEO to utilize those systems to track F4F participants, LEO-WD is requesting adult education providers to enter the Unique Identification Code (UIC) for all F4F-Path 2 participants. The [MAERS page](#) of the Adult Education website includes information on requesting a UIC and a link to the Center for Educational Performance and Information website.

Additional Resources

[Futures for Frontliners Champion Toolkit](#)

[Resources for Adult Education Providers](#)