

# ASSEMBLY, No. 2425

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY 221st LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2024 SESSION

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblywoman ANNETTE QUIJANO**

**District 20 (Union)**

**Assemblyman REGINALD W. ATKINS**

**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.



A2425 QUIJANO, ATKINS

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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:  
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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

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

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

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

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

1       3. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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

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