

TENNESSEE EDUCATION LOTTERY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

RECIPIENT OUTCOMES
THROUGH FALL 2023



Tennessee Higher Education Commission

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Introduction

This report is prepared pursuant to T.C.A. §49-4-903(b), which directs the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) to:

“...provide assistance to the general assembly and to [the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation] by researching and analyzing data concerning the scholarship and grant programs created under this part, including, but not limited to, student success and scholarship retention.”

The Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship (TELS) program was designed to meet the unique needs of the State of Tennessee, while also incorporating the hallmark elements of existing merit-based aid programs in other states. Developed through a process involving elected officials and members of the academic community, the TELS program aims to address the following broad public policy objectives:

- Improve academic achievement in high school through scholarship incentives.
- Provide financial assistance as a means of promoting access to higher education.
- Retain the state’s “best and brightest” students in Tennessee colleges and universities.
- Enhance and promote economic and community development through workforce training.

Privacy Notice

Throughout this report, THEC complies with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requirements to protect students’ personally identifiable information. Therefore, when tables are presented, **individual cells containing fewer than 10 observations are suppressed**. The suppressed information is included in table totals.

Executive Summary

Overview of the TELS Report

This manuscript provides a snapshot of TELS recipients and their outcomes, including narrative discussion on the current context. The report comprises four sections: (1) Program Overview, (2) HOPE Recipient Demographics, (3) HOPE Recipient Outcomes, and, new this year, (4) Dual Enrollment Grant Participation.

An interactive data dashboard and downloadable datasets allow users to explore data on TELS participation and recipient outcomes at a deeper level. **The HOPE Scholarship Dashboard** centralizes the most sought-after metrics related to the TELS annual report. HOPE Scholarship program participation, recipient academic profiles, renewal rates, retention rates, graduation rates, and cohort progression analyses are all easily accessible in the HOPE Dashboard. Users may filter the data by institutional sector, recipient demographics, and scholarship program to dig deeper into each metric presented on the dashboard. The dashboard, as well as datasets with institution-specific statistics, are available via the [TELS Report landing page](#).

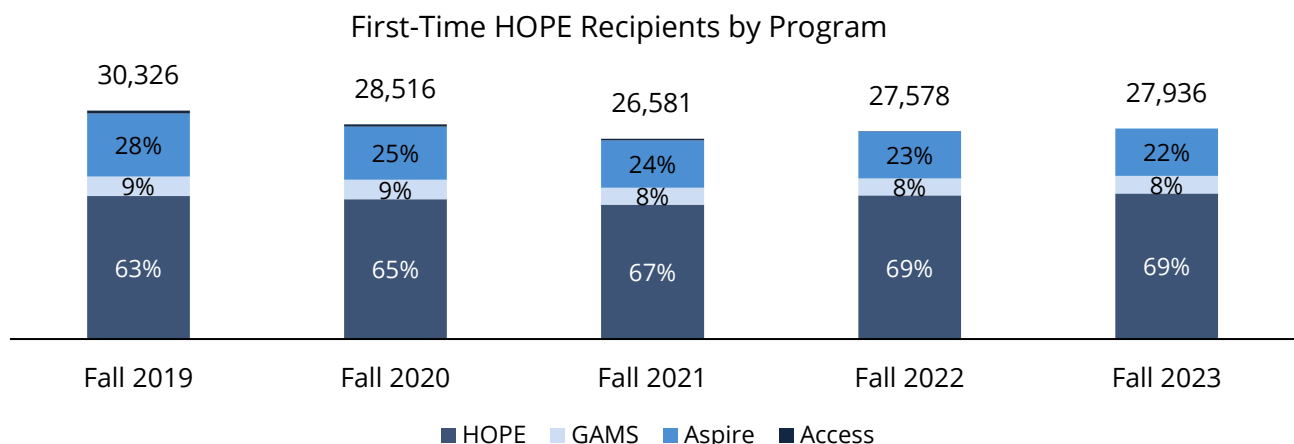
Key Takeaways

TELS Suite

In 2023-2024, **158,599 students** received a TELS award (see **Table 3**). This includes over 71,000 HOPE Scholarship recipients and over 50,000 Dual Enrollment Grant recipients, among others. There were over 10,000 more recipients and almost \$21 million more award dollars as compared to the 2022-2023 aid year.

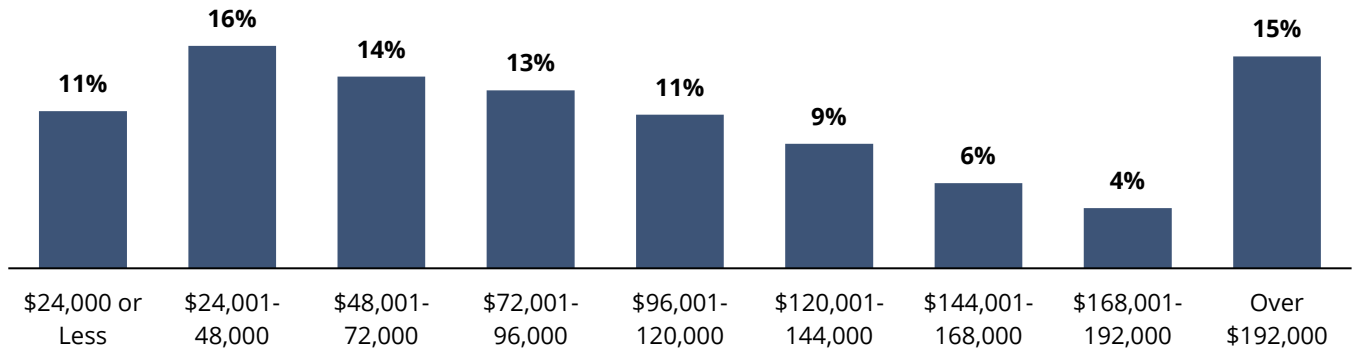
HOPE Scholarship

In fall 2023, **27,936 students** enrolled as first-time scholarship recipients of the HOPE Scholarship, General Assembly Merit Scholarship (GAMS), or Aspire Award (see **Table 5**). GAMS and Aspire are supplemental awards to the base HOPE Scholarship. Most first-time recipients are **women**, and the vast majority are **White, Not Hispanic** (see **Table 7**). Applications for the HOPE Access grant ceased to be accepted in Fall 2021. The Fall 2023 first-time recipient cohort is the first cohort with no HOPE Access recipients.



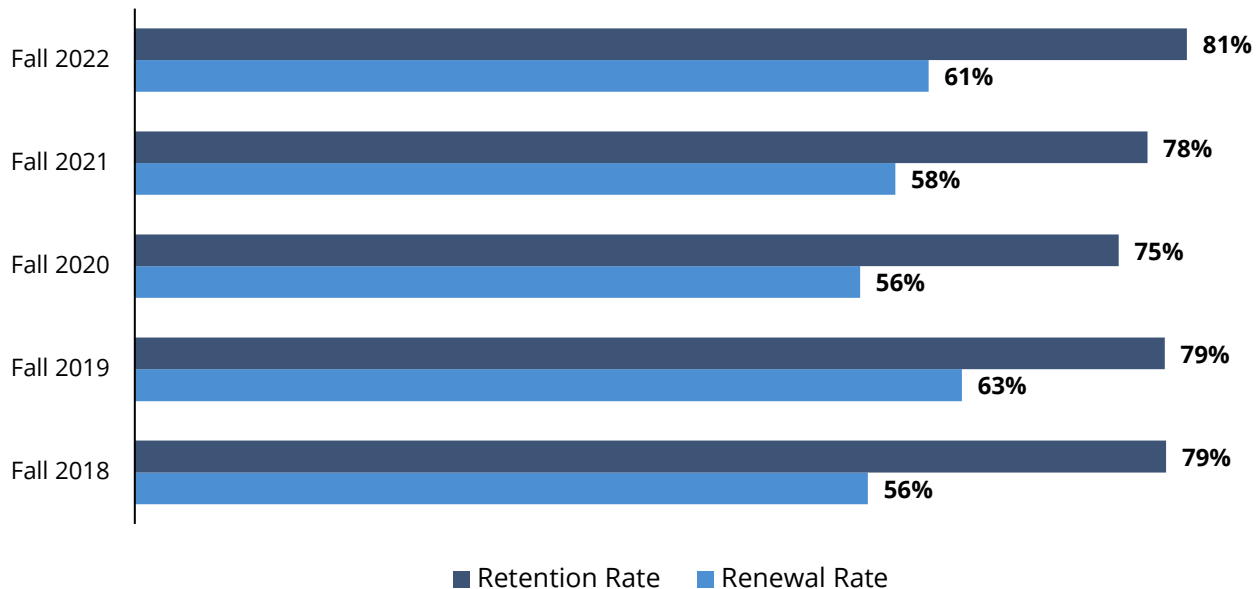
Fall 2023 first-time HOPE recipients with an **Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) over \$192,000 had the largest enrollment increase** compared to the previous cohort (see **Figure 3**). This continues a trend seen over the last several years where students at the highest gross income levels are making up a growing share of the HOPE recipient cohort.

First-Time HOPE Recipients by AGI



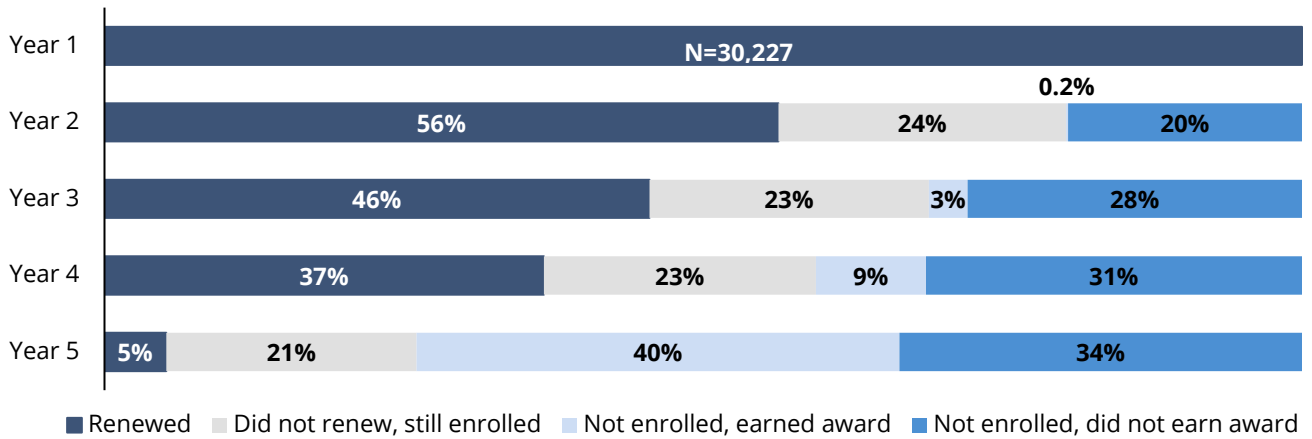
Eighty-one percent of the fall 2022 first-time HOPE recipient cohort remained enrolled in postsecondary education in fall 2023 regardless of scholarship receipt (see **Table 10**). **Sixty-one percent** of the cohort renewed their HOPE scholarship in fall 2023 (see **Table 10**). **Fifty-three percent** of students who did not renew their HOPE scholarship in fall 2022 returned to postsecondary education in fall 2023 (see **Table 11**).

First-Time HOPE Recipient Renewal and Retention Rates



Overall, 66% of the fall 2017 cohort of first-time HOPE recipients earned an award, were still enrolled, or renewed their scholarship at the beginning of the fifth and final year of scholarship eligibility.

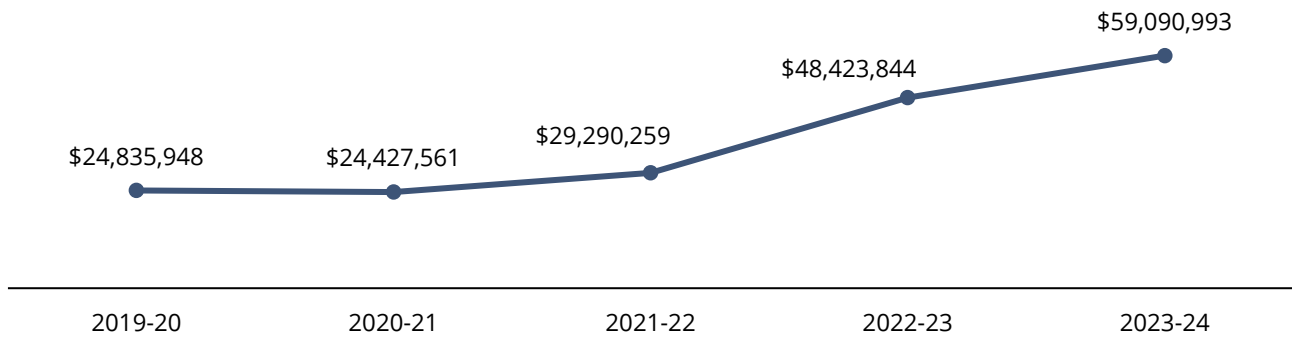
Fall 2017 First-Time HOPE Recipient Progression



Dual Enrollment Grant

New to the report this year is a section on the Dual Enrollment Grant (DEG). DEG expenditures have more than doubled in recent years. This nearly **\$30 million increase** in spending corresponds to **over 18,500 more students** receiving the grant in 2023-2024 compared to 2021-2022.

Dual Enrollment Grant Dollars Awarded



Recommendations

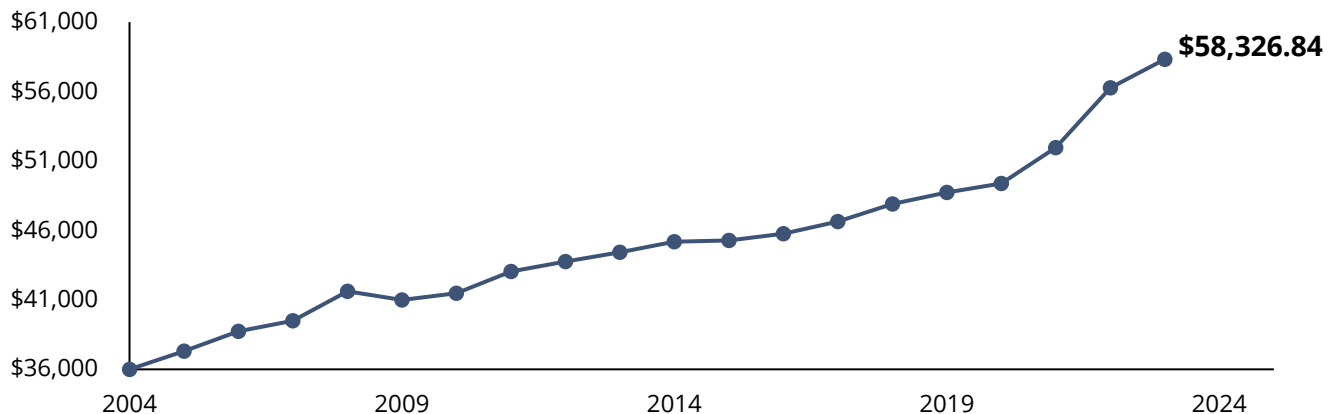
- The renewal of the HOPE scholarship from the first to the second year of higher education is the largest drop-off in terms of scholarship eligibility for HOPE recipients. As the table below shows, first-time HOPE Recipients have very different academic outcomes based on whether they renew their scholarship for their second year of higher education. THEC/TSAC is currently engaging in research on how HOPE scholarship loss affects student outcomes with the University of Michigan. This collaboration, funded by an Institute of Education Sciences (IES) grant, will produce additional insights into why students are losing the HOPE scholarship and the consequences of such loss. THEC/TSAC should use these findings to recommend and implement improvements to the HOPE scholarship program. Addressing scholarship loss after the first year and throughout a student’s postsecondary progression is an important step to the retention and success of students in Tennessee higher education.

Graduation Rates by Year 2 Scholarship Renewal

Cohort Year	First-time HOPE Recipients	Renewed HOPE Scholarship for Year 2			Did Not Renew HOPE Scholarship for Year 2		
		Student Count	Graduated within 4 Years	Graduated within 6 Years	Student Count	Graduated within 4 Years	Graduated within 6 Years
2015	28,858	16,271	69%	86%	12,587	18%	32%
2016	29,110	16,513	69%	86%	12,597	19%	32%
2017	30,227	17,014	70%	86%	13,213	18%	31%
2018	30,207	16,986	70%		13,221	17%	
2019	30,326	19,237	66%		11,089	13%	

- The Aspire Award serves low-income students who qualify for the HOPE scholarship. Eligibility for this supplement to the HOPE scholarship is based on the adjusted gross income (AGI) of a student and their family. The threshold for eligibility at or below an AGI of \$36,000 was set in 2003 and has not been changed. According to the Consumer Price Index tool published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, \$58,326 in fall 2023 has the buying power that \$36,000 had in 2004, the year the Aspire Award went into effect. Increasing the Aspire Award threshold to \$60,000 would increase affordability for an estimated 10,300 low-income students per year who are not currently eligible for the Aspire Award.

Aspire Award Threshold Inflation, 2004-2023



As demonstrated below, students at lower AGI levels are less likely to retain the HOPE scholarship from their first fall to their second fall and less likely to return to higher education in their second fall. This can also be seen in **Figure 2**, as students in higher AGI groups make up a larger share of the entire HOPE recipient cohort than in the first-time recipient cohort. Expanding the Aspire Award to not only cover more students, but to also cover a higher percentage of tuition and fees for low-income students would assist in closing the attainment gap across the income distribution.

Renewal and Retention by AGI

AGI	Fall 2020		Fall 2021		Fall 2022	
	Renewal Rate	Retention Rate	Renewal Rate	Retention Rate	Renewal Rate	Retention Rate
\$24,000 or Less	45%	67%	48%	70%	52%	75%
\$24,001-48,000	50%	71%	53%	74%	55%	77%
\$48,001-72,000	53%	74%	56%	76%	57%	78%
\$72,001-96,000	59%	76%	60%	77%	61%	81%
\$96,001-120,000	61%	79%	62%	80%	66%	84%
\$120,001-144,000	63%	81%	65%	83%	67%	84%
\$144,001-168,000	66%	83%	68%	86%	69%	86%
\$168,001-192,000	67%	86%	69%	86%	70%	89%
Over \$192,000	68%	87%	70%	88%	72%	90%

Data Sources & Technical Notes

Data Sources

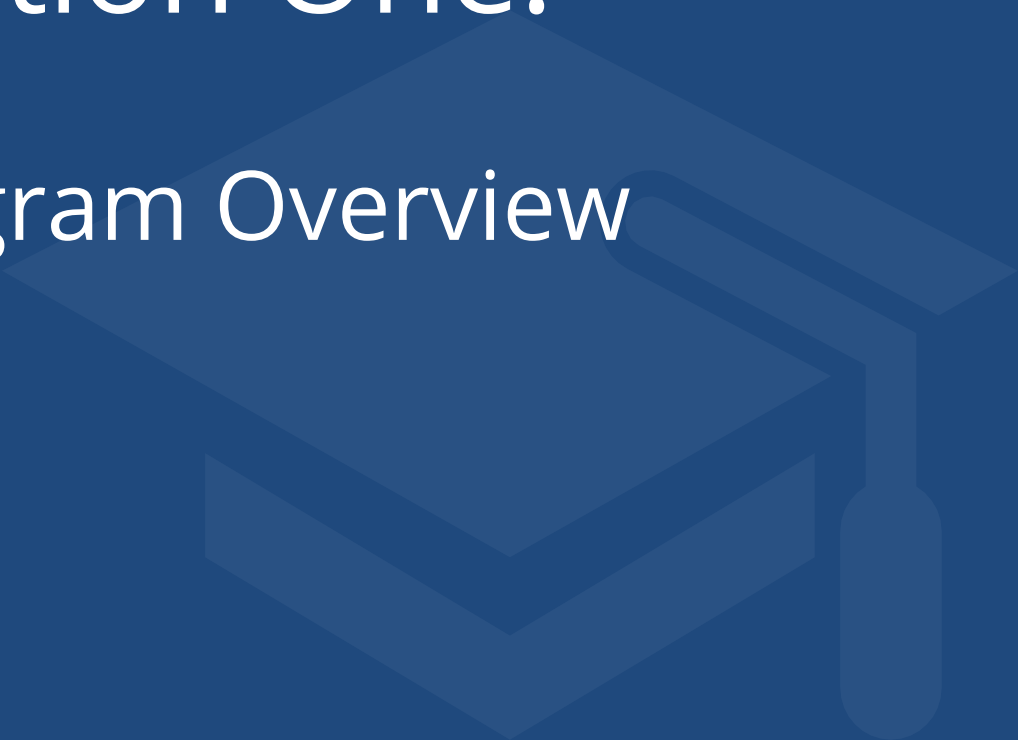
- Unless otherwise noted, data contained within this report are from the Financial Aid System of Tennessee (FAST), the Tennessee Higher Education Commission Student Information System (THECSIS), and the [TN DATA](#) System. Data from the [TSAC annual TELS Year-End Reports](#) are used in Section I.
- The current report uses verified payments from FAST to determine all TELS recipients and is supplemented by THECSIS and data from TN DATA, where applicable (e.g., retention and graduation data).
- The TN DATA System is used as an additional source to match **retention and graduation data** from private (i.e., TICUA) institutions. Not all TICUA institutions participate in TN DATA.
 - Twenty-two private institutions currently submit data to TN DATA: Aquinas College, Baptist Health Sciences University, Bethel University, Carson-Newman University, Christian Brothers University, Cumberland University, Fisk University, Freed-Hardeman University, Johnson University, King University, Lane College, Le Moyne-Owen College, Lee University, Lipscomb University, Maryville College, Milligan University, Rhodes College, Tennessee Wesleyan University, Trevecca Nazarene University, Tusculum University, Union University, and Welch College.

Technical Notes

- Students are identified by higher education sector and scholarship type **at college entry**, unless otherwise noted. Renewal, retention, and graduation rates are also attributed to the higher education sector and scholarship program at college entry.
- The full TELS suite includes 14 different financial aid programs. For this report, the focus will be on the HOPE Scholarship, General Assembly Merit Scholarship, and Aspire Award. Though phased out, student outcomes in the HOPE Access Grant program are still included. The final section of the report will focus on the Dual Enrollment Grant.
- Unless otherwise noted, all tables and figures include Locally Governed Institutions (LGIs), Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) Community Colleges, University of Tennessee (UT) campuses, and HOPE-eligible private institutions.
- Martin Methodist College merged with the University of Tennessee System on July 1, 2021, to become Tennessee's newest public university, the University of Tennessee Southern (UTS). For the Fall 2021 cohort and following, UTS is included with the UT Campuses.
- Statistics presented in this report exclude [Tennessee HOPE Nontraditional Scholarship](#) recipients, whose eligibility is contingent on enrollment in an eligible bachelor's degree program.

Section One:

Program Overview



Program Overview

Table 1 below depicts the award amounts and the eligibility criteria to receive and maintain the Tennessee HOPE Scholarship, the General Assembly Merit Scholarship (GAMS), and the Aspire Award as of the 2023-24 academic year. GAMS and the Aspire Award are supplements to the HOPE Scholarship. Students apply for HOPE, GAMS, and the Aspire award by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). For additional information on the scholarship eligibility requirements and award amounts, visit CollegeForTN.org.

Pursuant to Public Chapter (2020) 794, TSAC ceased accepting new applications after September 1, 2021, for the HOPE Access Grant. This is the first year the report will not contain HOPE Access students in the most recent cohort. However, Access recipients and their outcomes will continue to be reported as they progress through higher education.

Table 1: Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship (TELS) Criteria and Awards

Eligibility Criteria	HOPE	GAMS	Aspire
Minimum High School GPA	3.00	3.75	3.00
Minimum ACT Composite	<u>or</u> 21	<u>and</u> 29	<u>or</u> 21
Family Adjusted Gross Income (AGI)	N/A	N/A	<u>and</u> <=\$36,000
Postsecondary Retention GPA*	<i>Traditional Path</i> - Cumulative 2.75 at 24 & 48 hours, cumulative 3.0 at 72, 96, 120 hours		
	<i>Provisional Path</i> - Cumulative 2.75-2.99 at 72, 96, 120 hours with 3.0 prior semester		
4-year: Freshman and Sophomore	\$4,500	\$5,500	\$6,000
4-year: Junior and Senior	\$5,700	\$6,700	\$7,200
2-year: Freshman and Sophomore	\$3,200	\$4,200	\$3,700

Notes: The above award amounts are limited to fall and spring terms, but awards are also available for summer terms. Amounts reported in [historical versions](#) of this report included summer terms. Refer to the historical reports for award amounts prior to fall 2023, including HOPE Access award details.

Student Level is determined by the institution.

*HOPE eligibility may be renewed for up to five years after initial enrollment or until the student earned an advanced degree. The credit hour checkpoints correspond to 24=end of first year, 48=end of second year, 72=end of third year, 96=end of fourth year, 120=end of fifth year. The provisional path applies to students who do not have a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA at the end of the semester in which a student attempted 72 semester hours and any multiple of 24 semester hours thereafter. Under the provisional path, a student's continued eligibility will be determined on a semester-by-semester basis, and the student must maintain full-time enrollment.

Table 2 provides an abbreviated overview of the recent legislative history pertaining to Tennessee's state-based financial aid programs.

Table 2: Major Legislative Changes in TELS, 2018-2024

Legislative Changes
2018
Tennessee Reconnect launched; Eliminated Nontraditional HOPE at associate degree level. Middle College Scholarship launched.
2019
Increased semester award for the Tennessee Middle College Scholarship from \$600 to \$1,000. Expanded the Dual Enrollment Grant maximum from 8 courses to 10 courses (took effect fall 2020). Created the Governor's Investment in Vocational Education (GIVE), which expands the Dual Enrollment Grant to high-need career and technical education (CTE) courses (took effect fall 2020).
2020
Financial aid application process streamlined with the passage of the Financial Aid Simplification for Tennesseans (FAST) Act. Effective July 1, 2021, the FAST Act also eliminated the 120-credit hour accrual terminating event for HOPE eligibility. TSAC stopped accepting applications for the HOPE Access Grant on September 1, 2021, as part of the FAST Act. TSAC temporarily suspended several rules for the HOPE Scholarship, TN Promise, and TN Reconnect for the spring, summer, and fall 2020 semesters. More information on these rule suspensions can be found at TSAC's COVID-19 Campus & Financial Aid webpage . Rule suspensions extended into 2021.
2021
The Tennessee Promise Annual Report consolidated with the Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship Report with the first joint report to be released in October 2022. Public Chapter 512 established a four-year pilot program to award completion grants to Tennessee Promise Scholarship students who have an immediate financial need or who are experiencing a financial hardship that may prevent the student from completing a postsecondary degree or credential. The pilot program will be repealed January 1, 2026. Effective January 1, 2022, the Dual Enrollment Grant program will award in-state tuition and mandatory fees up to a maximum of the first four dual enrollment courses. The Middle College Scholarship award increased from \$1,000/semester to \$1,250/semester. William R. Moore College of Technology added as an eligible institution for the Dual Enrollment Grant. Created an alternate path to HOPE eligibility for home school students by allowing the use of two dual enrollment courses with a 3.0 average GPA to serve as a proxy for the cumulative high school GPA. Expanded the Helping Heroes grant by allowing TSAC to expand eligibility by military campaign through rule, removing the \$750,000 cap on expenditures, and removing the eight-year timeframe for completion.
2022
Effective July 1, 2022, Tennessee Public Chapter 1116 increased base HOPE award amount to \$2,250/semester at eligible four-year institutions for freshmen and sophomore students. Base HOPE award amount for juniors and seniors at eligible four-year institutions increased to \$2,850/semester. For students at eligible two-year colleges, Base HOPE awards increased to \$1,600/semester. Expanded the Dual Enrollment program to award in-state tuition and mandatory fees up to a maximum of the first five dual enrollment courses at a 4-year or 2-year eligible institution or 1,296 clock hours at a TCAT and expanded the program by allowing high school freshmen and sophomores enrolled in a TCAT to participate. Lowered the renewal GPA for the Dual Enrollment Grant from 2.75 to 2.00 and eliminated the required reduction of a student's HOPE award by the amount of DEG received after the fourth course. Expanded the HOPE Scholarship for Nontraditional Students by using independent status rather than a minimum age of 25 years. Lowered the minimum age for Tennessee Reconnect Grant eligibility from 24 to 23 (or otherwise classified as financially independent on the FAFSA).
2023
Expanded the HOPE scholarship to allow a student who earns their first bachelor's degree in less than the projected completion time to continue to receive the Tennessee HOPE scholarship in pursuit of an advanced degree; eligibility remains limited to a total of five years.
2024
Effective July 1, 2025, Tennessee Public Chapter 925 separated the terminating criteria for the Dual Enrollment Grant by institution type. So, if a student loses eligibility at two-year or four-year institutions, the student would still be eligible to receive the Dual Enrollment Grant from a TCAT.

Note: For additional historical legislative changes to TELS, please refer to [past reports](#).

Table 3 provides a comprehensive overview of recipient counts and total awards for the full suite of TELS programs. GAMS and Aspire are supplemental awards to the HOPE Scholarship and are included in the subtotal with HOPE. The first three sections of this report focus on HOPE scholarship recipients. The final section will provide information on recipients of the Dual Enrollment Grant.

Readers interested in learning more about the TELS programs not highlighted in this report are encouraged to review the TELS Year-End Reports and archived scholarship reports available via the [TELS Program Data webpage](#).

Table 3: Scholarship Recipients and Dollars Awarded by Scholarship Program, 2021-22 to 2023-24

Scholarship Program	2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
	Students	Dollars	Students	Dollars	Students	Dollars
HOPE	46,155	\$160,786,187	47,175	\$206,224,714	48,494	\$214,165,931
GAMS	8,690	\$42,765,904	8,408	\$50,571,280	8,363	\$50,604,268
Aspire	15,275	\$72,421,444	14,387	\$81,423,680	14,209	\$80,033,471
Subtotal (HOPE, GAMS, Aspire)	70,120	\$275,973,535	69,970	\$338,219,674	71,066	\$344,803,670
Tennessee Promise	13,796	\$26,230,370	12,847	\$22,513,667	12,717	\$23,944,797
Tennessee Reconnect	8,925	\$22,071,509	7,804	\$19,571,125	7,828	\$19,662,950
TCAT Reconnect	1,748	\$2,059,691	1,797	\$2,081,454	1,918	\$2,201,737
HOPE Access Grant	218	\$363,315	14	\$20,515	0	\$0
HOPE Non-Traditional	281	\$929,441	409	\$1,774,331	397	\$1,824,346
Wilder-Naifeh Grant	10,708	\$13,841,478	10,924	\$13,895,569	11,522	\$14,534,302
HOPE Foster Care Grant	89	\$490,522	105	\$594,933	120	\$733,600
Dual Enrollment Grant	31,626	\$29,290,259	41,709	\$48,423,844	50,211	\$59,090,993
Middle College Scholarship	393	\$886,941	481	\$1,769,848	834	\$3,012,917
Math & Science Teachers	*	\$2,000	0	\$0	0	\$0
Helping Heroes Grant	205	\$304,500	238	\$357,000	222	\$324,500
TN STEP UP	102	\$363,625	97	\$375,450	101	\$423,025
Total[^]	139,232	\$372,807,186	146,395	\$449,597,410	158,599	\$470,556,837

Source: [TSAC TELS year-end reports](#)

Notes: [^]Totals represent a distinct count of students by sector and are not always the sum of the numbers within the section.

The Financial Aid Simplification for Tennesseans (FAST) Act of 2020 sunset the HOPE Access Grant program and ended the Math & Science Teachers program. For more information about the FAST Act, please see this [brief](#) prepared by the Office of Research and Education Accountability in the Comptroller of the Treasury

Table 4 provides the count of recipients and the allocated awards by sector in Tennessee. Like Table 3, **Table 4** includes the full suite of TELS programs.

Table 4: Distribution of Scholarship Recipients and Dollars by System, 2021-22 to 2023-24

Year	System	Students		Allocations	
		Number	Percent	Dollars	Percent
2021-22	UT System	22,066	16%	\$89,482,973	24%
	LGIs	29,375	21%	\$105,624,754	28%
	TBR 2-Year	49,878	36%	\$95,096,754	26%
	Independents	17,029	12%	\$58,031,857	16%
	TCATs	19,883	14%	\$21,581,761	6%
	Proprietary Institutions	1,001	1%	\$2,989,087	1%
	Total*		139,232	100%	\$372,807,186
2022-23	UT System	22,418	15%	\$112,628,755	25%
	LGIs	31,260	21%	\$135,194,789	30%
	TBR 2-Year	50,450	34%	\$101,645,582	23%
	Independents	16,812	11%	\$69,792,755	16%
	TCATs	25,776	18%	\$26,916,040	6%
	Proprietary Institutions	945	1%	\$3,419,489	1%
	Total*		146,395	100%	\$449,597,410
2023-24	UT System	23,045	15%	\$115,916,123	25%
	LGIs	32,468	20%	\$137,724,816	29%
	TBR 2-Year	53,208	34%	\$109,076,632	23%
	Independents	17,998	11%	\$73,415,724	16%
	TCATs	30,759	19%	\$31,081,509	7%
	Proprietary Institutions	1,121	1%	\$3,342,033	1%
	Total*		158,599	100%	\$470,556,837

Source: [TSAC TELS year-end reports](#)

Notes: *Annual totals represent a distinct count of students and are not always the sum of the sector totals for the year, as students may attend multiple institutions throughout the academic year.

Due to rounding, totals may not sum to 100.

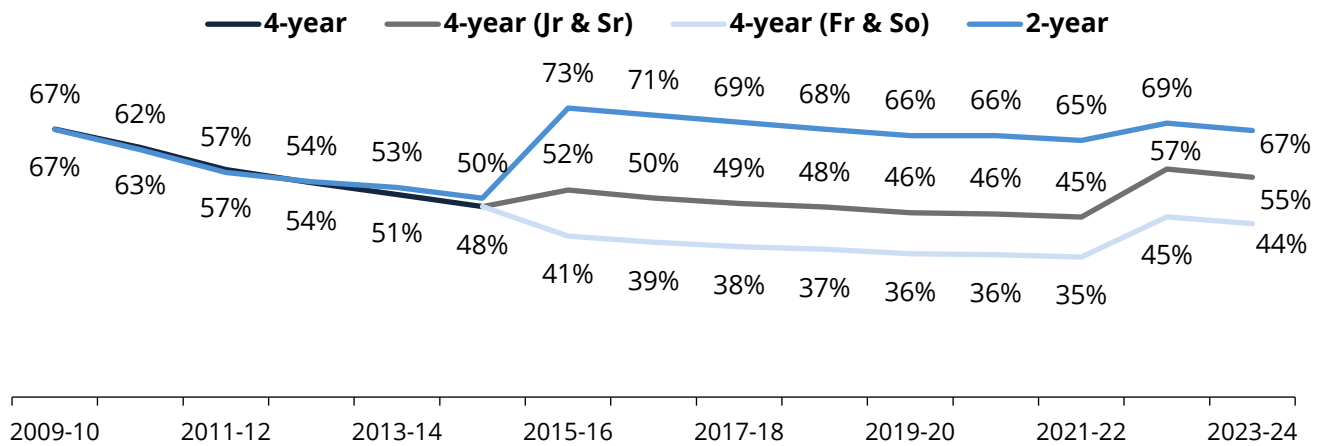
Student and award totals are based on the suite of TELS programs summarized in Table 3.

See [previous iterations](#) of this report for recipients and awards prior to 2020-21.

Figure 1 displays the maximum base HOPE award (not including GAMS or Aspire supplements; see **Table 1** for more information) as a percent of the average mandatory tuition and fees for Tennessee’s public community colleges and universities as reported in the annual [Tennessee Higher Education Fact Book](#). In 2023-24, public community colleges reported an average of \$4,765 in tuition and fees. For public universities, average tuition and fees were \$10,294.

Effective July 1, 2022, the maximum annual base HOPE amount for freshman- and sophomore-level students increased to \$4,500 at eligible four-year colleges. The maximum annual base HOPE amount for junior- and senior-level students increased to \$5,700. At community colleges, the maximum base HOPE increased to \$3,200 annually.

Figure 1: Maximum HOPE Award Amount as a Percent of Average Tuition & Fees at Public Institutions, 2009-10 to 2023-24



Notes: This figure does *not* include the HOPE award or tuition and fees for the summer semester. *Average Tuition and Fees* is an unweighted average of resident tuition and mandatory fees for full-time undergraduate students at public institutions. Refer to Table 3.10 in in 2024 [Tennessee Higher Education Fact Book](#) for more information.

Tables 5 and 6 depict the count and share of HOPE scholarship recipients by program and by sector in fall 2023. **Table 5** highlights first-time recipients in fall 2023, and **Table 6** captures all HOPE recipients in fall 2023. The overall HOPE participation increased slightly (1.4% or 974 students) from fall 2022 to fall 2023. The number of first-time recipients increased by 1.1% or 298 students during this timeframe. While the overall number of GAMS and Aspire supplement recipients decreased from fall 2022 to fall 2023, the number of base HOPE recipients increased by over 1,600 students over the timeframe. As will be shown in the outcomes section of this report, higher rates of scholarship retention explain some of the increased overall student count.

Table 5: Distribution of First-Time Scholarship Recipients by System and Scholarship Program, Fall 2023

First-Time HOPE Recipients	System	Student Headcount			
		HOPE	GAMS	Aspire	Total
Student Headcount	LGI Universities	5,656	577	2,073	8,306
	TBR Community Colleges	6,118	80	2,058	8,256
	UT Campuses	4,606	1,141	1,125	6,872
	Private Institutions*	2,956	541	1,005	4,502
	Total	19,336	2,339	6,261	27,936
Percent	LGI Universities	68%	7%	25%	30%
	TBR Community Colleges	74%	1%	25%	30%
	UT Campuses	67%	17%	16%	25%
	Private Institutions*	66%	12%	22%	16%
	Total	69%	8%	22%	100%

Notes: Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

*Includes proprietary and non-for-profit institutions. South College is the only HOPE-eligible proprietary institution.

GAMS and Aspire are supplemental awards to the base HOPE award. Students captured in the "HOPE" column are those who only received the base scholarship.

Table 6: Distribution of All Scholarship Recipients by System and Scholarship Program, Fall 2023

All HOPE Recipients	System	Student Headcount			
		HOPE	GAMS	Aspire	Total
Student Headcount	LGI Universities	16,945	2,059	4,562	23,566
	TBR Community Colleges	10,110	152	2,910	13,172
	UT Campuses	13,961	3,545	3,014	20,520
	Private Institutions*	8,151	1,814	2,352	12,317
	Total	49,167	7,570	12,838	69,575
Percent	LGI Universities	72%	9%	19%	34%
	TBR Community Colleges	77%	1%	22%	19%
	UT Campuses	68%	17%	15%	29%
	Private Institutions*	66%	15%	19%	18%
	Total	71%	11%	18%	100%

Notes: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

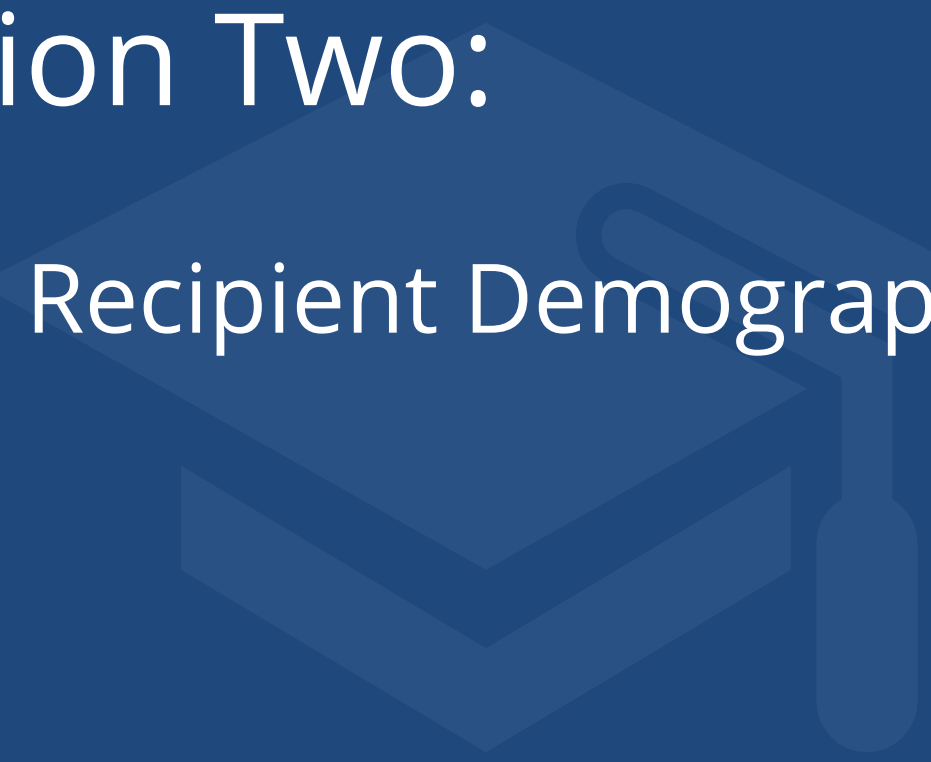
Student enrollment based on system in fall 2023, not necessarily the institution of initial scholarship receipt.

*Includes proprietary and non-for-profit institutions. South College is the only HOPE-eligible proprietary institution.

GAMS and Aspire are supplemental awards to the base HOPE award. Students captured in the "HOPE" column are those who only received the base scholarship.

Section Two:

HOPE Recipient Demographics



HOPE Recipient Demographics

This section of the report provides an overview of the demographic characteristics of the fall 2023 cohort of first-time HOPE recipients and a comparison to the demographic profile of previous cohorts. The majority of first-time HOPE recipients are female, White, ineligible for a Federal Pell Grant, and did not receive a Tennessee Student Assistance Award (TSAA)¹, which is consistent year to year. Most recipients also have at least one parent with an associate degree or higher. **Table 7** compares first-time HOPE recipient demographic characteristics over time by gender, race/ethnicity, parental education, eligibility for federal need-based financial aid, and receipt of TSAA.

Table 7: Demographic Profile of First-Time HOPE Recipients
Fall 2021 - Fall 2023

Recipient Demographic Categories		Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023
Gender	<i>Female</i>	59%	58%	59%
	<i>Male</i>	41%	42%	41%
Race/Ethnicity	<i>Black, Not Hispanic</i>	13%	13%	12%
	<i>Hispanic</i>	7%	7%	8%
	<i>Other*</i>	6%	7%	7%
	<i>White, Not Hispanic</i>	75%	73%	73%
Parental Education	<i>Associate Degree or Higher</i>	69%	70%	68%
Aid Eligibility	<i>Federal Pell Grant</i>	42%	41%	44%
	<i>TN Student Assistance Award (TSAA)</i>	40%	38%	42%
Count of First-Time HOPE Recipients		26,581	27,578	27,936

Notes: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

**Other* category includes Alaskan Native, American Indian, Asian/Pacific Islander, Multiracial, and Unknown.

Federal Pell Grant eligibility and TSAA receipt are based on the student's first year of scholarship receipt.

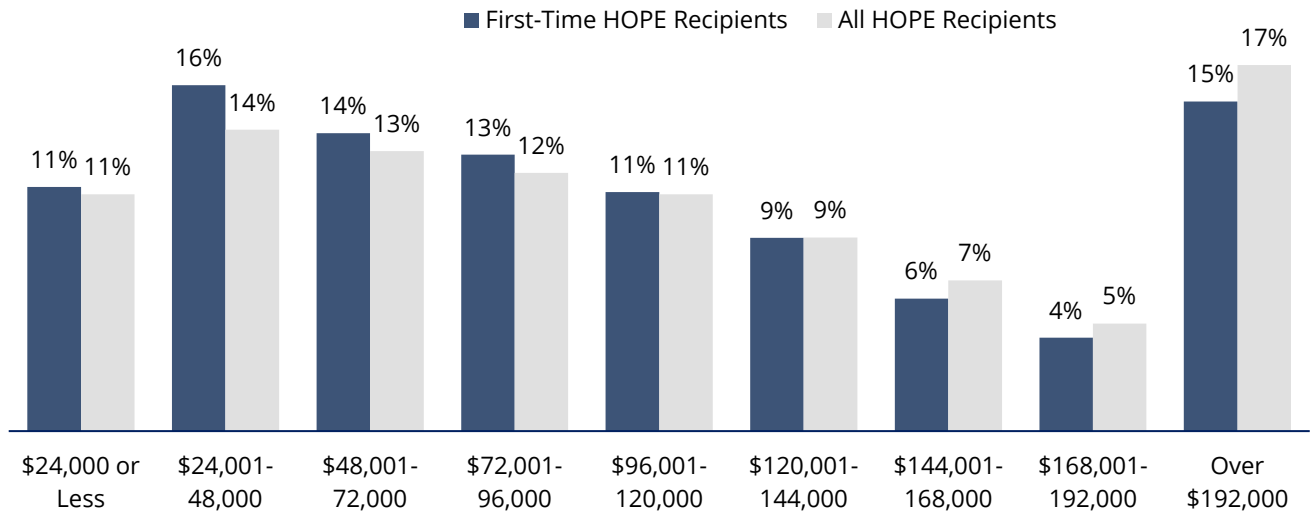
First generation is a measure of students with a parent with an associate degree or higher, as reported on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and is based on the student's first year of scholarship receipt.

Figures 2 and 3 provide insight into the fall 2023 cohort by their adjusted gross income (AGI). **Figure 2** displays the share of first-time and all HOPE recipients in fall 2023 in each AGI bracket. **Figure 3** displays the change in those AGI groups between the fall 2022 and fall 2023 cohorts. The growth in the largest AGI category extends a trend seen in the last several iterations of this report; the share of HOPE scholarship recipients from higher income backgrounds continues to grow.

¹ For more information on TSAA, Tennessee's need-based grant for undergraduates, visit [TSAC's TSAA webpage](#).

Figure 2: HOPE Scholarship by Family Adjusted Gross Income (AGI)

Fall 2023

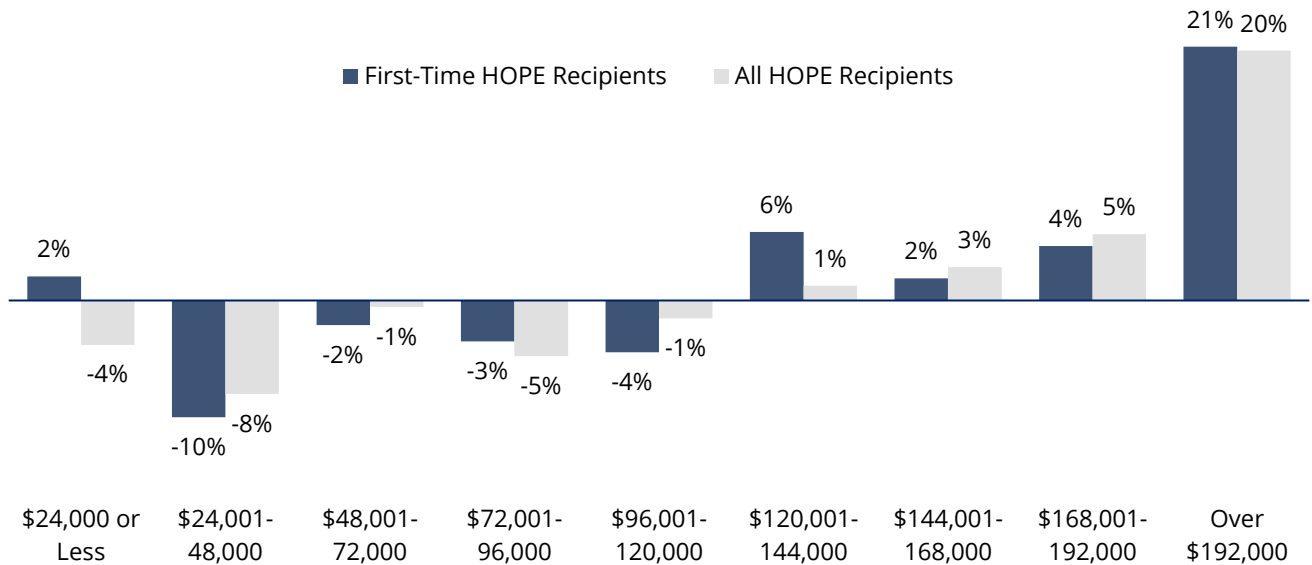


Notes: Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.
AGI from 2023-24 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

Figure 3: Change in First-Time and All HOPE Recipient Headcount by Family Adjusted Gross

Income (AGI),

Fall 2022 - Fall 2023



Notes: Change in first-time recipient headcounts between fall 2022 and fall 2023 are as follows:
 \$24,000 or Less = 58; \$24,001-48,000 = (449); \$48,001-72,000 = (75); \$72,001-96,000 = (118); \$96,001-120,000 = (130);
 \$120,001-144,000 = 126; \$144,001-168,000 = 29; \$168,001-192,000 = 49; Over \$192,000 = 696
 The change in headcounts for all HOPE recipients is available upon request.

Table 8 and **Figure 4** below depict the academic profile of first-time HOPE recipients in fall 2023. Overall, first-time recipients in fall 2023 had a slightly higher average high school grade point average (GPA; 3.57 on a 4.0 scale) compared to the previous cohort (3.54). The average ACT Composite score of 22 (highest possible score of 36) for the cohort was unchanged from the previous cohort.

Specific to recipients of the base HOPE Scholarship, 59% of first-time recipients in fall 2023 met both the high school GPA (3.0+) and ACT Composite score (21+) requirements, with 94% meeting at least the high school GPA requirement and 66% meeting at least the ACT Composite score requirement.

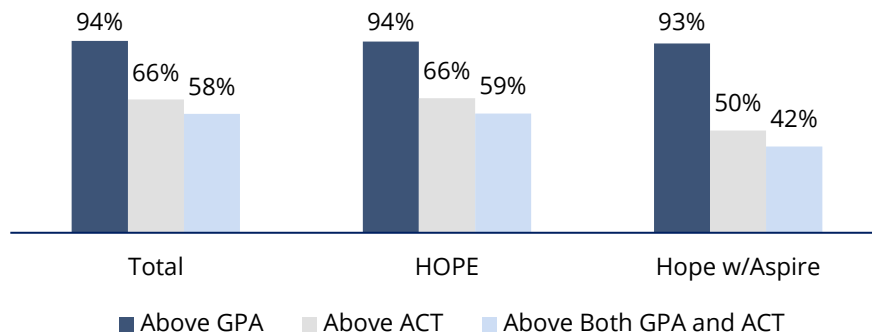
Table 8: Average High School GPAs and ACT Composite Scores of First-Time HOPE Recipients by Postsecondary System and Scholarship Type, Fall 2023

		Average High School GPA	Average ACT Composite Score
Scholarship	HOPE	3.55	22
	HOPE w/GAMS	3.93	31
	Hope w/Aspire	3.48	20
System	LGI Universities	3.55	22
	TBR Community Colleges	3.45	20
	UT Campuses	3.71	25
	Private Institutions	3.57	22
Total		3.57	22

Sources: FAST, THECSIS

Notes: Missing data on GPA/ACT from FAST are supplemented with data, where available, from THECSIS. Students with missing GPA or ACT scores are excluded. GPA or ACT values of 0 are treated as missing. GAMS and Aspire are supplemental awards to the base HOPE award. Students captured in the HOPE row are those who only received the base scholarship.

Figure 4: Share of First-Time HOPE Recipients Achieving GPA and ACT Eligibility Thresholds, Fall 2023

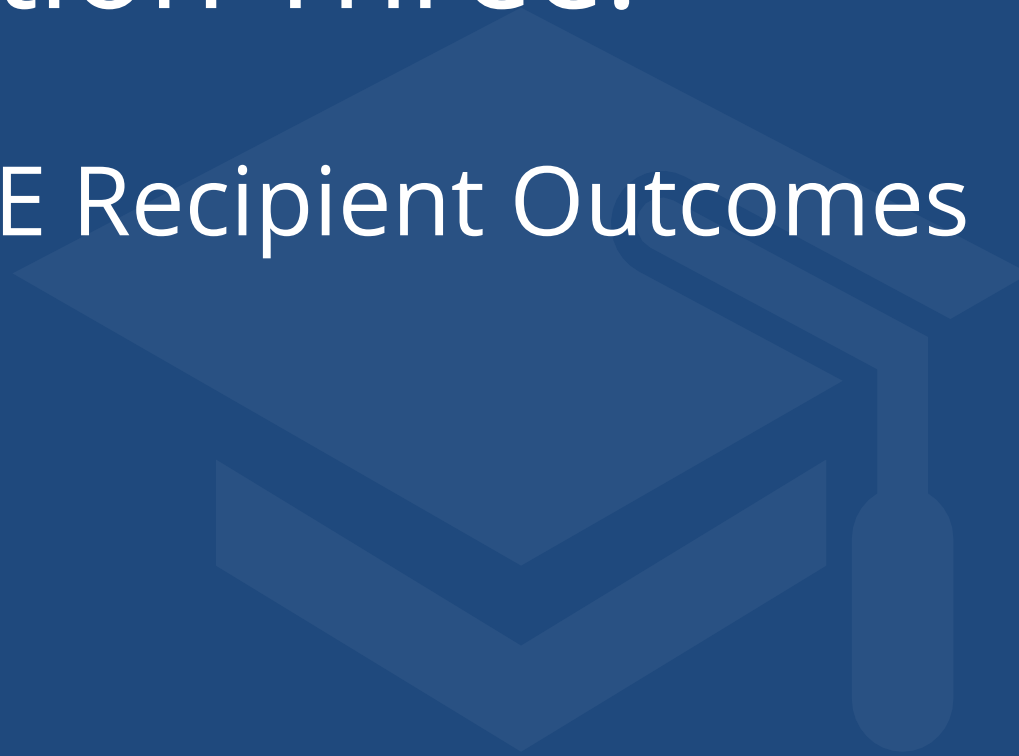


Sources: FAST, THECSIS

Notes: Students with missing GPA or ACT scores excluded. GPA or ACT values of 0 are treated as missing. The thresholds of 3.0 high school GPA and 21 ACT do not apply to GAMS. GAMS students are included in the Total figures. Students captured in the HOPE columns are those who only received the base scholarship. Missing data on GPA/ACT from FAST are supplemented with data, where available, from THECSIS.

Section Three:

HOPE Recipient Outcomes



HOPE Recipient Outcomes

This section reports on the outcomes of first-time HOPE recipients by cohort.

Definitions

- The **fall-to-fall renewal rate** is defined as the percentage of first-time HOPE recipients who renew their scholarship from the first fall to the second, third, fourth, or fifth fall of eligibility.
- The **fall-to-fall retention rate** is defined as the percentage of first-time HOPE recipients who returned to higher education in Tennessee with or without their scholarship intact. Importantly, students captured in the fall-to-fall retention rate do not necessarily return to the institution they were at when they first received the HOPE scholarship. Students who enrolled at any public or private institution in Tennessee that provides enrollment records to THEC/TSAC directly or indirectly through TN DATA are included in the fall-to-fall retention rate.
- Complementary to the fall-to-fall retention rate is the **non-renewal retention rate**. This is the share of first-time HOPE recipients who did not renew their scholarship after the first year but returned to higher education in Tennessee during their second fall term.
- The **four-year graduation rate** is defined as the percent of HOPE first-time freshmen who attained either an associate or bachelor's degree **within four years** of enrollment, regardless of scholarship status at graduation. Graduation rates within five and six years of initial enrollment are also reported.
- The **graduation rate with HOPE intact** is defined as the percent of HOPE first-time freshmen who attained either an associate or bachelor's degree **within four or five years** of enrollment **without losing scholarship eligibility** (i.e., received a HOPE award in the same term as their graduation).

Additional information on HOPE Scholarship eligibility maintenance requirements is available at CollegeForTN.org. See the **TELS Student Success Dashboard** for additional details on renewal and retention rates over time.

Outcomes Over Time

Table 9 below gives an overview of the academic outcomes for successive cohorts of first-time HOPE recipients throughout their time in Tennessee higher education. The Fall 2022 first-time recipient cohort saw increases in the first fall to second fall scholarship renewal rate and in the overall retention rate. These three percentage point increases over the Fall 2021 first-time recipient cohort demonstrate the continuation of strong student performance following the declines observed during the pandemic period. The second fall to third fall renewal and retention rate increases of the fall 2021 cohort are further evidence of this trend.

Table 9: Scholarship Renewal, Postsecondary Retention, and Graduation Rates by
First-Time HOPE Scholarship Recipients, Fall 2017 to Fall 2022

Cohort Year	First-time HOPE Recipients	Fall to Fall Cohort Scholarship Renewal Rates				Fall to Fall Cohort Retention Rates*				Cohort Graduation Rates				
		Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Scholarship intact within 4 years	within 4 years	Scholarship intact within 5 years	within 5 years	within 6 years
2017	30,227	56%	46%	37%	5%	79%	68%	59%	26%	33%	47%	36%	59%	62%
2018	30,207	56%	47%	36%	7%	79%	67%	57%	24%	35%	47%	39%	58%	
2019	30,326	63%	46%	36%	7%	79%	65%	55%	23%	35%	47%			
2020	28,516	56%	44%	35%		75%	63%	55%						
2021	26,581	58%	47%			78%	67%							
2022	27,578	61%				81%								

Notes: Scholarship renewals and retention rates are fall-to-fall. Retention means a student returned to higher education the following fall with or without the scholarship intact. Retention rates represent the share of the cohort who remained enrolled in postsecondary education (data from the TN DATA system are used to supplement continued enrollment at private institutions) regardless of scholarship renewal or of continued enrollment at the admitting institution. For these cohorts of students, students are only eligible to receive a HOPE scholarship for up to 5 years or the completion of an advanced degree, whichever event occurs first. As a result, for the table, renewal and retention rates are not calculated past the fifth academic year. Renewal rates over time and six-year graduation rates are reported within the [interactive dashboard](#). The spike in first-time scholarship renewal rates observed for the fall 2019 cohort may be explained by the relaxation of scholarship maintenance rules during the pandemic.

Scholarship Renewal and Postsecondary Retention

Table 10 below reports the share of first-time HOPE recipients who renewed their scholarship² in their second fall by their initial scholarship program and the sector of postsecondary enrollment. A student is considered a renewal if they receive a scholarship payment in their second fall, regardless of whether that payment was made to their initial postsecondary institution. **Table 10** also reports the share of first-time HOPE recipients who returned to higher education in their second fall by their initial scholarship program and the sector of postsecondary enrollment. A student is considered retained if they returned to any public or participating private postsecondary institution, regardless of if they renewed their HOPE scholarship. THEC/TSAC and TICUA have collaborated to improve the scope of students captured in the report from private, non-profit institutions of higher education³. THEC/TSAC and TICUA's partnership has resulted in improved record matching and allows THEC/TSAC to report a more complete picture of TELS recipients and their outcomes.

The overall renewal and retention rates have not only rebounded but have surpassed pre-pandemic levels. The sharp increase in renewal rates observed in the fall 2019 cohort is attributed to TSAC's temporary rule suspensions concerning scholarship eligibility and maintenance requirements. However, the overall renewal rate has also increased past pre-pandemic averages. Readers are encouraged to explore the **interactive dashboard** accessible via the [TELS Report landing page](#) to learn more about the scholarship renewal rates over time and by student demographic groups.

² For more information on the HOPE scholarship renewal criteria, visit collegefortn.org.

³ Starting in Fall 2023, TICUA institutions submit enrollment records for all students who have ever received the HOPE Scholarship; previously, only enrollment records for students currently receiving the scholarship were submitted to THEC/TSAC.

Table 10: One-Year Scholarship Renewal and Retention Rates by Scholarship Program and System, First-Time HOPE Recipients, Fall 2017 to Fall 2022

		First-Time HOPE Recipients					
		Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022
Renewal Rate	HOPE	57%	56%	64%	55%	58%	60%
	GAMS	88%	90%	93%	88%	91%	92%
	Aspire	47%	48%	55%	46%	49%	51%
	Access	17%	18%	22%	16%	13%	*
Retention Rate	HOPE	81%	80%	80%	76%	78%	81%
	GAMS	91%	92%	92%	90%	92%	93%
	Aspire	73%	74%	73%	69%	71%	75%
	Access	56%	60%	52%	46%	45%	*
Renewal Rate	LGI Universities	57%	59%	67%	58%	61%	62%
	TBR Community Colleges	46%	45%	50%	42%	45%	49%
	UT Campuses	64%	64%	74%	65%	67%	70%
	Private Institutions^	65%	63%	70%	64%	68%	69%
	Total	56%	56%	63%	56%	58%	61%
Retention Rate	LGI Univ	83%	84%	84%	80%	83%	84%
	TBR CC	70%	70%	68%	65%	66%	70%
	UT Campuses	90%	90%	90%	88%	87%	91%
	Private Institutions^	75%	74%	77%	71%	76%	80%
	Total	79%	79%	79%	75%	78%	81%

Note: ^Retention rate figures are sourced from THECSIS and supplemented by enrollment information from TN DATA. Not all private institutions report to TN DATA. See the Data Sources & Technical Notes section for a comprehensive listing of the private institutions reporting data to TN DATA at the time of this report. Retention is not limited to continued enrollment at the admitting/initial institution. Retention rates capture enrollment at any Tennessee public college or university (excluding TCAT) and at select private institutions. UT Southern is included in the UT Campuses system for the fall 2021 and fall 2022 cohorts.

Complementing the share of first-time TELS recipients renewing their scholarship eligibility for a second year, **Table 11** reports the share of first-time recipients who did not renew their scholarship eligibility but remained enrolled in postsecondary education. The retention rates below capture enrollment at any Tennessee public college or university (excluding Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology) and at select private institutions, not necessarily enrollment at the same institution where a student originally received the HOPE scholarship.

The non-renewal retention rate has increased but has not yet reached the level it was at prior to disruptions caused by the pandemic. Like the overall retention and renewal rates, the non-renewal retention rate varies across subgroups of scholarship recipients, with some groups approaching pre-pandemic retention rates while others continue to be lower. Readers can explore renewal and retention trends over time across different subgroups of scholarship recipients in the HOPE Scholarship dashboard on the [TELS Report landing page](#).

Table 11: Fall-to-Fall Retention Rate for First-Time Scholarship Recipients Who Did Not Renew their Scholarship Eligibility in Year Two by Scholarship Program and System, Fall 2017 to Fall 2022

		First-Time HOPE Recipients					
		Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022
Non-Renewals	HOPE	8,056	8,482	6,836	8,318	7,481	7,561
	GAMS	285	249	184	304	197	182
	Aspire	4,539	4,236	3,760	3,776	3,214	3,038
	Access	333	254	309	256	185	*
Non-Renewal Retention Rate	HOPE	58%	56%	47%	49%	51%	54%
	GAMS	65%	57%	48%	53%	57%	58%
	Aspire	50%	53%	42%	44%	46%	50%
	Access	48%	52%	39%	37%	37%	*
Non-Renewals	LGI Universities	3,802	3,670	2,847	3,379	2,980	3,258
	TBR Community Colleges	5,364	5,279	4,984	5,329	4,662	4,277
	UT Campuses	2,385	2,490	1,813	2,329	2,075	2,002
	Private Institutions^	1,662	1,782	1,445	1,617	1,360	1,252
Non-Renewal Retention Rate	LGI Univ	61%	61%	52%	52%	57%	58%
	TBR CC	44%	45%	36%	39%	39%	42%
	UT Campuses	74%	72%	64%	65%	65%	69%
	Private Institutions^	50%	47%	40%	38%	43%	53%
Total		55%	55%	45%	47%	49%	53%

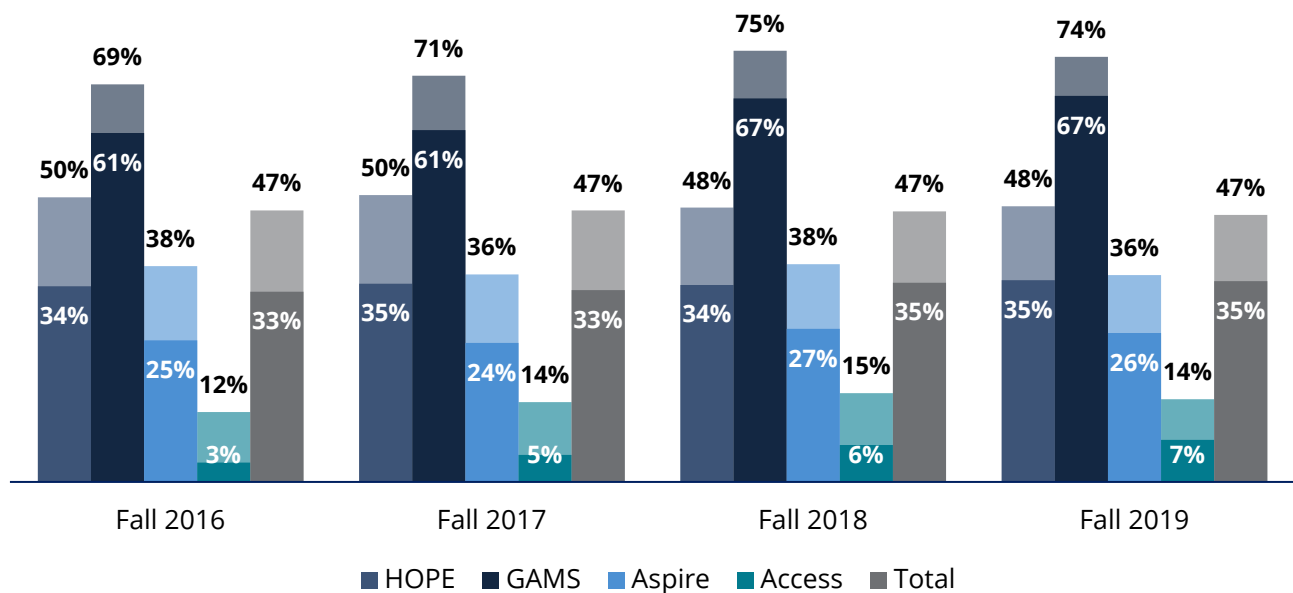
Notes: ^Retention rate figures are sourced from THECSIS and supplemented by enrollment information from TN DATA. Not all private institutions report to TN DATA. See the Data Sources & Technical Notes section for a comprehensive listing of the private institutions reporting data to TN DATA at the time of this report. Retention is not limited to continued enrollment at the admitting/initial institution. Retention rates capture enrollment at any Tennessee public college or university (excluding TCAT) and at select private institutions. UT Southern is included in the UT Campuses system for the fall 2021 and fall 2022 cohorts.

Four-Year Graduation Rates

With an increased focus on on-time completion, **Figure 5** below reports the share of first-time HOPE recipients, by their initial scholarship receipt, who graduated (i.e., earned an associate or bachelor’s degree) within four years of enrolling. To learn and explore more about the four-, five-, and six-year graduation rates both with and without maintaining HOPE scholarship eligibility through graduation, readers should refer to the [interactive dashboard](#).

The lower, darker bars in **Figure 5** represent the percentage of students who graduated with their HOPE scholarship intact. These students received a HOPE award in the term in which they graduated. The higher, lighter bars represent the share of students who graduated regardless of if they kept their HOPE scholarship intact through their graduation. For example, 50% of the Fall 2016 first-time recipient cohort who received just the base HOPE scholarship graduated within four years of initial enrollment. A subset of that group, 34% graduated within four years with the HOPE scholarship intact.

Figure 5: Four-Year Graduation Rate with and without Scholarship Intact by Original Scholarship Program, Fall 2016 to Fall 2019



Note: Graduation rate data for all cohorts incorporates THEC’s Student Information System (SIS), TN DATA, and National Student Clearinghouse Student Tracker to identify graduates. Bars represent actual values, while percentages shown are subject to rounding. As of July 1, 2023, HOPE eligibility may be renewed for up to five years or the completion of an advanced degree, whichever comes first. From July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2023, TELS eligibility terminated after five years or attainment of a bachelor’s degree.

Section Four:

Dual Enrollment Grant

Participation

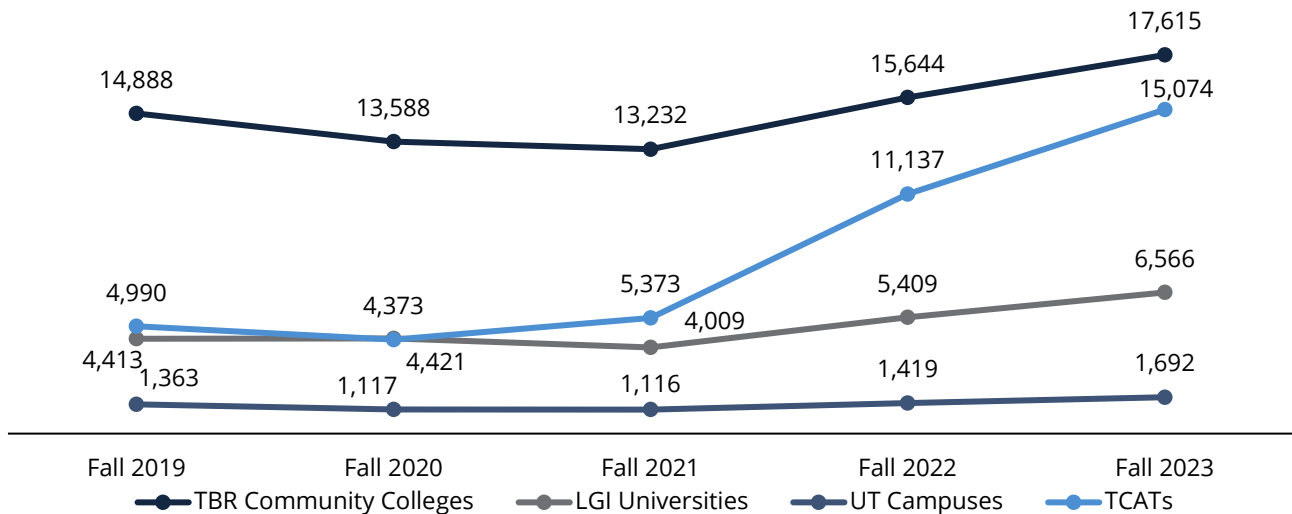


Dual Enrollment Grant Participation

New to the report this year is Dual Enrollment Grant participation. The Dual Enrollment Grant provides opportunities for Tennessee high school students to enroll in postsecondary courses at universities, community colleges, and technical colleges by covering tuition and fees for up to ten courses at eligible four- and two-year institutions or 1,296 clock hours at a TCAT. This program within the TELS suite has grown quickly over the last several years. Expenditures for the grant have increased by nearly \$30 million from 2021-22 to 2023-24 (see **Table 3**). This increase has come as the eligibility of the Dual Enrollment Grant has been expanded to give more high school students access to dual enrollment courses at all of Tennessee’s public institutions, especially at community colleges and Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology. See **Table 2** for information about legislative changes that have increased access to the Dual Enrollment Grant.

For the following analyses of the Dual Enrollment Grant, it is important to note that THEC/TSAC does not currently have student-level information about Dual Enrollment Grant recipients at private institutions. **Figure 6** provides the number of fall recipients of the Dual Enrollment Grant at Tennessee’s public colleges and universities by sector.

Figure 6: Dual Enrollment Grant Participants, Colleges and Universities
Fall 2019 to Fall 2023



Note: Dual Enrollment Grant payment records are sourced from the Financial Aid System of Tennessee (FAST) and matched to enrollment records in the Tennessee Higher Education Commission Student Information System (THECSIS). Due to data reporting practices, TCAT dual enrollments correspond to a full academic year (i.e. the Fall 2020 total refers to the 2020-2021 academic year).

Table 12 below shares demographic details about the cohorts of Dual Enrollment Grant (DEG) recipients. As the Dual Enrollment Grant has expanded, it has grown among historically underserved student groups. The gender breakdown of DEG recipients does vary by sector. At the universities and community colleges, just over sixty percent of DEG recipients are female each year. While males make up the majority of DEG recipients at the TCATs, the gender split has been narrowing as the grant has expanded.

Table 12: Demographic Profile of DEG Recipients, Colleges and Universities, Fall 2019 to Fall 2023

Recipient Demographic Categories		Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023
Gender	<i>Female</i>	55%	57%	55%	52%	50%
	<i>Male</i>	45%	43%	45%	48%	50%
Race/Ethnicity	<i>Black, Not Hispanic</i>	9%	10%	10%	13%	13%
	<i>Hispanic</i>	5%	5%	6%	7%	8%
	<i>Other*</i>	10%	11%	14%	13%	13%
	<i>White, Not Hispanic</i>	76%	75%	70%	67%	65%
Count of DEG Recipients		25,654	23,499	23,730	33,609	40,947

Note: Dual Enrollment Grant payment records are sourced from the Financial Aid System of Tennessee (FAST). Due to data reporting practices, TCAT dual enrollments correspond to a full academic year (i.e. the Fall 2020 total refers to the 2020-2021 academic year). Students without a recorded gender or race/ethnicity are excluded. Due to rounding, percentages may not add to 100%. **Other* category includes Alaskan Native, American Indian, Asian/Pacific Islander, Multiracial, and Unknown.

Table 13 presents the college-going rate for dual enrollment grantees by sector. This is defined as the share of high school graduates who received a DEG at any point in their high school careers that seamlessly enroll in higher education. This rate reflects the share of DEG recipients that were converted into postsecondary students for each sector in which they participated in dual enrollment. It is important to keep in mind the different missions of institutions in each sector when examining this table. Despite the expansion of the dual enrollment grant to more students, the rate at which institutions are converting high school seniors who participate in the grant into college goers has remained steady.

Table 13: College-Going Rate for Dual Enrollment Grantees by Sector

System	High School Graduating Class				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
TBR Community Colleges	86%	85%	84%	85%	85%
TCATs	50%	42%	44%	45%	45%
LGI Universities	93%	89%	87%	89%	92%
UT Campuses	92%	90%	86%	88%	90%

Sources: THECSIS; FAST; TN DATA; National Student Clearinghouse Student Tracker

Notes: Students appear in the sector in which they most recently had a dual enrollment grant record.

Data revised January 2025 following the clarification of students' high school graduating class information in FAST.

The methodology for calculating DEG CGR by sector is explained in the paragraph preceding Table 13.

Conclusion

This report presents an overview of the TELS suite of programs, HOPE scholarship participation in fall 2023, first-year HOPE scholarship renewal and retention of fall 2022 first-time recipients, and longitudinal educational outcomes for previous cohorts of first-time HOPE recipients. Generally, the HOPE scholarship recipient population has grown to mirror the enrollment rebounding since 2020.

The Fall 2023 first-time HOPE recipient cohort saw modest growth over the Fall 2022 cohort (see **Table 5**), however the distribution of first-time recipients by income level saw notable year-over-year changes (see **Figures 2 & 3**). Continuing a trend observed in recent reports, students in the highest income bracket are making up an increasing proportion of HOPE recipients. Students at higher income levels are more likely to renew the HOPE scholarship, retain in higher education, and graduate. The Aspire Award supplement to the HOPE scholarship has had the same eligibility threshold for twenty years. Expanding the Aspire Award threshold to adjust for inflation would provide additional funds for approximately 10,300 students, making them more likely to succeed.

The first-year scholarship renewal rate (based on scholarship payment in the second fall after the initial fall of receipt) for the fall 2022 cohort is particularly strong, at 61%, and has surpassed the rates observed in the years before pandemic disruptions (see **Table 10**). Likewise, the overall fall-to-fall retention rate of first-time scholarship recipients, regardless of scholarship renewal, for the fall 2022 cohort has surpassed the rates seen before the pandemic (see **Table 10**). Fall-to-fall retention of first-time scholarship recipients who did not renew their scholarship continued to increase (see **Table 11**).

This year's report provides four-, five-, and six-year graduation rates, focusing in detail on the four-year graduation rate. The four-year graduation rate of the last four cohorts held steady at 47%, while more students in the Fall 2019 first-time HOPE recipient cohort graduated within four years while maintaining scholarship receipt (see **Figure 5**).

New to the TELS report this year is a section on the Dual Enrollment Grant. This grant program has had a large influx of students and award dollars over the last several years (see **Table 3**). Every sector of public higher education in Tennessee has shown growth in the number of Dual Enrollment Grant recipients (see **Figure 6**). This growth is especially explosive in the Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) sector, as ninth and tenth graders have gained eligibility to enroll in dual enrollment courses at their local TCAT.