

Virginia529™

**An Early
Commitment
Scholarship
Program**



Agenda

- What is SOAR Virginia?
- Eligibility and Student Selection
- Measuring Success
- Frequently Asked Questions



SOAR Virginia®

- Early commitment scholarship program sponsored by Virginia529SM
- Scholarship support up to \$2,000
- 6 College Access Providers
 - GReat Aspirations Scholarship Program
 - Virginia Community Colleges
 - ACCESS College Foundation
 - Project Discovery of Virginia, Inc.
 - GMU-Early Identification Program
 - College Access Fairfax



Program Goals

- Inspire students
 - To complete high school and earn diplomas
 - To pursue higher education – 2 year, 4 year or technical
 - To complete higher education and earn Associates, Bachelors, or technical degrees
- Improving outcomes for low/moderate income students in Virginia
- Increase high school graduation rates
- Increase college enrollment and completion rates
- Provide a meaningful commitment
- Expand the program...ultimately statewide



How SOAR Virginia Works

- Students enroll in the 10th grade and work with a college access advisor during their 10th, 11th and 12th grade years.*
- If a SOAR Virginia scholar in grades 10 and 11 meet all pledge requirements, he/she will be awarded \$500.
- If a SOAR Virginia scholar in grade 12 meets all pledge requirements, he/she will be awarded \$1,000.
- The awarded funds are distributed directly to the college/university on behalf of the student for post-secondary education expenses.

*Highland High School students may begin in the 9th grade.

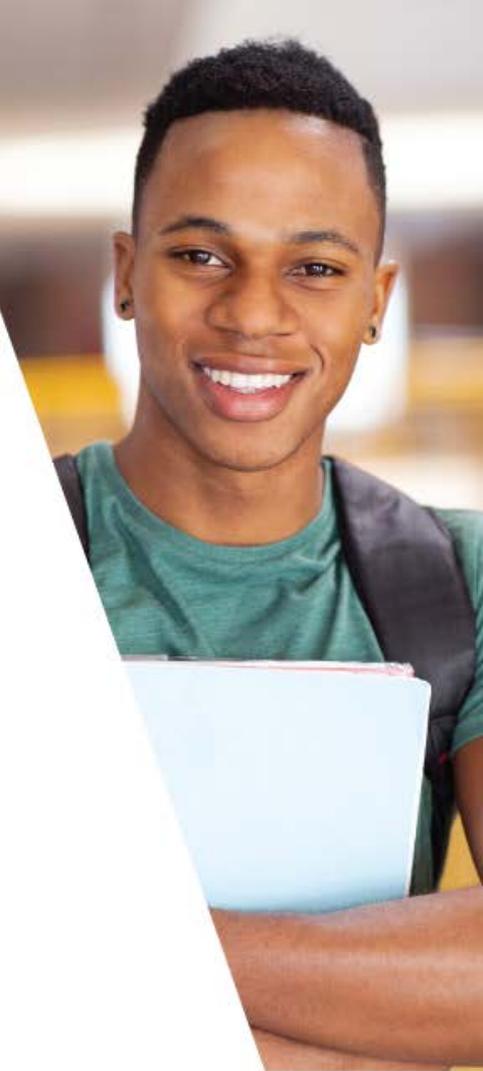


SOAR Virginia Pledge

I pledge that:

- I will maintain a minimum cumulative GPA* of 2.5.
- I will meet with my early commitment advisor regularly.
- I will complete financial literacy training during high school.
- I will comply with my school's Code of Student Conduct.
- I will attend school regularly without unexcused absences.
- I will participate in community service activities.
- I will complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) during my senior year.
- I will apply to an eligible 2- or 4-year college/university or technical school.

*Or comparable academic achievement as determined by SOAR Virginia



A school counselor's perspective on SOAR Virginia

“Students are committed and excited about planning for their future. This type of excitement contributes to keeping students engaged in school and empowers them to not only plan for their future but to plan to make a positive contribution to society.”



Who Can Join the Program?

To enroll in SOAR Virginia, students must:

- Be a U.S. citizen or legal U.S. resident.
- Be a Virginia resident.
- Be in grades 10-12 in a participating Virginia high school.*
- Agree to comply with the SOAR Virginia pledge.
- Have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5 at the time of enrollment.
- Qualify to participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

*Highland High School students may begin in the 9th grade.



How Do I Apply?

- If you are interested and meet the eligibility requirements, see your early commitment advisor for more information.
- The deadline to apply is November 15.



How are students selected?

- Early commitment advisors work with school guidance offices to determine potential participants.
- Advisors meet with rising 10th graders, who were eligible for NSLP in their 9th grade year, to determine level of interest in program.
- Up to 15 students are selected per cohort (year) to participate.



An early commitment advisor's perspective

“The fact that the program spans several years creates a sense of commitment and optimism on the part of the students and their parents.”

Measuring Success

- High school performance and graduation rates
- College applications and acceptances
- College enrollment rates
- Rate of on-time FAFSA completion
- The amount of financial aid awarded
- Program participation, retention and completion rates



A school administrator's perspective

“It’s giving them the motivation to look at careers that they might not have considered before because they couldn’t afford to go to college.”

Investment Management of SOAR Virginia Funds

- Funds will remain in Virginia529 ownership and control until paid out to an eligible higher education institution
- Funds are invested in the Invest529 program in the Stable Value Portfolio comprised 100% of Fixed Income / Stable Value securities





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The material in this presentation has been prepared by Virginia529 and is general background information about SOAR Virginia activities current as of the date of this presentation. This information is given in summary form and does not purport to be complete.