

SENATE, No. 4179

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED NOVEMBER 22, 2021

Sponsored by:

Senator LINDA R. GREENSTEIN

District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)

Senator TROY SINGLETON

District 7 (Burlington)

SYNOPSIS

Modifies Community College Opportunity Grant Program to permit adult students enrolled in postsecondary career and technical education programs to receive financial assistance.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 1/6/2022)

1 AN ACT concerning student financial aid and amending P.L.2021,
2 c.26 (C.18A:71B-111 et seq.).

3

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

6

7 1. Section 1 of P.L.2021, c.26 (C.18A:71B-111) is amended to
8 read as follows:

9 1. As used in this act:

10 "Adult student" means a postsecondary student who is enrolled
11 in a postsecondary career and technical education program that
12 prepares the student to earn a license or industry-recognized
13 certification or to take a nationally-recognized exam.

14 "Annual adjusted gross income" means:

15 a. for a dependent student, the annual adjusted gross income of
16 the student's parent or legal guardian, as reported on the student's
17 Free Application for Federal Student Aid or other financial aid
18 form; and

19 b. for an independent student, the annual adjusted gross income
20 of the student and, if applicable, the spouse of the student, as
21 reported on the student's Free Application for Federal Student Aid
22 or other financial aid form.

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

31 "Authority" means the Higher Education Student Assistance
32 Authority established pursuant to N.J.S.18A:71A-3.

33 "County vocational school district" means any entity established
34 pursuant to article 3 of chapter 54 of Title 18A of the New Jersey
35 Statutes.

36 "Out-of-county college" and "out-of-county vocational school
37 district" means a county college or a county vocational school
38 district that is outside of a student's county of residence.

39 "Program" means the Community College Opportunity Grant
40 Program created pursuant to section 2 of this act.

41 "Three plus one degree program" means a baccalaureate degree
42 program created pursuant to section 1 of P.L.2018, c.144
43 (C.18A:3B-78).

44 (cf: P.L.2021, c.26, s.1)

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 2. Section 2 of P.L.2021, c.26 (C.18A:71B-112) is amended to
2 read as follows:

3 2. There is hereby created the Community College Opportunity
4 Grant Program. The purpose of the program shall be to provide
5 financial aid grants to eligible county college and adult county
6 vocational school district students, to cover the costs of tuition and
7 approved educational fees that are not already covered by any other
8 State, federal, and institutional need-based grants or merit
9 scholarships and to provide county colleges with Student Success
10 Incentive funding for outreach and student success initiatives. The
11 financial aid grants distributed to eligible students under the
12 program shall be administered by the Higher Education Student
13 Assistance Authority, while the Student Success Incentive funding
14 distributed to county colleges under the program shall be
15 administered by the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education.
16 (cf: P.L.2021, c.26, s.2)

17
18 3. Section 3 of P.L.2021, c.26 (C.18A:71B-113) is amended to
19 read as follows:

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

22 (1) be a legal resident of the State in accordance with the
23 provisions of N.J.S.18A:71B-2 or be eligible for student financial
24 aid pursuant to P.L.2018, c.12 (C.18A:71B-2.1). A student who
25 otherwise meets the provisions of N.J.S.18A:71B-2 or P.L.2018,
26 c.12 (C.18A:71B-2.1), except for any requirement under those
27 provisions of law to be enrolled in an eligible institution of higher
28 education, shall be eligible to receive a financial aid grant under the
29 program if the student is an adult student enrolled in a
30 postsecondary career and technical education program offered by a
31 county vocational school district;

32 (2) be enrolled in at least six credits at a county college
33 established pursuant to chapter 64A of Title 18A of the New Jersey
34 Statutes or be an adult student enrolled in a postsecondary career
35 and technical education program of at least four months in length at
36 a county vocational school district;

37 (3) (a) be enrolled at the county college or county vocational
38 school district that serves the student's county of residence; or

39 (b) be enrolled at an out-of-county college, in which case the
40 student, if otherwise eligible, shall receive a grant under the
41 program to cover the remaining costs of tuition and approved
42 educational fees, charged at the in-district rate for the county
43 college at which the student is enrolled, provided that the amount of
44 a grant provided to a student under this subparagraph does not
45 exceed the amount of tuition and approved educational fees actually
46 charged to the student. An adult student enrolled in an out-of-
47 county vocational school district, if otherwise eligible, shall receive
48 a grant under the program to cover the remaining costs of tuition

1 and approved educational fees, charged at the out-of-county rate of
2 the county vocational school district at which the student is
3 enrolled;

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

5 (5) have an annual adjusted gross income between \$0 and
6 \$65,000, except that the authority, in consultation with the Office of
7 the Secretary of Higher Education **[and]**, the New Jersey Council
8 of County Colleges, and the New Jersey Council of County
9 Vocational-Technical Schools, may annually establish maximum
10 annual adjusted gross income eligibility limits of no less than
11 \$65,000;

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

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

24 (8) be in good academic standing and meet the minimum
25 standards for academic performance and satisfactory academic
26 progress as defined by the county college or county vocational
27 school district which the student is attending.

28 A county college or county vocational school district shall not
29 impose additional eligibility requirements for the program, other
30 than the requirements set forth in this subsection.

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

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

37 (2) (a) meets the standards for academic performance and
38 satisfactory academic progress, as defined by the county college
39 which the student is attending, to determine eligibility for federal
40 student aid programs under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of
41 1965 or, in the semester immediately prior to receiving an award,
42 attains a minimum level of academic success as determined by the
43 authority; or

44 (b) meets the standards for academic performance and
45 satisfactory academic progress as defined by the county vocational
46 school district which the student is attending; and

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

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

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

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

10 (4) An adult student enrolled in a postsecondary career and
11 technical education program, who is eligible for a financial aid
12 grant pursuant to subsection a. of this section, shall be eligible for a
13 financial aid grant for up to two years.

14 d. A student may be eligible for a grant under the program
15 during a fall or spring semester in an academic year.

16 e. If a student, the student's family, **[or]** a county college, or a
17 county vocational school district deems that the authority made an
18 unfair determination of eligibility, an appeal may be filed with the
19 authority within 60 days of initial notification of eligibility or
20 ineligibility.

21 f. The county college or county vocational school district
22 which a student attends shall notify the student of the student's
23 eligibility for the program and the amount of the grant.

24 (cf: P.L.2021, c.26, s.3)

25

26 4. Section 4 of P.L.2021, c.26 (C.18A:71B-114) is amended to
27 read as follows:

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

38 b. A full award under the program to a student at a county
39 college or an adult student enrolled in a postsecondary career and
40 technical education program at a county vocational school district
41 shall be equal to the student's full cost of approved tuition and
42 approved educational fees, subject to the prior application of all
43 other State, federal, and institutional need-based grants and merit
44 scholarships against those costs, for up to 18 credits in any
45 semester, for an eligible student for a full-time semester in an
46 associate's degree, certificate, **[or]** three plus one degree program,
47 or for up to the recognized equivalent number of credits in a
48 postsecondary career and technical education program as

1 determined by the authority. For an eligible student enrolled in at
2 least six credits but less than 12 credits in an associate's degree,
3 certificate, or three plus one degree program, or for an adult student
4 enrolled in the recognized equivalent range of credits in a
5 postsecondary career and technical education program as
6 determined by the authority, a grant under the program shall be pro-
7 rated from the full-time approved tuition and approved educational
8 fees based on the number of credits for which that student is
9 enrolled.

10 c. The authority shall, for each county college and county
11 vocational school district, annually establish a maximum individual
12 grant amount awarded under the program. The maximum
13 individual grant amount for each county college and county
14 vocational school district shall not increase by more than three
15 percent over the prior year.

16 (cf: P.L.2021, c.26, s.4)

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18 5. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to
19 the first academic year following the date of enactment.
20

21 22 STATEMENT 23

24 This bill amends the law establishing the Community College
25 Opportunity Grant (CCOG) Program to permit adult students
26 enrolled in postsecondary career and technical education programs
27 at county vocational school districts to be eligible to receive
28 financial aid under the program.

29 Under current State law, the CCOG Program provides last-dollar
30 grants to eligible county college students, to pay for the remaining
31 costs of tuition and approved educational fees that are not already
32 covered by any other State, federal, and institutional need-based
33 grants and merit scholarships for which a grant recipient is eligible.

34 Under the bill, an adult student would be eligible for financial
35 aid under the CCOG Program if the student: is a legal resident of
36 the State; is enrolled in a postsecondary career and technical
37 education program of at least four months in length offered by a
38 county vocational school district; is enrolled at the county
39 vocational school district that serves the student's county of
40 residence or is enrolled at an out-of-county vocational school
41 district, in which case the student, if otherwise eligible, would
42 receive a grant under the program to cover the remaining costs of
43 tuition and approved educational fees, charged at the in-district rate
44 for the county vocational school district at which the student is
45 enrolled; does not have an annual adjusted gross income that is
46 negative; has an annual adjusted gross income between \$0 and
47 \$65,000; has applied for all other available forms of State, federal,
48 and institutional need-based grants and merit scholarships and

1 submitted a financial aid form; does not owe a refund on a grant or
2 scholarship previously received from a State or federal program
3 through any institution or be in default on any loan made under any
4 State or federal student loan program at any institution, unless the
5 student makes arrangements with the Higher Education Student
6 Assistance Authority to repay the debt; and is in good academic
7 standing and meets the minimum standards for academic
8 performance and satisfactory academic progress as defined by
9 county vocational school district which the student is attending.
10 An adult education student enrolled in a postsecondary career
11 and technical education program at a county vocational school
12 district, who is eligible for a financial aid grant under the bill,
13 would be eligible for a financial aid grant for up to two years.