

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 4127

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
222nd LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 11, 2026

Sponsored by:

Senator ANDREW ZWICKER

District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes New Jersey Student Emergency Aid Program in Office of Secretary of Higher Education; appropriates \$1.5 million.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Senate Higher Education Committee on October 5, 2026, with amendments.



1 AN ACT concerning emergency student financial assistance and
 2 supplementing chapter ¹**[71B]** 62¹ of Title 18A of the New
 3 Jersey Statutes¹, and making an appropriation¹.

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

7
 8 1. a. There is established in the ¹**[Higher Education Student**
 9 **Assistance Authority]** Office of the Secretary of Higher Education¹
 10 the “New Jersey Student Emergency Aid Program.” The purpose of
 11 the program shall be to provide emergency aid grants to
 12 undergraduate students enrolled in public institutions of higher
 13 education who are experiencing unexpected financial crises and
 14 require financial assistance for living expenses including, but not
 15 limited to, groceries, clothing, housing, transportation, medical
 16 expenses, technology, and childcare. The ¹**[Higher Education**
 17 **Student Assistance Authority]** Office of the Secretary of Higher
 18 Education¹ shall distribute funds, within the limit of available
 19 appropriations and any other funds that may be available for the
 20 purposes of the program, to each public institution of higher
 21 education pursuant to a methodology to be established by the
 22 ¹**[authority]** office¹. Each public institution of higher education
 23 shall administer the program and distribute emergency aid grants to
 24 eligible students enrolled in the institution.

25 b. The ¹**[Higher Education Student Assistance Authority]**
 26 Secretary of Higher Education¹, in consultation with the ¹**[Office of**
 27 **the Secretary of Higher Education]** Higher Education Student
 28 Assistance Authority¹, public institutions of higher education, and
 29 the New Jersey Council of County Colleges, shall establish
 30 guidelines for the program that shall include, but not be limited to:

- 31 (1) eligibility criteria for student applicants;
 32 (2) permissible uses of emergency aid grants;
 33 (3) application and approval procedures for use by public
 34 institutions of higher education to ensure the timely distribution of
 35 grants;
 36 (4) the maximum emergency aid grant per student for each
 37 public institution of higher education;
 38 (5) an annual or lifetime limit for emergency aid grants on a per
 39 student basis; and
 40 (6) reporting and recordkeeping requirements for public
 41 institutions of higher education distributing grants under the
 42 program.

43 c. Each public institution of higher education shall adopt
 44 policies and procedures consistent with the guidelines issued by the

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 5, 2026.

1 ¹**[Higher Education Student Assistance Authority]** Secretary of
2 Higher Education pursuant to subsection b. of this section¹.

3 d. The financial aid office ¹, or the equivalent office,¹ of each
4 public institution of higher education shall manage student
5 applications for grants under the program, distribute grants under
6 the program, and advertise the availability of emergency aid grants.

7 e. Emergency aid grants distributed under the program shall not
8 be considered financial aid or taxable income for the purposes of
9 determining a student's eligibility for State student financial
10 assistance programs, to the extent permitted by law.

11 f. Emergency aid grants distributed under the program shall ¹, at
12 a minimum, meet the federal definition of emergency financial
13 assistance. Emergency aid grants shall¹ not be used to pay
14 outstanding tuition or fees or for the repayment of student loans.

15 g. The financial aid office ¹, or the equivalent office,¹ of each
16 public institution of higher education shall provide each student
17 receiving an emergency aid grant with information about other
18 relevant campus resources, community resources, and government-
19 administered supports including, but not limited to, food pantries,
20 the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and clothing
21 closets.

22
23 2. a. Each public institution of higher education that
24 administers emergency aid grants pursuant to this act shall submit
25 an annual report to the ¹**[Higher Education Student Assistance**
26 **Authority]** Office of the Secretary of Higher Education¹, in a form
27 and manner prescribed by the ¹**[authority]** office¹, that includes:

28 (1) the number of students who received emergency aid grants
29 during the preceding academic year;

30 (2) the average and median dollar amounts of emergency aid
31 grants awarded during the preceding academic year;

32 (3) the types of emergencies for which grants were awarded
33 during the preceding academic year, in aggregate and without
34 identifying individual students; and

35 (4) the percentage of students who received emergency aid
36 grants and who remained enrolled or completed their academic
37 program during or following the academic year in which the aid
38 was received.

39 b. The ¹**[Higher Education Student Assistance Authority]**
40 Office of the Secretary of Higher Education¹ shall submit an annual
41 report to the Governor, and to the Legislature pursuant to section 2
42 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1) that summarizes the information
43 submitted by institutions pursuant to subsection a. of this section.

44
45 3. There is established in the ¹**[Higher Education Student**
46 **Assistance Authority]** Office of the Secretary of Higher Education¹
47 a nonlapsing, revolving fund to be known as the "New Jersey
48 Student Emergency Aid Program Fund." The fund shall be credited

1 with moneys as may be appropriated by the Legislature and any
2 federal or private funds that may be available for the purposes of
3 the fund. Moneys in the fund shall be used for the purpose of
4 providing emergency aid grants pursuant to section 1 of this act.
5 The ¹【Executive Director of the Higher Education Student
6 Assistance Authority】 Secretary of Higher Education¹ shall
7 determine the methodology for distributing monies deposited in the
8 fund to public institutions of higher education.

9

10 4. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the “New
11 Jersey Student Emergency Aid Program Fund” the sum of
12 \$1,500,000.

13

14 5. This act shall take effect immediately and grants awarded
15 under the program shall be available in the first full academic year
16 next following the date of enactment.”