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Prepared By:

Amanda Broome

276-656-5478

[abroome@patrickhenry.edu](mailto:abroome@patrickhenry.edu)

Contact:

Tiffani Underwood

276-656-0281

[tunderwood@patrickhenry.edu](mailto:tunderwood@patrickhenry.edu)



# Patrick & Henry Community College

Patrick & Henry Community College, a comprehensive two-year institution, services Martinsville city as well as Patrick and Henry counties. P&HCC is a leader among community colleges in areas such as athletics, technology, and unique program offerings. By providing innovative curricula such as motorsports, entrepreneurship, and mechatronics, P&HCC changes lives and enriches the community. P&HCC is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution.

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## From \$2 Mil to \$44k. PCEF Goal Re-Assessed After New Report

MARTINSVILLE, VA— Early last year, the Patrick County Education Foundation [PCEF] publicly adopted a goal to raise funds for a scholarship they are calling the Patrick County Promise. When realized, the Patrick County Promise will completely cover the tuition, textbooks, and fees for every high school graduate in Patrick County to get a two-year degree at Patrick & Henry Community College. The initial estimate for financing this goal was 2 million dollars.

After the Harvest Foundation in Martinsville and Henry County covered tuition for students in their service region with an initial 3.1 million dollar grant, many people clamored for an equivalent program in Patrick County. Despite the number of people hoping for such a program, no donor has stepped up to follow Harvest's example yet for Patrick County. Two million dollars is a big ask.

At the Patrick County Education Foundation's last board meeting, P&HCC's president Dr. Greg Hodges shared some good news—new data that PCEF expects will make the goal much more attainable. According to the college's data, almost half (48%) of the Patrick County students currently enrolled at P&HCC already have their tuition covered. PCEF will only need to raise the funds to cover the remaining 52%. To cover the remaining students for their first year, the PCEF would only need to raise \$44,000.

To understand how this change is possible, a little background may be helpful.

In 2021, Virginia allocated \$36 million to create a statewide program called G3 (which stands for "Get Skilled. Get a Job. Get Ahead.") The G3 program covers tuition, fees, and books and provides wraparound support for students pursuing an in-demand field. The state outlined a long list of programs that qualify as "in demand." To be eligible, students could pursue essentially almost any degree or credential within the health care, information technology, skilled trades, public safety, or early childhood education fields.

With G3, the state could cover tuition for a significant swath of Patrick County students. Students covered by G3 would not need the Patrick County Promise, too. Their tuition, books, and fees are already covered.

Another group of students could also be already covered. Although the Harvest Foundation can only serve people within their service region—which is Martinsville and Henry County—their generosity is actually having a positive, tertiary impact on Patrick County students too. Because most Martinsville and Henry County seniors have their tuition covered by Harvest, these high schoolers are not vying for the other scholarships P&HCC offers. Over two hundred scholarships are offered through the P&HCC Foundation annually, and now, many of these are being awarded to Patrick County students.

What is the big takeaway from all of this? Two things. First, many Patrick County students are already able to get their credentials or degree from Patrick & Henry Community College for free. Second, things are looking pretty promising for the Patrick County Promise. Yes, the PCEF still needs to raise an initial \$44,000 to launch their vision and provide every Patrick County the same opportunity to attend college at no cost. However, meeting that goal now seems even more attainable.

“The Patrick County Education Foundation Board, through the Patrick County Promise, is promoting that economic success and education are inextricably interwoven,” said Stewart Roberson the PCEF Board Chair. “We are fortunate that the stars are aligning for all of Patrick County’s high school graduates to imagine a tuition-free college experience in their first two years. We are very, very close to assuring that this vision becomes a reality. Thanks to the entire community for your devotion and interest in closing this much smaller gap.”

Anyone wishing to contribute to the Patrick County Promise can visit <http://patrickhenryfoundation.com/>. Simply click “donate now” and select “Patrick County Promise” in the “Designated Gifts” menu. Alternatively, donors are also welcome to contact Tiffani Underwood, Executive Director of the Patrick & Henry Community College Foundation directly at [tunderwood@patrickhenry.edu](mailto:tunderwood@patrickhenry.edu) or 276.656.0281.

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