
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 890 Session of
2011

INTRODUCED BY PAYTON, B. BOYLE, K. BOYLE AND BRADFORD,
MARCH 2, 2011

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, MARCH 2, 2011

AN ACT

1 Establishing a Statewide academic scholarship program to be
2 known as the Reliable Educational Assistance for College
3 Hopefuls Scholarship for Community College; and providing for
4 the powers and duties of the Pennsylvania Higher Education
5 Assistance Agency.

6 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
7 hereby enacts as follows:

8 Section 1. Short title.

9 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Reliable
10 Educational Assistance for College Hopefuls Scholarship for
11 Community College Act.

12 Section 2. Purpose.

13 The purpose of this act is to reward educational excellence
14 and provide an incentive to Pennsylvania students to pursue
15 higher education at a community college within this
16 Commonwealth.

17 Section 3. Definitions.

18 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
19 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the

1 context clearly indicates otherwise:

2 "Agency." The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance
3 Agency.

4 "Community college." A public college or technical institute
5 established under Article XIX-A of the act of March 10, 1949
6 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949.

7 "Fund." The REACH Scholarship Fund for Community College
8 established in section 6.

9 "Grade point average." The numbered grade average calculated
10 using a 4.0 scale.

11 "REACH Scholarship for Community College." The Reliable
12 Educational Assistance for College Hopefuls Scholarship for
13 Community College established under section 4.

14 "Student." A school-age resident of this Commonwealth who
15 attends or is about to attend a community college located in
16 this Commonwealth.

17 Section 4. REACH Scholarship for Community College.

18 (a) Establishment.--The REACH Scholarship for Community
19 College is established within the agency.

20 (b) Issuance of scholarships.--

21 (1) The agency shall provide scholarships, which may be
22 referred to as REACH Scholarships for Community College, to
23 all students who meet the requirements of subsection (d) or
24 (f). The scholarships may be issued to a student only upon
25 confirmation from the community college to which the student
26 has enrolled full time.

27 (2) The scholarships shall be available for two years or
28 upon completion of an associate degree or certificate
29 program, whichever occurs earlier.

30 (3) The scholarships shall only be used for tuition and

1 mandatory fees.

2 (4) The scholarships shall be awarded solely on the
3 basis of merit and without regard to need.

4 (5) The scholarships shall only be awarded to students
5 who are high school seniors during or after the school year
6 in which this section takes effect.

7 (c) Calculation of award.--Each eligible student who will
8 attend or attends a community college within this Commonwealth
9 shall receive a full-tuition scholarship.

10 (d) Eligibility.--To receive a scholarship under this
11 section, a student must meet all of the following requirements:

12 (1) Pennsylvania residency for at least three years
13 prior to application for the REACH Scholarship for Community
14 College.

15 (2) Pennsylvania residency during the term of the
16 scholarship.

17 (3) Cumulative high school grade point average of 3.0 or
18 higher for the sophomore, junior and senior years of high
19 school. If the student does not graduate from high school or
20 completes a home study program meeting the requirements of
21 section 1327.1 of the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14),
22 known as the Public School Code of 1949, the agency shall
23 determine the eligibility of the student.

24 (4) Graduation in the top ten percentile of the
25 graduating class. If the student does not graduate from high
26 school or completes a home study program meeting the
27 requirements of section 1327.1 of the act of March 10, 1949
28 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, the
29 agency shall determine the eligibility of the student.

30 (5) Cumulative high school attendance of at least 90%

1 for the sophomore, junior and senior years of high school
2 unless the agency determines there are extenuating
3 circumstances, including, but not limited to, approved
4 medical or personal leave of absence. If the student does not
5 graduate from high school but completes a home study program
6 meeting the requirements of section 1327.1 of the Public
7 School Code of 1949, the agency shall determine the
8 eligibility of the student.

9 (6) Satisfactory disciplinary record or conduct record
10 for the sophomore, junior and senior years of high school. If
11 the student does not meet this requirement but meets or
12 exceeds all other requirements under this subsection, the
13 agency shall determine eligibility of the student.

14 (7) Satisfactory academic progress toward completion of
15 a course of study at a community college as provided under
16 subsection (f).

17 (8) Entrance into a written agreement with the agency to
18 maintain Pennsylvania residency for two years after
19 completion of an associate degree or certificate program. The
20 student shall reimburse the Commonwealth all amounts received
21 under this act and interest thereon, at a rate equal to the
22 average Stafford loan through the term of the scholarship, if
23 the student fails to comply with the terms of the written
24 agreement.

25 (9) Apply for the Free Application for Federal Student
26 Aid each year during the term of the scholarship.

27 (10) Complete at least 100 hours of community service
28 each academic year of high school. The community service must
29 be documented by a supervisor and approved by the agency.

30 (e) Contents of application.--The application of a student

1 who seeks a scholarship as prescribed by the agency must
2 include:

3 (1) All information and documentation required by the
4 agency.

5 (2) If the student is under 18 years of age, the
6 signature of a parent or guardian.

7 (3) A verified statement of grade point average,
8 attendance and disciplinary record or conduct record from the
9 appropriate educational institution.

10 (f) Maintenance of scholarship.--

11 (1) Except as provided under paragraph (2), a student
12 must maintain a grade point average of 3.0 or higher during
13 each semester at a community college through the term of the
14 scholarship, unless the agency determines that there are
15 extenuating circumstances, including, but not limited to,
16 approved medical or personal leave of absence.

17 (2) In the event that a student receives a grade point
18 average below 3.0 during the first or second semester of the
19 freshmen or first year at a community college, the agency
20 shall place the student on scholarship probation.

21 (3) A student must complete 40 hours of community
22 service during each 12-month period during the term of the
23 scholarship, which community service must be verified by the
24 agency.

25 (g) Scholarship termination and transfer.--

26 (1) If a student who has received a scholarship
27 terminates enrollment in the educational institution to which
28 the student has enrolled full time during the academic year,
29 the educational institution shall notify the agency in
30 writing and shall return all unused portions of the

1 scholarship.

2 (2) Returned amounts shall be deposited in the REACH
3 Scholarship Fund for Community College.

4 (3) A student may transfer a scholarship from one
5 community college to another.

6 (h) Limitation.--A scholarship shall be paid only from the
7 REACH Scholarship Fund for Community College.

8 Section 5. Administration.

9 (a) Verification.--The agency shall monitor and verify a
10 student's compliance with all the requirements under this act.

11 (b) Enforcement.--The agency shall enforce repayment of all
12 scholarships for a student who does not comply with the
13 provisions of this act, to include use of all lawful collection
14 procedures and the use of private collection agencies.

15 (c) Exclusion from taxation.--No scholarship received by a
16 student shall not be considered taxable income for purposes of
17 Article III of the act of March 4, 1971 (P.L.6, No.2), known as
18 the Tax Reform Code of 1971.

19 (d) Financial assistance.--No scholarship received by a
20 student shall be considered financial assistance or
21 appropriations to the approved education institution.

22 (e) Regulations.--The agency shall adopt regulations and
23 procedures necessary to carry out the purposes of this act.

24 Section 6. REACH Scholarship Fund for Community College.

25 (a) Establishment.--The REACH Scholarship Fund for Community
26 College is established as a separate fund in the State Treasury.

27 (b) Administration.--The fund shall be administered by the
28 agency.

29 (c) Use of fund.--The purpose of the fund shall be to
30 provide full tuition scholarships or equivalent scholarships to

1 students who have been determined eligible in accordance with
2 this act.

3 (d) Funding source.--

4 (1) Donations and contributions from all public and
5 private sources, including the Federal Government, and any
6 appropriations or transfers authorized by the General
7 Assembly may be deposited in the fund.

8 (2) All interest earned by the fund and all refunds and
9 repayments shall be credited to the fund.

10 (e) Limit on scholarships.--The agency shall not award more
11 than \$25,000,000 in scholarships under this act.

12 Section 7. Report to General Assembly.

13 On or before April 1 following the effective date of this
14 section, and in each succeeding year in which REACH Scholarships
15 for Community College are awarded, the agency shall provide a
16 report to the General Assembly regarding the implementation and
17 administration of this act.

18 Section 8. Effective date.

19 This act shall take effect July 1, 2011, or immediately,
20 whichever is later.