

Chapter 306

(House Bill 1288)

AN ACT concerning

Higher Education – Tuition Waivers for Foster Care Recipients and Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

FOR the purpose of ~~repealing the requirement that certain foster care recipients and certain unaccompanied homeless youth must be a certain candidate for certain certificate or degree programs in order to receive a certain tuition waiver;~~ defining the term vocational certificate to include completion of a certain course of study by taking credit-bearing courses or noncredit courses for purposes of establishing eligibility of foster care recipients for certain tuition waivers; altering a certain definition; *altering a certain requirement that certain foster care recipients and certain unaccompanied homeless youth apply for certain financial aid by a certain time*; and generally relating to tuition waivers for foster care recipients and unaccompanied homeless youth.

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,Article – EducationSection 15-106.1(a)(1) and (3) and (c)Annotated Code of Maryland(2014 Replacement Volume and 2015 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – Education

Section ~~15-106.1(e)~~ 15-106.1(a)(2)

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2014 Replacement Volume and 2015 Supplement)

BY adding toArticle – EducationSection 15-106.1(a)(6)Annotated Code of Maryland(2014 Replacement Volume and 2015 Supplement)

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

Article – Education

15-106.1.

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

(2) (i) “Foster care recipient” means an individual who:

1. Was placed in an out-of-home placement by the Maryland Department of Human Resources; and

2. A. Resided in an out-of-home placement ~~in the State at the time the individual graduated from high school or successfully completed a general equivalency development examination (GED)~~ **ON THE INDIVIDUAL’S 18TH BIRTHDAY;**
[or]

B. Resided in an out-of-home placement ~~in the State~~ on the individual’s 13th birthday and was placed into guardianship or adopted out of an out-of-home placement after the individual’s 13th birthday; OR

C. **RESIDED IN AN OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT IN THE STATE FOR AT LEAST 1 YEAR ON OR AFTER THE INDIVIDUAL’S 13TH BIRTHDAY AND RETURNED TO LIVE WITH THE INDIVIDUAL’S PARENTS AFTER THE OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT ENDED.**

(ii) “Foster care recipient” includes a younger sibling of an individual described in subparagraph (i) of this paragraph if the younger sibling is concurrently placed into guardianship or adopted out of an out-of-home placement by the same guardianship or adoptive family.

(3) “Out-of-home placement” has the meaning stated in § 5-501 of the Family Law Article.

(6) “VOCATIONAL CERTIFICATE” MEANS A CERTIFICATE OR LICENSE AWARDED BY A PUBLIC INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION ON COMPLETION OF A COURSE OF STUDY THAT PREPARES AN INDIVIDUAL TO WORK IN A CAREER FIELD BY TAKING CREDIT-BEARING COURSES OR NONCREDIT COURSES.

(c) (1) A foster care recipient or an unaccompanied homeless youth is exempt from paying any tuition at a public institution of higher education, regardless of that foster care recipient’s or unaccompanied homeless youth’s receipt of any scholarship or grant if:

(i) The foster care recipient or unaccompanied homeless youth is enrolled at the institution on or before the date that the foster care recipient or unaccompanied homeless youth reaches the age of 25 years; ~~AND~~

(ii) ~~¶~~The foster care recipient or unaccompanied homeless youth is enrolled as a candidate for a vocational certificate, an associate’s degree, or a bachelor’s degree; and

(iii) The foster care recipient or unaccompanied homeless youth has filed for federal and State financial aid ~~by March 1 each year.~~

(2) If a foster care recipient or an unaccompanied homeless youth receives a scholarship or grant for postsecondary study and is enrolled before the recipient's 25th birthday ~~as a candidate for a vocational certificate, an associate's degree, or bachelor's degree~~ at a public institution of higher education, the scholarship or grant may not be applied to the tuition for the foster care recipient or unaccompanied homeless youth.

(3) A foster care recipient or an unaccompanied homeless youth who is exempt from tuition under this section continues to be exempt until the earlier of:

(i) 5 years after first enrolling ~~as a candidate for an associate's degree or a bachelor's degree~~ at a public institution of higher education in the State; or

(ii) The date that the foster care recipient or unaccompanied homeless youth is awarded a bachelor's degree.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2016.

Approved by the Governor, April 26, 2016.