

ASSEMBLY, No. 1247

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman GARY S. SCHAER

District 36 (Bergen and Passaic)

Assemblywoman BRITNEE N. TIMBERLAKE

District 34 (Essex and Passaic)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes program to provide free tuition under State Tuition Aid Grant Program to certain students who are accepted to public four-year institutions of higher education and elect to attend county college for first two years.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 2/20/2020)

1 **AN ACT** concerning the State Tuition Aid Grant Program and
 2 supplementing chapter 71B of Title 18A of the New Jersey
 3 Statutes.

4
 5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
 6 *of New Jersey:*

7
 8 1. a. There is established, within the State Tuition Aid Grant
 9 Program, the Two to Four Tuition Free Students Program. The
 10 program shall provide free tuition to eligible students, as defined in
 11 subsection b. of this section, who are accepted for admission to a
 12 four-year public institution of higher education, qualify for a State
 13 tuition aid grant, and elect to complete the first two years of their
 14 undergraduate education at a county college. A grant under the
 15 program shall cover the full cost of tuition for an eligible full-time
 16 undergraduate student for two years of attendance at a county
 17 college to complete an associate degree and two years of attendance
 18 at a four-year public institution of higher education to complete a
 19 baccalaureate degree. The Higher Education Student Assistance
 20 Authority shall administer the program.

21 b. To be eligible to participate in the program, a student shall:

22 (1) be accepted for admission as a full-time undergraduate
 23 student at a four-year public institution of higher education;

24 (2) be eligible to receive a State tuition aid grant pursuant to
 25 N.J.S.18A:71B-18 et seq., and apply for all available State and
 26 federal student grants and scholarships for which the student is
 27 eligible;

28 (3) elect to complete the first two years of the student's
 29 undergraduate education at the New Jersey county college serving
 30 the student's county of residence;

31 (4) defer admission at the four-year public institution of higher
 32 education for a period of two years; and

33 (5) have a New Jersey Eligibility Index under the State Tuition
 34 Aid Grant Program that does not exceed 2499.

35 c. Eligible students who wish to participate in the program
 36 shall submit an application to the Higher Education Student
 37 Assistance Authority, on a form and in a manner prescribed by the
 38 authority.

39 d. (1) A four-year public institution of higher education shall
 40 grant a deferment for two years to a student who has been accepted
 41 for admission to the institution and who participates in the Two to
 42 Four Tuition Free Students Program established pursuant to this
 43 section.

44 (2) All academic credits earned at a county college in
 45 completing an associate degree by a student who participates in the
 46 program shall be fully transferable and credited as the first two
 47 years of a baccalaureate degree program at the four-year public
 48 institution of higher education to which the student is accepted.

1 e. In the event that a student who participates in the Two to
2 Four Tuition Free Students Program takes longer than two years at a
3 county college to complete an associate degree or longer than two
4 years at a four-year public institution of higher education to
5 complete a baccalaureate degree, funding for the additional time
6 period shall be calculated in accordance with the provisions of the
7 Tuition Aid Grant Program pursuant to N.J.S.18A:71B-18 et seq.

8
9 2. a. A four-year independent institution of higher education
10 may elect to participate in the Two to Four Tuition Free Students
11 Program. In the case of a participating four-year independent
12 institution of higher education, a grant under the program shall
13 cover the full cost of tuition for an eligible full-time undergraduate
14 student for two years of attendance at a county college to complete
15 an associate degree. For two years of subsequent attendance at the
16 independent institution of higher education to complete a
17 baccalaureate degree, the grant amount shall equal the average cost
18 of tuition at the four-year public institutions of higher education in
19 each year of attendance. If the cost of tuition at the independent
20 institution of higher education exceeds the amount of the grant, the
21 independent institution of higher education may charge the student
22 for the additional cost.

23 b. To be eligible to participate in the Two to Four Tuition Free
24 Students Program at a four-year independent institution of higher
25 education, a student shall:

26 (1) be accepted for admission as a full-time undergraduate
27 student at a four-year independent institution of higher education
28 that has elected to participate in the Two to Four Tuition Free
29 Students Program;

30 (2) be eligible to receive a State tuition aid grant pursuant to
31 N.J.S.18A:71B-18 et seq., and apply for all available State and
32 federal student grants and scholarships for which the student is
33 eligible;

34 (3) elect to complete the first two years of the student's
35 undergraduate education at the New Jersey county college serving
36 the student's county of residence;

37 (4) defer admission at the four-year independent institution of
38 higher education for a period of two years; and

39 (5) have a New Jersey Eligibility Index under the State Tuition
40 Aid Grant Program that does not exceed 2499.

41 c. A four-year independent institution of higher education that
42 participates in the Two to Four Tuition Free Students Program shall
43 grant a deferment for two years to a student who has been accepted
44 for admission to the institution and who participates in the Two to
45 Four Tuition Free Students Program. The institution shall also
46 agree to fully transfer and accept all academic credits earned by the
47 student at a county college in completing an associate degree.

1 (3) elect to complete the first two years of the student's
2 undergraduate education at the New Jersey county college serving
3 the student's county of residence;

4 (4) defer admission at the four-year public institution of higher
5 education for a period of two years; and

6 (5) have a New Jersey Eligibility Index under the State Tuition
7 Aid Grant Program that does not exceed 2499.

8 The bill requires a four-year public institution of higher
9 education to grant a deferment for two years to a student who has
10 been accepted for admission to the institution and who participates
11 in the Two to Four Tuition Free Students Program. All academic
12 credits earned at the county college by a program participant will be
13 fully transferrable and credited as the first two years of a
14 baccalaureate degree program at the four-year institution.

15 In addition, the bill allows independent institutions of higher
16 education to elect to participate in the program. In the case of an
17 eligible student who is accepted to a participating independent
18 institution, the grant will cover the full cost of tuition for two years
19 at a county college, and for the two subsequent years the grant
20 amount will equal the average cost of attendance at the four-year
21 public institutions of higher education in each year of attendance.
22 The independent institution may charge the student for the cost of
23 tuition in excess of the grant amount.

24 The bill provides that any monies the State saves under the
25 Tuition Aid Grant Program as a result of students participating in
26 the Two to Four Tuition Free Students Program will be reinvested
27 in the Tuition Aid Grant Program in order to expand the population
28 of students who are eligible to participate in the Two to Four
29 Tuition Free Students Program. The bill also requires the Higher
30 Education Student Assistance Authority to submit a report annually
31 to the Governor and the Legislature on the program, which will
32 include the number of students participating in the program, the
33 graduation rate of participants, information on student outcomes,
34 and the amount of any cost savings realized by the State as a result
35 of students participating in the program.