

Title 18A.
Subtitle 12A.
Part 3.
Chapter 71C.
Article 10 (New)
Air Traffic
Controller
Redemption
Program
§§1-3
C.18A:71C-93
to 18A:71C-95
§4
C.18A:3B-42.1
§5
Note to §§1-3
§6
Approp.

P.L. 2025, CHAPTER 269, *approved January 12, 2026*
Assembly, No. 5712 (*Third Reprint*)

1 AN ACT concerning programs to support aviation education,
2 supplementing ¹**chapter 71C of**¹ Title 18A of the New Jersey
3 Statutes, and making an appropriation.
4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
6 *of New Jersey:*
7
8 1. As used in sections 1 through 3 of ²**this act** P.L. __, c.
9 (C. __) (pending before the Legislature as this bill)²:
10 “Approved site” means an airport located within the State or
11 operated by a multi-state agency serving the State ³or a Terminal
12 Radar Approach Control, Air Route Control Center, or any other
13 similar Federal Aviation Administration facility serving an airport
14 located within the State or operated by a multi-state agency serving
15 the State³.
16 “Authority” means the Higher Education Student Assistance
17 Authority.
18 “Eligible air traffic controller” means an air traffic controller
19 holding an appropriate degree ¹**and employed by** who commences
20 employment with¹ the Federal Aviation Administration ¹following
21 the effective date of ²**this act**¹ P.L. __, c. __ (C. __) (pending
22 before the Legislature as this bill)².

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 June 12, 2025.
²Assembly AAP committee amendments adopted June 19, 2025.
³Senate SBA committee amendments adopted December 15, 2025.

1 “Executive director” means the executive director of the Higher
2 Education Student Assistance Authority.

3 “Program” means the Air Traffic Controller Loan Redemption
4 Program established pursuant to section 3 of ²【this act】 P.L. , c.
5 (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill)².

6 “Program participant” means an eligible air traffic controller
7 who contracts with the authority to be an air traffic controller at an
8 approved site in exchange for the redemption of qualifying student
9 loan amounts.

10 “Qualifying student loan amounts” means the cumulative
11 outstanding balance of federal, State, or commercial student loans
12 at the time an applicant is selected for the program, which an
13 applicant has borrowed to pay for the cost of attendance for
14 undergraduate or graduate education at an institution of higher
15 education. Interest paid or due on qualifying student loan amounts
16 shall be considered eligible for ²【reimbursement】 redemption²
17 under the program.

18 “Total and permanent disability” means a physical or mental
19 disability that is expected to continue indefinitely or result in death
20 and renders a program participant unable to perform the program
21 participant’s contractual obligation, as determined by the executive
22 director or the executive director’s designee.

23

24 2. a. There is established the Air Traffic Controller Loan
25 Redemption Program within the Higher Education Student
26 Assistance Authority. The program shall provide for the redemption
27 of a portion of the qualifying student loan amounts of a program
28 participant for each period of service at an approved site.

29 b. To be eligible to participate in the program, an applicant
30 shall:

31 (1) be a resident of the State; ²and²

32 (2) be employed as an eligible air traffic controller at an
33 approved site²【; and

34 (3) submit an application in a manner and form to be determined
35 by the executive director ¹within one year of being initially hired as
36 an eligible air traffic controller at an approved site¹².

37 c. The executive director, or the executive director’s designee,
38 shall select the program participants from among those applicants
39 who meet the eligibility criteria, subject to available funds.

40 d. The program participant shall enter into a written contract
41 with the authority to participate in the program. The contract shall
42 specify the duration of the program participant’s required service
43 and the total amount of qualifying student loan amounts to be
44 redeemed by the State in return for service.

45 e. The redemption of qualifying student loan amounts under the
46 program shall amount to 16 percent of the program participant’s
47 qualifying student loan amounts in return for one full year of
48 service at an approved site, ²up to \$16,000.² an additional 26

1 percent for a second full year of service, ²up to \$26,000,² an
2 additional 28 percent for a third full year of service ², up to
3 \$28,000,² and an additional 30 percent for a fourth full year of
4 service ², up to \$30,000². Total redemption of qualifying student
5 loan amounts under the program shall not exceed \$100,000.

6 f. The period of service shall commence on or after the date of
7 enactment of ²**【this act】** P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the
8 Legislature as this bill)².

9 g. No amount of qualifying student loan amounts shall be
10 redeemed for services performed for less than a full year.

11
12 3. a. A program participant who has entered into a redemption
13 contract with the authority pursuant to ²**【this act】** section 2 of
14 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill)²
15 may nullify that contract by submitting written notification to the
16 authority and assuming full responsibility for repayment of the full
17 amount of the program participant's student loan amounts.

18 b. In the case of a program participant's death or total and
19 permanent disability, the authority shall nullify the service
20 obligation of the program participant.

21 c. The authority may nullify or suspend a program participant's
22 service obligation if continued enforcement of the contract may
23 result in extreme hardship.

24
25 4. a. The Secretary of Higher Education shall ², in consultation
26 with the Department of Labor and Workforce Development and any
27 other State agencies as deemed appropriate by the secretary,²
28 establish a program to provide aviation grants to public institutions
29 of higher education which participate in the federal Unmanned
30 Aircraft Systems Collegiate Training Initiative established pursuant
31 to section 631 of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018. The
32 purposes of the program shall be to award grants to public
33 institutions of higher education to:

34 (1) ²support an institution of higher education's participation in
35 the federal Unmanned Aircraft Systems Collegiate Training
36 Initiative established pursuant to section 631 of the FAA
37 Reauthorization Act of 2018;

38 (2)² support the establishment of a Center for the Study of
39 Unidentified Aerial Phenomena;

40 ²**【(2)】** (3)² facilitate the establishment of non-engineering
41 aviation degrees which teach basic courses in air traffic control and
42 aviation administration; and

43 ²**【(3)】** (4)² encourage an institution of higher education to join
44 the Federal Aviation Administration's Air Traffic-Collegiate
45 Training Initiatives Program.

46 b. The secretary shall determine the allowable uses for grant
47 funds prior to accepting applications to participate in the program

1 and shall describe the allowable uses in a notice of grant
2 opportunity.

3 c. A ²~~four-year~~² public institution of higher education seeking
4 to participate in the program shall submit an application to the
5 secretary in a form and manner prescribed by the secretary. The
6 application shall include:

7 (1) confirmation of the institution's active participation in ², or
8 planned participation in,² the federal Unmanned Aircraft Systems
9 Collegiate Training Initiative;

10 (2) the institution's capacity to support a Center for the Study of
11 Unidentified Aerial Phenomena;

12 (3) ²whether² the ²~~institution's plan to establish~~² institution
13 offers² non-engineering aviation degrees that include instruction in
14 air traffic control and aviation administration ², or has any plans to
15 establish these degree programs²;

16 (4) ²whether² the ²~~institution's plan~~² institution participates in,
17 or plans² to participate in ²,² the federal Aviation Administration's
18 Air Traffic-Collegiate Training Initiatives Program; and

19 (5) any other information the secretary deems necessary.

20 d. The secretary shall make the application available no later
21 than 120 days following the effective date of ²~~this act~~² P.L. __, c.
22 (C. __) (pending before the Legislature as this bill)².

23 e. After reviewing the applications submitted pursuant to
24 subsection c. of this section, the secretary shall select one ²~~four-~~
25 ~~year~~² or more² public ²~~institution~~² institutions² of higher
26 education to participate in the program. The secretary shall give
27 preference to an institution of higher education located in a county
28 of the first class. The secretary shall award ²~~a grant in an amount~~
29 ~~not to exceed \$2,500,000 to the grant recipient~~² on an annual basis
30 a total of \$2,500,000 in grants to public institutions of higher
31 education pursuant to this section².

32 f. ²~~If no four-year public institution of higher education applies~~
33 ~~and qualifies for the program, the secretary shall permit one or more~~
34 ~~county colleges to submit an application to participate in the~~
35 ~~program. A county college selected as a grant recipient shall be a~~
36 ~~current participant in the federal Unmanned Aircraft Systems~~
37 ~~Collegiate Training Initiative and shall not be required to support a~~
38 ~~Center for the Study of Unidentified Aerial Phenomena. The~~
39 ~~secretary shall award a grant in an amount not to exceed \$1,000,000~~
40 ~~to each grant recipient.~~

41 g.]² In addition to the funds appropriated to the program
42 pursuant to ²~~this act~~² P.L. __, c. (C. __) (pending before the
43 Legislature as this bill)², the secretary may accept and allocate
44 funds made available to the program by contribution, gift, donation,
45 or any other sources for the purpose of the program.

1 5. ¹a. The Higher Education Student Assistance Authority
2 shall adopt rules and regulations pursuant to the “Administrative
3 Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), as may be
4 necessary to implement the provisions of sections 1 through 3 of
5 ²[this act] P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as
6 this bill)².

7 b.¹ The Office of the Secretary of Higher Education shall adopt
8 rules and regulations pursuant to the “Administrative Procedure
9 Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), as may be necessary to
10 implement the provisions of section 4 of ²[this act]
11 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill)².
12

13 6. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Higher
14 Education Student Assistance Authority the sum of \$1,000,000 to
15 ²[operate] fund² the Air Traffic Controller Loan Redemption
16 Program established pursuant to section 2 of this act ¹, of which
17 sum no more than five percent may be dedicated to the
18 administrative costs of the program¹. There is appropriated from the
19 General Fund to ¹the¹ Office of the Secretary of Higher Education
20 the sum of \$2,500,000 to ²[operate] fund² the program established
21 pursuant to section 4 of this act.
22

23 7. This act shall take effect immediately.
24
25
26
27

28 Establishes Air Traffic Controller Loan Redemption Program;
29 supports partnership between public institution of higher education
30 and federal Air Traffic-Collegiate Training Initiative and
31 establishment of Center for Study of Unidentified Aerial
32 Phenomena; appropriates \$3.5 million.