

# MASON CAN UPDATE

NEWS FROM THE MASON COUNTY  
COLLEGE ACCESS NETWORK

## January 2025 UPDATE

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## FREE COLLEGE IN MICHIGAN!

Across the state, there are more ways to get free college for most income levels than ever. Here are the major pathways to free college that have had recent changes:

### Michigan Community College Guarantee

**Income restrictions:** No

**Available at:** Community Colleges in Michigan

**MI Residency requirement:** July 1 previous to graduation in MI

**Offer:** Free tuition for full-time student who start college within 15 months of graduation; Requires full-time study.

**Note:** Will use Promise, Pell and TIP funding first. FAFSA required.

### Michigan ReConnect

**Income restrictions:** No

**Available at:** All community colleges in Michigan

**MI Residency requirement:** Yes

**Offer:** Covers tuition for residents 25 and older, taking at least 6 credits per semester, all credits must be toward an approved associate degree or certification.

**Note:** Uses Pell and TIP funding first. Covers for up to first associate degree only (anyone with a previous degree cannot qualify). FAFSA required.

### University Tuition Guarantees, Pledges, and Advantages

**Income restrictions:** Yes--vary by college, usually \$70,000 per household or less, except UofM campuses at \$125,000 or less.

**Available at:** Ferris State, Central Michigan, Eastern Michigan, Grand Valley State, Michigan State, Northern Michigan, Oakland, Saginaw Valley State, University of Michigan Campuses, Wayne State, Western Michigan, and several private institutions

**MI Residency requirement:** Yes

**Offer:** Covers tuition for full-time students who start college within 15 months of graduation; Limits may apply (ex. take fewer than 18 cr.)

**Note:** Uses Michigan Achievement, Pell, TIP, and all individual scholarship funds first, and then institutions cover the rest. Transfer students are typically not eligible. Some schools require Michigan Achievement eligibility. FAFSA required.

## Mason County Class of 2024 FAFSA Completion

**Rates:**

**LHS: 12.3 %**

**MCC: 15.9%**

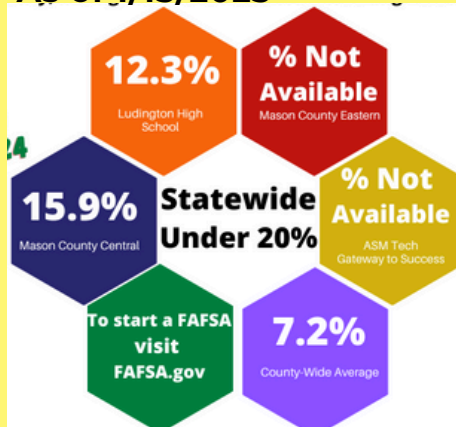
**MCE: Not available %**

**Approximate 25% lower  
than last year**

**ALL Schools: 7.2%**

**State average--20%**

**As of 1/15/2025**



## **60 by 30--College Credentials Matter!**

The newest Hot Jobs by 2032 information continues to support that college credentials, and especially the bachelors degree-level credential, are highly valued in job market projections. Currently, 66% of available jobs in Michigan require a bachelor's degree. By 2031, 69% of jobs in Michigan will require a post-secondary certification, associate or bachelor's degree. In addition, by 2032, 84%, or 42 of the 50 "Hot Jobs," which are jobs that pay a high wage (\$65K or more) in Michigan, and will be in high demand, will require a bachelor's degree (up from previous data of 74% by 2030) (Michigan.gov, 2024). While Mason County, the state, and nation, saw an uptick in college enrollment in 2025, the reality remains that only about half of students who start college, graduate.

Despite the existing graduation trend, new funding streams provide hope that more of Michigan's students can both pursue and complete degrees. Guarantees for tuition-free pathways to college exist for nearly all ages of college students. Cost is the leading reason why students do not start college, and remains the leading factor contributing to students stopping out and not returning (Gallup News, 2024). However, with cost minimized for low and middle-income families by recent state aid efforts, other factors, like perceptions of cost and of college being not worth time or effort, can be a new focus for communities to bridge the gap to 60% by 2030.

Why that focus? Research continues to demonstrate that high pay, job demand, and job security are tied to work in knowledge economy careers that require post-secondary education (MiFutureInc., 2024). Our message in Mason County should be that a post-secondary credential is not only worth it, it's also affordable--The most affordable that is has been in several decades! While Mason County itself may not need 60% of residents to hold a credential by 2030, the reality is that many of the young people who grow up here, will live elsewhere across the state and nation in adulthood. This means that locally, we have a responsibility to all students to promote earning a post-secondary credential for their future success and well-being. Please help by sharing about Michigan's needs for more degrees, and encouraging employees, students, and neighbors to consider how a college credential could make a difference in their lives.

### **For more information:**

#### **Michigan's Hot Jobs by 2032:**

<https://www.michigan.gov/mcda/-/media/Project/Websites/mcda/reports/2024/Michigan-Hot-50-Job-Outlook-through-2032.pdf?rev=692067ec2ab6412897e5962c9012b785>

**A Path to Prosperity:** <https://michiganfuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Report-A-New-Path-To-Prosperity-2nd-Edition.pdf>

#### **Cost Leading Reason College Students Are Stopping Out:**

<https://news.gallup.com/poll/646088/cost-leading-reason-college-students-stopping.aspx>







## LHS and MCE Students Visit Area Universities

Local students and educators took time out of their busy schedules to visit area universities, some students seeing a university for the very first time! In November, Mason County Eastern's English teacher, Dena Thurston, a proud Ferris alumna, took the MCE class of 2026, this year's juniors, for a tour of Ferris State University in Big Rapids. On a separate trip, a group of 15 seniors from Ludington High School also visited Ferris in November, headed up by their Independent Living teacher, Jen Rowe, and accompanied by another chaperone, Tess O'Neal, the LHS post-secondary advisor.

Current Ferris students led each tour. Students on the tour got to see the newest student housing, North Hall, which is more like modern apartment living, compared with the traditional "dorm" style halls, which students also walked through. Students explored the "Center for Virtual Learning," a state-of-the-art facility for all things technology on campus. Finally, students enjoyed an array of great food (and essentially, a mountain of desserts) at the "all-you-can-eat" dining experience at "The Rock," before returning home. The LHS group extended their tour to also visit Central Michigan University in Mount Pleasant. They were excited to see college life first-hand and asked many great questions. Thanks to generous support of the Mason College Access Network (CAN), students on both trips were able to enjoy snacks, drinks and prizes on the long bus ride! "We look forward to more visits in the future," shared Ms. Rowe, who hopes to grow the opportunity for more students to connect to college.

Visiting college campuses helps high school students to make informed decisions about whether a college is a good fit for them. Since nearly 70% of high-demand, livable wage careers in Michigan will require a post-secondary credential by 2030, having a path to a career-related credential after high school is now an essential tool for future success. If you'd like to support our next generation of local talent through helping with the cost of campus tours, consider donating to the Mason CAN Fund through the Community Foundation for Mason County.

## Upcoming Trainings, Grants and Events

### TRAININGS

**MCAN** Postsecondary Credit Agreements for Career Technical Education – The Value for Students and Schools: <https://micollegeaccess.org/events-professional-development/live-webinars>  
Feb 27, 2025 10-11 a.m.

**MCCA** Stereotype Threat: <https://www.mcca.org/Stereotype-Threat--DEIB-Alliance> Jan 27, 2025 at Noon

### GRANTS

MCAN Promising Practice Grant for Schools and Districts:  
<https://micollegeaccess.org/grants/category/promising-practice-grants>, submit by Feb 25, 2025

### EVENTS

MiCareerQuest Lunch & Learn for Businesses: <https://www.mwwc.org/lunch> January 29, 2025 at Noon

MCAN Advocacy Day, March 5, 2025 in Lansing:  
<https://micollegeaccess.org/events-professional-development/events/advocacy-day>  
Contact [jodym@ludington.org](mailto:jodym@ludington.org) if interested in attending

Sign up now for the MCC College & Career Expo, May 8, 2025

A poster for the MCC College & Career Expo 2025. The background is a blue-tinted aerial view of a city skyline. The text is primarily white and yellow on a dark blue background. The title 'MCC COLLEGE & CAREER EXPO 2025' is prominently displayed in a large, white, sans-serif font. Below the title, it says 'Employers & Professionals: Sign Up Now! Meet MCC, MCE & G2S Middle & HS Students'. There are two main boxes: one on the left with the date 'MAY 8' and time '8:30A-NOON @MCC HS', and one on the right with the registration deadline 'REGISTER BY APRIL 25'. The right box also contains a QR code and a registration link. The bottom of the poster features a QR code and the registration link again.

**MCC**  
**COLLEGE &  
CAREER EXPO  
2025**

**Employers & Professionals: Sign Up Now!**  
**Meet MCC, MCE & G2S Middle & HS Students**

**MAY 8**  
**8:30A-NOON**  
**@MCC HS**

**REGISTER BY APRIL 25**  
Scan the code or visit the website below. Share with students about careers in your field of employment.  
Registration is free.  
Local employers are also invited to sign up at the same time to list jobs on the Mason County Youth Summer Jobs Flyer!

 **Registration Here:**  
<https://forms.gle/epdwG6Lm2XuS1gGu7>





## FREE SUMMER PROGRAMS

### [YOUR MISSION]

Build coding skills, follow your passion, and explore tech careers with mentors and peers who'll inspire and support you every step of the way.



CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE: CODE. CREATE. CONNECT.

## VIRTUAL SUMMER IMMERSION PROGRAM

### Join the ultimate summer squad

Become a game designer while making friends, meeting mentors, and exploring career paths in live virtual classrooms.

#### Who gets to join?

- 9th-11th grade girls and non-binary high school students, with or without prior coding experience, including alums.

#### What will you learn?

- Design creative computer games inspired by your passion.
- Gain practical college and career advice.
- Get an inside look at working in tech.

#### What's in it for you?

- Find support and community from devoted Teaching Teams and classmates.
- Get career inspiration and mentorship from exclusive Partner Events.
- Enhance your experience with SIP Student Grants and laptop and hotspot access.

#### When does the 2025 program take place?

- Round 1: July 7–July 18
- Round 2: July 28–August 8
- Classes meet M-F for 2-3 hours, followed by independent work time and optional Student Hours.



### KEY 2025 DATES:

Early decision deadline: February 26

Application closes: April 11

[girlswhocode.com/summerapply](https://girlswhocode.com/summerapply)

## PATHWAYS



### Forge your own path in cutting-edge tech

Learn to code at your own pace, apply new skills to real-world projects, and connect with industry pros and an exclusive Discord community.

#### Who gets to join?

- 9th-12th grade girls and non-binary high school students, with or without prior coding experience, including alums.

#### What will you learn?

- Choose from courses in artificial intelligence, data science, cybersecurity, and web development.

#### What's in it for you?

- Learn at your own pace with step-by-step video tutorials.
- Get help in Advisor Events, Student Hours, and an exclusive Discord community.
- Earn certificates for completed courses.

#### When does the 2025 program take place?

- June 30–August 8
- Each course in a track takes 3-6 hours to complete.

JOIN  
THE FUN:





## MASON COUNTY PROMISE BY THE NUMBERS



# \$2 MILLION

**TUITION FUNDING AWARDED FOR SCHOLARS  
WHO USED THE PROMISE, SINCE 2018!  
THIS MONEY STAYS LOCAL AT WSCC**

2019: 3.0  
2020: 3.3  
2021: 3.17  
2022: 3.1  
2023: 2.97  
2024: 3.16  
Average HS GPA

**3.1**  
Average GPA  
reported by  
Promise Scholars  
in 2023-24

“The Promise allowed me to feel fully confident in my decision to go to West Shore. I saved a lot of money, and was able to figure out what I wanted to go into without having to go to a large university quite yet.”  
~Kari Grillo, Associate of Liberal Arts & Sciences, 2022

“I would encourage students to find what interests them and use the Promise. Students have the opportunities to explore at WSCC and identify what they want to do for the future—every experience is worth it!”  
~Samantha Goodman, Associate of Arts & Science, 2021



**CONTACT  
US**

INFO@MASONCOUNTPROMISE.ORG  
DIRECTOR: JODYM@LUDINGTON.ORG  
ADDRESS: 119 S. RATH, LUDINGTON, MI  
PHONE: 231-239-8224



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## Promise by the Numbers

### Key takeaways:

- Enrollment is up for the class of 2025, both Mason County and across the country! Fall 2025 was our biggest incoming class ever, with 105 students starting at WSCC as first-time college students and using the Promise.
- The Promise Is Relevant! Even though Michigan Community College Guarantee funds are available to cover full-time students, nearly half of Promise scholars use the Promise as part-time students, for books, and for tuition (Michigan Guarantee uses Promise funding first).
- The Promise saves more than meets the eye! The Promise has awarded over \$2M since 2018. Based on the average cost of tuition in Michigan, if Promise Scholars had attended a state university for the same number of credits, it would cost an equivalent of \$12.7M for tuition alone!