

## Chapter 197

**(House Bill 624)**

AN ACT concerning

**Next Generation Scholars of Maryland Program – Program Administrator –  
Alterations**

FOR the purpose of altering the administrator of the Next Generation Scholars of Maryland Program to be the Maryland Higher Education Commission rather than the State Department of Education; requiring the Department to assist the Commission with certain Program duties; and generally relating to the Next Generation Scholars of Maryland Program.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
Article – Education  
Section 18–303.1  
Annotated Code of Maryland  
(2022 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

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

**Article – Education**

18–303.1.

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

(2) “Fund” means the Next Generation Scholars of Maryland Program Fund.

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

(b) The [Department] **COMMISSION**, in collaboration with the [Commission] **DEPARTMENT**, county boards of education, county superintendents, and institutions of higher education, shall administer the Next Generation Scholars of Maryland Program.

(c) The Program shall provide guidance and services to students who qualify for a Guaranteed Access Grant in accordance with § 18–303(e) of this subtitle and students who qualify to receive free or reduced-price lunch under the National School Lunch Program to assist the students in successfully:

(1) Completing a college preparatory curriculum;

(2) Graduating from high school;

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

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

(d) (1) The [Department] COMMISSION shall:

(i) ~~Publicize~~ **IN COLLABORATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT, PUBLICIZE** the Program through community outreach and marketing materials, **INCLUDING POSTING LISTS OF THE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS SELECTED TO PROVIDE SERVICES AND THE LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS AND CITIES IN WHICH THE PROGRAM IS LOCATED;**

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

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

(iv) Give priority to applications:

1. From Maryland–based nonprofit organizations; and

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

**(2) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ASSIST THE COMMISSION WITH THE REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS AND THE SELECTION OF NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS TO ADMINISTER THE PROGRAM IN LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS.**

~~(2)~~ **(3)** The Program may continue to provide services to students:

(i) When they attend an institution of higher education; or

(ii) Who have participated in the Program for at least 1 full year and relocate to another county in the State that does not participate in the Program.

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

(1) A high school graduation plan;

(2) Summer work or internship opportunities;

(3) Financial aid literacy assistance, **INCLUDING INFORMING STUDENTS OF AVAILABLE SOURCES OF FINANCIAL AID AND HOW TO LEVERAGE FEDERAL, STATE, AND INSTITUTIONAL AID AT SPECIFIED INSTITUTIONS TO MAKE HIGHER EDUCATION AFFORDABLE**;

- (4) Career interest assessments;
- (5) Mentorship and one-on-one counseling;
- (6) Visits to college campuses and workplaces;

(7) An intensive summer bridge or matriculation assistance program for students entering an institution of higher education directly from high school; and

(8) A plan to matriculate and graduate from an institution of higher education.

(f) A nonprofit organization that receives a grant to provide the guidance and services required under subsection (e) of this section may utilize:

(1) Postsecondary students receiving work-study assistance at Maryland institutions of higher education; and

(2) Secondary students in 11th and 12th grades who are successfully completing high school graduation requirements.

(g) (1) For fiscal year 2023 and each fiscal year thereafter, the Governor shall include in the annual budget bill an appropriation of \$5,000,000 to the Program.

(2) The [Department] COMMISSION shall distribute grants to nonprofit organizations that:

(i) Are selected in accordance with subsection (d) of this section; and

(ii) Will administer the Program in local school systems in which at least 50% of the students as a percentage of full-time equivalent students as defined in § 5-201 of this article are eligible to receive a free lunch under the National School Lunch Program in the 2015-2016 school year, **AS IDENTIFIED BY THE DEPARTMENT**.

(h) (1) There is a Next Generation Scholars of Maryland Program Fund.

(2) The purpose of the Fund is to provide funds for the administration of the Program.

(3) The [Department] COMMISSION shall administer the Fund.

(4) The Fund is a special, nonlapsing fund that is not subject to § 7–302 of the State Finance and Procurement Article.

(5) The State Treasurer shall hold the Fund separately, and the Comptroller shall account for the Fund.

(6) The Fund consists of:

(i) Money appropriated in the State budget for the Program;

(ii) Interest earnings of the Fund; and

(iii) Any other money from any other source accepted for the benefit of the Fund.

(7) The Fund may be used only for administering the Program.

(8) (i) The State Treasurer shall invest the money of the Fund in the same manner as other State money may be invested.

(ii) Any interest earnings of the Fund shall be credited to the Fund.

(9) Expenditures from the Fund may be made only in accordance with the State budget.

(i) The [Department] **COMMISSION** may adopt regulations necessary to implement this section.

(j) On or before December 1, 2020, and each December 1 thereafter, the Commission and the Department shall report to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly, on the implementation of the Program, including:

(1) The number of students from each local school system who were prequalified for the Guaranteed Access Grant during each year of the Program;

(2) The race, disability status, and English language learner status of each participating student who prequalified for the Guaranteed Access Grant each year of the Program;

(3) The progress of each participating student through the Program, including high school graduation, institution of higher education matriculation and retention rates, and, if applicable, institution of higher education graduation rates;

(4) The potential for allocating additional funds for longitudinal data collection of the number of students matriculating to institutions of higher education each year, the number of students receiving retention services each year, and postsecondary outcomes for those two categories of students;

(5) The amount and quality of services provided by nonprofit organizations to participating students, including the use of college work–study students and high school students as mentors and counselors;

(6) The nonprofit organizations that received grants under the Program, including any other entities that provided services such as institutions of higher education, the business community, and local schools or local school systems;

(7) The amount of financial aid, in addition to the Guaranteed Access Grant, that participating students received each year that the students were enrolled in an institution of higher education; and

(8) Findings and recommendations on the success of the Program and whether funding for the Program should be continued or expanded.

~~SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall be construed to apply only prospectively and may not be applied or interpreted to have any effect on or application to the program administrator of the Next Generation Scholars of Maryland Program for the fiscal year 2025 grant cycle.~~

~~SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2024, and shall be applicable beginning in fiscal year 2026.~~

**Approved by the Governor, April 25, 2024.**