



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **Are the scholarships need based? And if not, why not?**
 - They are not “need based.” Practically all the Promise programs are place based, not need based. The emphasis is on providing all students assistance to ensure they can attain at least an Associate’s Degree and—when enough funding is available—a Bachelor’s Degree. To establish a cut-off for financial assistance is difficult, subjective, and does not allow all students to participate.

2. **If provided to every high school graduate in Greenwood County regardless of need, what’s to prevent a student from stacking up an assortment of financial scholarships and making money?**
 - The scholarship is a “last money” scholarship, meaning this scholarship will pay only the remaining tuition and fees after all State scholarships, grants, and Pell Grants are included. It is for tuition and fees only and no other costs such as room and board. The money is paid directly to the educational institution and not to the student.

3. **Why offer this program to the graduates of Greenwood public and private schools and accredited homeschools?**
 - Education is an important key to financial well-being.
 - It provides a meaningful and tangible opportunity for all students of Greenwood County regardless of choice of school system within Greenwood County.
 - Present and future companies and businesses will need qualified employees regardless of high school education decision.

4. **Will students who live in other counties and attend Greenwood County public or private schools or accredited homeschools be eligible for this award?**
 - Only students whose primary residence is zoned within Greenwood County School Districts 50, 51, and 52 are eligible. Those who live outside of these Districts but attend school in District 50, 51, 52 are not eligible.

5. **How is attendance calculated if the student leaves Greenwood County and then later returns?**
 - From the date of most recent enrollment.

6. Why is the benefit percentage based on a sliding scale of years of residence in Greenwood School Districts?

- The program is designed to provide maximum benefit to long-term residents. A desired outcome of the program will be to encourage families to make early decisions to live in Greenwood County, to enroll their children in Greenwood County Schools, and to maintain that enrollment through graduation.

7. What is the application process?

- Students must apply during their senior year. Applications are available online and at the high school guidance offices.

8. Do I need to fill out the FAFSA application?

- Yes, students must complete the FAFSA application, receive a valid Expected Family Contribution (EFC) number, and complete the financial aid process.
- A FAFSA form is not required to be accepted into educational institutions. It is required for virtually all scholarship and financial aid opportunities. If a student needs help filling out the form, he/she should contact the financial aid office of the educational institution of planned attendance.
- Monies already obtained and promised through scholarships and The Greenwood Promise are not listed on the FAFSA form. (The Greenwood Promise will not disqualify a student from other scholarship opportunities.) For more information and to apply online a student should visit www.fafsa.ed.gov.

9. What are the eligible two-year and four-year educational institutions?

- Piedmont Technical College or any accredited state-supported technical institution for the first two years or after receiving an Associate's Degree or certificate, whichever comes first. If the major is offered at Piedmont Technical College, then the student must attend Piedmont Technical College to be eligible. If the major is not offered at Piedmont Technical College, then the student may enroll at other eligible two-year educational institutions. The degree or course of work must be one that is eligible for the Life Scholarship based on the specific courses and/or number of semesters.
- For the last two years, any other state-supported four-year educational institution that offers targeted degrees which are covered at that time. Initially, limited scholarships will be available, based on funding, and monies will be allocated only for degrees that local industry and businesses deem most urgent and difficult to fill in Greenwood County. If the major is offered at Lander University, then the student must attend Lander to be eligible. If the major is not offered at Lander University, then the student may enroll at other eligible institutions.

10. What degree programs or certificates qualify?

- All Associate's and Bachelor's Degrees and certificate programs at state-supported educational institutions are qualified but must be covered by the Life Scholarship to be eligible. Private apprentice programs are not eligible.

11. Are summer school classes covered by The Promise?

- No, not at this time.

12. Is study abroad covered?

- Study abroad is covered only if the program is administered by the educational institution the student is attending. The only costs covered are normal tuition costs for credits taken abroad. No extraordinary tuition or expenses are covered.

13. Can the scholarship be transferred to a private college or out-of-state vocational training program or college/university?

- No.

14. Are there additional requirements that must be met after the initial award?

- Yes. After the first semester and all subsequent semesters, students must demonstrate the following:
 - i. Make regular progress toward a degree as defined by satisfactory academic standards of the educational institution.
 - ii. Maintain a 2.0 grade point average at the two-year educational institution and a 2.5 grade point average at the four-year educational institution.
 - iii. Be enrolled as a full-time student, typically twelve credit hours a semester and complete twenty-four hours each academic year.

15. What happens if the student fails to meet the requirements? Is the scholarship no longer available?

- The first semester that a student fails to meet the academic requirements, he/she is placed on probation and given an additional semester to bring their performance in line with the requirements. If a student on probation fails to meet the requirements in the subsequent semester, his/her scholarship is placed in suspension status. The student would not receive the scholarship the next semester.
- The scholarship can be reinstated if the student demonstrates that he/she has met all the academic requirements of The Promise. The scholarship would be reinstated prospectively. The scholarship is only available for five years following the student's graduation from Greenwood County Schools, unless interrupted by military service.

16. If the award is not needed due to other State academic scholarships or Pell Grant, can the award be applied to room and board fees?

- No.

17. What are considered to be mandatory fees?

- Mandatory fees are those required to be paid by all students attending a particular two-year and four-year educational institution. Not covered are application fees, contact-hour fees, fees which are course specific (such as lab fees for science and computer classes, etc.), or fees assessed based on the number of credit hours enrolled.

18. Are application fees covered?

- No. However, many institutions waive the application fee if requested to do so because of financial hardship.

19. When will scholarship funds be available?

- Plans are for the program to begin when funding is determined by The Greenwood Promise Steering Committee to be sufficient to sustain it. It is anticipated that the program will start with the graduating class of 2016. The intent is for this program to be available in perpetuity, but it may be discontinued if funding is unavailable.
- The intent is to grow the program at a measured pace so it does not have to be discontinued or reduced.
- The Promise is just that: we can **promise** those who start kindergarten in Greenwood County schools that they will be able to go to college and receive at least an Associate's Degree if they **promise** to work hard and are academically eligible.

20. How long do students have to use The Greenwood Promise?

- Students have up to three years from the date of high school graduation to obtain their degree from Piedmont Technical College or another eligible South Carolina two-year educational institution.
- In regards to Phase II, the Bachelor's Degree program, the student has a maximum of five years after graduation from high school to complete the degree program.
- Exceptions to the above will be made for an interruption resulting from military service.

21. How long will the Greenwood Promise be available?

- The Greenwood Promise is intended to be set up to continue in perpetuity, as funding allows.

22. How is the Greenwood Promise funded?

- It is to be set up as a non-profit organization funded by private and public funding.

23. How will this program ensure that local industry and businesses will be able to identify the difficult-to-find professionals?

- To be eligible for the last two years of post-secondary education (Bachelor's Degree Program), the student must be accepted and enrolled in one of the programs identified as "difficult to fill, but critical."
- Where possible, local industry and businesses will set up a pool of "internships" for these students to fill. Local businesses and industry will consider these students when filling these positions.
- Selected students will be encouraged to apply for these internships, to interview, and if selected, to give consideration to filling that internship.
- Local industry and businesses are encouraged to interview the students for open full-time positions as qualified and—if applicable—to give consideration to filling these positions.
- Selected students—if qualified—are encouraged to apply for and to interview for open positions within Greenwood County industry and businesses, and—if selected—to consider accepting that open position.

***The Greenwood Promise Steering Committee reserves the right to make any changes to the program as it deems necessary.**