

# ASSEMBLY, No. 4672

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY 220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED SEPTEMBER 29, 2022

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblyman DANIEL R. BENSON**

**District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Establishes scholarship program for students at public institutions of higher education pursuing certain community service-oriented opportunities; requires Secretary of Higher Education to establish grant program; appropriates \$10 million.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



1 AN ACT establishing a scholarship for community service-oriented  
2 programs at public institutions of higher education and making  
3 an appropriation.  
4

5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*  
6 *of New Jersey:*  
7

8 1. a. The Higher Education Student Assistance Authority, in  
9 consultation with the Office of Volunteerism in the Department of  
10 State, shall administer a two-year scholarship program for students  
11 at public institutions of higher education pursuing opportunities to  
12 perform community service. The program shall provide  
13 undergraduate students with opportunities to serve in their  
14 communities, and address the critical shortage of community  
15 service-oriented professionals in those fields of service by:

16 (1) making college more affordable for students who commit to  
17 serving in their communities;

18 (2) supporting the education and career development of students  
19 pursuing a community service-oriented career in the fields of  
20 climate action, K-12 education, and food insecurity; and

21 (3) increasing the workforce and retention of community  
22 service-oriented professionals in the fields of climate action, K-12  
23 education, and food insecurity.

24 b. The authority shall award scholarships in the amount of  
25 \$10,000 to each program participant. To qualify for participation in  
26 the scholarship program, a program participant shall:

27 (1) be a resident of the State in accordance with the provisions  
28 of N.J.S.18A:71B-2 or be eligible for student financial aid pursuant  
29 to P.L.2018, c.12 (C.18A:71B-2.1);

30 (2) be enrolled full-time in an undergraduate degree program at  
31 a public institution of higher education;

32 (3) commit to provide a minimum of 15 hours per week in  
33 community-based service, particularly in the fields of climate  
34 action, K-12 education, or food insecurity, for one full academic  
35 year;

36 (4) submit an application to the authority in a manner and on  
37 such forms as determined by the authority; and

38 (5) submit a written statement to the authority detailing the  
39 candidate's commitment, upon completion of the degree, to full-  
40 time employment in a community service-oriented profession  
41 related to climate action, K-12 education, or food insecurity in the  
42 State.

43 c. The authority, in consultation with the office, shall select the  
44 program participants from among those applicants who meet the  
45 criteria set forth in subsection b. of this section, subject to available  
46 funds, and may prioritize applicants who demonstrate the greatest  
47 financial need.

1 d. Each scholarship awarded under this act shall be contingent  
2 upon the program participant remaining in good standing at the  
3 public institution of higher education.

4  
5 2. a. The Secretary of Higher Education, in consultation with  
6 the Office of Volunteerism in the Department of State, shall  
7 establish a two-year Community Service Grant Program. The  
8 program shall provide grants to public institutions of higher  
9 education to:

10 (1) establish partnerships between the institutions and  
11 community-based service organizations that specialize in providing  
12 services in the fields of climate action, K-12 education, or food  
13 insecurity; and

14 (2) provide undergraduate students with opportunities to serve  
15 in their communities, particularly in the fields of climate action, K-  
16 12 education, and food insecurity, pursuant to section 1 of P.L. ,  
17 c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

18 b. A public institution of higher education that wishes to  
19 participate in the grant program established pursuant to subsection  
20 a. of this section shall submit an application to the Secretary of  
21 Higher Education in a manner and on such forms as determined by  
22 the secretary.

23 An application shall include information concerning the  
24 institution's proposed program, including its plan to:

25 (1) partner with specific community-based service organizations  
26 that specialize in providing services in the fields of climate action,  
27 K-12 education, or food insecurity;

28 (2) promote the ideals and benefits of community-based service,  
29 and inform students of opportunities to serve in their communities  
30 while earning a scholarship for their service pursuant to section 1 of  
31 P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill);

32 (3) provide program participants with academic credit for their  
33 participation in the program;

34 (4) ensure program participants attain real-world knowledge and  
35 experience in their field of service while serving with the partner  
36 community-based service organizations; and

37 (5) provide program participants with access to training,  
38 networking, and professional development opportunities during, and  
39 upon completion of, their service.

40 c. After reviewing the applications submitted pursuant to  
41 subsection b. of this section, the secretary, in consultation with the  
42 office, shall select 10 public institutions of higher education to  
43 participate in the program. The secretary shall award a grant in the  
44 amount of \$100,000 to each grant recipient.

45  
46 3. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Higher  
47 Education Student Assistance Authority the sum of \$9,000,000 to  
48 provide the scholarships authorized under section 1 of this act, and

1 there is appropriated from the General Fund to the Secretary of  
2 Higher Education the sum of \$1,000,000 to provide the grants  
3 authorized under section 2 of this act.

4  
5 4. This act shall take effect immediately.

6  
7  
8 STATEMENT

9  
10 This bill establishes a scholarship program for students at public  
11 institutions of higher education, and a grant program for public  
12 institutions of higher education, to promote opportunities to  
13 perform community service.

14 Under the bill, the Higher Education Student Assistance  
15 Authority (HESAA), in consultation with the Office of  
16 Volunteerism in the Department of State, will administer a two-year  
17 scholarship program for students at public institutions of higher  
18 education pursuing opportunities to perform community service.  
19 The program will provide undergraduate students with opportunities  
20 to serve in their communities, and address the critical shortage of  
21 community service-oriented professionals in those fields of service  
22 by:

- 23 • making college more affordable for students who commit to  
24 serving in their communities;
- 25 • supporting the education and career development of students  
26 pursuing a community service-oriented career in the fields of  
27 climate action, K-12 education, and food insecurity; and
- 28 • increasing the workforce and retention of community  
29 service-oriented professionals in the fields of climate action,  
30 K-12 education, and food insecurity.

31 Under the program, HESAA will award scholarships in the  
32 amount of \$10,000 to each program participant. Under the bill, \$9  
33 million will be appropriated to HESAA for the purposes of  
34 awarding scholarships.

35 The bill also requires the Secretary of Higher Education, in  
36 consultation with the Office of Volunteerism, to establish a two-  
37 year Community Service Grant Program. The program will provide  
38 grants to public institutions of higher education to:

- 39 • establish partnerships between the institutions and  
40 community-based service organizations that specialize in  
41 providing services in the fields of climate action, K-12  
42 education, or food insecurity; and
- 43 • provide undergraduate students with opportunities to serve  
44 in their communities, particularly in the fields of climate  
45 action, K-12 education, and food insecurity, to so they can  
46 earn scholarships.

47 Under the bill, an application is required to include information  
48 concerning the institution's proposed program, including its plan to:

- 1       • partner with specific community-based service organizations
  - 2       that specialize in providing services in the fields of climate
  - 3       action, K-12 education, or food insecurity;
  - 4       • promote the ideals and benefits of community-based service,
  - 5       and inform students of opportunities to serve in their
  - 6       communities while earning a scholarship for their service;
  - 7       • provide program participants with academic credit for their
  - 8       participation in the program;
  - 9       • ensure program participants attain real-world knowledge and
  - 10      experience in their field of service while serving with the
  - 11      partner community-based service organizations; and
  - 12      • provide program participants with access to training,
  - 13      networking, and professional development opportunities
  - 14      during, and upon completion of, their service.
- 15      The secretary, in consultation with the office, will select 10
- 16      public institutions of higher education to participate in the program.
- 17      The secretary will award a grant in the amount of \$100,000 to each
- 18      grant recipient. Under the bill, \$1 million will be appropriated to the
- 19      secretary for the purposes of this act.