



# FIRST2 NETWORK



[www.first2network.org](http://www.first2network.org)



The First2 Network is supported by the U.S. National Science Foundation under Award Numbers: HRD-1834586, WV Higher Education Policy Commission; HRD-1834601, Green Bank Observatory; HRD-1834575, Fairmont State University; HRD-1834595, High Rocks Educational Corporation; HRD-1834569, West Virginia University.

# First2 Policy Priorities Discussion



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# INCREASING AWARENESS

## **AMERICORPS TUITION WAIVER**

The WV AmeriCorps Tuition Waiver (SB 228), a year of school for a year of service, was nationally-groundbreaking legislation passed in 2022.

This means that those that complete AmeriCorps service in WV are eligible for up to 8 semesters of tuition waivers for undergraduate or graduate programs (for any major) at public colleges and universities in WV.

## **2ND CHANCE PROMISE BILL**

The 2nd chance PROMISE bill (HB 4919) permit a college student to re-apply for the Promise Scholarship on an annual basis if that student falls out of eligibility during the academic year.

# DEFINING FIRST-GENERATION STATUS



**College degrees and certifications at all levels are valuable to the WV economy and to the individuals involved. However, a federal definition of first-generation status may qualify individuals for benefits, support services, scholarships, and educational stipends. For this reason, our proposed statewide definition of first-generation status aligns with federal definitions.**



# DEFINING FIRST-GENERATION STATUS

The new West Virginia Higher Education Funding Formula targets student persistence and graduation rates. Knowing who our first-generation students are allows us to track the persistence, and the impact of interventions designed to improve persistence, for these students. Our goal is to propose a state-wide definition for first-generation status in West Virginia and for all West Virginia colleges to collect this status information.

**WE ARE PROPOSING THE  
FOLLOWING DEFINITION:**

**“Neither custodial parent or guardian has completed a 4 year degree in the US.”**

# LEVELS OF FIRST-GENERATION STATUS

**First2 recommends collecting more nuanced information, since students in level 4 are at higher risk than students in level 1:\***

- **LEVEL 1:** Custodial parents or guardians attended some college but did not complete a bachelors (4 year) degree.
- **LEVEL 2:** Siblings attended college or completed a bachelors (4 year) degree; parents did not.
- **LEVEL 3:** Extended family (grandparents, aunts/uncles, cousins) attended college or completed a bachelors (4 year) degree; parents or siblings did not.
- **LEVEL 4:** No one in immediate or extended family attended or completed college.



\*Darrah, M., Humbert, R., & Stewart, G. (2022). Understanding levels of first-generationness. Inside Higher Ed. <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2022/03/02/first-gen-category-encompasses-varied-group-opinion>.



# OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES AND COURSE TRANSFERABILITY

## **OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES**

**A state-led program that provides free or low-cost educational materials to students such as textbooks, workbooks and other instructional materials.**

## **COURSE TRANSFERABILITY**

**First-generation and other underrepresented students, as well as their families and supporters, can benefit from having clear, accessible processes for knowing what courses will transfer to other institutions and what credit requirements these courses will fulfill.**

# Questions and Conversation