

ASSEMBLY, No. 1655

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:
Assemblywoman ANNETTE QUIJANO
District 20 (Union)

SYNOPSIS

Provides that State pay high school equivalency exam fees for low-income individuals.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



A1655 QUIJANO

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1 **AN ACT** concerning high school equivalency exam fees,
2 supplementing chapter 50A of Title 18A of the New Jersey
3 Statutes, and amending P.L.1992, c.43.

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

7
8 1. (New section) a. No later than six months following the
9 effective date of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature
10 as this bill), the State Board of Education shall establish a program
11 to pay the fee of a high school equivalency exam on behalf of a
12 low-income individual. The State board shall specify the manner in
13 which an individual may apply for the payment, including the
14 documentation that shall be used to verify the individual's income.
15 The program established by the State board shall not provide
16 payment for more than one exam for an individual.

17 b. As used in this section:

18 “High school equivalency exam” means any adult education
19 assessment approved by the State board as a basis for qualifying for
20 a State-issued high school diploma;

21 “Low-income individual” means an individual who resides in a
22 household in which the household income is less than or equal to
23 185 percent of the most recent federal poverty guidelines available.

24
25 2. Section 9 of P.L.1992, c.43 (C.34:15D-9) is amended to read
26 as follows:

27 9. a. A restricted, nonlapsing, revolving Workforce
28 Development Partnership Fund, to be managed and invested by the
29 State Treasurer, is hereby established to: provide employment and
30 training services to qualified displaced, disadvantaged and
31 employed workers by means of training grants or customized
32 training services; provide for the other costs indicated in subsection
33 a. of section 4 of P.L.1992, c.43 (C.34:15D-4); provide for the New
34 Jersey Innovation and Research Fellowship Program as provided for
35 in section 3 of P.L.2015, c.235 (C.34:15D-26); and facilitate the
36 provision of education and training to youth by means of grants
37 provided by the Youth Transitions to Work Partnership pursuant to
38 the provisions of P.L.1993, c.268 (C.34:15E-1 et al.). All
39 appropriations to the fund, all interest accumulated on balances in
40 the fund and all cash received for the fund from any other source
41 shall be used solely for the purposes specifically delineated by this
42 act.

43 b. During any fiscal year beginning after June 30, 2001, of the
44 total revenues dedicated to the program during any one fiscal year:
45 25% shall be deposited in an account of the Workforce
46 Development Partnership Fund reserved to provide employment and
47 training services for qualified displaced workers; 6% shall be

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 deposited in an account of the Workforce Development Partnership
2 Fund reserved to provide employment and training services for
3 qualified disadvantaged workers; 42% shall be deposited in an
4 account of the Workforce Development Partnership Fund reserved
5 for and appropriated to the Office of Customized Training; 3% shall
6 be deposited in an account of the Workforce Development
7 Partnership Fund reserved for occupational safety and health
8 training; 5% shall be deposited in an account of the Workforce
9 Development Partnership Fund reserved for the Youth Transitions
10 to Work Partnership created pursuant to P.L.1993, c.268 (C.34:15E-
11 1 et seq.); 3% shall be deposited in an account of the Workforce
12 Development Partnership Fund reserved for the New Jersey
13 Innovation and Research Fellowship Program established pursuant
14 to section 3 of P.L.2015, c.235 (C.34:15D-26); 10% shall be
15 deposited in an account of the Workforce Development Partnership
16 Fund reserved for administrative costs as defined in section 3 of
17 P.L.1992, c.43 (C.34:15D-3); 0.5% shall be deposited in an account
18 of the Workforce Development Partnership Fund reserved for the
19 State Employment and Training Commission to design criteria and
20 conduct an annual evaluation of the program; and 5.5% shall be
21 deposited in an account of the Workforce Development Partnership
22 Fund to be used , pursuant to the provisions of P.L. , c. (C.)
23 (pending before the Legislature as this bill), to pay the fee for an
24 adult education assessment exam, and, at the discretion of the
25 commissioner, for any of the purposes indicated in subsection a. of
26 section 4 of P.L.1992, c.43 (C.34:15D-4).

27 c. Beginning January 1, 1995, through June 30, 2002, the
28 balance in the fund as of the previous December 31, as determined
29 in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, shall
30 not exceed 1.5 times the amount of contributions deposited for the
31 calendar year then ended. If the balance exceeds this amount, the
32 excess shall be deposited into the unemployment compensation
33 fund within seven business days of the date that the determination is
34 made.

35 d. Beginning July 1, 2002, and for any subsequent fiscal year,
36 if the unexpended cash balance in any of the accounts indicated in
37 subsection b. of this section, less any amount awarded in grants but
38 not yet disbursed from the account, is determined to exceed 20% of
39 the amount of contributions collected for deposit in the account
40 pursuant to this subsection during the fiscal year then ended, the
41 excess shall be regarded as an unemployment compensation
42 contribution and deposited into the unemployment compensation
43 fund within seven business days of the date that the determination is
44 made.

45 (cf: P.L.2015, c.235, s.2)

46
47 3. This act shall take effect immediately.

1 STATEMENT

2

3 This bill requires that the State Board of Education, within six
4 months of the bill's effective date, establish a program to pay the
5 high school equivalency exam fees on behalf of low-income
6 individuals. The bill defines a low-income individual as one who
7 lives in a household in which the household income is not greater
8 than 185 percent of the most recent federal poverty guidelines. The
9 program would not provide payment for more than one exam for an
10 individual. The State cost of the fees would be paid from the
11 portion of the Workforce Development Partnership Fund that is
12 currently used to fund, at the discretion of the Commissioner of
13 Labor and Workforce Development, the purposes enumerated in
14 subsection a. of section 4 of P.L.1992, c.43 (C.34:15D-4).

15 The State board currently accepts three exams as the basis for
16 awarding a State-issued high school diploma to an individual: 1) the
17 GED, which costs \$120; 2) Hi-SET, which costs \$90; and TASC,
18 which costs \$92.