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Overview

The Hope Scholarship Program is an education savings account (ESA) program that will allow parents and families to utilize the state portion of their education funding to tailor an individualized learning experience that works best for them.

An ESA allows each family to have access to an account for each eligible student in their household. All purchases will be made via an ACH electronic transfer and will be pre-approved by the West Virginia Treasurer’s Office.

In 2021, West Virginia, along with Indiana and New Hampshire, became the sixth, seventh, and eighth states in the United States, after Arizona, Florida, Mississippi, North Carolina, and Tennessee, to enact education savings account programs.

The following sections will help guide you as you utilize your Hope Scholarship.

Qualifying for the Hope Scholarship Program

To qualify for the Hope Scholarship Program, a student must meet the following criteria:

- The student must be a resident of West Virginia.
- The student must be under 21 years of age. If at any point during the school year the student turns 21, they will no longer be eligible and their account will be closed.
- The student has not successfully completed a secondary education program; AND
- Was enrolled full-time in a public elementary or secondary school program in West Virginia for the entire instructional term during the academic year immediately preceding the academic year for which the student is applying to participate in the Hope Scholarship Program; OR
- Is enrolled full-time and attending a public elementary or secondary school in West Virginia for at least 45 consecutive calendar days at the time of application.
  - The student must continue to attend and maintain a 90% attendance rate until an award letter is issued by the Hope Scholarship Board; OR
- The student is eligible or required at the time of application to enroll in a West Virginia kindergarten program for the first time under West Virginia’s compulsory school attendance law (W. Va Code § 18-8-1a). (i.e., the student must be at least five years old
prior to July 1). If the student won’t be five years old before July 1, the student may become eligible for the Hope Scholarship Program if the student successfully enrolls in a public kindergarten program in West Virginia through the public kindergarten program’s early entrance process. If a student who has not yet attained the age of five years old by July 1 and who is unable to enroll in a public kindergarten through an early entrance process otherwise attends a kindergarten program authorized under W. Va. Code §18-8-1a, that student is considered an existing private or homeschool student since the student is no longer eligible for kindergarten.

If a Hope Scholarship student becomes ineligible to participate in the program during the academic year based on the above rules or by not filing a renewal application, his or her account will be terminated.

**EMA – Education Market Assistant**

Step Up For Students-West Virginia, Inc. is a not-for-profit organization that has been engaged by the West Virginia State Treasurer’s Office to provide Hope Scholarship program management including the application intake process and subsequent scholarship funding management. These functions will be supported by EMA, the Education Market Assistant.

EMA will serve as the scholarship management platform for parents and providers.

**Applying for the Hope Scholarship Program**

**Initial Application**

The Hope Scholarship Board will accept applications from March 1 until May 15 for the following school year. Students who are ineligible for the program during the regular application window but who become eligible may submit an application to the Board at any time during the academic year. An eligible student who misses the application window must be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Hope Scholarship Board.

**Parent/Guardian Account - New Sign Up**

In order to apply, the parent/guardian of the student must set up an online account through the Education Market Assistant (EMA). The guardian account can be setup by clicking [here](#). The following steps will be required when setting up a profile:
1. On main Log In page, click “Sign Up.”

2. Enter an Email Address and click “Send Code.”

3. When email is received, enter code into field and click “Confirm.”

4. Click on the arrow and select the “Parent/Guardian” Account Type.
5. Create a username and password. If the username is taken, you will be prompted to choose a different one.
6. Click “Continue.”
7. You will be asked to select 3 security questions and complete the answers.

8. You will be asked to certify the Terms and Conditions during your first login.
Parent/Guardian Account – Complete Profile

The guardian will be prompted to complete their full profile including the following information:

- Account holder (parent/guardian) legal name. **Note:** Please do not use nicknames. You are not permitted to change your name once the profile is complete. Please contact the EMA Contact Center to make a valid name change.
- Physical and Mailing address – This information will be verified against the U.S. Postal Service. **Note:** The physical address cannot be a Post Office (PO) Box.
- County of residence.
- Phone number.
- Manage consents and contact preferences.

Submit an Application

Once the account has been set up, you may apply for the scholarship for your student(s).

**Note:** The board shall issue a notification to eligible recipients within 45 days of receipt of a completed application and all required documentation.

From the Dashboard, click “Apply Now.”

You will be asked to fill in the required **student information:**

1. First and Last Name (must be letters or the following characters: ‘.’, ‘-’).
2. Date of Birth (must be at least 5 years old by July 1).
3. Gender
4. Ethnicity
5. Race (will only be available if “Non-Hispanic” is chosen under Ethnicity).
6. Student WVEIS Number (must be 9 or 10-digit numeric field).
7. Grade Level for the year for which applying for the Hope Scholarship Program.
The following documentation showing that the student is eligible to participate in the Hope Scholarship Program must be uploaded to the portal:

1. A copy of the student’s birth certificate.

2. Proof of West Virginia residency demonstrated by one of the following documents:
   - Current tax records with a West Virginia address matching the address on the application;
   - Proof of West Virginia home ownership, such as a mortgage document or homeowner’s insurance document;
   - A valid West Virginia vehicle registration card;
   - A West Virginia voter’s registration card;
   - Residential rental or lease agreement;
   - Proof of public assistance through the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources; or
   - Two West Virginia utility bills no more than 60 days old from two different companies, not including termination notices.

The following are considered utilities for purposes of proof of West Virginia residency: water, gas, electric, telephone, cellular phone, garbage, internet and cable. The utility bills must match the address on the application.

To upload the required documentation:

1. Click “Drag and drop files here or Browse to select files.”

2. Choose the files you wish to upload and click “Open.” Up to five files may be uploaded. Only the following file types are supported: PDF (.PDF) and image files (JPG or .PNG).
You will be asked to review the application details provided and click the checkbox to agree to the Consent Statement. Please type your name and sign before clicking submit.

IMPORTANT: Please be sure the Student WVEIS ID Number is accurate. This is how EMA will confirm eligibility for the scholarship. If your student is an incoming kindergarten student and does not have a WVEIS number, please contact your local county board of education to be assigned one prior to the submission of your Hope Scholarship application.

You will need to carefully review the parent responsibilities before signing and submitting your application.

After you have successfully completed an application, you will be taken to the scholarship dashboard where you will see your scholarship status. You may also submit additional applications.

For all new students, once an application has been found eligible, the parent/guardian must provide a notice of intent to participate in the program to the superintendent of the county where the student lives. A sample Notice of Intent letter can be found at [www.hopescholarshipwv.com](http://www.hopescholarshipwv.com).
Note: Hope renewal applications do not require a Notice of Intent.

**Application Status Definitions**

**Eligible** – Satisfied the eligibility requirements and waiting on eligibility date.

**Ineligible** – Has not satisfied the eligibility requirements and may appeal decision.

**On Hold** – Application and supporting documentation have been processed and there is missing information, or the information needs further clarity.

**Awarded** – Indicates a student has met all requirements and found eligible.

**Funded** – Indicates a student was found eligible and funding has been placed in the student’s educational savings account within EMA.

**Appeals**

If a student is found not eligible for the Hope Scholarship Program, their parent/guardian may appeal the eligibility determination by filing an appeal with the Hope Scholarship Board within forty-five (45) days of being found ineligible for the Program. The Board will appoint a three-member appeals subcommittee who will consider the appeal and determine the outcome within thirty (30) days of when the appeal was filed.

Appeal forms may be found at [www.hopescholarshipwv.com](http://www.hopescholarshipwv.com) and may be submitted by emailing [hopescholarshipwv@wvsto.com](mailto:hopescholarshipwv@wvsto.com) after the student has been found ineligible.

**Renewal Applications**

To renew a student’s scholarship for each upcoming academic year, parents/guardians must submit a renewal application through the Education Market Assistant (EMA). Renewal applications will be accepted from **January 15 until May 15** for the following school year. For the 2023-24 school year, renewal applications will begin on February 20, 2023.

In order for the student to be eligible to renew, the following conditions must be met:

- The student is still a resident of West Virginia.
- The student has not successfully completed a secondary program.
- The student is not 21 years old; if at any point during the school year the student turns 21, they will no longer be eligible, and their account will be closed.
- If the student is enrolled in a nonpublic school, the student’s educational progress must be evaluated each year by complying with the requirements of the nonpublic school and
remain in good standing with the nonpublic school. The nonpublic school is required to submit annual confirmation for each Hope Scholarship student enrolled. The enrollment confirmation must be sent to the county superintendent of residence for each Hope Scholarship student.

- If the student is enrolled in an individualized instructional program, the student must be evaluated annually using one of the methods below and provide evidence of compliance to the county superintendent of the county in which the student resides no later than June 8th each year:
  
  o The student may take a nationally normed standardized achievement test of academic achievement. The mean of the child's test results in the subject areas of reading, language, mathematics, science, and social studies for any single year is above the fourth stanine, or if below the fourth stanine, show improvement from the previous year's results; or
  
  o A certified teacher conducts a review of the student's academic work annually and determines the student is making academic progress commensurate with his or her age and ability.

All renewal students will be considered conditionally eligible until evidence of compliance is provided and verified by the West Virginia Department of Education.

Hope Scholarship student accounts will remain open for each year their parent/guardian renews their application. Unused funds in a student’s account will roll forward to the following school year so long as the student remains eligible for the Program.

A Hope Scholarship student who does not renew their application must reapply for the Program.

**Account Holder Responsibilities**

In accordance with the Hope Scholarship Program requirements, there are parent/guardian responsibilities for program participation. Pursuant to W. Va. Code §18-31-1 et. seq. and §112-18-1 et. seq., the parent agrees with the following parent/account holder responsibilities when the student application is submitted.

As a parent/account holder, I affirm that:

- I am an eligible person to serve as account holder for the student’s Hope Scholarship account in accordance with W. Va. Code §18-31-1 et. seq. and §112-18-1 et. seq.

- I understand that the failure to sign this agreement is grounds for the denial of the application for the Hope Scholarship Program.

- I will provide an education for the eligible student in at least the subjects of reading, language, mathematics, science, and social studies.
• I will use the Hope Scholarship funds exclusively for qualifying expenses to serve the student’s educational needs as provided for in W. Va. Code §18-31-7 and the Hope Scholarship Program Legislative rules (§112-18-1 et. seq.).

• I will comply with the rules and requirements of the Hope Scholarship program from W. Va. Code §18-31-1 et. seq. and the Hope Scholarship Program Legislative rules (§112-18-1 et. seq.).

• I will afford the Hope Scholarship student opportunities for educational enrichment such as organized athletics, art, music, or literature.

• I will not receive a payment, refund, or rebate from an approved provider of any services under this program.

• I understand that I am responsible for the payment of all eligible expenses in excess of the amount of the Hope Scholarship account in accordance with the terms agreed to between the parent/guardian and the providers.

• I will provide a notice of intent to participate in the Hope Scholarship Program to the county superintendent of the eligible student’s county of residence.

• If the student is enrolled in a nonpublic school, I will ensure that the student’s educational progress is evaluated each year by complying with the requirements of the nonpublic school attended and will remain in good standing with the nonpublic school.

• If the student is enrolled in an individualized instructional program, I agree to have the student evaluated annually using one of the methods below and provide evidence of compliance to the county superintendent of the county in which the student resides by no later than June 8th each year:
  o The student may take a nationally normed standardized achievement test of academic achievement. The mean of the child’s test results in the subject areas of reading, language, mathematics, science, and social studies for any single year is above the fourth stanine, or if below the fourth stanine, show improvement from the previous year’s results.
  o A certified teacher conducts a review of the student’s academic work annually and determines the student is making academic progress commensurate with his or her age and ability.

• I understand that participation in the Hope Scholarship Program must be renewed annually in accordance with all Hope Scholarship program guidelines so long as the student meets all eligibility requirements.

• I will file a renewal application for continued participation in the Hope Scholarship Program by the date established by the Hope Scholarship Board. If I fail to renew but
wish to return to the Hope Scholarship Program, I understand that I must reapply.

- I will not take possession of any funding provided by the State for the Hope Scholarship Program. This does not include reimbursements for expenditures approved by the Hope Scholarship Board.

- I understand that participation in the Hope Scholarship Program is a parental placement under 20 U.S.C §1412 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and that accepting the Hope Scholarship releases the public school system of the county of residence from its obligation to provide the student with a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

- I will not resell items purchased with Hope Scholarship funds to other parties.

- I authorize the Hope Scholarship Board, West Virginia State Treasurer’s Office, West Virginia Department of Education, and the contracted program manager acting on behalf of the Hope Scholarship Board to exchange all necessary enrollment or other data to confirm initial and ongoing eligibility for the Hope Scholarship Program.

- I understand that if I wish for my child to receive services provided by the public school system, I will be charged tuition by the county board of education proportionate to the percentage of total instruction provided to the student by the public school.

- I understand that failure to comply with any of the above responsibilities forfeits my child’s participation in the Hope Scholarship Program.

Failure to agree to these terms, will result in scholarship revocation.

**Approved Uses for Hope Scholarship Funds**

Parents/guardians of a Hope Scholarship student must agree to use the funds deposited in their student’s Hope Scholarship account only for the following qualifying expenses to educate their student:

- Ongoing services provided by a public school district under W. Va Code §18-31-8(f), including without limitation, individual classes and extracurricular activities and programs;

- Private or parochial school tuition and fees at a participating school;

- Tutoring services provided by an individual or a tutoring facility, provided that such tutoring services are not provided by a member of the Hope Scholarship student’s immediate family;

- Fees for nationally standardized assessments, advanced placement examinations, any examinations related to college or university admission, and tuition and/or fees for preparatory courses for the aforementioned exams;
• Tuition and fees for programs of study or the curriculum of courses that lead to an industry-recognized credential that satisfies a workforce need;
• Tuition and fees for nonpublic online learning programs;
• Tuition and fees for alternative education programs;
• Fees for after-school or summer education programs;
• Educational services and therapies, including, but not limited to, occupational, behavioral, physical, speech-language, and audiology therapies;
• Tuition and fees for programs of study, curriculum, or supplemental materials in reading, language, mathematics, science, social studies, or the arts; Fees for transportation paid to a fee-for-service transportation provider for the student to travel to and from an education service provider;
• Tuition, fees and materials for enrollment in dual credit or college level courses;
• The cost of school uniforms required by a participating school;
• Basic educational supplies, including but not limited to, paper, writing utensils, scissors, etc.;
• Tuition and fees for programs of study, curriculum, or supplies needed for supplemental or elective educational courses;
• Technology equipment needed for an educational program, including but not limited to computers, printer and required software;
• Any assistive technology or other equipment/supplies necessary to accommodate a student with a disability;
• Vocational supplies or equipment required for a K-12 course of study;
• Tuition and fees at a microschool;
• Certified teacher annual reviews of a student’s academic work;
• Payments to out-of-state public schools for tuition and fees; and
• Any other qualified expenses as approved by the Hope Scholarship Board.

Hope Scholarship funds may only be used for qualified educational purposes. However, it is not required that a Hope Scholarship student be enrolled, full- or part-time, specifically in either a nonpublic school, either in-person or virtually.

Hope Scholarship funds may not be refunded, rebated, or shared with a parent or student in any manner. Any refund or rebate for goods or services purchased with Hope Scholarship funds shall be credited directly to a student’s Hope Scholarship account.

Parents/guardians of a Hope Scholarship student may make payments using personal funds for
the costs of educational goods and services not covered by the funds in their student’s Hope Scholarship account. However, personal deposits into a Hope Scholarship account are not permitted.

**Funding For The Hope Scholarship Program**

**Award Amount**
The amount of the Hope Scholarship will be equal to the statewide average amount of funding a public school is allotted per pupil in West Virginia for the previous year. Up to five percent may be retained by the Hope Scholarship Board to administer the program. For the 2022-2023 school year, the scholarship award amount is $4,298.60. This amount will change on a yearly basis and will be published to the Hope Scholarship website each year prior to August funding.

**Award Distribution**
Distribution of the first half of each eligible student’s Hope Scholarship funds into their accounts will occur no later than **August 15** of each year. The second half of Hope Scholarship funds will be deposited no later than **January 15** of each year.

Note: Due to the injunction against the Hope Scholarship Program, Hope Scholarship funds for the 2022-23 school year will be deposited in student accounts in one payment no later than January 15, 2023. In the event there is an issue verifying a student’s educational status for the 2022-23 school year, funding will be made available as quickly as possible once the issues are resolved.

Each Hope Scholarship student will have their own Hope Scholarship account, even if multiple Hope Scholarship students reside in the same household or share the same parent/account holder. Funds in a Hope Scholarship account may only be used for the student who is assigned to the individual account.

**Prorated Funding**
The amount of funding to an eligible student who is awarded a Hope Scholarship account for less than a full fiscal year will be prorated based on the portion of the fiscal year the eligible student is awarded the Hope Scholarship account.

The percentage of funds distributed will be calculated by reducing the total award amount by a percentage equal to the number of school days that have already passed in the student’s county of residence since the beginning of the school year divided by 180.

For example: if 45 days of the school year have passed when the student is found eligible for the scholarship, $4,298.60 / 180 = 0.25 = 25% reduction in scholarship award amount; meaning the eligible student will receive 75% of a full scholarship for the remainder of that school year.

Note: For the 2022-23 year, students may receive a prorated amount of Hope Scholarship funding if they attended public school for a portion of the school year during the injunction against
Public school enrollment is being verified via the WVEIS system.

**Funding Continuation**

Any funds remaining in a Hope Scholarship account at the end of the fiscal year may be carried forward to the next fiscal year upon successful renewal of the Hope Scholarship application. The Hope Scholarship Board will continue to make deposits into an eligible student’s Hope Scholarship account unless any of the following occur:

- A parent of an eligible recipient fails to renew a Hope Scholarship application or withdraws from the Hope Scholarship Program;
- The Board determines that a student is no longer eligible for a Hope Scholarship;
- The Board suspends or revokes participation in the Hope Scholarship Program for failure to comply with the requirements of this article;
- The Hope Scholarship student successfully completes a secondary education program; or
- The Hope Scholarship student reaches 21 years of age.

If any of the above conditions occur, the Board will notify the parent/guardian that the eligible recipient’s account will be closed in forty-five (45) calendar days. If a parent fails to adequately address the condition(s) causing the closure or does not respond within thirty (30) calendar days of being notified, the board shall close the account and any remaining moneys shall be returned to the Hope Scholarship Program Fund.

**Funds From Closed Accounts**

If a parent/account holder fails to renew a Hope Scholarship application, or if the account is terminated, all remaining funds from the account will be returned to the West Virginia Hope Scholarship Program Fund. If an account is closed because the student is returning to public school after October 1 of that academic year, upon request of the county board of education, the funds in the student’s account will be transferred to the county board where the public school is located in order to fund the student’s education for the rest of the school year.

**Tax Implications**

Funds deposited into a student’s Hope Scholarship account, other than those expended on fee-for-service transportation services, do not count as taxable income for the parent/guardian of a Hope Scholarship student or for the student themselves.

**Termination of Program Participation**

A Hope Scholarship student’s participation in the program will terminate if any of the following conditions occur:

- The parent/account holder withdraws the student from the program;
- The student successfully completes a secondary education program;
- The student reaches 21 years of age;
• If the student chooses an individualized instructional program, the parent/account holder fails to submit the student’s annual standardized test results or annual certified teacher’s review of the student’s academic work to the county superintendent before June 8th prior to the upcoming academic year; or
• The student no longer lives in West Virginia.

If any of the above occur, the Hope Scholarship Board will notify the parent/account holder that the account will be closed in forty-five (45) days. The Board will close the account if:

• The parent/account holder does not respond to the notice within thirty (30) days of receiving it;
• The parent/account holder or student doesn’t cure the issue in the notice within forty-five (45) days of receiving it; or
• The parent/account holder doesn’t provide information showing that the circumstances leading to the Board’s decision to close the account were factually incorrect within forty-five (45) days of the notice.

Immediately following termination of a Hope Scholarship student’s participation in the program, the Board will close the student’s account. Within twenty days of the account being closed, the Board will provide written notice of the closure to the parent/account holder. The notice will include the reason for the account closure and the process to appeal the Board’s decision.

Any funds remaining in a Hope Scholarship account upon its closure will be returned to the West Virginia Hope Scholarship Program Fund. If an account is closed because the student is returning to public school after October 1 of that academic year, upon request of the county board of education, the funds in the student’s account will be transferred to the county board where the public school is located to fund the student’s education for the rest of the school year.

Noncompliance, Intentional Misuse of Funds, or Criminal Activity

The Hope Scholarship Board may temporarily freeze or put a hold on an account if they receive credible information that a parent/account holder or student has violated Hope Scholarship Account statute or rule or has engaged in criminal activity using Hope Scholarship funds. A parent/account holder will be notified of an account freeze or hold within twenty (20) days following change in account status.

Parents/account holders must submit to any audit related to Hope Scholarship funds initiated by the Board. Upon request from the Board, parents/account holders must provide all records in the parent/account holder’s possession relating to Hope Scholarship transactions.

A student or parent/account holder may appeal any action, audit finding, or other determination of the Board by filing an appeal.
Transactions Using Hope Scholarship Funds

Purchases

An account holder must complete all payments of Hope Scholarship funds to education service providers and vendors electronically using the online portal. There are two different mechanisms available to parents for making purchases within the online portal. Purchases of educational services (other than tuition and fees to a participating school) are made through the Find Providers function in the portal, while purchases of goods and commodities are made through the MyScholarShop electronic marketplace. Invoices for tuition and fees to a participating school are initiated by the participating school and parents will receive a notification in their portal to confirm their child’s enrollment at the school and tuition amount before payment is made to the school. Please note that if a specific vendor is not signed up to participate in the Hope Scholarship Program, parents will be unable to utilize their Hope Scholarship funds with that vendor. Parents may refer vendors who are not already participating in the program to the Hope Scholarship Program at hopescholarshipwv@wvsto.com and our staff can answer any questions they have and help them sign up. Reimbursements of Hope Scholarship funds for payments made with non-Hope Scholarship funds will only be considered on a case-by-case basis caused by extenuating circumstances.

MyScholarShop has limitations on the purchases of certain technology equipment. Each of the following types of technology may only be purchased after two calendar years have passed since the date the item was originally purchased. For example: A student who purchases a laptop on February 1, 2023, will be eligible to purchase another laptop using scholarship funds on or after February 2, 2025. The student will still be eligible to purchase a desktop computer, tablet/reader, and monitor, provided there have been no prior purchases of those items within the previous 2 calendar years,

- Desktop computers
- Laptop computers
- Tablets / Readers
- Monitors

MyScholarShop only allows the purchase of single quantities of the following types of technology. Multiples of the following items in a single order or reimbursement will be denied:

- Headsets / Earbuds
- iPad pencils / Pointer devices
- Keyboards
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• Mouse / Touchpads / Trackballs
• Printers

Find Providers
To access the EMA Marketplace and search for direct pay providers, you will need to login to your scholarship portal by clicking here. “Find Providers” will appear under the Marketplace option and will only appear in the portal once your student’s funds have been deposited in their account.

1. Log in using your current credentials (email and password).
2. Select the “Marketplace” tab.
3. Click “Find Providers.”
4. Select your student’s name from the dropdown menu.
5. Search for a provider.
   a. You are able to search for a provider by business name, email address, website address, and description.
   b. You may also use the filter option to search by Service Category or Class Type.
6. Click “View Locations” for any provider that matched your search criteria.
   a. Select a location to view additional provider information, such as the business address, phone number, hours of operation, services offered, and pricing.
   b. You should contact the provider before selecting them to make sure they are a good fit for your student.
7. After selecting the desired provider and location for your student, you may purchase the desired quantity of each service by using the dropdown labeled “Quantity”.
   a. Please note: Pricing may be per session, per activity, or per hour. You should contact the provider before purchasing if you have any questions regarding the pricing structure.
8. Click “Add to Cart” to move the purchase to your shopping cart.
   a. If you would like to purchase additional services from other providers, click “Continue Shopping” to return to the “Find Providers” screen.
   b. If you would like to complete your transaction, click “Go to Cart”.
9. To complete your order, select “Reserve Funds” in your shopping cart. By placing your order you agree to reserve scholarship funds for your requested service provider.
a. Click “Confirm” to reserve your funds for the specified service or “Close” to cancel and return to the previous screen.

b. If you cancel your service request after funds have already been reserved, these funds will be available again within 3 business days.

c. If you are unable to complete the transaction, it may be the student does not have enough available funds.

NOTE: You must contact the provider directly after completing your order to schedule service.

MyScholarShop

MyScholarShop is an educational e-purchasing platform built to assist you in purchasing instructional materials using your scholarship funds without any upfront cost to you.

- Items available through MyScholarShop are approved for purchase using the Hope Scholarship funds. If you do not see an item in MyScholarShop, it does not mean the item is not approved.
- Make sure you have available funds in your scholarship account to cover the entire purchase.
- This partnership is ONLY for goods purchased through MyScholarShop and does NOT apply to in-store purchases or purchases from the vendor’s website.

MyScholarShop orders cannot be shipped out-of-state or to a post office box.

- When purchasing multiple items, include ALL items on one order.
- Please be aware that the Board reserves the right to deny requests.
- Access to MyScholarShop will be activated once your student’s account has funding.
- The Board reserves the right to limit or deny access to MyScholarShop.

To access MyScholarShop, you will need to login to your scholarship portal by clicking here. MyScholarShop will appear under the Marketplace option and will only appear in the portal once your student’s funds have been deposited in their account.

1. Log in using your current credentials (email and password).
2. Select the “Marketplace” tab.
   a. When logging in the first time to the MyScholarShop platform, you will be required to read and acknowledge the Privacy Statement.
3. Confirm the address on file using the “Update Address” option.
4. Select the student account.
5. Search for the items you wish to purchase.
6. Choose the tile with the item category or type the item name in the search window.

7. Hover or select the item and click “Add to Cart”.

8. Review your cart.
   a. After reviewing the cart, choose “Check Out”.

9. Review your ‘ship to’ information.

10. Choose “Send Request” to complete the purchase.

**Reimbursements**

Reimbursement for payments made with non-Hope Scholarship funds will only be considered on a case-by-case basis caused by extenuating circumstances. Any request must be made on a form prescribed by the Board and must require detailed supporting documentation and receipts. Any reimbursement request requires approval of the Board.

**Note:** The Hope Scholarship Board authorized reimbursement requests for qualified expenses incurred by eligible Hope Scholarship families between August 15, 2022 and the date Hope Scholarship funds for the 2022-23 school year are made available in student accounts. Due to the injunction against the program that prevented parents from accessing Hope Scholarship funds, reimbursement requests may be submitted on EMA. Expenses incurred outside of the specified window shall not be eligible for reimbursement under the injunction reimbursement procedures and are instead subject to the regular reimbursement provisions outlined in W. Va. CSR §112-18-8.1.2.

Approved reimbursements are paid using a prepaid debit card. Before creating your first reimbursement request, you will be asked to confirm your address to mail the card and for a birth date. Please enter the birth date of the parent or guardian on the account. Please click here to learn more about how reimbursement payments are made and how to activate your card. Please note: The card will not arrive with scholarship funds loaded. You will be notified by email once your reimbursement has been processed and funds have been added to your card. Please keep the card in a safe place. Funds will be loaded onto the card after your reimbursement is approved. Any future reimbursements will be loaded onto the same card within 1 week after the reimbursement is approved. Parents with multiple Hope Scholarship students will receive one card per student. Call 888-863-0681 to report your card lost/stolen and have a replacement card sent to your home address. There is no cost for the first replacement card; subsequent cards are subject to a nominal fee.
How to Submit a Reimbursement Request

1. Once logged into your EMA Account, click on “Reimbursements.”

2. Click “New” to add a new reimbursement request.

3. Select the student and click “Continue.”

4. Upload your reimbursement document. Please see the following note for required documentation. You will have the option of adding more support documents for the same reimbursement request later.

   **Note:** Please provide official document/receipt from the educational provider that clearly shows the student’s name, eligible educational expenses, the amount of each expense, and the payment dates and amounts paid by parent/guardian. You must attach detailed, itemized receipts or invoices that reflect the educational expense. A bank statement alone, without any of the other criteria above, is not sufficient support for a reimbursement request.

5. Click “Continue” until you come to the page to enter reimbursement information.

6. Enter information for each line item of your receipt. Be sure to include the educational benefit for your request. The educational benefit will need to demonstrate how the item or service will help the student learn.

   a. If you only have one item to submit for reimbursement on your receipt, click “Done”.

   b. If there are multiple items on your receipt, click “Add Item”. You may add as many items as needed. After adding all items, click “Done”.

7. Review your reimbursement request for the correct purchase date, amount requested, and to clear any “drafts” or $0 purchases. Click back to make any edits or click “Submit for Approval” if the information is correct.

8. If your requested amount exceeds the balance in your student's account, an onscreen error will appear as shown below. The screen will refresh and will go back to the request form so you can adjust the amount. When you adjust the amount, please add a comment explaining the requested amount no longer ties to the attached documentation because the reimbursement was capped at the amount of available funding.
NOTE: Reimbursements may be placed on hold for further information or clarification. To view reimbursement comments, click Reimbursements on the left-hand menu in EMA. A table will appear showing all reimbursements for your student(s). Click “Details” next to the desired reimbursement.

This will display information for the selected reimbursement. You may scroll to the bottom of the page to view any comments tied to the reimbursement.

Refunds

All refunds of Hope Scholarship funds by an educational service provider or vendor must be electronically credited directly back to the Hope Scholarship student’s account. It is illegal for Hope Scholarship funds to be refunded, rebated, or shared with a parent or student in any manner other than a credit directly into the student's Hope Scholarship account.

If a Hope Scholarship student uses Hope Scholarship funds to make a partial payment of tuition or fees to an educational service provider to reserve the student’s enrollment in a program and the student does not participate in the program, the education service provider must electronically credit the payment back to the Hope Scholarship student’s account within thirty (30) days after receiving notice that the student will not participate in the program or after the program has commenced, whichever occurs first.
Online Portal Access

Only an account holder is authorized to access an online portal user account or to complete a transaction using Hope Scholarship funds.

The Hope Scholarship Board may allow a person who is the account holder for multiple Hope Scholarship students residing in the same household to access all of the accounts through one online portal user account, provided that individual Hope Scholarship accounts must remain separate and segregated at all times.

The Hope Scholarship Board

Members

The West Virginia Hope Scholarship Program shall be administered by the West Virginia Hope Scholarship Board. The board consists of nine members:

- Chairman, WV State Treasurer – Riley Moore
- WV State Auditor Designee – Anthony Woods, Deputy State Auditor
- WV State Attorney General – Patrick Morrisey
- WV State Superintendent of Schools Designee – Dustin Lambert, Coordinator
- Chancellor of Higher Education Designee – Brian Weingart, Senior Director of Financial Aid
- Director of the Herbert Henderson Office of Minority Affairs – Jill Upson
- Parent – Jonathan “Zak” Ritchie
- Parent – Charles Russell
- Parent – Amanda Hoylman

If there is a vacancy among appointed members, the vacancy shall be filled by appointment for the unexpired term of a person meeting the requirements of this section by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. Members of the board shall serve until the later of the expiration of the term for which the member was appointed or the appointment of his or her successor.

Powers of the Board

The board is authorized to take any action necessary to successfully administer the Hope Scholarship Program, subject to applicable state and federal law, including, but not limited to the following:
• Adopt and amend bylaws;
• Execute contracts and other instruments for necessary goods and services, employ necessary personnel and engage the services of private consultants, actuaries, auditors, counsel, managers, trustees, and any other contractor or professional needed for rendering professional and technical assistance and advice;
• Implement the program through the use of financial organizations as account depositories and managers;
• Develop and impose requirements, policies, procedures, and guidelines to implement and manage the program;
• Determine whether an expenditure of Hope Scholarship funds is or was a qualifying expense to educate a Hope Scholarship student. The board may approve or deny expenditures by a majority vote; and
• Review any eligibility and/or reimbursement appeals.

For information about the board meeting agendas, please click here.

**Contact Information**

If you have any questions, please contact us at WVHope@emaportal.org or by calling our Service Center at 1-833-622-6819. Our service center is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. ET. You can also find additional information by clicking here.

If at any point you have a change of address, telephone, cell phone or E-mail address, you can update your information by logging into your account. Name changes must be made by the EMA service center.
Appendix A - Definitions

Academic Year: The period of time occurring between the first day of July and ending on the 30th of June, during which a student must meet the educational requirements equivalent to an instructional term under W. Va. Code §18-8-1.

Account or Scholarship: A Hope Scholarship account, awarded by the West Virginia Hope Scholarship Board, to which funds are allocated by the Board to the parent or guardian of an eligible Hope Scholarship student in order to pay for qualifying education expenses to educate the student.

ACH or Automated Clearinghouse: A national EFT network which enables participating financial institutions to distribute electronic credit and debit entries to financial institution accounts and to settle the entries.

Account Holder: The person designated and authorized to administer and manage a Hope Scholarship student’s account. Refers to the person who applies or submits information on behalf of the potential Hope Scholarship student. Does not refer to a “secondary account holder”.

Board: The Hope Scholarship Board created pursuant to W. Va. Code §18-31-3.

Curriculum: A complete course of study for a particular content area or grade level, including any supplemental materials required by the curriculum.

Education Service Provider or Provider: A person or organization that receives payments from Hope Scholarship accounts to provide educational goods and services to Hope Scholarship students.

EFT: “Electronic Funds Transfer”.

Eligible Student: A child who:

- Is a resident of West Virginia; and
- Is enrolled full-time and attending a public elementary or secondary school program in this state for at least 45 calendar days during an instructional term at the time of application and until an award letter is issued by the board under W.Va. Code §18-31-5(c) or enrolled full-time in a public elementary or secondary school program in this state for the entire instructional term the previous year, or is eligible at the time of application to enroll in a kindergarten program in this state pursuant to W.Va. Code §18-8-1a.

However, if on July 1, 2024, the participation rate of the combined number of students in the Hope Scholarship Program and students eligible who have applied to participate in the Hope Scholarship program during the previous school year is less than five percent of
net public school enrollment adjusted for state aid purposes for the previous school year, then, effective July 1, 2026, a child is considered to meet the requirements of this paragraph if he or she is enrolled, eligible to be enrolled, or required to be enrolled in a kindergarten program or public elementary or secondary school program in this state at the time of application.

**Hope Scholarship Funds or Funds:** The moneys deposited into a Hope Scholarship student’s account in accordance with the requirements of this article.

**Hope Scholarship Student or Student:** A student who receives a Hope Scholarship.

**Hope Scholarship Website:** The website created and maintained to provide program information, documents, and forms available to the public located at [www.hopescholarshipwv.com](http://www.hopescholarshipwv.com).

**Immediate Family:** A definition can be found in §112-18-2 to describe a person’s relationship to a Hope Scholarship student.

**Instructional Term:** A period of continuous enrollment in the West Virginia public school system for the full academic year.

**Online Portal:** The online system and interface administered by the Treasurer through which parents, vendors, and service providers may complete transactions using Hope Scholarship Funds.

**Parent/Account Holder:** A biological parent, legal guardian, custodian, or other person with legal authority to act on behalf of an eligible recipient or Hope Scholarship student.

**Participating School:** Any private school that provides education to elementary and/or secondary students and has notified the board of its intention to participate in the program and comply with the program’s requirements.

**Resident School District:** The county school district in which the student resides.

**Transaction:** A single purchase, payment, or transfer.

**Treasurer:** The West Virginia State Treasurer or designee.