

CHAPTER 594

(House Bill 279)

AN ACT concerning

Higher Education – Workforce Shortage Student Assistance Grants – Eligibility

FOR the purpose of ~~specifying that a grant recipient under the Workforce Shortage Student Assistance grant program may be enrolled at an eligible institution during a fall, spring, or summer term; defining certain terms requiring the Advisory Council on Workforce Shortage to make a certain recommendation to the Maryland Higher Education Commission relating to a certain determination;~~ requiring a recipient of a Workforce Shortage Assistance grant to earn a certain number of credit hours in an academic year; requiring the Commission to distribute certain grant awards in certain amounts for a student taking courses during a summer session; authorizing a certain student who is enrolled in a certain program that requires a mandatory summer academic session to receive an additional award in a certain amount; requiring a grant recipient to repay certain funds to the Commission if the grant recipient does not earn a certain minimum number of credit hours in a certain academic year; ~~prohibiting the Commission from designating new workforce shortage fields under the program of Workforce Shortage Student Assistance grants unless the Governor includes certain funds in the annual budget; requiring the Commission to give priority under the program to existing workforce shortage fields unless certain contingencies are met;~~ defining a certain term; making stylistic changes; and generally relating to the Workforce Shortage Student Assistance grant program.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – Education

Section ~~18-708(a) and (h)~~ 18-708(a), ~~(c)(3)~~, (h), (i), and (l)(1)

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2006 Replacement Volume)

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

Article – Education

Section 18-708(b) ~~and (c)(2)~~

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2006 Replacement Volume)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Education

18–708.

(a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

(2) “Advisory Council” means the Advisory Council on Workforce Shortage.

(3) “Eligible institution” means a public or private institution of higher education in this State that possesses a certificate of approval from the Commission.

(4) “Grant” means the Workforce Shortage Student Assistance grant.

~~(5) “PART-TIME STUDENT” MEANS A STUDENT WHO MAINTAINS A COURSE CREDIT LOAD OF BETWEEN 3 AND 6 CREDIT HOURS.~~

~~(6) “STUDENT” INCLUDES:~~

~~(I) A STUDENT IN AN UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL COURSE OF STUDY;~~

~~(II) A STUDENT IN A GRADUATE LEVEL COURSE OF STUDY;~~
~~AND~~

~~(III) A MEMBER OF THE FACULTY OF AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE STATE.~~

(5) “PUBLIC GOOD OR BENEFIT” MEANS SERVICE TO LOW-INCOME OR UNDERSERVED RESIDENTS OR AREAS OF THE STATE IN AN OCCUPATION IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR OR IN AN ORGANIZATION, INSTITUTION, ASSOCIATION, SOCIETY, OR CORPORATION THAT IS EXEMPT FROM TAXATION UNDER § 501(C)(3) OR (4) OF THE INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1986.

(b) There is a program of Workforce Shortage Student Assistance grants under this section for students who pledge to work in fields of critical shortage in the State on completion of their studies.

~~(e) (2) The Secretary shall appoint an Advisory Council on Workforce Shortage to:~~

~~(i) Identify workforce shortage fields in the State; and~~

~~(ii) Recommend to the Commission:~~

~~1. Priority workforce shortage fields to be included in the grant program; and~~

~~2. The removal of fields that in the Advisory Council's judgment no longer qualify as workforce shortage fields.~~

~~(3) In making recommendations to the Commission, the Advisory Council shall:~~

~~(I) [consider] **CONSIDER** whether a workforce shortage field provides a public good or benefit to the citizens of Maryland; **AND**~~

~~(II) **ON DETERMINATION THAT A WORKFORCE SHORTAGE FIELD PROVIDES A PUBLIC GOOD OR BENEFIT, GIVE PRIORITY TO THE WORKFORCE SHORTAGE FIELD WHEN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMISSION UNDER PARAGRAPH (2)(II) OF THIS SUBSECTION.**~~

(h) ~~(1)~~ A grant recipient:

~~(1) may~~ **MAY** be enrolled at an eligible institution; **INSTITUTION**

~~(I) [on] **ON**~~ a part-time or full-time basis; **AND**

~~(II) **DURING A FALL, SPRING, OR SUMMER TERM.**~~

~~(2)~~ **SHALL EARN AT LEAST 12 UNDERGRADUATE OR 9 GRADUATE CREDIT HOURS IN EACH ACADEMIC YEAR, INCLUDING SUMMER SESSIONS;**

~~(2) (3)~~ Except as provided in paragraph ~~(3)~~ ~~(4)~~ of this subsection, ~~a grant recipient~~ shall be an undergraduate student at an eligible institution; **AND**

~~(3)~~ A grant recipient may

(4) MAY be a graduate student if the Office determines that the shortage field requires employees with a graduate level education.

(i) (1) In this subsection, “cost of attendance” means the equivalent annual tuition and mandatory fees of a resident undergraduate student at the 4-year public institution of higher education within the University System of Maryland, other than the University of Maryland University College and University of Maryland, Baltimore, with the highest annual expenses for a full-time resident undergraduate.

(2) Subject to [paragraph (3)] PARAGRAPHS (3), (4), AND (5) of this subsection, the Commission shall establish in guidelines the annual grant awards under this section.

(3) Annual grant awards shall be within the following ranges:

(i) For a part-time student attending a 2-year eligible institution – \$1,000 and 12.5% of cost of attendance;

(ii) For a full-time student attending a 2-year eligible institution – \$2,000 and 25% of cost of attendance;

(iii) For a part-time student attending a 4-year eligible institution – \$2,000 and 25% of cost of attendance; and

(iv) For a full-time student attending a 4-year eligible institution – \$4,000 and 50% of cost of attendance.

(4) FOR A STUDENT TAKING COURSES DURING A SUMMER SESSION TO MEET THE MINIMUM NUMBER OF CREDIT HOURS FOR FULL-TIME OR PART-TIME STATUS, THE COMMISSION SHALL DISTRIBUTE GRANT AWARDS TO THE STUDENT IN THE SPRING AND SUMMER SESSIONS IN AMOUNTS IT DETERMINES TO BE APPROPRIATE.

(5) A STUDENT WHO IS ENROLLED IN AN ACADEMIC PROGRAM THAT INCLUDES A MANDATORY SUMMER ACADEMIC SESSION AS PART OF THE APPROVED CURRICULUM MAY RECEIVE AN ADDITIONAL AWARD NOT TO EXCEED \$1,000 PER CALENDAR YEAR.

(1) (1) A grant recipient shall repay the Commission the funds received as set forth in § 18–112 of this title if the recipient does not:

(i) EARN AT LEAST 12 UNDERGRADUATE OR 9 GRADUATE CREDIT HOURS IN EACH ACADEMIC YEAR IN WHICH THE STUDENT RECEIVES ASSISTANCE, INCLUDING SUMMER SESSIONS;

(II) Complete the specified degree, attain the licensure or certification required, or fulfill other requirements as provided in this section; or

[(ii)] (III) Perform the service obligation required under subsection (k) of this section.

~~SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, unless the Governor includes in the annual budget additional funds in excess of those budgeted for existing workforce shortage fields, the Maryland Higher Education Commission may not designate new workforce shortage fields under the program of Workforce Shortage Student Assistance grants.~~

~~SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That unless data suggests otherwise and until such a time that the Governor includes additional funds for awards under new workforce shortage fields under the program of Workforce Shortage Student Assistance grants, the Maryland Higher Education Commission shall give priority under the program to existing workforce shortage fields.~~

SECTION ~~2.~~ 4. 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June 1, 2007.

Approved by the Governor, May 17, 2007.