



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

September 30, 2016

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Affordable Pathways Grants to Strengthen Partnerships Between PreK-12 and Higher Education

In order to help stimulate collaboration between PreK-12 and higher education, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) is announcing an Affordable Pathways Partnership Grant competition for the period of January 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018.

The SCHEV defines affordable student pathways as sequential academic courses or learning experiences with connected support services designed to result in a cost savings to the student while in the pursuit of a degree and/or workforce credential.

The Affordable Pathways grants (up to \$140,000 each) will be awarded to as many as four public two- and four-year institutions of higher education. Grants awarded will target the expansion and creation of sustainable affordable pathways programs that focus primarily on high school to college-age students; strengthen PreK-12 partnerships with higher education; implement or expand pathways that support cost savings to students such as opportunities for early college credit, improve time-to-degree/credential or completion rates, particularly for underrepresented populations; and lead to a degree, certificate or workforce credential. Underrepresented populations are defined by SCHEV as students who are a racial/ethnic minority, from a low-income background and/or are from areas of the state with low degree attainment rates, based on census data.

The proposed programs must include a partnership between: (1) at least one public high school, school division or regional school consortium and (2) a degree-granting public institution of higher education (IHE). A Virginia public higher-education institution must be the fiscal agent and applicant. In order to enhance the proposed affordable pathways model and students' success, partnerships with additional organizations are encouraged.

Visit <http://www.schev.edu/index/institutional/grants/affordable-pathways> for application materials and additional grant details. For institutions of higher education contact information in your area contact Paula Robinson, Assistant Director of Academic Affairs, State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, by email at PaulaRobinson@schev.edu, or by telephone at (804) 225-2612.

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