



Southside Virginia Tobacco Loan Forgiveness Program

Academic Year 2009-2010

Funded By:

Virginia Tobacco Indemnification & Community Revitalization Commission

The 2009-2010 academic year marks the eighth year of the Southside Virginia Tobacco Loan Forgiveness program, funded by the VA Tobacco Indemnification & Community Revitalization Commission. The 2009-2010 funded amount is \$3.5 million. In the previous years, a total of \$13,118,680 has been provided to residents of the Southside Virginia region as assistance with tuition and academic fees while attending an accredited 4-year college or university.

The goal of the Southside Virginia Tobacco Loan Forgiveness Program is to provide a stimulus for economic revitalization in communities within Southside Virginia by encouraging native Southside Virginians to complete a degree, then return to and settle in one of the 24 qualifying localities of Southside Virginia, the region that nurtured and developed them in their formative years.

The 24 qualifying localities include the counties of Amelia, Appomattox, Bedford, Brunswick, Buckingham, Campbell, Charlotte, Cumberland, Dinwiddie, Franklin, Greensville, Halifax, Henry, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nottoway, Patrick, Pittsylvania, Prince Edward, and Sussex as well as the cities of Bedford, Danville, Emporia, and Martinsville.

Applicants must be enrolled in a degree-seeking program (Bachelor's or Master's) at an accredited 4-year accredited college or university. The college can be public or private, in-state or out-of-state. The Southside Tobacco Loan Forgiveness Program is designed to serve as a "last dollar effort" **after all other scholarships, grants, employer-sponsored tuition, etc. have been posted to the award recipient's account.** The scholarship is for tuition and fees only, and does not cover room and board, books and supplies. The scholarship program is limited to one degree per student or 4-years whichever happens first. Awards are established by the cumulative GPA and the number of credit hours for which an award recipient is enrolled for the Fall 09 semester.

Funds for this program are provided by the VA Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission on a fiscal year basis. As a result, awards from the Southside Tobacco Loan Forgiveness Program can be applied to the fall of the first year semester, the spring of the second year semester, and the summer of the second year semester, i. e. Fall 2009, Spring 2010, and Summer 2010.

FORGIVENESS/CANCELLATION DOES NOT APPLY TO LOANS RECEIVED FROM ANY SOURCE OTHER THAN THE SOUTHSIDE TOBACCO FORGIVENESS LOAN PROGRAM.

ALL AWARDS ARE DEPENDENT UPON THE AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS FROM THE VA TOBACCO COMMISSION.

ELIGIBILITY:

- Have a permanent residence in one of the 24 Southside Virginia localities listed above and be a resident of Virginia for the last 12 months;

A Virginia resident is defined as a person who has lived in Virginia for the last 12 months and has no ties with any other state, including a driver's license, tax return, voter registration, or auto

registration. Residents of other states who are attending school at a college or university in Southside Virginia region are not considered permanent residents of the area and, therefore do not meet the specified eligibility requirements.

- Be a U.S. national, or permanent legal resident of the United States;
- Have a cumulative GPA for Fall 08 that is 2.0 or better; and,
- Be in good academic standing with the college or university

TO QUALIFY:

After having met the eligibility requirements, an applicant must meet the following conditions in order to qualify for an award from the Southside Tobacco Loan Forgiveness Program.

- Be a degree-seeking student (Bachelor's or Master's) at an accredited 4-year college or university.
 - Assistance with tuition and fees is available to all residents of the Southside Virginia region in any college major.
 - **Only students enrolled in a Bachelor's or Master's degree program are eligible for the award.**
 - ***Exception:** The following exception was implemented in 2006: Students who are enrolled in a **2-year degree program at a 4-year college or university** will be eligible to receive funding through the Southside Tobacco Loan Forgiveness Program, provided that the 2-year degree-program is not offered at the local community college serving that individual student.
 - Eligibility requirements for students who are interested in becoming teachers through the Alternative Route to Licensure as set forth by VA DOE must be (1) employed by a VA public or private school system under a provisional license; (2) enrolled in courses to satisfy the DOE requirements; and, (3) working under a licensed teacher who serves as a mentor. (See section 8 VAC 20-21-80 of the Virginia Licensure Regulations for School Personnel handbook available online at the VA Dept. of Education website.)
- Submit an online application at www.tic.virginia.gov during the period **March 2, 2009 through December 15, 2009**. Print the required support documentation using the link provided once the application has been successfully submitted. Mail support documentation to the address that is given on the Check List.
- Provide an official transcript each funding cycle from the last school attended as documentation of cumulative GPA. Applicants who last attended high school need to submit a cumulative grade report from the high school showing a cumulative GPA that is based on a 4.0 or 5.0 scale.
- Sign a promissory note agreeing to (1) become employed full-time in one of the Southside Virginia localities listed above in order to receive loan forgiveness **or** (2) repay the monies awarded from the Southside Virginia Tobacco Forgiveness Loan as outlined in the promissory note completed by the award recipient.
- Provide an Information Release Form each year if you want anyone other than your school or yourself to have access to your information in our database. This form is accessible once the application has been successfully submitted online.
- Submit a copy of the Fall 09, Spring 10, and Summer 10 schedules as soon as they are available. The award amount is established according to the number of credit hours for which an award recipient is enrolled for the fall semester (or the first semester of enrollment) awards are based on the number of enrollment hours for the Fall 09 semester.
- Applications completed after November 15, 2009 will receive funding for Spring semester ONLY, based on the number of hours for which the student is enrolled for Spring semester.
- Mail support documentation to reach the Southside Tobacco Loan Forgiveness Program, P. O. Box 1987, Abingdon, VA 24212-1987 by the **close of business (6 PM) on December 31, 2009. Should funds be depleted prior to the December 31, 2009 deadline, awards will be based on the date**

received stamped on the Student Authorization Form which is the last support document that must be received prior to the college or university being notified of an award.

- **It is the responsibility of the applicant to make sure all required support documentation is received in a timely manner. Requests for additional information will be issued as time allows; however, the VA Tobacco Scholarship/Loan Programs staff will not accept responsibility for an application that is not completed in a timely manner.**

Once the application and its support documentation have been received in the VA Tobacco Scholarship/Loan Programs Office, evaluation of the application will be conducted and awards given based on the following:

- 1. Applicant meets residency and citizenship requirements listed above.**
- 2. Previous award recipients will compete with the entire field of qualified applicants.** No one from the previous year(s) is grandfathered into the program.
- 3. Applicant must be in good academic standing with the college/university.**
 - Awards will be based on cumulative GPA for the previous fall semester (2008) because a cumulative GPA for spring semester (2009) will not be available by March 2, 2009. Only applicants with a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or better and who is in good academic standing with his/her school will be deemed eligible for an award.
 - Applicants who are on academic warning or academic probation for the Fall 08 semester should wait to apply until the cumulative GPA is 2.0 or better. The application will not be processed until the cumulative GPA requirement is met. Awards are dependent upon the availability of funding in the Southside Tobacco Loan Forgiveness Program.
- 4. Applicant must be enrolled in a minimum of 15 undergraduate credit hours or 9 graduate credit hours to receive an established award of \$3,750. Those enrolled in less than the stated minimums will receive an established award of \$1,875.**

AWARD INFORMATION:

- **Eligibility for funding is based on an award from the Southside Loan Forgiveness Program serving as a “last dollar” program -- not intended to replace or substitute for any other gifted assistance. In other words, all other gifted assistance (PELL Grant, employer-paid tuition assistance, or other grants/scholarships that do not have to be repaid) must be posted to the student account before the award from this program is posted. The 2009-2010 Southside Virginia Tobacco Forgiveness Loan:**
- The award amount is established according to the number of credit hours for which an award recipient is enrolled for the fall semester (or the first semester of enrollment) awards are based on the number of enrollment hours for the Fall 09 semester. Spring and summer awards may be adjusted based on the number of credit hours for which the applicant is enrolled, only if funds are remaining in the program. If all funds are awarded or depleted prior to the spring and/or summer semesters, the established award will not change even if the applicant enrolls in the minimum number of credit hours.
 - Pays up to **\$3,750** per year for tuition and fees in an accredited in-state or out-of-state public or private 4-year college or university for students enrolled in a minimum of 15 undergraduate credit hours per semester or 9 graduate credit hours per semester. Applicants enrolled in an adult cohort and attending classes according to a pre-determined schedule must be enrolled in a total of 30 undergraduate credit hours or 18 graduate credit hours for the funded academic year (Fall 09, Spring 10, and Summer 10) in order to receive the full \$3,750 award for the funded academic year.
 - Pays up to **\$1,875** per year for tuition and fees at an accredited in-state or out-of-state public or private 4-year college or university for students enrolled in less than 15 undergraduate credit hours per semester or 9 graduate credit hours per semester. Applicants enrolled in an adult cohort and attending classes every semester but are enrolled in less than a total of 30

undergraduate credit hours or 18 graduate credit hours for the funded academic year (Fall 09, Spring 10, and Summer 10) are eligible to receive \$1,875 for the funded academic year.

Applications completed after November 15, 2009 will receive funding for Spring 2010 semester ONLY, based on the number of hours for which the student is enrolled for Spring semester.

Applicants enrolled in quarter hours must enroll for a minimum total of 45 undergraduate quarter hours or 27 graduate quarter hours for the academic year (3 quarters).

Applicants who are enrolled in a cohort program (attending classes according to a pre-determined schedule) and will enroll for a total of 30 undergraduate credit hours or 18 graduate credit hours are eligible for the full award of \$3,750 divided into 3 payments.

All award recipients must submit a copy of their schedule for each semester prior to payment being sent to the college or university. Award recipients who are enrolled in a cohort program must submit the full cohort schedule at the beginning of the semester in which the cohort begins. Most colleges and universities issue this document to cohort members at initial registration. It can also be provided in the form of a letter from an authorized representative of the college or university.

- Accepts one year of documented full time employment in one of the 24 Southside Virginia localities as qualification for one year of loan forgiveness. (Self-employed residents must submit official documentation as evidence of employment, e.g. tax returns, certificate of incorporation,) Forgiveness or repayment begins 12 months after a degree is received. Students who are currently employed may not receive tuition assistance and be granted “forgiveness” in the same year. All award recipients will receive a **College Enrollment and/or Employment Verification Form** along with in-depth instruction as to how the form is to be completed by November 30th of each year. This form is used as a tracking instrument for award recipients from the first award throughout forgiveness/cancellation or total repayment. Failure to submit this form could result in payment coming due before the actual due date.
- Loan terms for the 2009-2010 academic year are 6% simple interest with payment beginning 12 months after program completion or failure to enroll in future credit courses that are relative to the program area. The minimum payment is \$100 per month with a maximum term of 10 years to repay.
- **It is the responsibility of the student/award recipient to make the staff of the Virginia Tobacco Scholarships Office as administration for the Southside Tobacco Loan Forgiveness Program updated as to changes in personal information, (i. e. change of address, graduation, withdrawing from classes, no longer enrolled in classes, et. al). Dated or incorrect information could result in a delay in receiving important information or having an application or invoice processed.**
- Assistance with tuition and academic fees from the Southside Tobacco Loan Forgiveness Program may be used to complete **ONLY** one degree or for 4 years, **whichever comes first**. Lifetime program benefit is restricted to the completion of one degree program.