

Title 18A.
Subtitle 12A.
Part 2.
Article 16. (New)
Community
College
Opportunity Grant
Program
§§1-6 -
C.18A:71B-111 to
18A:71B-116
§7 - Note

P.L. 2021, CHAPTER 26, *approved February 26, 2021*
Assembly, No. 4410 (*Third Reprint*)

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 form;
13 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 reported
16 on the student’s Free Application for Federal Student Aid or other
17 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 limit
25 of funds appropriated or otherwise made available for the program¹.
26 “Authority” means the Higher Education Student Assistance
27 Authority established pursuant to N.J.S.18A:71A-3.
28 ³**“Home county college”** means the county college that serves a
29 student’s county of residence. ³

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.
³Senate SBA committee amendments adopted December 14, 2020.

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

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

5 “Three plus one degree program” means a baccalaureate degree
6 program created pursuant to section 1 of P.L.2018, c.144 (C.18A:3B-
7 78).

8
9 2. There is hereby created the Community College Opportunity
10 Grant Program. The purpose of the program shall be to provide
11 financial aid grants to eligible county college students, to cover the
12 costs of tuition and approved educational fees that are not already
13 covered by any other State, federal, and institutional need-based
14 grants or merit scholarships and to provide county colleges with
15 Student Success Incentive funding for outreach and student success
16 initiatives. The financial aid grants distributed to eligible students
17 under the program shall be administered by the Higher Education
18 Student Assistance Authority, while the Student Success Incentive
19 funding distributed to county colleges under the program shall be
20 administered by the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education.

21
22 3. a. To be eligible to receive a financial aid grant under the
23 Community College Opportunity Grant Program, a student shall:

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

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

29 (3) ³(a)³ be enrolled at the county college that serves the student’s
30 county of residence ³], except that a student may ³; or

31 (b) be enrolled at an out-of-county college, in which case the
32 student, if otherwise eligible, shall³ receive a grant under the program
33 to cover the remaining costs of tuition and approved educational fees,
34 charged at the in-district rate for ³[the home county college, to attend a
35 county college outside of the county of residence] the county college at
36 which the student is enrolled, provided that the amount of a grant
37 provided to a student under this subparagraph does not exceed the
38 amount of tuition and approved educational fees actually charged to the
39 student³;

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

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

46 (6) have applied for all other available forms of State, federal, and
47 institutional need-based grants and merit scholarships and, in

1 accordance with annually established deadline dates, have completed
2 and submitted a Free Application for Federal Student Aid, other
3 financial aid form, or, as applicable, a State financial aid form as
4 required by the authority pursuant to subsection b. of section 1 of
5 P.L.2018, c.12 (C.18A:71B-2.1);

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

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

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

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

17 (1) annually completes and submits a Free Application for Federal
18 Student Aid, other financial aid form, or, as applicable, a State financial
19 aid form as required by the authority pursuant to subsection b. of section
20 1 of P.L.2018, c.12 (C.18A:71B-2.1);

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

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

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

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

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

38 d. A student may be eligible for a grant under the program during
39 a fall ²[, ¹ or ² spring ²[, or summer ²] semester in an academic year.

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

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

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

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

23 c. The authority shall, for each county college, annually
24 establish a maximum individual grant amount awarded under the
25 program. The maximum individual grant amount for each county
26 college shall not increase by more than three percent over the prior
27 year.

28

29 5. a. The Legislature shall annually appropriate to the Office of
30 the Secretary of Higher Education such funds as may be necessary
31 for Student Success Incentive funding to provide capacity-building
32 grants to each county college to support the goals of the Community
33 College Opportunity Grant Program. The Secretary of Higher
34 Education shall distribute funding made available pursuant to this
35 section to county colleges for outreach, recruitment, and promoting
36 the success of county college students. The secretary shall establish
37 the purposes for which a county college may use a grant received
38 pursuant to this section, which shall include, but not be limited to:

39 (1) establishing mentorship programs;

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

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

44 b. The secretary shall distribute the funding made available
45 pursuant to this section. 'The secretary may retain up to five percent
46 of the funding for grant administration activities designed to increase
47 the effectiveness of the program.'¹ Fifty percent of the 'remaining'¹
48 appropriation shall be distributed equally among all of the county

1 colleges, while the ~~'[remaining]~~ other¹ fifty percent of the
2 ¹remaining¹ appropriation shall be distributed based on the total
3 number of students at each county college who received awards under
4 the program during the previous academic year.

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6 6. The authority shall adopt in accordance with the
7 “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et
8 seq.), rules and regulations as may be necessary to implement the
9 provisions of sections 1 through 4 of this act. The Office of the
10 Secretary of Higher Education shall adopt in accordance with the
11 “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et
12 seq.), rules and regulations as may be necessary to implement the
13 provisions of section 5 of this act.

14
15 7. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to
16 the first full academic year following the date of enactment.

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19 _____
20
21 Establishes Community College Opportunity Grant Program in
22 Higher Education Student Assistance Authority to provide last-dollar
23 financial aid grants to county college students and Student Success
24 Incentive funding to county colleges.