

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2007 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 699
Appropriations

(Delegate Burns, *et al.*)

Higher Education - Senior Citizen Tuition Waiver Program

This bill establishes a Senior Citizen Tuition Waiver Program that requires each four-year public institution of higher education to waive tuition for Maryland residents who are at least 62 years old, have been accepted for enrollment at the institution, and have an income no more than 150% of the federal poverty level. Fees may also be waived at the discretion of the institution. Tuition waivers are limited to three classes per semester and to classes for which space is available. Each institution must report annually to the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) on the number of senior citizens who participate in the program and the total cost to the institution for the program. MHEC must then report to the General Assembly.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill would not materially impact higher education tuition revenues because similar senior citizen tuition waiver policies already exist for the University System of Maryland (USM), Morgan State University (MSU), and St. Mary's College of Maryland (St. Mary's). The institutions and MHEC could report on the program with existing personnel and resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: Existing senior citizen tuition waiver policies for USM institutions, MSU, and St. Mary's are similar to the program established in the bill. All the existing policies require a senior citizen to be at least 60 years old to qualify for a tuition waiver. Although the policies do not limit the participation of senior citizens based specifically on income, all require senior citizens to receive all or most of their income from retirement benefits in order to qualify for waivers, and all disqualify senior citizens who work full-time.

The policies also limit tuition waivers to three classes per semester and to classes for which space is available. The USM and MSU policies further limit the tuition waivers to 2% of the full-time equivalent undergraduate enrollment at institutions. St. Mary's tuition waiver program requires a senior citizen to wait until after the schedule-adjustment and late-registration periods expire (two weeks into the semester) before a tuition waiver can be granted.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): St. Mary's College of Maryland, University System of Maryland, Maryland Department of Aging, Maryland Higher Education Commission, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 19, 2007
ncs/rhh

Analysis by: Mark W. Collins

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510