

[Second Reprint]
SENATE, No. 2743

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JULY 28, 2020

Sponsored by:

Senator SANDRA B. CUNNINGHAM

District 31 (Hudson)

Senator M. TERESA RUIZ

District 29 (Essex)

Co-Sponsored by:

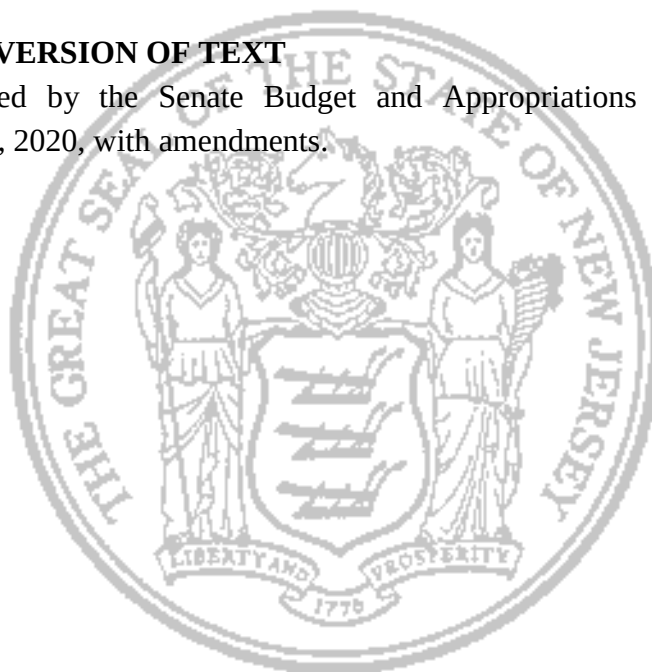
Senators Singleton, Diegnan, Pou and Turner

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 Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee on December 14, 2020, with amendments.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 1/11/2021)

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 ²**【**“Home county college” means the county college that serves a
 30 student’s county of residence.**】**²

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:

¹Senate SHI committee amendments adopted October 19, 2020.

²Senate SBA committee amendments adopted December 14, 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
11 aid 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
13 established pursuant to chapter 64A of Title 18A of the New Jersey
14 Statutes;

15 (3) ²(a)² be enrolled at the county college that serves the
16 student's county of residence ²], except that a student may] ; or

17 (b) be enrolled at an out-of-county college, in which case the
18 student, if otherwise eligible, shall² receive a grant under the
19 program to cover the remaining costs of tuition and approved
20 educational fees, charged at the in-district rate for ²[the home
21 county college, to attend a county college outside of the county of
22 residence] the county college at which the student is enrolled,
23 provided that the amount of a grant provided to a student under this
24 subparagraph does not exceed the amount of tuition and approved
25 educational fees actually charged to the student²;

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

27 (5) have an annual adjusted gross income between \$0 and
28 \$65,000, except that the authority, in consultation with the Office of
29 the Secretary of Higher Education and the New Jersey Council of
30 County Colleges, may annually establish maximum annual adjusted
31 gross income eligibility limits of no less than \$65,000;

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

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

44 (8) be in good academic standing and meet the minimum
45 standards for academic performance and satisfactory academic

1 progress as defined by the county college which the student is
2 attending.

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

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

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

12 (2) meets the standards for academic performance and
13 satisfactory academic progress, as defined by the county college
14 which the student is attending, to determine eligibility for federal
15 student aid programs under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of
16 1965 or, in the semester immediately prior to receiving an award,
17 attains a minimum level of academic success as determined by the
18 authority; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

37 f. The county college which a student attends shall notify the
38 student of the student's eligibility for the program and the amount
39 of the grant.
40

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

1 scholarships received by an eligible student shall be applied to the
2 amount of tuition and approved educational fees charged to an
3 eligible student. The remaining balance of tuition and approved
4 educational fees shall be covered by a grant under the program.

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

17 c. The authority shall, for each county college, annually
18 establish a maximum individual grant amount awarded under the
19 program. The maximum individual grant amount for each county
20 college shall not increase by more than three percent over the prior
21 year.

22

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

34 (1) establishing mentorship programs;

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

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

39 b. The secretary shall distribute the funding made available
40 pursuant to this section. ¹The secretary may retain up to five percent
41 of the funding for grant administration activities designed to increase
42 the effectiveness of the program.¹ Fifty percent of the ¹remaining¹
43 appropriation shall be distributed equally among all of the county
44 colleges, while the ¹remaining¹ other¹ fifty percent of the
45 ¹remaining¹ appropriation shall be distributed based on the total

1 number of students at each county college who received awards
2 under the program during the previous academic year.

3

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

12

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