

[Third Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 4410

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JULY 16, 2020

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SYNOPSIS

Establishes Community College Opportunity Grant Program in Higher Education Student Assistance Authority to provide last-dollar financial aid grants to county college students and Student Success Incentive funding to county colleges.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee on December 14, 2020, with amendments.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 1/11/2021)

1 AN ACT concerning financial aid for county college students and
2 supplementing chapter 71B of Title 18A of the New Jersey
3 Statutes.

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

7
8 1. As used in this act:

9 “Annual adjusted gross income” means:

10 a. for a dependent student, the annual adjusted gross income of
11 the student’s parent or legal guardian, as reported on the student’s
12 Free Application for Federal Student Aid or other financial aid form;
13 and

14 b. for an independent student, the annual adjusted gross income
15 of the student and, if applicable, the spouse of the student, as reported
16 on the student’s Free Application for Federal Student Aid or other
17 financial aid form.

18 “Approved educational fees” means general education fees,
19 registration fees, facility fees, technology fees, laboratory fees,
20 student service and activity fees, and program and course fees,
21 including fees associated with coursework in nursing, culinary, and
22 other career and technical education programs as determined by the
23 Higher Education Student Assistance Authority in consultation with
24 the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education ¹, subject to the limit
25 of funds appropriated or otherwise made available for the program¹.

26 “Authority” means the Higher Education Student Assistance
27 Authority established pursuant to N.J.S.18A:71A-3.

28 ³**【“Home county college” means the county college that serves a
29 student’s county of residence.】³**

30 “Out-of-county college” means a county college that is outside of
31 a student’s county of residence.

32 “Program” means the Community College Opportunity Grant
33 Program created pursuant to section 2 of this act.

34 “Three plus one degree program” means a baccalaureate degree
35 program created pursuant to section 1 of P.L.2018, c.144 (C.18A:3B-
36 78).

37
38 2. There is hereby created the Community College Opportunity
39 Grant Program. The purpose of the program shall be to provide
40 financial aid grants to eligible county college students, to cover the
41 costs of tuition and approved educational fees that are not already
42 covered by any other State, federal, and institutional need-based
43 grants or merit scholarships and to provide county colleges with
44 Student Success Incentive funding for outreach and student success

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 October 8, 2020.

²Assembly AAP committee amendments adopted November 12, 2020.

³Senate SBA committee amendments adopted December 14, 2020.

1 initiatives. The financial aid grants distributed to eligible students
2 under the program shall be administered by the Higher Education
3 Student Assistance Authority, while the Student Success Incentive
4 funding distributed to county colleges under the program shall be
5 administered by the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education.
6

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

9 (1) be a legal resident of the State in accordance with the provisions
10 of N.J.S.18A:71B-2 or be eligible for student financial aid pursuant to
11 P.L.2018, c.12 (C.18A:71B-2.1);

12 (2) be enrolled in at least six credits at a county college established
13 pursuant to chapter 64A of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes;

14 (3) ³(a)³ be enrolled at the county college that serves the student's
15 county of residence ³[], except that a student may]; or

16 (b) be enrolled at an out-of-county college, in which case the
17 student, if otherwise eligible, shall³ receive a grant under the program
18 to cover the remaining costs of tuition and approved educational fees,
19 charged at the in-district rate for ³[the home county college, to attend a
20 county college outside of the county of residence] the county college at
21 which the student is enrolled, provided that the amount of a grant
22 provided to a student under this subparagraph does not exceed the
23 amount of tuition and approved educational fees actually charged to the
24 student³;

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

26 (5) have an annual adjusted gross income between \$0 and \$65,000,
27 except that the authority, in consultation with the Office of the Secretary
28 of Higher Education and the New Jersey Council of County Colleges,
29 may annually establish maximum annual adjusted gross income
30 eligibility limits of no less than \$65,000;

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

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

43 (8) be in good academic standing and meet the minimum standards
44 for academic performance and satisfactory academic progress as
45 defined by the county college which the student is attending.

46 A county college shall not impose additional eligibility requirements
47 for the program, other than the requirements set forth in this subsection.

- 1 b. A grant under the program may be renewed for a student who:
- 2 (1) annually completes and submits a Free Application for Federal
- 3 Student Aid, other financial aid form, or, as applicable, a State financial
- 4 aid form as required by the authority pursuant to subsection b. of section
- 5 1 of P.L.2018, c.12 (C.18A:71B-2.1);
- 6 (2) meets the standards for academic performance and satisfactory
- 7 academic progress, as defined by the county college which the student
- 8 is attending, to determine eligibility for federal student aid programs
- 9 under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 or, in the semester
- 10 immediately prior to receiving an award, attains a minimum level of
- 11 academic success as determined by the authority; and
- 12 (3) maintains all eligibility requirements established pursuant to
- 13 subsection a. of this section.
- 14 c. (1) A student shall be eligible for a grant under the program for
- 15 up to five semesters, unless the student is enrolled in a program regularly
- 16 requiring at least six semesters for completion, in which case the
- 17 authority shall permit up to six semesters of eligibility.
- 18 (2) A student enrolled in a three plus one degree program shall be
- 19 eligible for a grant under the program for up to six semesters.
- 20 (3) Semesters for which a student is enrolled in at least six credits
- 21 but less than 12 credits shall be counted as one-half of a full-time
- 22 semester.
- 23 d. A student may be eligible for a grant under the program during
- 24 a fall ²[,] or² spring ²[,] or summer² semester in an academic year.
- 25 e. If a student, the student's family, or a county college deems that
- 26 the authority made an unfair determination of eligibility, an appeal may
- 27 be filed with the authority within 60 days of initial notification of
- 28 eligibility or ineligibility.
- 29 f. The county college which a student attends shall notify the
- 30 student of the student's eligibility for the program and the amount of the
- 31 grant.
- 32
- 33 4. a. A grant distributed to an eligible student under the
- 34 Community College Opportunity Grant Program shall cover the
- 35 remaining cost of tuition and approved educational fees, which is not
- 36 covered by State, federal, or any other need-based grant or merit
- 37 scholarship, for up to 18 credits in any semester. The full amount of
- 38 State, federal, and institutional need-based grant or merit
- 39 scholarships received by an eligible student shall be applied to the
- 40 amount of tuition and approved educational fees charged to an
- 41 eligible student. The remaining balance of tuition and approved
- 42 educational fees shall be covered by a grant under the program.
- 43 b. A full award under the program to a student at a county
- 44 college shall be equal to the student's full cost of approved tuition
- 45 and approved educational fees, subject to the prior application of all
- 46 other State, federal, and institutional need-based grants and merit
- 47 scholarships against those costs, for up to 18 credits in any semester,
- 48 for an eligible student for a full-time semester in an associate's

1 degree, certificate, or three plus one degree program. For an eligible
2 student enrolled in at least six credits but less than 12 credits in an
3 associate's degree, certificate, or three plus one degree program, a
4 grant under the program shall be pro-rated from the full-time
5 approved tuition and approved educational fees based on the number
6 of credits for which that student is enrolled.

7 c. The authority shall, for each county college, annually
8 establish a maximum individual grant amount awarded under the
9 program. The maximum individual grant amount for each county
10 college shall not increase by more than three percent over the prior
11 year.

12
13 5. a. The Legislature shall annually appropriate to the Office of
14 the Secretary of Higher Education such funds as may be necessary
15 for Student Success Incentive funding to provide capacity-building
16 grants to each county college to support the goals of the Community
17 College Opportunity Grant Program. The Secretary of Higher
18 Education shall distribute funding made available pursuant to this
19 section to county colleges for outreach, recruitment, and promoting
20 the success of county college students. The secretary shall establish
21 the purposes for which a county college may use a grant received
22 pursuant to this section, which shall include, but not be limited to:

23 (1) establishing mentorship programs;

24 (2) hosting events to assist students and families in completing
25 financial aid applications; and

26 (3) addressing students' material hardships, such as lack of access
27 to food, medical care, housing, child care, and transportation.

28 b. The secretary shall distribute the funding made available
29 pursuant to this section. ¹The secretary may retain up to five percent
30 of the funding for grant administration activities designed to increase
31 the effectiveness of the program.¹ Fifty percent of the ¹remaining¹
32 appropriation shall be distributed equally among all of the county
33 colleges, while the ¹[remaining] other¹ fifty percent of the
34 ¹remaining¹ appropriation shall be distributed based on the total
35 number of students at each county college who received awards under
36 the program during the previous academic year.

37
38 6. The authority shall adopt in accordance with the
39 "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et
40 seq.), rules and regulations as may be necessary to implement the
41 provisions of sections 1 through 4 of this act. The Office of the
42 Secretary of Higher Education shall adopt in accordance with the
43 "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et
44 seq.), rules and regulations as may be necessary to implement the
45 provisions of section 5 of this act.

46
47 7. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to
48 the first full academic year following the date of enactment.