

HOUSE BILL 734

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By: **Delegates Lierman and Solomon**

Introduced and read first time: February 3, 2022

Assigned to: Appropriations

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Higher Education – Student Financial Assistance – Alterations and**
3 **Appropriation**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring the Maryland Higher Education Commission to use a certain
5 annual family income determination when awarding a Guaranteed Access Grant;
6 authorizing the Next Generation Scholars of Maryland Program to continue
7 providing certain services to students when they attend an institution of higher
8 education; altering the maximum award amount for an Educational Assistance
9 Grant; providing that a recipient of a Guaranteed Access Grant who becomes
10 ineligible because of a change in family income shall remain eligible for the full
11 award term applicable to the recipient with a reduced award amount calculated by
12 the Commission; requiring the Governor to include in the annual budget bill a
13 certain appropriation for Delegate Howard P. Rawlings Educational Excellence
14 Awards; altering the qualifications for the 2+2 Transfer Scholarship Program; and
15 generally relating to student financial assistance programs.

16 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
17 Article – Education
18 Section 18–303(a)(3), (b)(6), (c)(1) and (2)(v), and (e), and 18–303.1(a), (c), and (e)
19 Annotated Code of Maryland
20 (2018 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

21 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
22 Article – Education
23 Section 18–303(d), 18–303.1(d), 18–304(c), and 18–2503(10)
24 Annotated Code of Maryland
25 (2018 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

26 BY adding to
27 Article – Education
28 Section 18–304(d)

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 Annotated Code of Maryland
2 (2018 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

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

5 **Article – Education**

6 18–303.

7 (a) Subject to subsection (e) of this section, each recipient of a Delegate Howard
8 P. Rawlings Educational Excellence Award shall:

9 (3) Demonstrate a definite financial need to:

10 (i) For an Educational Assistance Grant, the Office; or

11 (ii) For a Guaranteed Access Grant, the Office or an institution of
12 higher education that complies with § 18–303.3 of this subtitle; and

13 (b) Except as provided in subsection (c) of this section, each recipient of a
14 Guaranteed Access Grant shall:

15 (6) Subject to subsection (d) of this section, have an annual family income
16 below a poverty index determined by the Commission; and

17 (c) (1) Subject to paragraph (2) of this subsection, an individual who has
18 successfully obtained a high school diploma by examination under § 11–808 of the Labor
19 and Employment Article is exempt from the requirements of subsection (b) of this section.

20 (2) An individual described under paragraph (1) of this subsection is
21 eligible for a Guaranteed Access Grant if the individual:

22 (v) Subject to subsection (d) of this section, has an annual family
23 income below a poverty index determined by the Commission.

24 (d) **(1)** To determine the annual family income eligibility of an applicant for a
25 Guaranteed Access Grant, the Office or an institution of higher education that complies
26 with § 18–303.3 of this subtitle may not consider an amount received by the applicant as
27 an earned income credit under § 32 of the Internal Revenue Code.

28 **(2) WHEN AWARDING A GUARANTEED ACCESS GRANT, THE**
29 **COMMISSION SHALL USE THE ANNUAL FAMILY INCOME DETERMINATION USED**
30 **WHEN THE STUDENT PREQUALIFIED UNDER SUBSECTION (E)(1) OF THIS SECTION.**

31 (e) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, a student in
32 grade 7 or grade 8 who applies and qualifies for a Guaranteed Access Grant on the basis of

1 financial need as established by the Commission shall prequalify for a Guaranteed Access
2 Grant to be used at the time of enrollment in an institution of higher education by agreeing
3 in writing, as a secondary and undergraduate student, to:

- 4 (i) Satisfy the attendance policy of the applicable school;
- 5 (ii) Refrain from substance abuse;
- 6 (iii) Provide information required by the Commission or the State
7 Board of Education;
- 8 (iv) Apply for admission to an institution of higher education during
9 the student's senior year of high school;
- 10 (v) Complete and file on a timely basis applications for federal
11 student aid for each year that the student plans to enroll in postsecondary education;
- 12 (vi) Participate in the Next Generation Scholars of Maryland
13 Program established in § 18–303.1 of this subtitle until the student graduates from high
14 school and matriculates at an institution of higher education;
- 15 (vii) Maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.5 on a
16 4.0 scale or its equivalent; and
- 17 (viii) Satisfy any other program requirements set by the Office, the
18 Commission, the State Board of Education, or the State Department of Education.

19 (2) A student in grade 9 or grade 10 shall prequalify for a Guaranteed
20 Access Grant to be used at the time of enrollment in an institution of higher education if
21 the student:

- 22 (i) Otherwise meets the conditions of paragraph (1) of this
23 subsection; and
- 24 (ii) 1. Is eligible for free or reduced priced meals; or
25 2. Attends a school that participates in the U.S. Department
26 of Agriculture Community Eligibility Provision and the student is identified by:
 - 27 A. Direct certification; or
 - 28 B. Income information provided by the family of the student
29 to the local school system on an alternative form developed by the Department.

30 18–303.1.

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

1 (2) "Fund" means the Next Generation Scholars of Maryland Program
2 Fund.

3 (3) "Program" means the Next Generation Scholars of Maryland Program.

4 (c) The Program shall provide guidance and services to students who qualify for
5 a Guaranteed Access Grant in accordance with § 18–303(e) of this subtitle to assist the
6 students in successfully:

7 (1) Completing a college preparatory curriculum;

8 (2) Graduating from high school;

9 (3) Matriculating at an institution of higher education as defined in §
10 18–303 of this subtitle; and

11 (4) Making timely progress to complete a degree program.

12 (d) (1) The Department shall:

13 [(1)] (I) Publicize the Program through community outreach and
14 marketing materials;

15 [(2)] (II) Award grants to nonprofit organizations to administer the
16 Program;

17 [(3)] (III) Solicit applications from nonprofit organizations to administer
18 the Program in local school systems; and

19 [(4)] (IV) Give priority to applications:

20 [(i)] 1. From Maryland–based nonprofit organizations; and

21 [(ii)] 2. That include business and institution of higher education
22 partners.

23 (2) **THE PROGRAM MAY CONTINUE TO PROVIDE SERVICES TO**
24 **STUDENTS WHEN THEY ATTEND AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.**

25 (e) In accordance with subsection (c) of this section, the services to be provided to
26 students participating in the Program shall include:

27 (1) A high school graduation plan;

28 (2) Summer work or internship opportunities;

- 1 (3) Financial aid literacy assistance;
- 2 (4) Career interest assessments;
- 3 (5) Mentorship and one-on-one counseling;
- 4 (6) Visits to college campuses and workplaces;
- 5 (7) An intensive summer bridge or matriculation assistance program for
6 students entering an institution of higher education directly from high school; and
- 7 (8) A plan to matriculate and graduate from an institution of higher
8 education.

9 18-304.

10 (c) (1) Except as provided in paragraphs (2) and (3) of this subsection, a
11 Delegate Howard P. Rawlings Educational Excellence Award may be awarded in \$100
12 increments.

13 (2) (i) The amount of an Educational Assistance Grant made to a
14 student in the student's first 2 academic years of enrollment may not be less than \$400 or
15 more than [~~\$3,000~~] **\$7,000**.

16 (ii) Beginning in the third academic year of enrollment and for each
17 academic year thereafter:

18 1. If the student successfully completed at least 30 credits in
19 the prior academic year, the amount of an Educational Assistance Grant made to a student
20 may not be less than \$400 or more than [~~\$3,000~~] **\$7,000**; or

21 2. If the student successfully completed at least 24 but less
22 than 30 credits in the prior academic year, the award amount shall be equal to the amount
23 the student would have otherwise received multiplied by the ratio of the number of credits
24 successfully completed divided by 30.

25 (3) (i) All applicants who fulfill the requirements established in §
26 18-303(a) and (b) of this subtitle shall receive a Guaranteed Access Grant.

27 (ii) **[The] EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBPARAGRAPH (IV) OF**
28 **THIS PARAGRAPH, THE** amount of a Guaranteed Access Grant made to a student in the
29 student's first 2 academic years of enrollment shall be equal to 100 percent of the student's
30 financial need as determined by the Office, not to exceed the equivalent annual expenses
31 of a full-time resident undergraduate at the 4-year public institution of higher education
32 within the University System of Maryland, other than the University of Maryland Global
33 Campus and University of Maryland, Baltimore Campus, with the highest annual expenses

1 for a full-time resident undergraduate.

2 (iii) [Beginning] **EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBPARAGRAPH (IV)**
3 **OF THIS PARAGRAPH, BEGINNING** in the third academic year of enrollment and for each
4 academic year thereafter:

5 1. If the student successfully completed at least 30 credits in
6 the prior academic year, the award amount shall be equal to 100 percent of the student's
7 financial need as determined by the Office, not to exceed the equivalent annual expenses
8 of a full-time resident undergraduate at the 4-year public institution of higher education
9 within the University System of Maryland, other than the University of Maryland Global
10 Campus and University of Maryland, Baltimore Campus, with the highest annual expenses
11 for a full-time resident undergraduate; or

12 2. If the student successfully completed at least 24 but less
13 than 30 credits in the prior academic year, the award amount shall be equal to 100 percent
14 multiplied by the ratio of the number of credits successfully completed divided by 30.

15 **(IV) IF A RECIPIENT OF A GUARANTEED ACCESS GRANT**
16 **BECOMES INELIGIBLE BECAUSE OF A CHANGE IN FAMILY INCOME, THE RECIPIENT**
17 **SHALL REMAIN ELIGIBLE FOR THE AWARD FOR THE FULL AWARD TERM APPLICABLE**
18 **TO THE RECIPIENT UNDER THIS SUBTITLE, BUT THE COMMISSION SHALL REDUCE**
19 **THE AWARD BASED ON A SLIDING SCALE DEVELOPED BY THE COMMISSION.**

20 **(D) BEGINNING IN FISCAL YEAR 2024, THE GOVERNOR SHALL INCLUDE IN**
21 **THE ANNUAL BUDGET BILL AN APPROPRIATION OF \$75,000,000 FOR DELEGATE**
22 **HOWARD P. RAWLINGS EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS MADE UNDER THIS**
23 **SUBTITLE.**

24 18-2503.

25 To qualify for a 2+2 Transfer Scholarship, an applicant shall:

26 (10) Have demonstrated financial need, defined [as a federally calculated
27 expected family contribution (EFC) of \$10,000 or less as reported on the student's FAFSA]
28 **BY THE COMMISSION; and**

29 **SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED,** That this Act shall take effect July
30 1, 2022.