



**SOMERSET COUNTY  
FOUNDATION FOR  
HIGHER EDUCATION**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Somerset Trust Company and Education Partners Supporting Local Students: Program Creates Knowledgeable, Confident and College-Ready Students**

SOMERSET COUNTY, PA (August 15, 2023) – Somerset Trust Company, the Somerset County Foundation for Higher Education and Allegany College of Maryland (ACM) are excited to announce a collaboration that provides no-cost early college courses for Somerset County high school students for the upcoming 2023-24 academic year.

Thanks to monetary support from Somerset Trust Company and the partnership between the Somerset County Foundation and ACM, every public, private, and homeschooled student in the county has the option to enroll in one, no-cost, early college course per fall and spring semester. Eligible courses are taught either within the students' high school or at the Somerset County Technology Center. Students also have the option to enroll in additional early college courses at a discounted rate.

While current funding is designated for the upcoming academic year, this represents the second year this program has been subsidized by Somerset Trust Company. Last year, the program assisted 383 students with tuition costs in the fall and spring semesters. David Jones, Executive Director of the ACM

Foundation, and Suzanne Funa, Executive Director of the Somerset County Foundation, are already seeing increased interest in the program and attribute this to the affordability made possible by the contribution from Somerset Trust Company.

The primary mission of the program is to help local students become college ready. Courses count towards high school graduation requirements, and at the same time, students experience college in a supportive environment: small classes with attentive, experienced instructors. They gain a head start on their college career by taking courses from an accredited college. After graduation, students can apply their credits towards a degree program at Allegany College of Maryland or transfer them to another college or university.

Somerset Trust Company has been a strong supporter of education programs throughout the region for many years. Through participation in Pennsylvania's Education Improvement Tax Credit Program, Somerset Trust Company was able to provide \$200,000 in funding to the Somerset County Foundation, which in turn, pays Somerset County students' tuition, books, and fees for early college courses through Allegany College of Maryland.

Sean Cook, CEO and President of Somerset Trust Company, is encouraged by the growth of the program and what it means for county students. "The more students we can support in achieving academic success, the greater our future looks in this area." He went on to express his confidence in ACM and the Somerset County Foundation, "ACM has been providing quality education in the region for a long time, and we're eager to support them and the Somerset County Foundation in their mission."

"This donation opens doors for students from Somerset County's school districts and homeschooled students," said Barbara Zuchelli, the coordinator of Early College and Articulations at Allegany College of Maryland. "We hope more students will find their path to college through this partnership."

Interested students can find additional information about Allegany College of Maryland's Early College program online at [www.allegany.edu/early-college](http://www.allegany.edu/early-college). For specific questions about early college courses for Somerset County students, contact a school guidance counselor or ACM College and Career Coach Tiffany Boone by calling 814-445-9848 or [tboone3@allegany.edu](mailto:tboone3@allegany.edu).

### **About Somerset Trust Company**

With a long history as a community bank, Somerset Trust Company has an expansive network of branches throughout southwestern Pennsylvania, northern Maryland, and northern Virginia. The bank has been independent and locally managed since its establishment in 1889, and is proud to be a leading employer in the region. Today, Somerset Trust maintains over \$2 billion in assets. In addition to consumer and commercial lending and deposit products, the bank offers Trust and Investment Management, an extensive ATM network including fee free use at over 55,000 ATMs, and top-of-the-line online and mobile banking for consumers and businesses. Somerset Trust is committed to providing excellent service and competitive products, as well as maintaining a high profile in the growth and economic development of the markets it serves. Visit [www.somersettrust.com](http://www.somersettrust.com).

### **About Somerset County Foundation for Higher Education**

The Somerset County Foundation for Higher Education is a nonprofit, fundraising organization dedicated to furthering the post-secondary educational pursuits of Somerset County students in Somerset County, Pennsylvania. Visit [www.scfhe.org](http://www.scfhe.org).

### **About Allegany College of Maryland**

Allegany College of Maryland (ACM) is a dynamic, small college community where learners gain diverse, relevant education centered on their success. ACM offers seven locations in western Maryland and Pennsylvania and online and in-person credit courses, continuing education classes, and workforce development programs. ACM serves more than 3,000 students and enrolls more than 6,900 continuing education and workforce development participants. More than 1,400 private and public high school and homeschooled students enroll in early college courses annually. Visit [www.allegany.edu](http://www.allegany.edu).



PHOTO CAPTION #1= [Left to Right] David Jones, ACM Advancement and Community Relations Vice President; Jennifer Sheeler, Somerset Trust Company Chief Financial Officer; Sean Cook, Somerset Trust Chief Executive Officer; Suzanne Funa, Somerset County Foundation for Higher Education Executive Director; Barb Zuchelli, ACM Early College and Articulations Coordinator; Miha Wood, ACM Dean of Arts and Sciences; and Tiffany Boone, ACM College and Career Coach.



PHOTO CAPTION #2=Partnership representatives gather in Somerset Trust’s conference room. Funa, Cook and Jones (seated), Wood, Sheeler, Zuchelli and Boone (standing).