

[Second Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 4410

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JULY 16, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman LOUIS D. GREENWALD

District 6 (Burlington and Camden)

Assemblywoman MILA M. JASEY

District 27 (Essex and Morris)

Assemblyman DANIEL R. BENSON

District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblymen Moen, Giblin, Zwicker, Assemblywomen Reynolds-Jackson, Murphy, Carter, Assemblymen Spearman, Johnson, Assemblywoman Jimenez, Assemblyman Mejia, Assemblywoman Vainieri Huttie, Assemblyman Conaway, Assemblywomen Quijano, Lampitt, Lopez, Swain, Assemblyman Tully, Assemblywomen Mosquera and Timberlake

SYNOPSIS

Establishes Community College Opportunity Grant Program in Higher Education Student Assistance Authority to provide last-dollar financial aid grants to county college students and Student Success Incentive funding to county colleges.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Assembly Appropriations Committee on November 12, 2020, with amendments.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 11/16/2020)

1 AN ACT concerning financial aid for county college students 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. As used in this act:

9 “Annual adjusted gross income” means:

10 a. for a dependent student, the annual adjusted gross income of
11 the student’s parent or legal guardian, as reported on the student’s
12 Free Application for Federal Student Aid or other financial aid
13 form; and

14 b. for an independent student, the annual adjusted gross income
15 of the student and, if applicable, the spouse of the student, as
16 reported on the student’s Free Application for Federal Student Aid
17 or other financial aid form.

18 “Approved educational fees” means general education fees,
19 registration fees, facility fees, technology fees, laboratory fees,
20 student service and activity fees, and program and course fees,
21 including fees associated with coursework in nursing, culinary, and
22 other career and technical education programs as determined by the
23 Higher Education Student Assistance Authority in consultation with
24 the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education ¹, subject to the
25 limit of funds appropriated or otherwise made available for the
26 program¹.

27 “Authority” means the Higher Education Student Assistance
28 Authority established pursuant to N.J.S.18A:71A-3.

29 “Home county college” means the county college that serves a
30 student’s county of residence.

31 “Out-of-county college” means a county college that is outside
32 of a student’s county of residence.

33 “Program” means the Community College Opportunity Grant
34 Program created pursuant to section 2 of this act.

35 “Three plus one degree program” means a baccalaureate degree
36 program created pursuant to section 1 of P.L.2018, c.144
37 (C.18A:3B-78).

38

39 2. There is hereby created the Community College Opportunity
40 Grant Program. The purpose of the program shall be to provide
41 financial aid grants to eligible county college students, to cover the
42 costs of tuition and approved educational fees that are not already
43 covered by any other State, federal, and institutional need-based
44 grants or merit scholarships and to provide county colleges with
45 Student Success Incentive funding for outreach and student success

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.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Assembly AHI committee amendments adopted October 8, 2020.

²Assembly AAP committee amendments adopted November 12, 2020.

1 initiatives. The financial aid grants distributed to eligible students
2 under the program shall be administered by the Higher Education
3 Student Assistance Authority, while the Student Success Incentive
4 funding distributed to county colleges under the program shall be
5 administered by the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education.
6

7 3. a. To be eligible to receive a financial aid grant under the
8 Community College Opportunity Grant Program, a student shall:

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

12 (2) be enrolled in at least six credits at a county college established
13 pursuant to chapter 64A of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes;

14 (3) be enrolled at the county college that serves the student's
15 county of residence, except that a student may receive a grant under
16 the program to cover the remaining costs of tuition and approved
17 educational fees, charged at the in-district rate for the home county
18 college, to attend a county college outside of the county of residence;

19 (4) not have an annual adjusted gross income that is negative;

20 (5) have an annual adjusted gross income between \$0 and \$65,000,
21 except that the authority, in consultation with the Office of the
22 Secretary of Higher Education and the New Jersey Council of County
23 Colleges, may annually establish maximum annual adjusted gross
24 income eligibility limits of no less than \$65,000;

25 (6) have applied for all other available forms of State, federal, and
26 institutional need-based grants and merit scholarships and, in
27 accordance with annually established deadline dates, have completed
28 and submitted a Free Application for Federal Student Aid, other
29 financial aid form, or, as applicable, a State financial aid form as
30 required by the authority pursuant to subsection b. of section 1 of
31 P.L.2018, c.12 (C.18A:71B-2.1);

32 (7) not owe a refund on a grant or scholarship previously received
33 from a State or federal program through any institution or be in default
34 on any loan made under any State or federal student loan program at
35 any institution, unless the student makes arrangements with the
36 authority to repay the debt; and

37 (8) be in good academic standing and meet the minimum standards
38 for academic performance and satisfactory academic progress as
39 defined by the county college which the student is attending.

40 A county college shall not impose additional eligibility
41 requirements for the program, other than the requirements set forth in
42 this subsection.

43 b. A grant under the program may be renewed for a student who:

44 (1) annually completes and submits a Free Application for Federal
45 Student Aid, other financial aid form, or, as applicable, a State
46 financial aid form as required by the authority pursuant to subsection
47 b. of section 1 of P.L.2018, c.12 (C.18A:71B-2.1);

(2) meets the standards for academic performance and satisfactory academic progress, as defined by the county college which the student is attending, to determine eligibility for federal student aid programs under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 or, in the semester immediately prior to receiving an award, attains a minimum level of academic success as determined by the authority; and

(3) maintains all eligibility requirements established pursuant to subsection a. of this section.

c. (1) A student shall be eligible for a grant under the program for up to five semesters, unless the student is enrolled in a program regularly requiring at least six semesters for completion, in which case the authority shall permit up to six semesters of eligibility.

(2) A student enrolled in a three plus one degree program shall be eligible for a grant under the program for up to six semesters.

(3) Semesters for which a student is enrolled in at least six credits but less than 12 credits shall be counted as one-half of a full-time semester.

d. A student may be eligible for a grant under the program during a fall ²[.] or² spring ²[.] or summer² semester in an academic year.

e. If a student, the student's family, or a county college deems that the authority made an unfair determination of eligibility, an appeal may be filed with the authority within 60 days of initial notification of eligibility or ineligibility.

f. The county college which a student attends shall notify the student of the student's eligibility for the program and the amount of the grant.

4. a. A grant distributed to an eligible student under the Community College Opportunity Grant Program shall cover the remaining cost of tuition and approved educational fees, which is not covered by State, federal, or any other need-based grant or merit scholarship, for up to 18 credits in any semester. The full amount of State, federal, and institutional need-based grant or merit scholarships received by an eligible student shall be applied to the amount of tuition and approved educational fees charged to an eligible student. The remaining balance of tuition and approved educational fees shall be covered by a grant under the program.

b. A full award under the program to a student at a county college shall be equal to the student's full cost of approved tuition and approved educational fees, subject to the prior application of all other State, federal, and institutional need-based grants and merit scholarships against those costs, for up to 18 credits in any semester, for an eligible student for a full-time semester in an associate's degree, certificate, or three plus one degree program. For an eligible student enrolled in at least six credits but less than 12 credits in an associate's degree, certificate, or three plus one degree program, a grant under the program shall be pro-rated from

1 the full-time approved tuition and approved educational fees based
2 on the number of credits for which that student is enrolled.

3 c. The authority shall, for each county college, annually
4 establish a maximum individual grant amount awarded under the
5 program. The maximum individual grant amount for each county
6 college shall not increase by more than three percent over the prior
7 year.

8
9 5. a. The Legislature shall annually appropriate to the Office
10 of the Secretary of Higher Education such funds as may be
11 necessary for Student Success Incentive funding to provide
12 capacity-building grants to each county college to support the goals
13 of the Community College Opportunity Grant Program. The
14 Secretary of Higher Education shall distribute funding made
15 available pursuant to this section to county colleges for outreach,
16 recruitment, and promoting the success of county college students.
17 The secretary shall establish the purposes for which a county
18 college may use a grant received pursuant to this section, which
19 shall include, but not be limited to:

20 (1) establishing mentorship programs;

21 (2) hosting events to assist students and families in completing
22 financial aid applications; and

23 (3) addressing students' material hardships, such as lack of
24 access to food, medical care, housing, child care, and transportation.

25 b. The secretary shall distribute the funding made available
26 pursuant to this section. 'The secretary may retain up to five percent
27 of the funding for grant administration activities designed to
28 increase the effectiveness of the program.' Fifty percent of the
29 'remaining' appropriation shall be distributed equally among all of
30 the county colleges, while the '[remaining] other' fifty percent of
31 the 'remaining' appropriation shall be distributed based on the total
32 number of students at each county college who received awards
33 under the program during the previous academic year.

34
35 6. The authority shall adopt in accordance with the
36 "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et
37 seq.), rules and regulations as may be necessary to implement the
38 provisions of sections 1 through 4 of this act. The Office of the
39 Secretary of Higher Education shall adopt in accordance with the
40 "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et
41 seq.), rules and regulations as may be necessary to implement the
42 provisions of section 5 of this act.

43
44 7. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to
45 the first full academic year following the date of enactment.