



Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship Program

2022 Annual Report
Recipient Outcomes through Fall 2021

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Introduction

This report is prepared pursuant to T.C.A. §49-4-903(b), which directs the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) to:

"...provide assistance to the general assembly and to [the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation] by researching and analyzing data concerning the scholarship and grant programs created under this part, including, but not limited to, student success and scholarship retention."

The Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship (TELS) program was designed to meet the unique needs of the State of Tennessee, while also incorporating the hallmark elements of existing merit-based aid programs in other states. Developed through a process involving elected officials and members of the academic community, the TELS program aims to address the following broad public policy objectives:

- Improve academic achievement in high school through scholarship incentive
- Provide financial assistance as a means of promoting access to higher education
- Retain the state's "best and brightest" students in Tennessee colleges and universities
- Enhance and promote economic and community development through workforce training.

Tennessee Promise Scholarship Report

With the passage of Public Chapter 183 (2021), the Tennessee Promise Annual Report became a part of Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship reporting. THEC and the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation (TSAC) will continue to release two scholarship-specific reports each year. This report represents the inaugural joint release of Tennessee Promise and Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship reports. More information on the Tennessee Promise program and reporting can be found [here](#).

COVID-19 Impact on TELS

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the TSAC suspended various rules for determining initial or continuing eligibility for financial aid programs. Rule suspensions pertained to qualifying ACT exams and maintenance GPA policies. More details on temporary rule suspensions for the HOPE Scholarship and other programs can be found at [TSAC's COVID-19 Campus & Financial Aid webpage](#).

Privacy Notice

Throughout this report, THEC complies with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requirements to protect students' personally identifiable information. Therefore, when tables are presented, **individual cells containing fewer than 10 observations are suppressed**. The suppressed information is included in table total. Previous versions of this report suppressed cells with fewer than six observations.

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Data Sources, Technical Notes & Definitions

Data Sources

- Unless otherwise noted, data contained within this report are from the Financial Aid System of Tennessee (FAST), the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) Student Information System (SIS), and the P20 Connect Data System. Data from the [TSAC annual TELS Year-End Reports](#) are used in Section I.
- The current report uses verified payments from FAST to determine all TELS recipients and is supplemented by THECSIS and P20 Connect data, where applicable (e.g., retention and graduation data).
- The P20 Connect Data System is used as an additional source to match **retention and graduation data** from private (i.e., TICUA) institutions. Not all TICUA institutions participate in the P20 Connect.
 - Twenty-one private institutions currently submit data to P20 Connect: Baptist Health Sciences University, Bethel University, Carson-Newman University, Christian Brothers University, Cumberland University, Fisk University, Freed-Hardeman University, Johnson University, King University, Lane College, Le Moyne-Owen College, Lee University, Lipscomb University, Maryville College, Milligan College, Rhodes College, Tennessee Wesleyan University, Trevecca Nazarene University, Tusculum University, Union University, and Welch College.

Technical Notes

- Students are identified by higher education sector and scholarship type **at college entry**, unless otherwise noted. Renewal, retention, and graduation rates are also attributed to the higher education sector and scholarship program at college entry.
- Unless otherwise noted, all tables and figures include Locally Governed Institutions (LGIs), TBR Community Colleges, UT Campuses, and private institutions, and the HOPE Scholarship, General Assembly Merit Scholarship, Aspire Award, and HOPE Access Grant programs.
- Martin Methodist College merged with the University of Tennessee System on July 1, 2021, to become Tennessee's newest public university, the University of Tennessee Southern. The first two sections of this report, which provide data on scholarship recipients in fall 2021, categorize the University of Tennessee Southern within the "UT Campuses" sector. The remaining three sections of the report focus on scholarship recipient outcomes by cohort and classify scholarship recipients in the institution and sector at college entry, Martin Methodist College, a "Private Institution."
- Statistics presented in this report exclude [Tennessee HOPE Nontraditional Scholarship](#) recipients, whose eligibility is contingent on enrollment in an eligible baccalaureate program.

Definitions

- The **six-year graduation rate** is defined as the percent of TELS first-time freshmen who attained either an associate or bachelor's degree **within six years** of enrollment regardless of scholarship status at graduation.
- The **graduation rate with TELS intact** is defined as the percent of TELS first-time freshmen who attained either **an associate or bachelor's degree within five years** of enrollment without losing scholarship eligibility (received a TELS award in the same term as their graduation). Five years is the maximum time for which students can renew a scholarship.

Executive Summary

Overview of the TELS Report

This manuscript provides a concise data snapshot of TELS recipients and their outcomes including narrative discussion on the current context. The report comprises five sections: (1) Program Overview, (2) Recipient Demographics, (3) Scholarship Renewal and Postsecondary Retention for Non-Renewals, (4) Five-Year Graduation Rates with TELS Intact, and (5) Six-Year Graduation Rates and Outcomes over Time.

Two interactive data dashboards allow users to explore data on TELS participation and recipient outcomes at a deeper level:

- **TELS Participation Dashboard** provides a descriptive look into the first-time TELS recipients by term and over time. Users should refer to the TELS Participation Dashboard to learn more about the distribution of first-time TELS recipients by income, academic profile, and scholarship program participation. Users may refine the results of the dashboard by institutional sector, scholarship program, and recipient demographic group, including race, gender, and economic status.
- **TELS Student Success Dashboard** demonstrates the outcomes of first-time TELS recipients by cohort and over time. Users may refer to the TELS Student Success Dashboard to learn more about TELS scholarship renewal rates, retention rates, and graduation rates. As with the TELS Participation Dashboard, users may filter the data by institutional sector, scholarship program, and recipient demographic group.

The dashboards, as well as downloadable datasets with institution-specific statistics, are available via the [TELS Report landing page](#).

Overview and Key Takeaways

- **In 2021-2022, over 139,000 students received a Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship (TELS), with awards totaling nearly \$373 million** (see [Table 3](#)). This represents all TELS programs, including Tennessee Promise, Wilder-Naifeh, and the Dual Enrollment Grant, among others. Overall, 2021-2022 had nearly 12,000 fewer TELS recipients than 2020-2021 and a drop of \$26 million in scholarship allocations.
- **In fall 2021, 26,519 students enrolled as first-time scholarship recipients** (see [Table 5](#); based on confirmed payments for HOPE, GAMS, Aspire, and Access); 67% received the HOPE Scholarship, 24% received the Aspire Award, 9% received the General Assembly Merit Scholarship (GAMS), and 1% received the HOPE Access Grant. GAMS and Aspire are supplemental awards to the base HOPE Scholarship.
- **First-time scholarship participation declined from fall 2020 to fall 2021, which echoes broader trends in Tennessee postsecondary enrollment and college going. The fall 2021 cohort of first-time scholarship recipients had a similar demographic composition to the previous cohort** (see [Table 7](#)). Slight declines were observed with “White, Not Hispanic” student participation, and an increasing proportion of first-time TELS recipients received a Tennessee Student Assistance Award.
- **First-time scholarship receipt in fall 2021 fell for all adjusted gross income (AGI) categories.** Recipients with an AGI of “\$12,001 - \$24,000” had the most notable decline,

dropping 18%, when compared to the previous cohort (see [Figure 3](#)).

- **First-time TELS recipients in fall 2021 had an average high school GPA of 3.57 and an average ACT Composite score of 22** (see [Table 8](#)). Less the recipients of the HOPE Access Grant, 94% of first-time TELS recipients in fall 2021 had a high school GPA of at least 3.0, and 67% had at least an ACT Composite score of 21. Fifty-nine percent of first-time TELS recipients met both the GPA and ACT Composite score requirements for the HOPE Scholarship (see [Figure 4](#)).
- **Seventy-five percent of all first-time TELS recipients in fall 2020 (n = 28,523) remained enrolled in postsecondary education in fall 2021 regardless of scholarship receipt** (see [Table 11](#)). This represents a decline of 4 percentage points relative to the fall 2019 cohort of first-time recipients.
- **Fifty-six percent of first-time TELS recipients in fall 2020 renewed their scholarship eligibility (i.e., received a TELS award) in fall 2021** (see [Table 9](#)). Compared to the previous cohort (i.e., from fall 2019), the proportion of the fall 2020 cohort maintaining scholarship eligibility in the first year declined to pre-pandemic rates.
- **Forty-seven percent of first-time TELS recipients in fall 2020 who did not renew their scholarship eligibility requirements in fall 2021 (i.e., did not receive a TELS award) remained enrolled in postsecondary education** (see [Table 10](#)). This represents a marginal increase of 2 percentage points when compared to the prior year. Despite the increase, non-renewal retention remains substantially lower (8 to 11 percentage points) compared to pre-pandemic rates.
- **Overall, the fall 2015 cohort of first-time TELS recipients had a 68% success rate at the end of the fifth and final year of scholarship eligibility.** Of the fall 2015 cohort (n = 28,514), 5% of recipients renewed eligibility into a fifth year, 23% did not maintain their scholarship but remained enrolled in postsecondary education, and 39% had earned either an associate or bachelor's degree ([Figure 7](#)).

Section One:

Program Overview



Program Overview

Table 1 below depicts the award amounts and the eligibility criteria to receive and maintain the Tennessee HOPE Scholarship, the General Assembly Merit Scholarship (GAMS), the Aspire Award, and the HOPE Access Grant as of the 2021-22 academic year. GAMS and the Aspire Award are supplements to the HOPE Scholarship. Pursuant to Public Chapter (2020) 794, TSAC ceased accepting new applications after September 1, 2021, for the HOPE Access Grant. For all four scholarships, students apply by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). For additional information on the scholarship eligibility requirements and award amounts, visit CollegeForTN.org.

Table 2 provides an abbreviated overview of the recent legislative history pertaining to Tennessee’s state-based financial aid programs.

Table 1: Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship (TELS) Criteria

Eligibility Criteria	HOPE	GAMS	Aspire	Access
Minimum High School GPA	3.00	3.75	3.00	2.75-2.99
Minimum ACT Composite	<u>or</u> 21	<u>and</u> 29	<u>or</u> 21	<u>and</u> 18-20
Family Adjusted Gross Income (AGI)	N/A	N/A	<=\$36,000	<=\$36,000
Postsecondary Retention GPA*	<i>Traditional Path</i> - Cumulative 2.75 at 24 & 48 hours, cumulative 3.0 at 72, 96, 120 hours			Cumulative 2.75 at 24 hours qualifies the student for HOPE
	<i>Provisional Path</i> - Cumulative 2.75-2.99 at 72, 96, 120 hours with 3.0 prior semester			

Award Amounts per Academic Year (Fall and Spring Only), Fall 2015-Summer 2022

4-year: Freshman and Sophomore	\$3,500	\$4,500	\$5,000	\$2,500
4-year: Junior and Senior	\$4,500	\$5,500	\$6,000	N/A
2-year: Freshman and Sophomore	\$3,000	\$4,000	\$3,500	\$1,750

Notes: The above award amounts are limited to fall and spring terms, but awards are also available for summer terms. Amounts reported in [historical versions](#) of this report included summer terms. Refer to the historical reports for award amounts prior to fall 2015.

The provisional path applies to students who do not have a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA at the end of the semester in which a student attempted 72 semester hours and any multiple of 24 semester hours thereafter. Under the provisional path, a student’s continued eligibility will be determined on a semester-by-semester basis, and the student must maintain full-time enrollment.

*TELS eligibility may be renewed for up to five years after initial enrollment or until the student earned a baccalaureate degree. The credit hour checkpoints correspond to 24=end of first year, 48=end of second year, 72=end of third year, 96=end of fourth year, 120=end of fifth year.

Table 2: Major Legislative Changes in TELS, 2016-2022

Legislative Changes
2016
Expanded eligibility criteria for the Community College Reconnect Grant Pilot
2017
Created Community College Reconnect Grant Program (Tennessee Reconnect)
Created Middle College Scholarship Program (took effect fall 2018)
2018
Tennessee Reconnect launched (takes effect fall 2018)
Middle College Scholarship launched
Eliminated Nontraditional HOPE at associate degree level
2019
Increased semester award for the Tennessee Middle College Scholarship from \$600 to \$1,000.
Expanded the Dual Enrollment Grant maximum from 8 courses to 10 courses (took effect fall 2020)
Created the Governor's Investment in Vocational Education (GIVE), which expands the Dual Enrollment Grant to 4 high-need career and technical education (CTE) courses (took effect fall 2020)
2020
Financial aid application process streamlined with the passage of the Financial Aid Simplification for Tennesseans (FAST) Act. Effective July 1, 2021, the FAST Act also eliminated the 120-credit hour accrual terminating event for HOPE eligibility. The FAST Act ended a number of state-based financial aid programs, which included the HOPE Access Grant. TSAC stopped accepting applications for the HOPE Access Grant on September 1, 2021.
TSAC temporarily suspended several rules for the HOPE Scholarship, TN Promise, and TN Reconnect for the spring, summer, and fall 2020 semesters. More information on these rule suspensions can be found at TSAC's COVID-19 Campus & Financial Aid webpage . Rule suspensions extended into 2021.
2021
The Tennessee Promise Annual Report consolidated with the Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship Report with the first joint report to be released in October 2022.
Public Chapter 512 established a four-year pilot program to award completion grants to Tennessee Promise Scholarship students who have an immediate financial need or who are experiencing a financial hardship that may prevent the student from completing a postsecondary degree or credential. The pilot program will be repealed January 1, 2026.
Effective January 1, 2022, the Dual Enrollment Grant program will award in-state tuition and mandatory fees up to a maximum of the first four dual enrollment courses.
The Middle College Scholarship award increased from \$1,000/semester to \$1,250/semester.
William R. Moore College of Technology added as an eligible institution for the Dual Enrollment Grant.
Created an alternate path to HOPE eligibility for home school students by allowing the use of two dual enrollment courses with a 3.0 average GPA to serve as a proxy for the cumulative high school GPA.
Expanded the Helping Heroes grant by allowing TSAC to expand eligibility by military campaign through rule, removing the \$750,000 cap on expenditures, and removing the eight-year timeframe for completion.
2022
Effective July 1, 2022, Tennessee Public Chapter 1116 increased base HOPE award amount to \$2,250/semester at eligible four-year institutions for freshmen and sophomore students. Base HOPE award amount for juniors and seniors at eligible four-year institutions increased to \$2,850/semester. For students at eligible two-year colleges, Base HOPE awards increased to \$1,600/semester.
Expanded the Dual Enrollment program to award in-state tuition and mandatory fees up to a maximum of the first five dual enrollment courses and expanded the program by allowing high school freshmen and sophomores enrolled in a TCAT to participate.
Lowered the renewal GPA from 2.75 to 2.0 and eliminated the required reduction of a student's HOPE award by the amount of DEG received after the fourth course.
Expanded the HOPE Scholarship for Nontraditional Students by using independent status rather than minimum 25 years of age.
Lowered the minimum age for Tennessee Reconnect Grant eligibility from 24 to 23 (or as otherwise classified as financially independent on the FAFSA).

Note: For additional historical legislative changes to TELS, please refer to [past reports](#).

Table 3 provides a comprehensive overview of recipient counts and total awards for the full suite of TELS programs. GAMS and Aspire are supplemental awards to the HOPE Scholarship and are included in the subtotal with HOPE. With the exception of **Table 3** and **Table 4**, this report focuses exclusively on HOPE, GAMS, Aspire, and HOPE Access Grant (Access) programs. TSAC ceased accepting new applications after September 1, 2021, for the HOPE Access Grant. Importantly, Access recipients and their outcomes will continue to be reported as is appropriate and feasible.

Readers interested in learning more about the TELS programs not highlighted in this report are encouraged to review the TELS Year-End Reports and archived scholarship reports available via the [TELS Program Data webpage](#).

Table 3: Scholarship Recipients and Dollars Awarded by Scholarship Program, 2019-20 to 2021-22

Scholarship Program	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22	
	Students	Dollars	Students	Dollars	Students	Dollars
HOPE	47,721	\$167,517,238	49,179	\$169,364,419	46,155	\$160,786,187
GAMS	8,704	\$42,545,301	9,080	\$44,507,415	8,690	\$42,765,904
Aspire	18,126	\$84,636,702	17,555	\$81,852,978	15,275	\$72,421,444
Subtotal (HOPE, GAMS, Aspire)	74,551	\$294,699,241	75,814	\$295,724,812	70,120	\$275,973,535
Tennessee Promise	16,082	\$32,344,785	16,633	\$30,449,206	13,796	\$26,230,370
Tennessee Reconnect	12,735	\$31,296,679	11,648	\$29,069,338	8,925	\$22,071,509
TCAT Reconnect	1,827	\$2,073,087	2,058	\$2,215,621	1,748	\$2,059,691
HOPE Access Grant	410	\$717,942	317	\$519,978	218	\$363,315
HOPE Non-Traditional	481	\$1,608,878	338	\$1,190,782	281	\$929,441
Wilder-Naifeh Grant	11,349	\$14,471,197	11,033	\$13,725,144	10,708	\$13,841,478
HOPE Foster Care Grant	105	\$582,586	75	\$458,828	89	\$490,522
Dual Enrollment Grant	33,417	\$24,835,948	31,210	\$24,427,561	31,626	\$29,290,259
Middle College Scholarship	246	\$459,000	260	\$459,000	393	\$886,941
Math & Science Teachers	4	\$8,000	1	\$2,000	1	\$2,000
Helping Heroes Grant	287	\$414,522	196	\$306,250	205	\$304,500
TN STEP UP	119	\$448,000	101	\$342,250	102	\$363,625
Total	150,939*	\$403,959,865	151,024*	\$398,890,770	139,232*	\$372,807,186

Source: [TSAC TELS year-end reports](#).

Notes: * Indicates a distinct count of individuals receiving award dollars from grant programs.

Totals represent a distinct count of students and are not always the sum of the numbers within the section.

Table 4 provides the count of recipients and the allocated awards by sector in Tennessee. Like Table 3, **Table 4** includes the full suite of TELS programs. Relative to prior years, TBR Community Colleges represented a decreasing share of recipients and of award allocations, which is consistent with broader enrollment trends observed in this sector. For additional information on general enrollment data through fall 2021, see the [2021-2022 Tennessee Higher Education Fact Book](#).

Table 4: Distribution of Scholarship Recipients and Dollars by System, 2019-20 to 2021-22

Year	System	Students		Allocations	
		Number	Percent	Dollars	Percent
2019-20	UT System	21,941	15%	\$88,093,197	22%
	LGIs	31,521	21%	\$113,561,979	28%
	TBR 2-Year	60,091	40%	\$116,844,689	29%
	Independents	18,447	12%	\$61,858,376	15%
	TCATs	19,979	13%	\$20,656,569	5%
	Proprietary Institutions	925	1%	\$2,945,055	1%
	Total*		150,939	100%	\$403,959,865
2020-21	UT System	22,499	15%	\$91,702,289	23%
	LGIs	31,924	21%	\$113,136,180	28%
	TBR 2-Year	57,412	38%	\$108,367,292	27%
	Independents	18,587	12%	\$61,835,781	16%
	TCATs	19,512	13%	\$20,556,098	5%
	Proprietary Institutions	1,090	1%	\$3,293,130	1%
	Total*		151,024	100%	\$398,890,770
2021-22	UT System	22,066	16%	\$89,482,973	24%
	LGIs	29,375	21%	\$105,624,754	28%
	TBR 2-Year	49,878	36%	\$95,096,754	26%
	Independents	17,029	12%	\$58,031,857	16%
	TCATs	19,883	14%	\$21,581,761	6%
	Proprietary Institutions	1,001	1%	\$2,989,087	1%
	Total*		139,232	100%	\$372,807,186

Source: [TSAC TELS year-end reports](#).

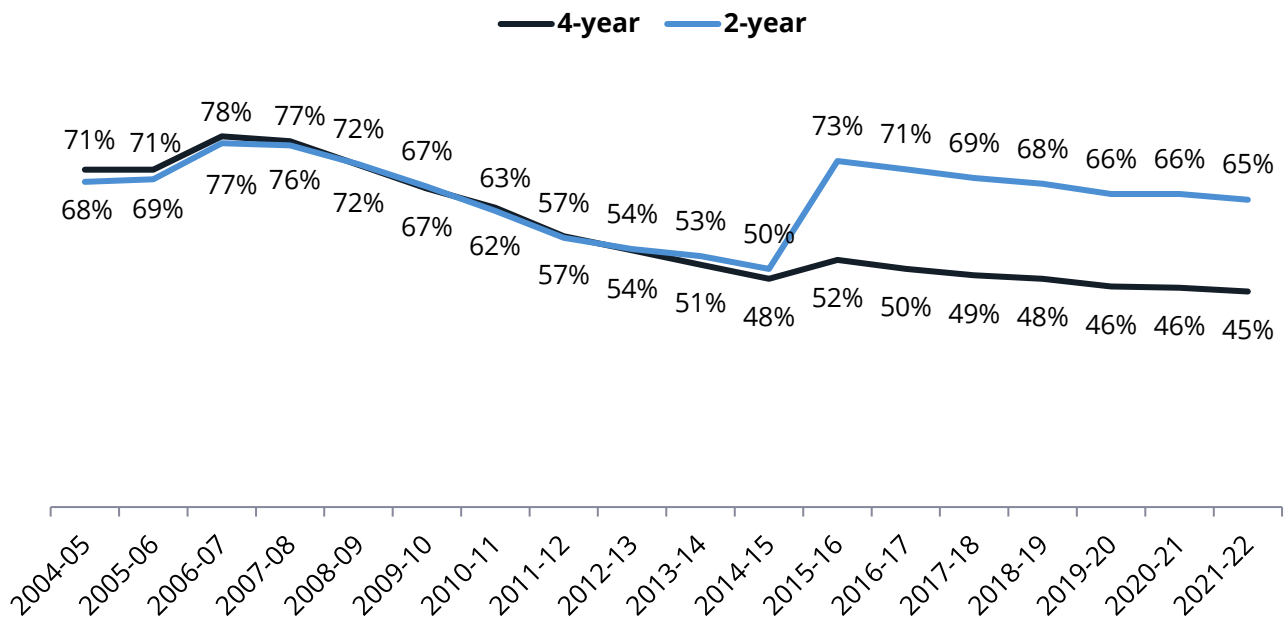
Notes: *Annual totals represent a distinct count of students and are not always the sum of the sector totals for the year. Due to rounding, totals may not sum to 100. Student and award totals are based on the suite of TELS programs summarized in Table 3. See [previous iterations](#) of this report for recipients and awards prior to 2019-20.

Figure 1 displays the maximum base HOPE award (not including GAMS or Aspire supplements; see **Table 1** for more information) as a percent of the average mandatory tuition and fees for Tennessee’s public community colleges and universities as reported in the annual [Tennessee Higher Education Fact Book](#). In 2021-22, public community colleges reported an average of \$4,638 in tuition and fees. For public universities, average tuition and fees were \$9,923.

From 2015-16 to 2021-22, the maximum base HOPE award was \$4,500 for four-year colleges and \$3,000 for two-year colleges per academic year. Tennessee Public Chapter 1116 (2022) increased the maximum annual base HOPE amount for students (at the junior and senior level) at eligible four-year colleges to \$5,700. At community colleges, the maximum base HOPE increased to \$3,200 annually. The new award amounts will apply to entering freshmen in fall 2022 and will be reflected in next year’s iteration of this report.

Over the lifetime (2004-05 to 2021-22) of the TELS suite of programs, the maximum base HOPE award amount has increased by an average (i.e., compound annual growth rate) of 2.3% for 4-year colleges and by 3.9% for two-year colleges. Conversely, the tuition at Tennessee public colleges has grown by an average of 4.9% for public universities and by 4.2% for public community colleges. As such, the HOPE purchasing power declined from a high in 2006-07 for both community colleges and universities (77% and 78%, respectively). The maximum HOPE award reached its lowest purchasing power (45%) at universities in 2021-22. Following the award adjustment in 2015-16, HOPE purchasing power at community colleges has declined from 73% to 65% at community colleges.

Figure 1: Maximum HOPE Award Amount as a Percent of Average Tuition & Fees at Public Institutions, 2004-05 to 2021-22



Notes: This figure *does not* include the HOPE award or tuition and fees for the summer semester. The increase in maximum amount between 2014-15 and 2015-16 at community colleges is explained by the change in HOPE award amounts in 2015-16. *Average Tuition and Fees* is an unweighted average of resident tuition and fees for full-time undergraduate students at public institutions. Refer to Table 3.6 in in 2022 [Tennessee Higher Education Fact Book](#) for more information. The average tuition and fees for public universities is inclusive of all six Locally Governed Institutions and four universities within the University of Tennessee System (Chattanooga, Knoxville, Martin, and Southern).

Tables 5 and 6 below depict the count and representative share of TELS recipients by program and by sector in fall 2021. **Table 5** highlights first-time recipients in fall 2021, and **Table 6** reports details for all TELS recipients. Compared to fall 2020, HOPE represented a greater share of both first-time (67% versus 65%) and all TELS (68% versus 67%) recipients. Since fall 2019, the Aspire Award has represented a smaller share of first-time scholarship recipients (24% versus 28%). The decline in Aspire receipt indicates that fewer students with adjusted gross incomes (AGIs) of or below \$36,000 are participating in TELS over time. Over 2,000 fewer students received a TELS award for the first time between fall 2020 and fall 2021. GAMS and Aspire experienced declines at 13% (a reduction of 330 recipients) and 11% (a reduction of 775 recipients), respectively. The Access Grant experienced a nearly 30% decline (91 fewer students) in participation. Community colleges reported 9% fewer first-time recipients in fall 2021 than in fall 2020.

Table 5: Distribution of First-Time Scholarship Recipients by System and Scholarship Program, Fall 2021

First-Time TELS Recipients	System	Student Headcount				Total
		HOPE	GAMS	Aspire	Access	
Student Headcount	LGI Universities	4,918	623	2,035	64	7,640
	TBR Community Colleges	6,213	93	1,968	103	8,377
	UT Campuses	4,013	971	1,284	18	6,286
	Private Institutions*	2,624	570	994	28	4,216
	Total	17,768	2,257	6,281	213	26,519
Percent	LGI Universities	64%	8%	27%	1%	29%
	TBR Community Colleges	74%	1%	23%	1%	32%
	UT Campuses	64%	15%	20%	0.3%	24%
	Private Institutions*	62%	14%	24%	1%	16%
	Total	67%	9%	24%	1%	100%

Notes: Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

*Includes proprietary and non-for-profit institutions. South College is the only HOPE-eligible proprietary institution.

GAMS and Aspire are supplemental awards to the base HOPE award. Students captured in the "HOPE" column are those who only received the base scholarship.

UT Southern is included in the UT Campuses system.

Table 6: Distribution of All Scholarship Recipients by System and Scholarship Program, Fall 2021

ALL TELS Recipients	System	Student Headcount				Total
		HOPE	GAMS	Aspire	Access	
Student Headcount	Locally Governed Institutions	15,928	2,117	4,986	65	23,096
	TBR Community Colleges	10,026	185	2,938	105	13,254
	UT Campuses	13,056	3,500	3,513	18	20,087
	Private Institutions*	7,941	1,966	2,612	28	12,547
	Total	46,951	7,768	14,049	216	68,984
Percent	Locally Governed Institutions	69%	9%	22%	0.3%	33%
	TBR Community Colleges	76%	1%	22%	0.8%	19%
	UT Campuses	65%	17%	17%	0.1%	29%
	Private Institutions*	63%	16%	21%	0.2%	18%
	Total	68%	11%	20%	0.3%	100%

Notes: Students are only eligible for the HOPE Access Grant for 24 credit hours. Students then either become eligible for the traditional HOPE Scholarship or lose lottery eligibility.

Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Student enrollment based on system in fall 2021, not necessarily the institution of initial scholarship receipt.

GAMS and Aspire are supplemental awards to the base HOPE award. Students captured in the "HOPE" column are those who only received the base scholarship.

*Includes proprietary and non-for-profit institutions. South College is the only HOPE-eligible proprietary institution.

UT Southern is included in the UT Campuses system.

Section Two:

Recipient Demographics



Recipient Demographics

This section of the report provides an overview of the demographic characteristics of the cohort of first-time TELS recipients and a comparison to the demographic profile of all TELS recipients in fall 2021. The majority of TELS recipients are female, White, and ineligible for a Federal Pell Grant or Tennessee Student Assistance Award (TSAA), which is consistent year to year. Most recipients also have at least one parent with an associate degree or higher. **Table 7** below provides a comparison of first-time TELS recipient demographic characteristics over time by gender, race/ethnicity, parental education, and eligibility for need-based financial aid. Contrasting the reduced share of Pell-eligible students, the share of TSAA-eligible students has increased over time, which reflects recent changes in the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) threshold used when determining TSAA eligibility. To be eligible for TSAA, scholarship applicants must have an EFC of \$5,846 or less, which is also the threshold used for determining Pell eligibility. The EFC increased to \$3,500 for the 2020-21 academic year and to Pell eligibility (\$5,846) in 2021-22. Students were identified as TSAA eligible if they had an EFC of \$2,100 or less. The growth in first-time TELS recipients receiving TSAA over time represents this expansion in eligibility over time.

Table 7: Demographic Profile of First-Time TELS Recipients

Fall 2019 - Fall 2021

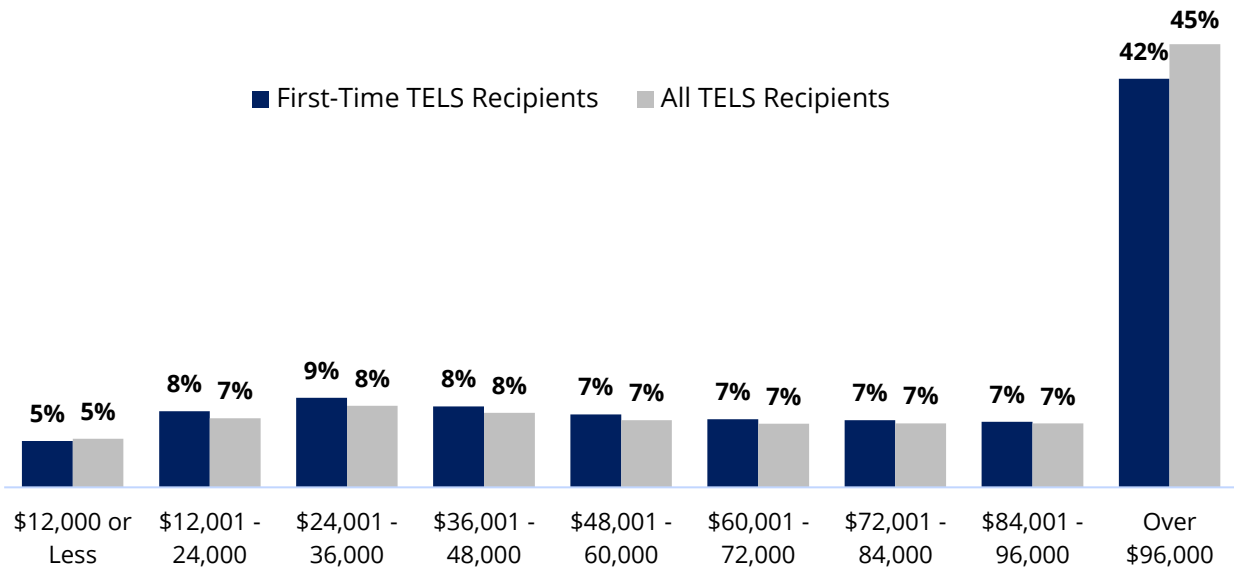
Recipient Demographic Categories		Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021
Gender	<i>Female</i>	58%	59%	59%
	<i>Male</i>	42%	41%	41%
Race/Ethnicity	<i>Black, Not Hispanic</i>	13%	12%	13%
	<i>White, Not Hispanic</i>	76%	76%	75%
	<i>Hispanic</i>	6%	6%	7%
	<i>Other*</i>	5%	5%	6%
Parental Education	<i>Associate Degree or Higher</i>	66%	68%	69%
Aid Eligibility	<i>Federal Pell Grant</i>	45%	43%	42%
	<i>TN Student Assistance Award (TSAA)</i>	33%	35%	40%
Count of First-Time TELS Recipients		30,331	28,523	26,519

Notes: Table excludes students whose race/ethnicity or gender is unknown.
 **Other* category includes Alaskan Native, American Indian, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Multiracial.
 Pell and TSAA eligibility are based on the student's first year of scholarship receipt.
 First generation is a measure of "College and Beyond" as reported on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and is based on the student's first year of scholarship receipt.
 For more information on TSAA, Tennessee's need-based grant for undergraduates, visit [TSAC's TSAA webpage](#).

Figures 2 and 3 provide insight into the fall 2021 cohort by their adjusted gross income (AGI). In fall 2021, 42% of first-time TELS recipients had an AGI of \$96,000 or above, with the remaining 58% distributed fairly evenly across the remaining AGI categories.

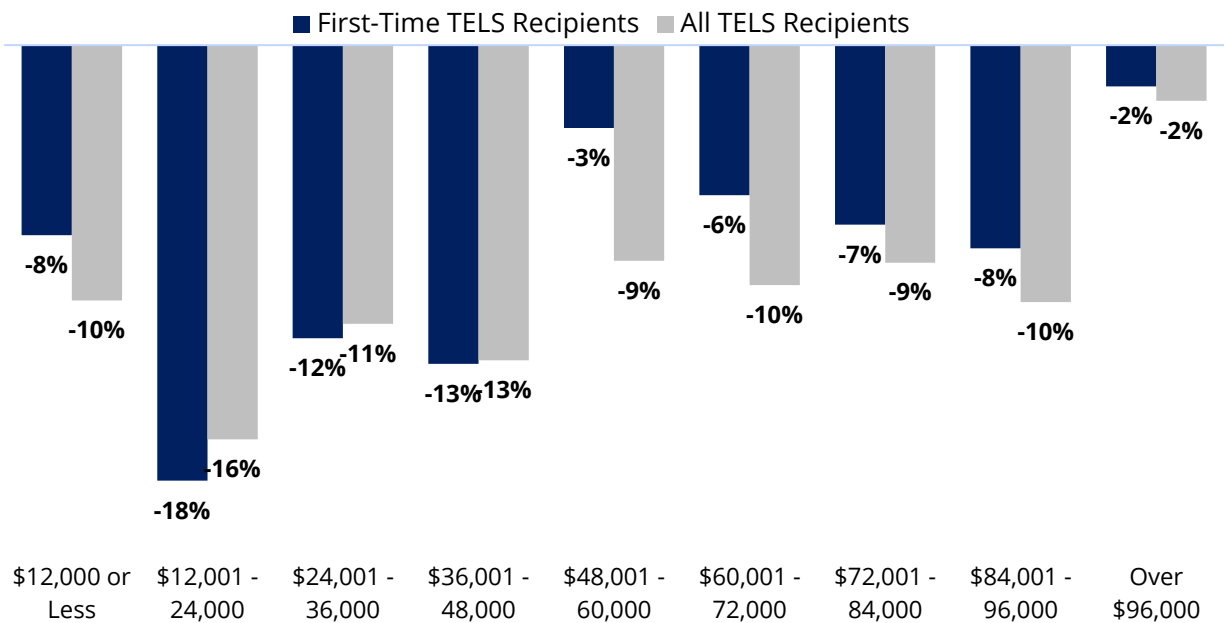
Figure 3 displays the change in headcount by AGI category for first-time TELS recipients between fall 2020 and fall 2021. Each AGI category had fewer scholarship recipients as compared to fall 2020. Recipients with an AGI of "\$96,000 or more" and recipients with an AGI of "\$48,001 – 60,000" experienced the lowest magnitude of loss, with declines of 2% (-178 recipients) and 3% (-65 recipients), respectively. Those with an AGI of "\$12,001 – 24,000" had the greatest decline at 18% (-419 recipients).

Figure 2: Lottery Scholarship by Family Adjusted Gross Income (AGI)
Fall 2021



Notes: Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.
AGI as of fall 2021.

Figure 3: Change in First-Time and All TELS Recipient Headcount by Family Adjusted Gross Income (AGI),
Fall 2020 - Fall 2021



Notes: Change in first-time recipient headcounts between fall 2019 and fall 2020 are as follows:
 \$12,000 or Less = (99); 12,001-24,000 = (419); 24,001-36,000 = (310); \$36,001- 48,000 = (308); 48,001-60,000 = (65);
 \$60,001-72,000 = (113); 72,001-84,000 = (135); 84,001-96,000 = (151); Over \$96,000 = (178)
 The change in headcounts for all TELS recipients is available upon request.

Table 8 and **Figure 4** below depict the academic profile of first-time TELS recipients in fall 2021. Overall, first-time recipients in fall 2021 had a marginally lower academic profile compared to the previous cohort. On average, TELS recipients had a high school grade point average (GPA) of 3.53 (as measured on a 4.0 scale) and an average ACT Composite score of 22 (highest possible score of 36). The average high school GPA scores ranged from 2.87 to 3.94 by scholarship program and from 3.44 to 3.69 by system. The average ACT Composite score ranged from 18-31 by scholarship program and from 20-24 by system.

Specific to the HOPE Scholarship, 58% of first-time recipients in fall 2021 met both the high school GPA (3.0+) and ACT Composite score (21+) requirements, with 92% meeting at least the high school GPA requirement and 67% meeting at least the ACT Composite score requirement.

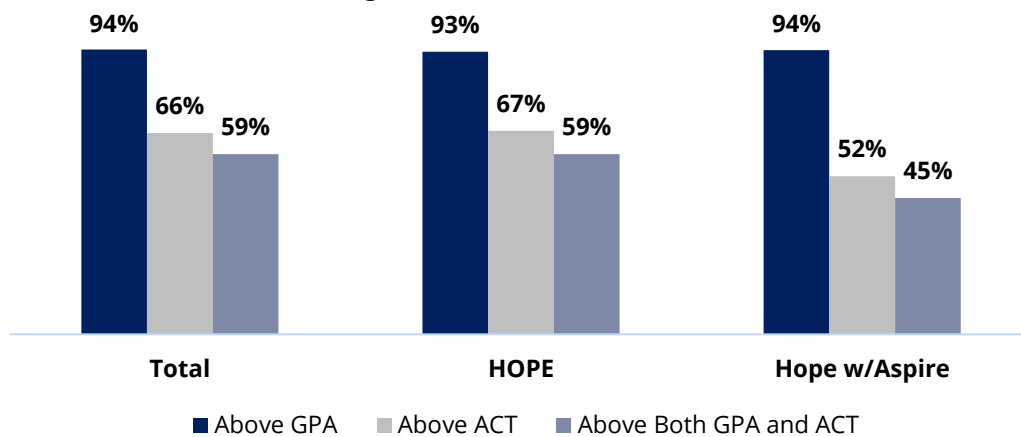
Table 8: Average High School GPAs and ACT Composite Scores of First-Time TELS Recipients by Postsecondary System and Scholarship Type, Fall 2021

		Average High School GPA	Average ACT Composite Score
Scholarship	HOPE	3.56	22
	HOPE w/GAMS	3.94	31
	Hope w/Aspire	3.50	20
	Hope Access	2.87	18
System	LGI Universities	3.58	22
	TBR Community Colleges	3.44	20
	UT Campuses	3.69	24
	Private Institutions	3.66	23
Total		3.57	22

Sources: FAST, THECSIS

Notes: Missing data on GPA/ACT from FAST are supplemented with data, where available, from THECSIS. Students with missing GPA or ACT scores are excluded. GPA or ACT values of 0 are treated as missing. Eligibility for the Tennessee HOPE Access Grant requires a GPA between 2.75-2.99 *and* an ACT of 18-20. GAMS and Aspire are supplemental awards to the base HOPE award. Students captured in the “HOPE” column are those who only received the base scholarship. UT Southern is included in the UT Campuses system.

Figure 4: Share of First-Time TELS Recipients Achieving GPA and ACT Eligibility Thresholds (excluding HOPE Access), Fall 2021

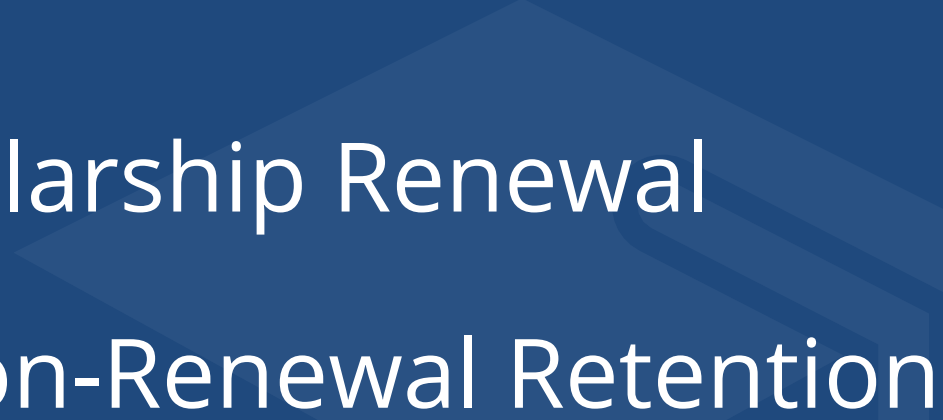


Sources: FAST, THECSIS

Notes: Students with missing GPA or ACT scores excluded. GPA or ACT values of 0 are treated as missing. The thresholds of 3.0 high school GPA and 21 ACT do not apply to the HOPE Access Grant or to GAMS. All GAMS students meet these thresholds.

Section Three:

Scholarship Renewal & Non-Renewal Retention



Scholarship Renewal & Non-Renewal Retention

This section reports the share of first-time TELS recipients who renewed their scholarship eligibility for a second year (assessed fall to fall) and the share of first-time TELS recipients who did not renew their scholarship eligibility but remained enrolled in postsecondary education. Analyses of past cohort data and of scholarship-loss reasons (as reported by the certifying institutions at the start of term) have indicated that on average 22.3% of first-time TELS recipients who did not maintain eligibility in the first year lost their scholarship because they did not reapply (i.e., not resubmitting a Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Approximately 33.1% of scholarship loss in the first year was due to non-continuous enrollment. Other scholarship-loss reasons, such as unsatisfactory GPAs, account on average for 44.6% of first-year scholarship loss. Additional information on HOPE Scholarship eligibility maintenance requirements is available at CollegeForTN.org.

See the **TELS Student Success Dashboard** for additional details on renewal and retention rates over time.

Renewal Requirements

TELS recipients are evaluated for scholarship renewal after every 24 attempted credit hours. At the 24- and 48-hour check points, students must have earned a cumulative postsecondary GPA of 2.75 or higher to remain eligible for the scholarship. Upon attempting 72 credit hours, a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 is required to remain eligible. Credit hour checks continue at each subsequent 24 credit hour check point, up to 120 credit hours.

T.C.A. §49-4-911(a)(2) permits those with 72 or more credit hours to maintain eligibility if their cumulative GPA is less than 3.0 (i.e., via a provisional path), as long as they:

- Maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.75;
- Earned a semester grade point average of at least 3.0 for the semester in which continuing eligibility was reviewed;
- Enrolled full-time in the semester when continuing eligibility was reviewed; and
- Will continue to enroll full-time in the subsequent semester.

The TELS award is available for up to five years after the date of initial enrollment or baccalaureate degree attainment, whichever comes first. Prior to July 1, 2021, TELS eligibility could terminate upon the student attempting 120 credit hours.

If a student ceases to be academically eligible for the HOPE Scholarship, the student may regain the award one time only. The award may be re-established once the student meets the required GPA at a subsequent benchmark and maintains continuous enrollment and satisfactory academic progress at an eligible postsecondary institution without the HOPE Scholarship.

For the temporary suspensions to GPA eligibility requirements related to the COVID-19 pandemic, please refer to the “Note on COVID-19 Impact on TELS” on page ii or [TSAC’s COVID-19 Campus & Financial Aid webpage](#).

Table 9 below reports the share of first-time TELS recipients in fall 2020 who renewed their scholarship eligibility requirements in fall 2021 by their initial scholarship program and the sector of their initial postsecondary institution. The statistics reported in **Table 9** are based on scholarship payments made in fall 2021.

In total, 56% of TELS recipients renewed their eligibility for a second year, which is 7 percentage-point decrease compared to the fall 2019 cohort but is on par with scholarship renewal rates prior to the pandemic (e.g., the fall 2018 cohort of first-time recipients maintaining their scholarship into fall 2019 was also 56%). The sharp increase in renewal rates observed in the previous cohort is attributed to TSAC’s temporary rule suspensions concerning scholarship eligibility and maintenance requirements.

Not reflected in **Table 9**, scholarship renewal rates also vary substantially by student demographic groups. For the fall 2020 cohort, 59% of female students renewed compared to 51% of male students. While 57% of “White, Not Hispanic” students renewed their scholarship eligibility, only 45% of “Black, Not Hispanic” students did so. Considering race-gender intersections, 48% of “Black, Not Hispanic” female scholarship recipients renewed, but only 39% of “Black, Not Hispanic” male scholarship recipients renewed.

Likewise, students who were ineligible for a Federal Pell Grant demonstrated higher renewal rates compared to those who were Pell eligible (62% versus 47%). First-generation students renewed at lower rates than their not-first-generation peers (47% versus 60%). Readers are encouraged to explore the **interactive dashboards** accessible via the [TELS Report landing page](#) to learn more about the scholarship renewal rates over time and by student demographic groups.

Table 9: One-Year Scholarship Renewal Rates by Scholarship Program and System, First-Time TELS Recipients, Fall 2020

System		HOPE	GAMS	Aspire	Access	Total
LGI Universities	First-time TELS Freshmen	5,091	697	2,209	91	8,088
	Scholarship Renewal Rate	58%	88%	50%	20%	58%
TBR Community Colleges	First-time TELS Freshmen	6,777	122	2,187	149	9,235
	Scholarship Renewal Rate	45%	75%	35%	17%	42%
UT Campuses	First-time TELS Freshmen	3,960	1,134	1,554	22	6,670
	Scholarship Renewal Rate	63%	88%	54%	<10%	65%
Private Institutions	First-time TELS Freshmen	2,748	634	1,106	42	4,530
	Scholarship Renewal Rate	64%	91%	52%	<10%	64%
Total	First-time TELS Freshmen	18,576	2,587	7,056	304	28,523
	Scholarship Renewal Rate	55%	88%	47%	16%	56%

Note: GAMS and Aspire are supplemental awards to the base HOPE award. Students captured in the “HOPE” column are those who only received the base scholarship.

Complementing the share of first-time TELS recipients renewing their scholarship eligibility for a second year, **Table 10** below reports the share of first-time recipients who did not renew their scholarship eligibility but remained enrolled in postsecondary education. In total, 47% of the non-renewing students in fall 2020 were retained into fall 2021. This represents a two-percentage point growth compared to the previous cohort, but non-renewal retention rates are still notably lower

as compared to earlier (i.e., pre-pandemic) cohorts. The largest increase in retention occurred in the community college sector. HOPE, GAMS, and Aspire all demonstrated increases in non-renewal retention rates over last year. HOPE Access experienced a two percentage-point decline from the previous cohort. The trends in non-renewal retention rates observed here echo the broader downturn in first-time, full-time freshmen fall-fall retention in fall 2021 (as reported Tables 2.1 and 2.2 of the 2022 [Tennessee Higher Education Fact Book](#)).

Non-renewal retention rates vary across subgroups of scholarship recipients, with some groups experiencing higher rebounds toward pre-pandemic retention rates than others. For example, “Black, Not Hispanic” men and “White, Not Hispanic” men experienced more growth in retention compared to women of the same race/ethnicity classification. Readers can explore renewal and retention trends over time across different subgroups of scholarship recipients via the [TELS Student Success Dashboard](#) accompanying this report.

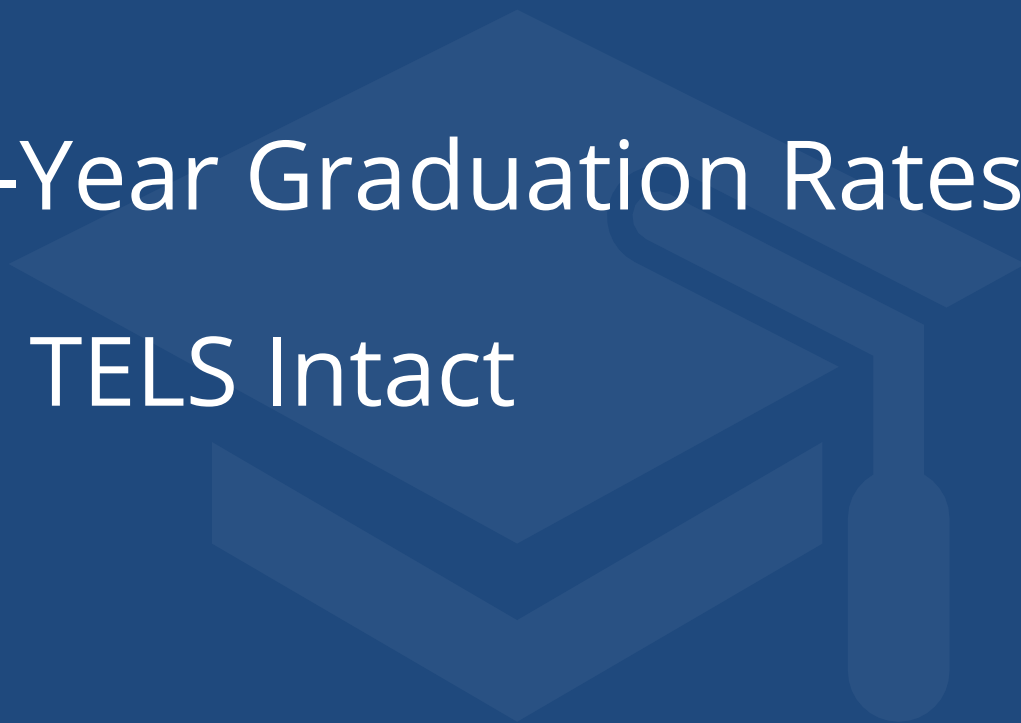
Table 10: Fall-to-Fall Retention Rate for First-Time Scholarship Recipients Who Did Not Renew their Scholarship Eligibility in Year Two by Scholarship Program and System, Fall 2016 to Fall 2020

		First-Time TELS Recipients				
		Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020
Non-Renewals	HOPE	7,904	8,054	8,480	6,827	8,310
	GAMS	218	285	249	184	305
	Aspire	4,189	4,538	4,233	3,759	3,774
	Access	282	333	254	309	256
Retention Rate	HOPE	60%	58%	56%	47%	49%
	GAMS	61%	65%	57%	48%	52%
	Aspire	56%	50%	53%	42%	44%
	Access	47%	48%	52%	39%	37%
Non-Renewals	LGI Universities	3,531	3,802	3,669	2,847	3,378
	TBR Community Colleges	5,126	5,362	5,275	4,982	5,323
	UT Campuses	2,367	2,385	2,490	1,813	2,329
	Private Institutions*	1,569	1,661	1,782	1,437	1,615
Retention Rate	LGI Universities	63%	61%	61%	52%	52%
	TBR Community Colleges	49%	44%	45%	36%	39%
	UT Campuses	73%	74%	72%	64%	64%
	Private Institutions*	54%	50%	47%	39%	38%
Total Retention Rate		58%	55%	55%	45%	47%

Notes: *Not all private institutions report to P20 Connect. See the Technical Notes and Definitions section for a comprehensive listing of the private institutions reporting data to P20 Connect at the time of this report. Retention is not limited to continued enrollment at the admitting/initial institution. Retention rates capture enrollment at any Tennessee public college or university (excluding Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology) and at select private institutions.

Section Four:

Five-Year Graduation Rates
with TELS Intact

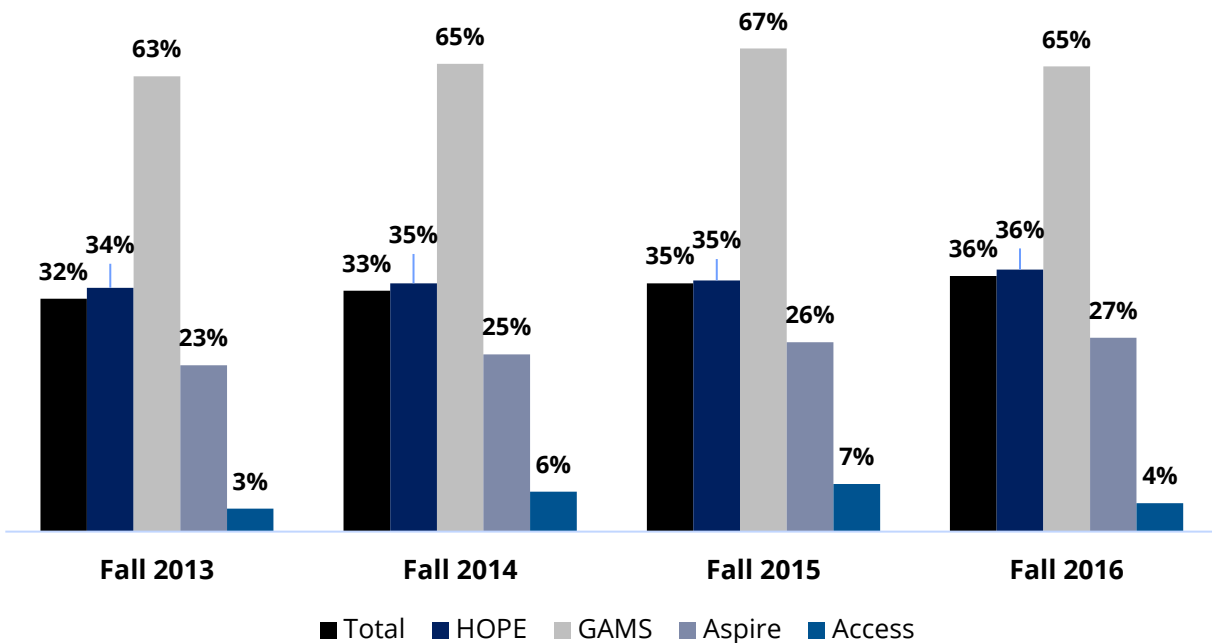


Five-Year Graduation Rates with TELS Intact

TELS eligibility may be renewed for up to five years or the completion of a baccalaureate degree, whichever comes first. **Figure 5** below reports the share of first-time TELS recipients, by their initial scholarship receipt, who graduated (i.e., earned an associate or bachelor’s degree) within five years of enrolling and who received a TELS award in the term in which they graduated.

Overall, 36% of the fall 2016 cohort of first-time TELS recipients earned an associate or bachelor’s degree within five years of enrolling and with their scholarship eligibility intact. Not reflected in **Figure 5**, higher shares of female recipients graduated within five years with their TELS eligibility intact compared to male recipients (39% versus 30%). Between racial groups, 38% of “White, Not Hispanic” students maintained scholarship eligibility through graduation, whereas only 21% of “Black, Not Hispanic” students did so. Based on Federal Pell Grant Eligibility in the student’s initial year of scholarship receipt, 42% who were ineligible graduated within five years with TELS intact compared to 28% of Pell-eligible students. To learn and explore more about the share of recipients who maintained scholarship eligibility through graduation, readers should refer to the [interactive dashboards](#) and to **Table 11** on page 20.

Figure 5: Five-Year Graduation Rate with Scholarship Intact by Original Scholarship Program, Fall 2013 to Fall 2016



Note: Graduation rate data for all cohorts incorporates THEC’s Student Information System (SIS), P20 Connect, and National Student Clearinghouse to identify graduates.

Section Five:

6-Year Graduation Rates & Outcomes Over Time

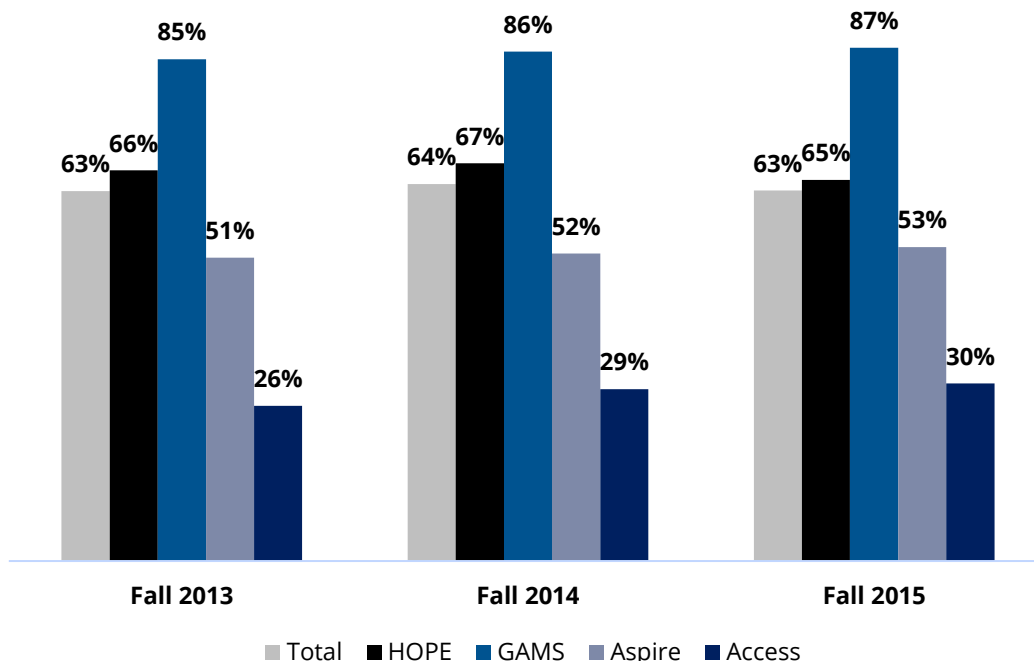


Six-Year Graduation Rates of TELS Recipients

Figure 6 provides the six-year graduation rates of first-time TELS recipients. Unlike the previous section, the rates presented below are not contingent on whether the student graduated with their scholarship intact. **Figure 6** includes the three most recent cohorts for which six-year outcomes may be assessed. For first-time recipients in fall 2015, these statistics represent the share of those students who earned an associate or bachelor's degree by the summer of 2021. Across scholarship programs, six-year graduation rates for the fall 2015 cohort ranged from 30% to 87%, with an overall rate of 63%. Beyond differences between scholarship programs, six-year graduation rates also varied notably between student subgroups. For example, a 26 percentage-point disparity existed in the overall six-year graduation rate of scholarship recipients in the highest AGI category (\$96,000 and above) and the lowest AGI category (\$12,000 or less), with graduation rates of 76% and 50% respectively. For additional information on six-year graduation rates, including by academic profile and by student subgroups, readers are encouraged to explore the [TELS Student Success Dashboard](#) accompanying this report.

Table 11 on the following page provides a more comprehensive and holistic look into the outcomes of first-time TELS recipients over time, which includes the renewal and retention rates through year five, four-year graduation rates, five-year graduation rates, and six-year graduation rates.

Figure 6: Six-Year Graduation Rate by Scholarship Program,
First-Time Scholarship Recipients
Fall 2013 to Fall 2015



Note: For the purposes of this analysis, *graduated* includes students who lost their scholarship before attaining a degree.

Outcomes Over Time

Table 11: Scholarship Renewal, Postsecondary Retention, and Graduation Rates by
First-Time Scholarship Recipients, Fall 2015 to Fall 2020

Cohort Year	First-time TELS Recipients	Fall to Fall Cohort Scholarship Renewal Rates				Fall to Fall Cohort Retention Rates*				Cohort Graduation Rates			
		Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	within 4 years	on TELS within 5 years	within 5 years	within 6 years
2015	28,514	56%	47%	37%	5%	81%	70%	60%	28%	46%	35%	59%	63%
2016	29,102	57%	47%	37%	5%	81%	69%	60%	27%	47%	36%	59%	
2017	30,228	56%	46%	37%	5%	79%	68%	59%	26%	47%			
2018	30,207	56%	47%	36%		79%	67%	57%					
2019	30,331	63%	46%			79%	64%						
2020	28,523	56%				75%							

Notes: Scholarship renewals and retention rates are fall to fall. Retention means a student returned to higher education the following fall with or without the scholarship intact. Students are only eligible to receive a TELS scholarship for up to 5 years or the completion of a baccalaureate degree, whichever event occurs first. As a result, for the table, renewal and retention rates are not calculated past the fifth academic year. Renewal rates over time and six-year graduation rates are reported within the **interactive dashboards**. Fall to fall retention rates beyond Year 2 are not reported in the **interactive dashboards**.
*Retention rates represent the share of the cohort who remained enrolled in postsecondary education (data from the P20 Connect system are used to supplement continued enrollment at private institutions) regardless of scholarship renewal or of continued enrollment at the admitting institution.

The two figures below display the outcome trajectory for the fall 2015 cohort of first-time TELS recipients. **Figure 7** depicts the enrollment and renewal statuses for the first five years of TELS eligibility. Students who earned a degree and remained enrolled are captured in either the “Renewed” or “Did not renew, still enrolled” categories depending on whether scholarship termination criteria were met. **Figure 8** shows the share of first-time recipients earning an associate or bachelor’s degree (i.e., graduating) within six years.

Figure 7: Renewal and Retention Through Year 5, Fall 2015 First-Time TELS Recipients

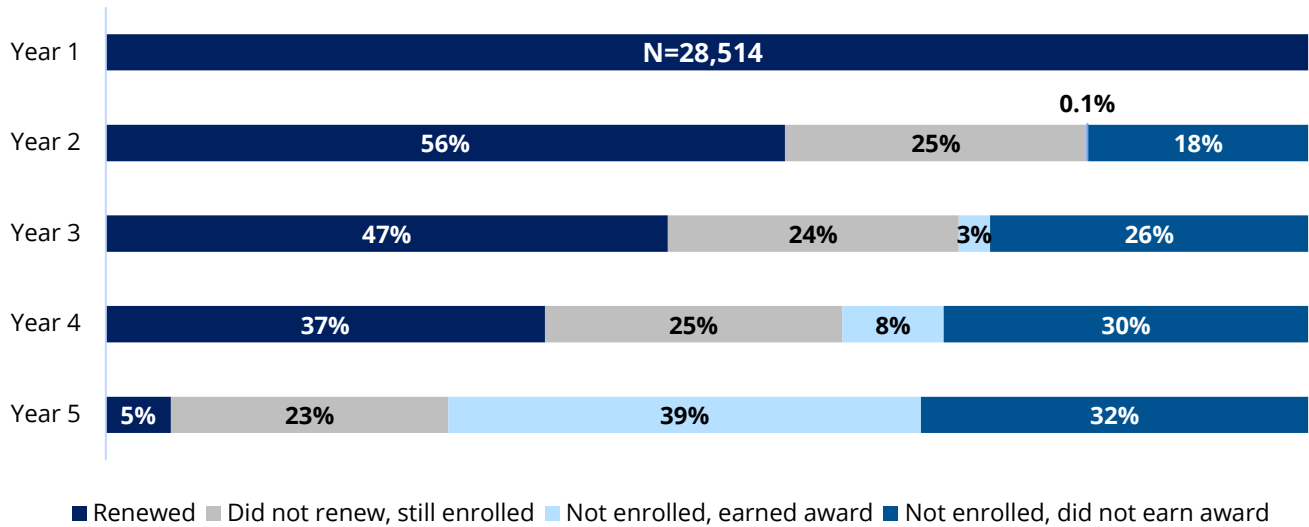
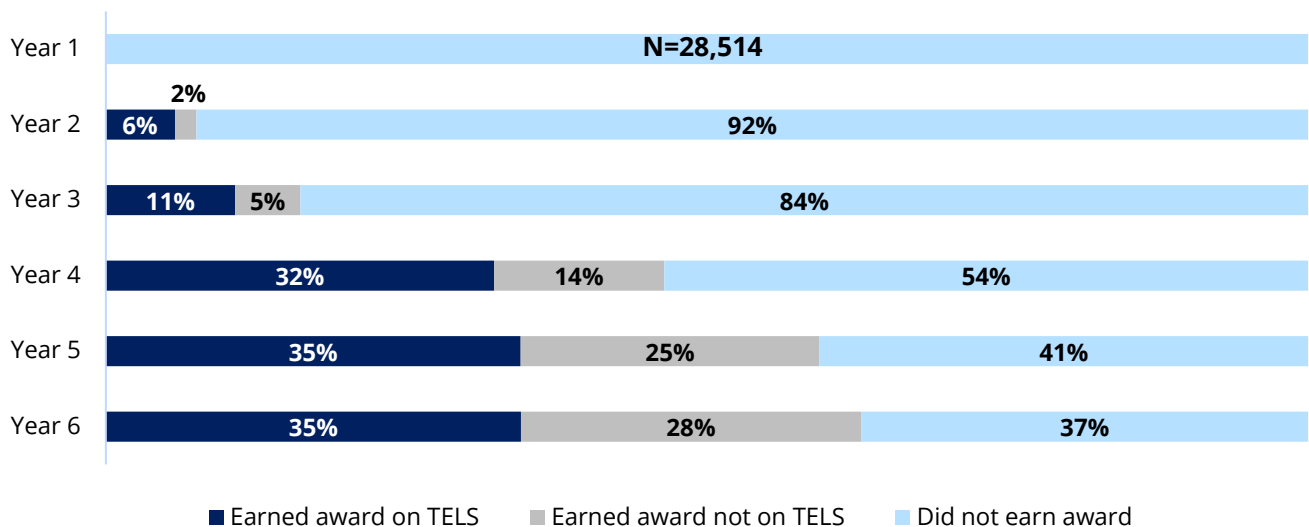


Figure 8: Awards Earned Through Year 6, Fall 2015 First-Time TELS Recipients



Sources: THECSIS; FAST; P20 Connect; Student Tracker, National Student Clearinghouse

Notes: Scholarship renewal and college retention rates are fall to fall. Retention means a student returned to a higher education institution the following fall with or without the scholarship intact.

Awards capture associate and bachelor’s degrees. Students earning an associate degree may continue to be eligible for a TELS award for up to five years or the completion of a bachelor’s degree, whichever occurs first.

Conclusion

This report presented an overview of TELS participation in fall 2021, first-year scholarship renewal and retention of fall 2020 first-time TELS recipients, and complete educational outcomes for first-time recipients through the fall 2015 cohort. The statistics reported here mirror broader trends observed in Tennessee postsecondary education. For instance, the 7% decline in first-time TELS receipt in fall 2021 from fall 2020 (representing 2,004 fewer students) echoes the decreases in overall postsecondary enrollment and Tennessee's college-going rate (or the share of high school graduates making a seamless transition from high school to college). For additional information on postsecondary education in Tennessee, readers should refer to the annual [Tennessee Higher Education Fact Book](#) and to THEC's report on [College Going and the Class of 2021](#).

First-year scholarship renewal rates (based on scholarship payment in the second fall after the initial fall of receipt) for the fall 2020 cohort of first-time recipients have regressed to pre-pandemic trends. The spike in first-time renewal rates observed for the fall 2019 cohort may be explained by the relaxing of scholarship maintenance rules during the pandemic. Absent these relaxed rules, renewal rates are on par with historical data. Overall fall-fall retention rates of first-time scholarship recipients slightly declined for the fall 2020 cohort compared to the previous cohort, which reflects a broader decline in first-time, full-time freshmen retention in Tennessee postsecondary education. Fall-fall retention of first-time scholarship recipients who did not renew their scholarship, however, increased toward pre-pandemic figures.

As compared to prior cohorts, a greater share of first-time scholarship recipients from the fall 2016 cohort graduated with their scholarship intact within a five-year period. Six-year graduation rates for first-time scholarship recipients from fall 2015 are slightly lower compared to the previous cohort. These declines owed and were isolated to HOPE recipients, as GAMS, Aspire, and Access recipients demonstrated marginal increases in graduation rates between the fall 2014 and fall 2015 cohorts.

To learn more about the students receiving TELS awards and their postsecondary outcomes, readers should explore the **TELS Participation Dashboard** and **TELS Student Success Dashboard**, both of which are available on the [TELS Report landing page](#) along with a user's guide on navigating the dashboards and a downloadable workbook summarizing TELS participation and outcomes at an institution level. Readers may also find resources on scholarship requirements, copies of historical reports, and links to TSAC's TELS Year-End reports on scholarship allocations across the entire suite of TELS programs and by institution.