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GRADD offering need-based scholarships

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By Megan Harris, Messenger-Inquirer

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The Green River Area Development District is seeking a fresh batch of 16- to 21-year-old, economically disadvantaged fledgling college students for several youth scholarships, paying up to \$7,000 each for tuition and books, to be awarded for the fall 2012 semester.

Client services manager Marcie Vooris said GRADD would continue taking applications through the summer, but encouraged prospective students to get started early on their college and financial aid applications.

Students must meet specific eligibility guidelines, including income and at least one of the following obstacles: parenting, criminal record, disability, deficiency in basic literacy skills or homelessness.

"We're trying to serve some of those youth that are traditionally harder to reach," Vooris said.

The scholarship, offered through the Workforce Investment Act, is more readily available this year, Vooris said, due to a large number of recent graduates.

GRADD currently sponsors about 40 students from Daviess and the surrounding counties to attend Owensboro Community & Technical College, Henderson Community & Technical College, Western Kentucky University-Owensboro, Brescia University or Kentucky Wesleyan College.

"That's kind of a low number," said Tonya Logsdon, GRADD's associate director. "That's why we've got so many slots open."

As part of an 11-page application, Vooris said the selection committee will also review what subject students plan to pursue.

"We prefer high-demand occupations," she said. "We don't want them to graduate into unemployment."

The most popular fields of study remain nursing and related health care courses, social work, manufacturing, electrical engineering and industrial maintenance.

Once accepted, students are guaranteed paid job placement during the summer or school year at a local business related to their field of study, should they choose to take it. Logsdon said all scholarship recipients will also be assigned a case manager to help with career assessments, resume building and additional services.

"So that when they do finish their degrees, they will have employer references to help launch their careers," Logsdon said. "It's a really good opportunity for students that may otherwise never have the means to get a post secondary education."

For more information, contact Vooris at (270) 926-4433.

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