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The Foundation for NH Community Colleges and Granite Edvance Announce New Student Support Fund

Emergency grants will assist community college students with non-academic expenses.

Concord, N.H. (February 21, 2024) – For some college students whose finances are stretched razor thin as they pursue a better future, one unexpected expense may be all it takes to derail their goals. A new emergency grant program created by a partnership between [The Foundation for New Hampshire Community Colleges](#) and [Granite Edvance](#) will help ensure students complete their degrees by assisting with such expenses as food, housing, childcare, and transportation. The Student Emergency Aid Fund, established through a gift of \$80,000 from Granite Edvance, will provide community college students with short-term financial support for non-academic emergency needs.

“We know that students who are unable to access basic needs such as food and housing are at a high risk for dropping out,” said Mark Rubinstein, [Community College System of New Hampshire](#) (CCSNH) Chancellor. “We’d like to thank Granite Edvance for providing the initial investment to establish the Student Emergency Aid Fund. The fund will help students meet basic but very critical needs and help keep them on track to meet their goals. The assistance funds will be administered locally at each of our colleges across the state enabling the staff who work directly with students to respond rapidly in an emergency.”

Supporting the launch of the Student Emergency Aid Fund reflects Granite Edvance’s purpose: empowering students of all ages and backgrounds to discover and achieve their education and career goals, said President and CEO Christiana Thornton.

“No matter how hard they work, no matter how carefully they plan, some students are going to face financial obstacles that threaten their ability to complete their schooling,” Thornton said. “It’s heartbreaking to think that something like a car repair bill could stand in the way of a student receiving their diploma and going on to accomplish great things in their community.”

The new fund reinforces efforts already in place to assist students who face financial hardships, said Kristen Butterfield-Ferrell, a student support counselor at Manchester Community College. Butterfield-Ferrell regularly works with students who need just a small infusion of funds to buy groceries or cover medical expenses to complete their studies or get back on track.

“The Student Emergency Aid Fund is really going to impact people in such a positive way,” Butterfield-Ferrell said. “It gives me hope to be able to offer a solution for people.”

Recent research finds that “basic needs funding” significantly impacts students’ likelihood of persisting in their studies. According to a [two-part report](#) published in 2022 and 2023 by the Center for Higher Education Policy and Practice, students who received emergency grant funding during the pandemic were between 8.6 and 15.5 percent more likely to remain enrolled than their peers.

Ensuring students can not only pursue educational goals but persist in reaching them is a key priority for The Foundation for New Hampshire Community Colleges, said Executive Director Tim Allison.

“Our mission is focused on providing greater access to educational opportunities to students throughout the state,” Allison said. “We accomplish this through financial assistance for scholarships, grants, program development, and facility enhancements. The new Student Emergency Aid Fund is yet another example of what can be accomplished when we work together to help our students succeed. Thank you, Granite Edvance.”

New Hampshire’s seven community colleges and local academic centers serve more than 22,000 learners each year, offering degree and certificate programs that align with career opportunities in the state.

Granite Edvance, a 60-year-old nonprofit, supports higher education and career access in the state by offering free career and higher-education counseling and resources as well as funding support through loans, grants, and scholarships. The donation to the Student Emergency Aid Fund reflects Granite Edvance’s focus on serving New Hampshire residents.

Thornton said: “We’d like to thank the anonymous donor who provided \$30,000 to assist students who are facing unexpected expenses. That initial donation prompted our organization to offer an additional \$50,000 to support our state’s community college students.”

About The Foundation for New Hampshire Community Colleges

The Foundation is a charitable organization established to provide greater access to educational opportunities through financial assistance for student scholarships, program development and enhancements to facilities across New Hampshire’s seven community colleges. The Foundation actively seeks contributions from public and private sources to create scholarships and program partnerships that prepare students for in-demand, skilled jobs to meet the needs of the workforce. To learn more about supporting community college students, visit [GiveNHCC.org](https://www.giveNHCC.org).

About Granite Edvance

Granite Edvance (formerly the New Hampshire Higher Education Assistance Foundation, or the NHHEAF Network) supports New Hampshire students and their families through free career and higher-education counseling and resources, as well as funding assistance including scholarships and a private student loan. As a 501 (c) (3), Granite Edvance reinvests its earnings into the state as part of a strong and growing commitment to NH students of all ages and backgrounds. Visit

GraniteEdvance.org.

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