

SENATE, No. 1545

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
221st LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2024 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Senator SHIRLEY K. TURNER

District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)

Senator TROY SINGLETON

District 7 (Burlington)

SYNOPSIS

Expands Tuition Aid Grant program to part-time undergraduates.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



S1545 TURNER, SINGLETON

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1 AN ACT expanding the Tuition Aid Grant program, amending
2 N.J.S.18A:71B-20 and N.J.S.18A:71B-21, and supplementing
3 chapter 71B of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

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) The Legislature finds and declares that:
9 a. the availability of educational opportunity at the college and
10 university level is a critical State interest given the needs of the
11 State for a well-educated work force;
12 b. the cost of college in New Jersey, as in the nation, continues
13 to grow faster than the rate of inflation;
14 c. soaring tuition rates threaten to impede student access to a
15 quality higher education;
16 d. the Tuition Aid Grant (TAG) program, established in 1968,
17 is a State program that provides grant awards to resident full-time
18 undergraduates attending New Jersey public and private institutions
19 of higher education up to the cost of tuition based on a family's
20 ability to pay;
21 e. part-time students attending a higher education institution,
22 other than county colleges, are currently ineligible for TAG awards;
23 and
24 f. expanding the TAG program to include part-time students
25 would demonstrate the State's commitment to student financial aid
26 for those students who are in as much need of financial assistance
27 and are as deserving of an opportunity for a post-secondary
28 education as those students able to attend an institution of higher
29 education on a full-time basis.

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31 2. N.J.S.18A:71B-20 is amended to read as follows:
32 18A:71B-20. a. A State tuition aid grant shall be awarded
33 annually to each eligible, qualified full-time undergraduate student
34 enrolled in a curriculum leading to a degree or certificate in an
35 eligible institution, or in an institution of higher education in
36 another state, provided that state permits its residents to utilize its
37 state student financial assistance grants in New Jersey institutions
38 of higher education through reciprocity agreements approved by the
39 authority. In no event shall a State tuition aid grant be utilized at an
40 out-of-State institution which is not licensed by that state and
41 accredited by a regional accrediting association recognized by a
42 national accrediting organization. A State tuition aid grant shall
43 also be awarded annually to each eligible, qualified part-time
44 undergraduate student enrolled in a curriculum leading to a degree
45 or certificate in an eligible institution in New Jersey.

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 b. To each New Jersey resident enrolled as a full-time student
2 and meeting the other requirements for eligibility under this chapter
3 and to each New Jersey resident enrolled as a part-time student, the
4 State shall grant an amount as provided in N.J.S.18A:71B-21. A
5 student shall not be eligible for a grant unless the application is in a
6 form satisfactory to the authority. A student shall not be eligible for
7 grants for more than four and one-half academic years, unless the
8 recipient is enrolled in an undergraduate program regularly
9 requiring five academic years for completion, in which case the
10 authority shall permit five and one-half years of eligibility.
11 Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions, a student receiving aid
12 under the provisions of P.L.1968, c.142 (C.18A:71-28 et seq.) shall
13 be entitled to a sixth year of eligibility. Notwithstanding the
14 foregoing provisions, a county college student who transfers to a
15 four- year institution, or any student who is required to pursue 18 or
16 more credit hours in a remedial or developmental curriculum, as
17 defined by regulations adopted by the authority, is entitled to an
18 additional half year of eligibility. For the purpose of this article, a
19 remedial curriculum shall include only noncredit courses in which a
20 student is directed to enroll by the institution. **[Eligibility for**
21 **tuition aid grants may be extended to part-time students through**
22 **regulations developed by the authority if funds are separately**
23 **appropriated for this purpose.]** Each period of part-time award
24 status shall be counted toward the maximum allowable period of
25 student eligibility as one-half of the maximum allowable period of
26 full-time student eligibility. A student shall not be eligible for
27 grants unless the student maintains such minimum standards of
28 academic performance as are required by the institution of
29 enrollment. A student who is enrolled in a course leading to a
30 degree in theology or divinity shall not be eligible for a tuition aid
31 grant.

32 c. A person shall not be awarded a State tuition aid grant unless
33 that person:

34 (1) satisfies the residency and other requirements provided in
35 article 1 of this part;

36 (2) has applied for State tuition aid and has been determined by
37 the authority to be eligible for the tuition aid;

38 (3) has demonstrated financial need for the tuition aid as
39 determined by and in accordance with standards to be established
40 by the authority; and

41 (4) maintains satisfactory academic progress in accordance with
42 standards established by the authority.

43 (cf: N.J.S.18A:71B-20)

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45 3. N.J.S.18A:71B-21 is amended to read as follows:

46 18A:71B-21. a. The amount of a tuition aid grant awarded
47 under this article to any student attending an eligible institution
48 shall be established by the authority, but shall not exceed the

1 maximum amount of tuition normally charged at a public institution
2 of higher education for students attending that institution or 50% of
3 the average tuition normally charged at the independent institutions
4 of higher education for students attending those institutions. As
5 determined by the authority, part-time grant awards shall be
6 prorated against the full-time grant award for the applicable
7 institutional sector. The amount of a State tuition aid grant awarded
8 under this act to any full-time student attending an institution of
9 higher education in any state other than New Jersey pursuant to this
10 section shall not exceed \$500 in an academic year. The amount of
11 grant to be paid for each semester or its equivalent shall be based on
12 the financial need for the grant, as determined by standards and
13 procedures established by the authority, and subject to the amount
14 of appropriations available therefor.

15 b. Appropriations for each program category of full-time
16 tuition aid grants shall be separately made by line item.
17 Appropriations for each program category of part-time tuition aid
18 grants shall be separately made by line item.

19 c. State tuition aid grants shall be awarded by the authority to
20 all eligible applicants without any limitation on the number to be
21 awarded in any year other than the amount of appropriations
22 available therefor. In the event that the amount appropriated is
23 insufficient for full awards to all eligible applicants, the authority,
24 in consultation with the Commission on Higher Education, shall
25 reduce awards equitably among eligible students according to such
26 procedures and guidelines as it shall establish. Any revisions of
27 procedures and guidelines in effect as of the effective date of this
28 act shall be submitted on or before March 1 of the prebudget year
29 by the executive director of the authority to the Joint Budget
30 Oversight Committee of the Legislature, or its successor, together
31 with supporting information. The revised criteria and guidelines
32 may be approved or disapproved by the Joint Budget Oversight
33 Committee, or its successor, at any time; provided that if at the end
34 of a 60-calendar day period after the date on which the revisions are
35 transmitted to the committee, the committee has taken no action, the
36 proposed revised criteria and guidelines shall be deemed to be
37 approved by the committee.

38 (cf: N.J.S.18A:71B-21)

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40 4. (New section) a. The amount of funds appropriated on the
41 effective date of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature
42 as this bill) for full-time tuition aid grants shall not be reduced or
43 diverted to implement the provisions of that act.

44 b. The amount of funds appropriated on the effective date of
45 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill) for
46 part-time tuition aid grants for county college students shall not be
47 reduced or diverted to implement the provisions of that act.

1 5. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to
2 the 2022-2023 academic year.

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STATEMENT

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7 This bill expands the Tuition Aid Grant program to part-time
8 undergraduate students who are enrolled in an eligible institution in
9 New Jersey. The bill provides that part-time grant awards would be
10 prorated against the full-time grant award for public and
11 independent institutions of higher education as determined by the
12 Higher Education Student Assistance Authority. Under the current
13 statute, the amount of a tuition aid grant may not exceed the
14 maximum amount of tuition normally charged at a public institution
15 or 50% of the average tuition normally charged at an independent
16 institution.

17 Appropriations for each program category of part-time tuition aid
18 grants would be made separately by line item in order to ensure that
19 funding for the part-time tuition aid grants would not lead to a
20 reduction in the funding for the full-time tuition aid grants.