

# HOUSE BILL 923

F2

(3lr0732)

## ENROLLED BILL

— Appropriations/ Education, Energy, and the Environment —

Introduced by **Delegates B. Barnes, Solomon, and Smith**

Read and Examined by Proofreaders:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Proofreader.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Proofreader.

Sealed with the Great Seal and presented to the Governor, for his approval this

\_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock, \_\_\_\_\_ M.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Speaker.

### CHAPTER \_\_\_\_\_

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Higher Education – Appointment of Secretary and Student**  
3 **Financial Assistance – ~~Alterations~~ Accommodations at Public Institutions for**  
4 **Religious Beliefs**

5 FOR the purpose of providing that the Secretary of Higher Education is appointed by, and  
6 serves at the pleasure of, the Governor; requiring each institution of higher  
7 education to adopt a certain written policy regarding the provision of reasonable  
8 academic accommodations for students to practice sincerely held faith-based or  
9 religious beliefs; altering eligibility criteria for, and the process for awards from, the  
10 Delegate Howard P. Rawlings Program of Educational Excellence Awards; altering  
11 eligibility criteria for services provided to students through the Next Generation  
12 Scholars of Maryland Program; altering the administration of the Maryland  
13 Community College Promise Scholarship to require community colleges to award  
14 scholarships from the Maryland Community College Promise Scholarship in place of  
15 the Office of Student Financial assistance within the Maryland Higher Education

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#### EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.

*Italics indicate opposite chamber/conference committee amendments.*



1 Commission; repealing certain provisions of law related to the intent of the General  
 2 Assembly for the Commission to be reorganized to establish the Office of Student  
 3 Financial Assistance as a separate independent agency in a certain fiscal year; and  
 4 generally relating to the appointment of the Secretary of Higher Education ~~and~~  
 5 student financial assistance programs ~~in the State~~, and accommodations at public  
 6 institutions for religious beliefs.

7 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

8 Article – Education

9 Section 11–104(a) and (b), 18–303, 18–303.1(c) and (d), 18–303.3, 18–304, 18–307,  
 10 18–3601, 18–3602, 18–3603, and 18–3604

11 Annotated Code of Maryland

12 (2022 Replacement Volume)

13 BY adding to

14 Article – Education

15 Section ~~18–303.4~~ and 15–136, 18–303.4, and 18–3603.1

16 Annotated Code of Maryland

17 (2022 Replacement Volume)

18 BY repealing

19 Chapter 639 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 2022

20 Section 3

21 BY repealing

22 Chapter 640 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 2022

23 Section 3

24 ~~BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,~~

25 ~~Article – Education~~

26 ~~Section 18–303 and 18–303.3~~

27 ~~Annotated Code of Maryland~~

28 ~~(2022 Replacement Volume)~~

29 ~~(As enacted by Section 1 of this Act)~~

30 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,

31 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

32 **Article – Education**

33 11–104.

34 (a) [(1) In accordance with paragraph (2) of this subsection, the] **THE** Governor  
 35 shall appoint, with the advice and consent of the Senate, a Secretary of Higher Education.

1           [(2) (i) The Commission shall submit to the Governor the names of 3  
2 nominees for the position of Secretary from which the Governor shall make the  
3 appointment.

4           (ii) The Governor may reject the list and request the Commission to  
5 submit the names of additional nominees.]

6           (b) (1) The Secretary shall:

7                   (i) Select, organize, and direct the staff of the Commission;

8                   (ii) Perform the duties the Commission assigns;

9                   (iii) See that the policies and decisions of the Commission are carried  
10 out;

11                   (iv) Serve at the pleasure of the [Commission] **GOVERNOR**; and

12                   (v) Be a member of the Governor's Executive Council.

13           (2) (i) After consideration of the recommendations of the Commission,  
14 the Governor shall include in the annual budget request the salary for the Secretary.

15           (ii) The Secretary is entitled to the salary provided in the State  
16 budget.

17 **15-136.**

18           **(A) EACH PUBLIC INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION SHALL ADOPT A**  
19 **WRITTEN POLICY THAT PROVIDES REASONABLE ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS FOR**  
20 **STUDENTS TO PRACTICE SINCERELY HELD FAITH-BASED OR RELIGIOUS BELIEFS.**

21           **(B) THE POLICY SHALL:**

22                   **(1) PROVIDE AN ACCOMMODATION FOR A STUDENT, INCLUDING**  
23 **EXCUSED ABSENCES, FOR A STUDENT TO:**

24                           **(I) OBSERVE FAITH-BASED OR RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS; OR**

25                           **(II) PARTICIPATE IN ORGANIZED RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES;**

26                   **(2) PROVIDE THAT A STUDENT BE ALLOWED REASONABLE**  
27 **ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR MISSING AN EXAMINATION OR OTHER**  
28 **ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS DUE TO AN EXCUSED ABSENCE UNDER ITEM (1) OF THIS**  
29 **SUBSECTION IF THE STUDENT'S SINCERELY HELD FAITH-BASED OR RELIGIOUS**

1 BELIEF OR PRACTICE AFFECTS THE STUDENT'S ABILITY TO TAKE AN EXAMINATION  
2 AS SCHEDULED OR MEET ANY OTHER ACADEMIC REQUIREMENT; AND

3 (3) INCLUDE A GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE TO REPORT  
4 NONCOMPLIANCE WITH THE POLICY.

5 (C) (1) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION,  
6 EACH PUBLIC INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IS REQUIRED TO PROVIDE A  
7 SPACE ON CAMPUS TO ACCOMMODATE FAITH-BASED OR RELIGIOUS PRACTICES.

8 (2) THIS SUBSECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF  
9 MARYLAND GLOBAL CAMPUS.

10 (D) EACH PUBLIC INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION SHALL POST  
11 PROMINENTLY ON ITS WEBSITE A COPY OF THE POLICY ADOPTED UNDER THIS  
12 SECTION.

13 18-303.

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

16 (1) Be accepted for admission in the regular undergraduate program at an  
17 eligible institution or be enrolled in a 2-year associate degree program in which the course  
18 work is acceptable for transfer credit for an accredited baccalaureate program in an eligible  
19 institution;

20 (2) Except as provided in § 18-303.2 of this subtitle, be a resident of this  
21 State;

22 (3) Demonstrate a definite financial need to:

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

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

26 (4) Accept any other conditions attached to the award.

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

29 (1) Have [attained a grade point average of at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale or its  
30 equivalent at the end of the first semester of the senior year in high school and have]  
31 completed high school or, failing to do so, on the recommendation of the recipient's high  
32 school principal, provide evidence satisfactory to the Office of extenuating circumstances;

1 (2) ~~¶~~Begin college within ~~1-year~~ 6 YEARS of completing high school or,  
2 failing to do so, provide evidence satisfactory to the Office of extenuating circumstances;

3 (3) Be under the age of ~~22~~ 26 years at the time of receiving the first award;

4 (4) ~~Have successfully completed a college preparatory program in high~~  
5 ~~school;~~

6 ~~(5)¶~~ Enroll in college as a full-time student;

7 [(6)] ~~(3)~~ (5) Subject to subsection (d) of this section, have an annual family  
8 income below a poverty index determined by the Commission; and

9 [(7)] ~~(4)~~ (6) Satisfy any additional criteria the Commission may establish.

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

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

15 (i) Has scored a passing score of at least ~~165~~ 145 per module on the  
16 diploma by examination;

17 (ii) ~~¶~~Begins college within ~~1-year~~ 6 YEARS of achieving the score  
18 described under item (i) of this paragraph or, failing to do so, provides evidence satisfactory  
19 to the Office of extenuating circumstances;

20 (iii) Is under the age of ~~22~~ 26 years at the time of receiving the first  
21 award;

22 (iv)¶ Enrolls in college as a full-time student; and

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

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

29 (2) When awarding a Guaranteed Access Grant to a student who  
30 prequalified for the award under subsection (e)(1) or (2) of this section, the Commission  
31 shall use the annual family income determination used when the student prequalified.

1 (e) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, a student in  
2 grade 7 or grade 8 who applies and qualifies for a Guaranteed Access Grant on the basis of  
3 financial need as established by the Commission shall prequalify for a Guaranteed Access  
4 Grant to be used at the time of enrollment in an institution of higher education by agreeing  
5 in writing, as a secondary and undergraduate student, to:

6 (i) Satisfy the attendance policy of the applicable school;

7 (ii) [Refrain from substance abuse;

8 (iii)] Provide information required by the Commission or the State  
9 Board of Education;

10 [(iv)] (III) Apply for admission to an institution of higher education  
11 during the student's senior year of high school;

12 [(v)] (IV) Complete and file on a timely basis applications for federal  
13 student aid for each year that the student plans to enroll in postsecondary education;

14 [(vi)] (V) Participate in the Next Generation Scholars of Maryland  
15 Program established in § 18–303.1 of this subtitle until the student graduates from high  
16 school and matriculates at an institution of higher education;

17 [(vii)] (VI) Maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.5  
18 on a 4.0 scale or its equivalent; and

19 [(viii)] (VII) Satisfy any other program requirements set by the Office,  
20 the Commission, the State Board of Education, or the State Department of Education.

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

24 (i) Otherwise meets the conditions of paragraph (1) of this  
25 subsection; and

26 (ii) 1. Is eligible for free or reduced priced meals; or  
27 2. Attends a school that participates in the U.S. Department  
28 of Agriculture Community Eligibility Provision and the student is identified by:

29 A. Direct certification; or

30 B. Income information provided by the family of the student  
31 to the local school system on an alternative form developed by the Department.

1 18–303.1.

2 (c) The Program shall provide guidance and services to students who qualify for  
3 a Guaranteed Access Grant in accordance with § 18–303(e) of this subtitle **AND STUDENTS**  
4 **WHO QUALIFY TO RECEIVE FREE OR REDUCED–PRICE LUNCH UNDER THE NATIONAL**  
5 **SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM** to assist the students in successfully:

6 (1) Completing a college preparatory curriculum;

7 (2) Graduating from high school;

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

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

11 (d) (1) The Department shall:

12 (i) Publicize the Program through community outreach and  
13 marketing materials;

14 (ii) Award grants to nonprofit organizations to administer the  
15 Program;

16 (iii) Solicit applications from nonprofit organizations to administer  
17 the Program in local school systems; and

18 (iv) Give priority to applications:

19 1. From Maryland–based nonprofit organizations; and

20 2. That include business and institution of higher education  
21 partners.

22 (2) The Program may continue to provide services to students [when]:

23 **(I) WHEN they attend an institution of higher education; OR**

24 **(II) WHO HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE PROGRAM FOR AT LEAST**  
25 **1 FULL YEAR AND RELOCATE TO ANOTHER COUNTY IN THE STATE THAT DOES NOT**  
26 **PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM.**

27 18–303.3.

1 (a) A public institution of higher education in the State, or a private nonprofit  
2 institution of higher education that is eligible for State aid under § 17–103 of this article,  
3 may verify the eligibility of an applicant for, and on verification of the eligibility administer,  
4 a Guaranteed Access Grant in accordance with this section.

5 (b) An institution may verify:

6 (1) The eligibility of an applicant who:

7 (i) Is identified by the Office as potentially eligible for a Guaranteed  
8 Access Grant under § 18–303 of this subtitle; and

9 (ii) Applies for admission to the institution; or

10 (2) The renewal eligibility of a student who:

11 (i) Received a Guaranteed Access Grant under § 18–303 of this  
12 subtitle in the prior award year; and

13 (ii) Is an admitted student at the institution in the current award  
14 year.

15 (c) An institution shall:

16 (1) Verify that an applicant qualifies for a Guaranteed Access Grant under  
17 the requirements of § 18–303 of this subtitle;

18 (2) Evaluate the applicant's income eligibility criteria using federal [V1  
19 standard] **STANDARDS FOR** verification and in accordance with the income eligibility  
20 criteria established by the Office;

21 (3) Maintain records used by the institution to determine the eligibility of  
22 applicants for a period of 5 years after the end date of the award year associated with the  
23 student's last award; and

24 (4) Provide the Commission with an audit, in accordance with rules  
25 adopted by the Commission, to show that awards verified and administered under this  
26 section have been made properly.

27 (d) (1) Subject to paragraph (2) of this subsection, a verification obtained by  
28 an applicant under subsection (b) of this section may be used at any eligible institution  
29 described under § 18–305 of this subtitle.

30 (2) The amount of the Guaranteed Access Grant awarded to an applicant  
31 may be adjusted in accordance with the cost of attendance at the institution at which the  
32 applicant uses the award.



1 18-3601.

2 (a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.

3 (b) “Annual adjusted gross income” means the total of the combined adjusted  
4 gross income of the applicant and the applicant’s parents, or the applicant and the  
5 applicant’s spouse if the applicant is married, as reported on the most recent federal or  
6 State income tax return.

7 (c) **“AWARD” MEANS A SCHOLARSHIP AWARD FROM THE MARYLAND**  
8 **COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROMISE SCHOLARSHIP.**

9 [(c)] (D) “Community college” includes Baltimore City Community College.

10 [(d)] (E) “Local promise scholarship” means a community college scholarship  
11 program in effect on July 1, 2018, that provides a scholarship to any high school senior who  
12 is eligible for enrollment at the community college.

13 [(e)] (F) (1) “Tuition” means the basic instructional charge for courses offered  
14 at a community college.

15 (2) “Tuition” includes any fees for:

16 (i) Registration;

17 (ii) Application;

18 (iii) Administration;

19 (iv) Laboratory work; and

20 (v) Other mandatory fees.

21 (3) “Tuition” does not include:

22 (i) Costs associated with the parts of a registered apprenticeship  
23 that take place at a location that is not a community college; or

24 (ii) Any fees for room and board that are related to an on-campus  
25 residential facility for students.

26 18-3602.

27 (a) There is a program of Maryland Community College Promise Scholarships in  
28 the State that are awarded under this subtitle.

1 (b) The purpose of the program is to provide tuition assistance for students to  
2 attend a community college in the State.

3 (c) The Office **AND EACH COMMUNITY COLLEGE** shall publicize the availability  
4 of Maryland Community College Promise Scholarships.

5 **(D) (1) THE OFFICE SHALL ALLOCATE MARYLAND COMMUNITY**  
6 **COLLEGE PROMISE SCHOLARSHIP FUNDING TO EACH COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN THE**  
7 **STATE BASED ON THE PROPORTION OF ~~FULL-TIME-EQUIVALENT PELL-ELIGIBLE~~**  
8 **STUDENTS AT EACH COMMUNITY COLLEGE, ~~AS DEFINED IN § 16-305(B)(7) OF THIS~~**  
9 **~~ARTICLE,~~ FOR EACH COMMUNITY COLLEGE TO AWARD MARYLAND COMMUNITY**  
10 **COLLEGE PROMISE SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS TO STUDENTS.**

11 **(2) IF A COMMUNITY COLLEGE DOES NOT AWARD ALL FUNDING**  
12 **ALLOCATED TO THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS**  
13 **SUBSECTION, THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE SHALL DISTRIBUTE THE REMAINING**  
14 **FUNDING TO OTHER COMMUNITY COLLEGES TO MAKE MARYLAND COMMUNITY**  
15 **COLLEGE PROMISE SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS TO STUDENTS IN THE AWARD YEAR.**

16 18-3603.

17 (a) (1) (I) [A student must] **SUBJECT TO SUBPARAGRAPH (II) OF THIS**  
18 **PARAGRAPH, A STUDENT MAY** apply annually to [the Commission] **A MARYLAND**  
19 **COMMUNITY COLLEGE LOCATED IN THE COUNTY OR, IN THE CASE OF A REGIONAL**  
20 **COMMUNITY COLLEGE, IN THE REGION WHERE THE APPLICANT LIVES** to receive a  
21 Maryland Community College Promise Scholarship award.

22 **(II) IF THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE LOCATED IN THE COUNTY OR**  
23 **REGION WHERE THE APPLICANT LIVES DOES NOT OFFER THE DEGREE OR**  
24 **CERTIFICATION PROGRAM IN WHICH THE APPLICANT WANTS TO ENROLL, THE**  
25 **STUDENT MAY APPLY TO THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE OUTSIDE THE COUNTY OR, IN**  
26 **THE CASE OF A REGIONAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE, OUTSIDE THE REGION WHERE THE**  
27 **APPLICANT LIVES TO RECEIVE A MARYLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROMISE**  
28 **SCHOLARSHIP AWARD.**

29 (2) [The Office] **A COMMUNITY COLLEGE** annually shall select eligible  
30 applicants and offer a Maryland Community College Promise Scholarship award to each  
31 selected applicant to be used for tuition at [a] **THE** community college [of the applicant's  
32 choice].

33 (b) An applicant is eligible for a Maryland Community College Promise  
34 Scholarship **AWARD** if the applicant:

35 (1) Is eligible for in-State tuition;

1           (2) Enrolls as a candidate for a vocational certificate, a certificate, or an  
2 associate's degree or participates in a registered apprenticeship after graduating from a  
3 high school or successfully completing a GED in the State:

4           (i) Except as provided in [items (ii) and (iii)] **ITEM (II)** of this item,  
5 at the community college located in the county or, in the case of a regional community  
6 college, in the region, where the applicant lives; **OR**

7           (ii) [If the community college located in the county or region where  
8 the applicant lives does not offer the degree or certification program in which the applicant  
9 wants to enroll, then at any community college in the State that offers the program; or

10           (iii)] At a community college in the State that has an on-campus  
11 residential facility for students;

12           (3) Except as provided in subsection (c)(3) of this section, has earned a  
13 cumulative grade point average of:

14           (i) For an initial award, at least 2.3 on a 4.0 scale or its equivalent  
15 at the end of the first semester or the end of the year of the senior year in high school; or

16           (ii) While enrolled at a community college in the State, at least 2.5  
17 on a 4.0 scale or its equivalent;

18           (4) Has an annual adjusted gross income of not more than:

19           (i) \$100,000 if the applicant is single or resides in a single-parent  
20 household; or

21           (ii) \$150,000 if the applicant is married or resides in a two-parent  
22 household;

23           (5) (i) Enrolls in:

24           1. At least [12] **6** credits per semester at the community  
25 college; or

26           2. A sequence of credit or noncredit courses that leads to  
27 licensure or certification; or

28           (ii) Participates in a registered apprenticeship program; and

29           (6) (i) Timely submits a Free Application for Federal Student Aid  
30 (FAFSA) or any other applications for any State or federal student financial aid, other than  
31 a student loan, for which the applicant may qualify; or

1 (ii) Is ineligible to submit a FAFSA, qualifies for in-State tuition  
2 under § 15-106.8 of this article, and timely submits an application for any State student  
3 financial aid, other than a student loan, for which the applicant may qualify.

4 (c) (1) An applicant who receives any other educational grants or scholarships  
5 that cover the applicant's full cost of attendance at the community college is ineligible to  
6 receive an award under this subtitle.

7 (2) An applicant who has earned a bachelor's degree or an associate's  
8 degree is ineligible to receive an award under this subtitle.

9 (3) An applicant who graduated from high school 5 or more years before  
10 the date of application is not subject to the grade point average requirements established  
11 in subsection (b)(3)(i) of this section for an initial award.

12 (d) On request the community college shall assist an applicant to submit a FAFSA  
13 or any other applications for State or federal student financial aid.

14 **18-3603.1.**

15 (A) A COMMUNITY COLLEGE SHALL VERIFY THE ELIGIBILITY OF AN  
16 APPLICANT FOR A MARYLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROMISE SCHOLARSHIP  
17 AWARD IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS SECTION.

18 (B) (1) A COMMUNITY COLLEGE SHALL:

19 (i) VERIFY THAT AN APPLICANT QUALIFIES FOR A MARYLAND  
20 COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROMISE SCHOLARSHIP AWARD UNDER THE  
21 REQUIREMENTS OF § 18-3603 OF THIS SUBTITLE;

22 (ii) EVALUATE THE APPLICANT'S INCOME ELIGIBILITY USING  
23 FEDERAL STANDARDS FOR VERIFICATION AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH INCOME  
24 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA ESTABLISHED BY THE OFFICE;

25 (iii) MAINTAIN RECORDS USED BY THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
26 TO DETERMINE THE ELIGIBILITY OF APPLICANTS FOR NOT LESS THAN A PERIOD OF  
27 5 YEARS AFTER THE END DATE OF THE AWARD YEAR ASSOCIATED WITH THE  
28 STUDENT'S LAST AWARD; AND

29 (iv) PROVIDE THE COMMISSION WITH AN AUDIT, IN  
30 ACCORDANCE WITH RULES ADOPTED BY THE COMMISSION, TO SHOW THAT AWARDS  
31 VERIFIED AND ADMINISTERED UNDER THIS SECTION HAVE BEEN MADE PROPERLY.

1           **(2) A VERIFICATION OBTAINED BY AN APPLICANT UNDER**  
2 **PARAGRAPH (1)(I) OF THIS SUBSECTION MAY BE USED AT ANOTHER COMMUNITY**  
3 **COLLEGE.**

4           **(C) (1) THE OFFICE SHALL REVIEW THE AUDIT PROVIDED TO THE**  
5 **COMMISSION UNDER SUBSECTION (B)(1)(IV) OF THIS SECTION NOT LESS THAN ONCE**  
6 **EVERY 3 YEARS TO VERIFY THAT RECIPIENTS MET THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**  
7 **FOR AN AWARD.**

8           **(2) (I) IF THE OFFICE DETERMINES THAT A COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
9 **MADE AN INCORRECT AWARD TO AN INELIGIBLE STUDENT, THE COMMUNITY**  
10 **COLLEGE SHALL REMIT TO THE COMMISSION THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF THE AWARD**  
11 **MADE IN ERROR.**

12                     **(II) THE COMMISSION SHALL PAY ALL AMOUNTS RECEIVED**  
13 **UNDER SUBPARAGRAPH (I) OF THIS PARAGRAPH TO THE NEED-BASED STUDENT**  
14 **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FUND UNDER § 18-107 OF THIS TITLE.**

15                     **(III) THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE MAY NOT REQUIRE A STUDENT**  
16 **TO REPAY THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOR AN INCORRECT AWARD MADE FROM THE**  
17 **MARYLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROMISE SCHOLARSHIP.**

18 18-3604.

19           (a) Beginning in the 2019–2020 academic year, the annual scholarship award  
20 shall be not more than \$5,000 per recipient, or actual tuition, whichever is less.

21           (b) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (3) of this subsection, any State or  
22 federal student financial aid, other than a student loan, received by the recipient shall be  
23 credited to the recipient’s tuition before the calculation of any award amount provided  
24 under this subtitle.

25                     (2) (i) 1. Initial **SCHOLARSHIP** awards shall be provided to  
26 recipients based on greatest demonstrated financial need.

27                                     2. Priority for **SCHOLARSHIP** awards in subsequent years  
28 shall be given to [prior]:

29                                     **A. PRIOR** year recipients who remain eligible for the  
30 program;

31                                     **B. ALL ELIGIBLE STUDENTS WHO ARE ENROLLED IN AT**  
32 **LEAST 12 CREDITS PER SEMESTER, OR ENROLLED IN A SEQUENCE OF CREDIT OR**  
33 **NONCREDIT COURSES THAT LEAD TO LICENSURE OR CERTIFICATION; AND**

1                                   **C.     IF ANY FUNDS REMAIN TO BE ALLOCATED, STUDENTS**  
2 **ENROLLED IN AT LEAST 6 CREDITS PER SEMESTER.**

3                                   3.     Notwithstanding § 18–3603(b) of this subtitle, an eligible  
4 recipient who does not receive an award under this subparagraph due to insufficient  
5 funding of the program remains eligible for the program the following academic year.

6                                   (ii)   Eligible applicants who do not receive an award under this  
7 subtitle shall be notified and placed on a waiting list.

8                                   (3)   If a recipient is eligible for a local promise scholarship, an award  
9 provided under this subtitle shall be credited to the recipient’s tuition before the award of  
10 the local promise scholarship.

11                                  (c)   (1)   Subject to paragraphs (2) and (3) of this subsection, each recipient may  
12 hold the award until the earlier of:

13                                   (i)   3 years after first enrolling as a candidate for a vocational  
14 certificate, a certificate, or an associate’s degree at a community college in the State; or

15                                   (ii)   The date that the individual is awarded an associate’s degree.

16                                  (2)   [The Office] **A COMMUNITY COLLEGE** may extend the duration of an  
17 award for an allowable interruption of study if the recipient provides to the [Office]  
18 **COMMUNITY COLLEGE** satisfactory evidence of extenuating circumstances that prevent  
19 the recipient from continuous enrollment.

20                                  (3)   Each recipient may hold the award in accordance with paragraph (1) of  
21 this subsection only if the recipient:

22                                   (i)   Continues to be eligible for in–State tuition;

23                                   (ii)   1.   Continues to enroll in and complete at least [12] **6** credits  
24 per semester, or a sequence of credit or noncredit courses that leads to licensure or  
25 certification, or their equivalent, as determined by the [Office] **COMMUNITY COLLEGE**; or

26                                   2.   Continues to participate in a registered apprenticeship  
27 program.

28                                   (iii)  Maintains a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.5 on a  
29 4.0 scale or its equivalent for the requisite credit–bearing coursework for the remainder of  
30 the award or, failing to do so, provides to the [Office] **COMMUNITY COLLEGE** satisfactory  
31 evidence of extenuating circumstances;

32                                   (iv)  Makes satisfactory progress toward a vocational certificate, a  
33 certificate, or an associate’s degree;

1 (v) Continues to meet the income limitations under § 18–3603(b)(4)  
2 of this subtitle; and

3 (vi) Continues to timely submit an application under § 18–3603(b)(6)  
4 of this subtitle.

### 5 Chapter 639 of the Acts of 2022

6 [SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That it is the intent of the General  
7 Assembly that the Maryland Higher Education Commission be reorganized to establish the  
8 Office of Student Financial Assistance as a separate independent agency in fiscal year  
9 2024.]

### 10 Chapter 640 of the Acts of 2022

11 [SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That it is the intent of the General  
12 Assembly that the Maryland Higher Education Commission be reorganized to establish the  
13 Office of Student Financial Assistance as a separate independent agency in fiscal year  
14 2024.]

15 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Laws of Maryland read  
16 as follows:

### 17 Article – Education

18 ~~18–303.~~

19 ~~(a) Subject to subsection (c) of this section, each recipient of a Delegate Howard~~  
20 ~~P. Rawlings Educational Excellence Award shall:~~

21 ~~(1) Be accepted for admission in the regular undergraduate program at an~~  
22 ~~eligible institution or be enrolled in a 2-year associate degree program in which the course~~  
23 ~~work is acceptable for transfer credit for an accredited baccalaureate program in an eligible~~  
24 ~~institution;~~

25 ~~(2) Except as provided in § 18–303.2 of this subtitle, be a resident of this~~  
26 ~~State;~~

27 ~~(3) Demonstrate a definite financial need to:~~

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

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

1           ~~(4) Accept any other conditions attached to the award.~~

2           ~~(b) Except as provided in subsection (e) of this section, each recipient of a~~  
3 ~~Guaranteed Access Grant shall:~~

4           ~~(1) Have completed high school or, failing to do so, on the recommendation~~  
5 ~~of the recipient's high school principal, provide evidence satisfactory to the Office of~~  
6 ~~extenuating circumstances;~~

7           ~~(2) Enroll in college as a full-time student;~~

8           ~~(3) Subject to subsection (d) of this section, have an annual family income~~  
9 ~~below a poverty index determined by the Commission; and~~

10          ~~(4) Satisfy any additional criteria the Commission may establish.~~

11          ~~(e) (1) Subject to paragraph (2) of this subsection, an individual who has~~  
12 ~~successfully obtained a high school diploma by examination under § 11-808 of the Labor~~  
13 ~~and Employment Article is exempt from the requirements of subsection (b) of this section.~~

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

16           ~~(i) Has scored a passing score of at least 165 per module on the~~  
17 ~~diploma by examination;~~

18           ~~(ii) Enrolls in college as a full-time student; and~~

19           ~~(iii) Subject to subsection (d) of this section, has an annual family~~  
20 ~~income below a poverty index determined by the Commission.~~

21          ~~(d) (1) ON OR BEFORE AUGUST 1 EACH YEAR, THE COMMISSION SHALL~~  
22 ~~ESTABLISH THE ANNUAL FAMILY INCOME USED TO DETERMINE A STUDENT'S~~  
23 ~~ELIGIBILITY FOR A GUARANTEED ACCESS GRANT AND AN EDUCATIONAL~~  
24 ~~ASSISTANCE GRANT.~~

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

29          ~~[(2)](3) (1) When awarding a Guaranteed Access Grant to a student~~  
30 ~~who prequalified for the award under subsection (c)(1) or (2) of this section, the~~  
31 ~~[Commission] INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION shall use the annual family income~~  
32 ~~determination used when the student prequalified.~~





~~B. Income information provided by the family of the student to the local school system on an alternative form developed by the Department.~~

~~18-303.3.~~

~~(a) A public institution of higher education in the State, or a private nonprofit institution of higher education that is eligible for State aid under § 17-103 of this article, [may] SHALL verify the eligibility of [an] EACH applicant FOR THE GUARANTEED ACCESS GRANT PROGRAM and on verification of the eligibility administer, a Guaranteed Access Grant in accordance with this section.~~

~~[(b) An institution may verify:~~

~~(1) The eligibility of an applicant who:~~

~~(i) Is identified by the Office as potentially eligible for a Guaranteed Access Grant under § 18-303 of this subtitle; and~~

~~(ii) Applies for admission to the institution; or~~

~~(2) The renewal eligibility of a student who:~~

~~(i) Received a Guaranteed Access Grant under § 18-303 of this subtitle in the prior award year; and~~

~~(ii) Is an admitted student at the institution in the current award year.]~~

~~[(c) (B) An institution shall:~~

~~(1) Verify [that an] WHETHER EACH applicant qualifies for a Guaranteed Access Grant under ALL OF the requirements of § 18-303 of this subtitle;~~

~~[(2) Evaluate the applicant's income eligibility criteria using federal standards for verification and in accordance with the income eligibility criteria established by the Office;]~~

~~(2) CALCULATE AND OFFER THE GUARANTEED ACCESS GRANT AWARD TO THE APPLICANT UPON THE APPLICANT'S AWARD LETTER FOR ADMISSION;~~

~~(3) SUBMIT TO THE OFFICE ON OR BEFORE JUNE 1 EACH YEAR FOR THE UPCOMING SCHOOL YEAR, INFORMATION ON THE STUDENTS TO WHOM THE INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION OFFERED A GUARANTEED ACCESS GRANT AWARD;~~

1 ~~[(3)] (4) Maintain records used by the institution to determine the~~  
2 ~~eligibility of applicants for a period of 5 years after the end date of the award year associated~~  
3 ~~with the student's last award; [and]~~

4 ~~[(4)] (5) Provide the Commission with an audit, in accordance with rules~~  
5 ~~adopted by the Commission, to show that awards verified and administered under this~~  
6 ~~section have been made properly; AND~~

7 ~~(6) EVALUATE THE APPLICANT'S INCOME ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA~~  
8 ~~USING FEDERAL STANDARDS FOR VERIFICATION AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE~~  
9 ~~INCOME ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA ESTABLISHED BY THE OFFICE.~~

10 ~~(c) (1) THE OFFICE SHALL REVIEW THE AUDIT PROVIDED TO THE~~  
11 ~~COMMISSION UNDER SUBSECTION (B)(5) OF THIS SECTION NOT LESS THAN ONCE~~  
12 ~~EVERY 4 YEARS TO VERIFY THAT RECIPIENTS MEET THE ELIGIBILITY~~  
13 ~~REQUIREMENTS FOR AN AWARD.~~

14 ~~(2) (i) IF THE OFFICE DETERMINES THAT AN INSTITUTION OF~~  
15 ~~HIGHER EDUCATION MADE AN INCORRECT AWARD TO AN INELIGIBLE STUDENT, THE~~  
16 ~~INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION SHALL REMIT TO THE COMMISSION THE~~  
17 ~~TOTAL AMOUNT OF THE AWARD MADE IN ERROR.~~

18 ~~(ii) THE COMMISSION SHALL PAY ALL AMOUNTS RECEIVED~~  
19 ~~UNDER SUBPARAGRAPH (I) OF THIS PARAGRAPH TO THE NEED-BASED STUDENT~~  
20 ~~FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FUND UNDER § 18-107 OF THIS TITLE.~~

21 ~~(iii) THE INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION MAY NOT~~  
22 ~~REQUIRE A STUDENT TO REPAY THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOR AN INCORRECT~~  
23 ~~AWARD MADE FROM THE GUARANTEED ACCESS GRANT.~~

24 ~~(d) (1) Subject to paragraph (2) of this subsection, a verification obtained by~~  
25 ~~an applicant under subsection (b) of this section may be used at any eligible institution~~  
26 ~~described under § 18-305 of this subtitle.~~

27 ~~(2) The amount of the Guaranteed Access Grant awarded to an applicant~~  
28 ~~may be adjusted in accordance with the cost of attendance at the institution at which the~~  
29 ~~applicant uses the award.~~

30 18-303.4.

31 (A) (1) BEGINNING WHEN FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE  
32 EACH YEAR, BUT NOT LATER THAN OCTOBER 1 EACH YEAR, THE OFFICE SHALL  
33 COMPILE AND CERTIFY LISTS FOR THE ENTIRE STATE THAT RANK APPLICANTS FOR  
34 THE GUARANTEED ACCESS GRANT AWARD BY FINANCIAL NEED.

1           **(2) REGULARLY, THE OFFICE SHALL PROVIDE TO EACH INSTITUTION**  
2 **OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE STATE THE LISTS COMPILED AND CERTIFIED IN**  
3 **ACCORDANCE WITH PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION.**

4           **(B) (1) EACH INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION SHALL USE THE LISTS**  
5 **PROVIDED BY THE OFFICE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBSECTION (A) OF THIS SECTION,**  
6 **AND THE REQUIREMENTS UNDER §§ 18-303 AND 18-304 OF THIS SUBTITLE, TO**  
7 **DETERMINE THE APPLICANTS WHO SHALL BE OFFERED A GUARANTEED ACCESS**  
8 **GRANT AWARD BY THE INSTITUTION AND THE AMOUNT OF THE AWARD.**

9           **(2) THE INSTITUTION SHALL SEND THE FINANCIAL AID AWARD**  
10 **NOTIFICATION TO AN APPLICANT TO OFFER THE APPLICANT A GUARANTEED**  
11 **ACCESS GRANT AWARD.**

12           **(C) AN APPLICANT MAY ACCEPT THE OFFER OF A GUARANTEED ACCESS**  
13 **GRANT AWARD FROM AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.**

14           **(D) (1) EACH SEMESTER, EACH INSTITUTION SHALL SUBMIT TO THE**  
15 **OFFICE A LIST OF THE STUDENTS WHO WERE AWARDED A GUARANTEED ACCESS**  
16 **GRANT FOR THE SEMESTER AND THE AMOUNTS AWARDED.**

17           **(2) THE OFFICE SHALL REIMBURSE EACH INSTITUTION FOR THE**  
18 **GUARANTEED ACCESS GRANT AWARDS ON THE LIST SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE**  
19 **WITH PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION.**

20           **(E) (1) (I) THE OFFICE SHALL COMPILE AND CERTIFY LISTS OF**  
21 **STUDENTS WHO PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED A GUARANTEED ACCESS GRANT AWARD**  
22 **AND ARE ELIGIBLE FOR A RENEWAL AWARD.**

23                           **(II) THE OFFICE SHALL PROVIDE TO EACH INSTITUTION OF**  
24 **HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE STATE THE LISTS COMPILED AND CERTIFIED IN**  
25 **ACCORDANCE WITH SUBPARAGRAPH (I) OF THIS PARAGRAPH.**

26           **(2) (I) EACH INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION SHALL USE THE**  
27 **LISTS PROVIDED BY THE OFFICE IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS**  
28 **SUBSECTION, AND THE REQUIREMENTS UNDER §§ 18-303 AND 18-304 OF THIS**  
29 **SUBTITLE, TO DETERMINE THE STUDENTS WHO SHALL BE OFFERED A GUARANTEED**  
30 **ACCESS GRANT RENEWAL AWARD BY THE INSTITUTION.**

31                           **(II) THE INSTITUTION SHALL SEND THE FINANCIAL AID AWARD**  
32 **NOTIFICATION TO A STUDENT TO OFFER THE STUDENT A GUARANTEED ACCESS**  
33 **GRANT RENEWAL AWARD.**

1           **(3) THE OFFICE SHALL REIMBURSE EACH INSTITUTION FOR THE**  
2 **GUARANTEED ACCESS GRANT RENEWAL AWARDS MADE IN ACCORDANCE WITH**  
3 **PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION.**

4           **(F) THE OFFICE SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS TO IMPLEMENT THIS**  
5 **SECTION.**

6 18–304.

7           (a) In this section, “academic year” means:

8                   (1) The fall, spring, and summer semesters; and

9                   (2) Any semester shorter in length than the term of a regular semester.

10           (b) (1) [Except as provided in § 18–307 of this subtitle, the Office] **AN**  
11 **INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION** ~~THAT COMPLIES WITH § 18–303.3 OF THIS~~  
12 ~~SUBTITLE~~ shall determine the amount of each [Delegate Howard P. Rawlings Educational  
13 Excellence] **GUARANTEED ACCESS** Award based on the financial need of the applicant.

14                   (2) In determining the amount of financial need, the [Office] **INSTITUTION**  
15 **OF HIGHER EDUCATION** shall consider regional cost–of–living differences.

16                   (3) In determining the percent of financial need used to calculate an award  
17 for a community college student receiving a [Delegate Howard P. Rawlings Educational  
18 Excellence] **GUARANTEED ACCESS** Award, the [Commission] **INSTITUTION OF HIGHER**  
19 **EDUCATION** shall use [the following percentages:

20                           (i) For fiscal year 2007, not less than 55%; and

21                           (ii) For fiscal year 2008 and each fiscal year thereafter,] not less than  
22 60%.

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

26                   (2) (i) The amount of an Educational Assistance Grant made to a  
27 student in the student’s first 2 academic years of enrollment may not be less than \$400 or  
28 more than \$3,000.

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

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

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

8                   (3)   (i)    All applicants who fulfill the requirements established in §  
9 18–303(a) and (b) of this subtitle shall receive a Guaranteed Access Grant.

10                   (ii)   Except as provided in subparagraph (iv) of this paragraph, the  
11 amount of a Guaranteed Access Grant made to a student in the student's first 2 academic  
12 years of enrollment shall be equal to 100 percent of the student's financial need as  
13 determined by the [Office] **INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION**, not to exceed the  
14 equivalent annual expenses of a full-time resident undergraduate at the 4-year public  
15 institution of higher education within the University System of Maryland, other than the  
16 University of Maryland Global Campus and University of Maryland, Baltimore Campus,  
17 with the highest annual expenses for a full-time resident undergraduate.

18                   (iii)   Except as provided in subparagraph (iv) of this paragraph,  
19 beginning in the third academic year of enrollment and for each academic year thereafter:

20                   1.     If the student successfully completed at least 30 credits in  
21 the prior academic year, the award amount shall be equal to 100 percent of the student's  
22 financial need as determined by the [Office] **INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION**, not  
23 to exceed the equivalent annual expenses of a full-time resident undergraduate at the  
24 4-year public institution of higher education within the University System of Maryland,  
25 other than the University of Maryland Global Campus and University of Maryland,  
26 Baltimore Campus, with the highest annual expenses for a full-time resident  
27 undergraduate; or

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

31                   (iv)   If a recipient of a Guaranteed Access Grant becomes ineligible  
32 because of a change in family income, the recipient shall remain eligible for the full award  
33 for the full award term applicable to the recipient under this subtitle if the recipient  
34 remains eligible to receive a federal Pell Grant.

35                   **(D) EACH INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION SHALL INCLUDE IN AN**  
36 **~~AWARD LETTER~~ THE FINANCIAL AID AWARD NOTIFICATION TO A STUDENT THE**  
37 **AVAILABILITY OF THE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE AWARD ADMINISTERED BY THE**  
38 **OFFICE, INCLUDING:**

1           **(1) A DESCRIPTION OF THE OFFICE AND THE EDUCATIONAL**  
 2 **ASSISTANCE AWARD;**

3           **(2) INFORMATION ON EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE AWARD**  
 4 **TIMELINES; AND**

5           **(3) A POINT OF CONTACT AT THE OFFICE FOR STUDENTS.**

6           **[(d)] (E)** Beginning in fiscal year 2024 and each fiscal year thereafter, the  
 7 Governor shall include in the annual budget bill an appropriation of at least \$112,000,000  
 8 for Delegate Howard P. Rawlings Educational Excellence Awards made under this subtitle.  
 9 18–307.

10           (a) **(1)** Except as provided in subsection ~~(d)~~ **(C)** of this section, the Office shall  
 11 compile and certify lists for the entire State that rank applicants by financial need **FOR**  
 12 **THE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE AWARD.**

13           **(2) ~~AFTER AWARDS FROM INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION~~**  
 14 **~~HAVE BEEN MADE AND ACCEPTED FOR THE GUARANTEED ACCESS GRANT, THE THE~~**  
 15 **OFFICE SHALL AWARD ELIGIBLE STUDENTS THE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE**  
 16 **AWARD BASED ON FINANCIAL NEED FROM ANY REMAINING FUNDING FOR THE**  
 17 **DELEGATE HOWARD P. RAWLINGS EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS.**

18           (b) All funds for annual initial grants **FOR THE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE**  
 19 **AWARD** shall be awarded from the statewide list on the basis of greatest financial need.

20           (c) **[(1)]** On or before April 15 each year, the Office shall send a notification to  
 21 each individual who applied for a Delegate Howard P. Rawlings Educational Excellence  
 22 Award indicating:

23                   (i) Whether or not the student is a recipient of an award; and

24                   (ii) If applicable, the amount awarded to the student.

25           **(2)** On or before May 1 of each year, the Office shall send each Senator and  
 26 each Delegate a list of individuals in each legislative district to whom Delegate Howard P.  
 27 Rawlings Educational Excellence Awards are awarded.

28           **(d)] (1) (i)** If State funds are available for this purpose, institutions of  
 29 higher education in the State may provide Delegate Howard P. Rawlings Educational  
 30 Excellence Awards to students who otherwise meet the requirements for receiving a  
 31 Delegate Howard P. Rawlings Educational Excellence Award but who apply after the  
 32 March 1 deadline or have other extenuating circumstances.

1 (ii) Each year the Commission shall transfer at least \$2 million of  
2 the funds available under § 18–107(b) of this title for the purposes of this subsection.

3 (2) The Commission shall:

4 (i) Establish guidelines for the awarding of Delegate Howard P.  
5 Rawlings Educational Excellence Awards by the institutions of higher education to the  
6 students;

7 (ii) Adopt regulations necessary for the implementation of this  
8 subsection.

9 (3) (i) The Commission shall allocate available funds to institutions of  
10 higher education based on the proportion of State residents enrolled at each institution who  
11 receive federal Pell Grants.

12 (ii) An institution of higher education that receives funds under this  
13 paragraph shall provide the Commission with an annual audit describing the disposition  
14 of the funds.

15 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That it is the intent of the General  
16 Assembly that:

17 (1) beginning in fiscal year 2026, the Governor shall include funding for  
18 financial aid offices at public institutions of higher education to implement Section 2 of this  
19 Act; and

20 (2) the Maryland Higher Education Commission shall work with the  
21 Segmental Advisory Council and the Financial Assistance Advisory Council to establish  
22 regulations to implement Section 2 of this Act, including award deadlines and procedures  
23 for renewal awards.

24 SECTION 4. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That Section 2 of this Act shall take  
25 effect July 1, 2025.

26 SECTION 5. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, except as provided in Section  
27 4 of this Act, this Act shall take effect July 1, 2023.