

2024 -- H 7905 SUBSTITUTE A

LC005066/SUB A/3

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2024

A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN,
YOUTH AND FAMILIES' HIGHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY INCENTIVE GRANT

Introduced By: Representatives Casimiro, Noret, Caldwell, Boylan, McGaw, Kazarian,
Diaz, Tanzi, and Cruz

Date Introduced: March 04, 2024

Referred To: House Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 42-72.8-2 of the General Laws in Chapter 42-72.8 entitled
2 "Department of Children, Youth and Families' Higher Education Opportunity Incentive Grant" is
3 hereby amended to read as follows:

4 **42-72.8-2. Administration of program.**

5 (a) ~~Each year the~~ The department annually shall notify, identify and ~~recommend from~~
6 ~~among outreach to those~~ youth in its legal custody, ~~or who were in the Department's legal custody~~
7 ~~on their eighteenth (18th) birthday, those students who may be eligible to apply for a~~ beginning at
8 age fourteen (14) and until the youth exits care, who may satisfy the eligibility requirements
9 prescribed in § 42-72.8-2.1 for the Higher Education Opportunity Incentive Grant. ~~The department~~
10 ~~of elementary and secondary education shall afford all appropriate assistance to the department in~~
11 ~~the identification of youth who may be eligible for such grants.~~ Each ~~selected~~ qualified applicant
12 will receive ~~grants~~ a grant, to the extent of available funding, to supplement federal, state, private
13 and institutional scholarships, grants and ~~loans~~ work-study opportunities awarded to the higher
14 education institution for the applicant in an amount not to exceed the full cost of attendance
15 including, but not limited to: tuition, fees ~~and room and board charges~~ books, academic support,
16 transportation, food and housing: The department shall request from the higher education institution
17 the qualified applicant's unmet need calculated in accordance with federal and state laws and the
18 institution's policies. For the workforce development incentive grant, each qualified applicant shall

1 receive a grant, to the extent of available funding, in an amount not to exceed the full cost of
2 attendance including, but not limited to: training, fees, books, transportation, food, and housing
3 calculated by the department, in collaboration with the Community College of Rhode Island.
4 Payments pursuant to this chapter shall be disbursed in accordance with the requirements of the
5 higher education institution.

6 ~~(b) A grant period shall be limited to two (2) years of full-time study at the Community~~
7 ~~College of Rhode Island, four (4) years of full-time study at Rhode Island College, and the~~
8 ~~University of Rhode Island, and in no instance shall the grant period exceed a period of four (4)~~
9 ~~years. Grant recipients shall be enrolled full-time and shall continue to make satisfactory progress~~
10 ~~toward an academic certificate or degree as determined by the school in which they are enrolled;~~

11 ~~(c) The department shall make recommendations for grant awards from among those youth~~
12 ~~who:~~

13 ~~(1) Have not yet reached the age of eighteen (18) on the day of recommendation, are in the~~
14 ~~legal custody of the department on the day of recommendation and have remained in such custody~~
15 ~~for at least twenty-four (24) months prior to the day of recommendation; or, for former foster care,~~
16 ~~have reached the age of eighteen (18) prior to the date of recommendation, have not yet reached~~
17 ~~the age of twenty-one (21) and were in the custody of the department from their sixteenth (16th) to~~
18 ~~their eighteenth (18th) birthdays; and~~

19 ~~(2) Have graduated from high school or received the equivalent of a high school diploma~~
20 ~~not more than one year prior to the date of recommendation; and~~

21 ~~(3) Has not reached his/her twenty-first (21st) birthday; except that youth who are~~
22 ~~participating in this program on the date before his/her twenty-first (21st) birthday may remain~~
23 ~~eligible until his/her twenty-third (23rd) birthday, as long as he/she continues to be considered a~~
24 ~~full-time student by Community College of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College or University of~~
25 ~~Rhode Island, and is making satisfactory progress, as determined by the school in which he/she is~~
26 ~~enrolled, toward completion of his/her degree program.~~

27 SECTION 2. Chapter 42-72.8 of the General Laws entitled "Department of Children,
28 Youth and Families' Higher Education Opportunity Incentive Grant" is hereby amended by adding
29 thereto the following section:

30 **42-72.8-2.1. Eligibility.**

31 (a) To be eligible for a Higher Education Opportunity Incentive Grant, a youth:

32 (1) Must have been in foster care in Rhode Island through the department for at least six
33 (6) months on or after their fourteenth birthday. The six (6) months can be non-consecutive periods
34 of foster care placement or participation in the voluntary extension of care pursuant to §14-1-6;

1 (2) Retains eligibility through the academic year in which the student reaches their twenty-
2 third birthday;

3 (3) Must have graduated from high school or received a high school equivalency diploma;

4 (4) Must be admitted to, and must enroll, attend, and make satisfactory progress towards
5 the completion of a degreed program of study at the Community College of Rhode Island, Rhode
6 Island College or the University of Rhode Island on a full-time or part-time basis enrolled in no
7 less than six (6) credits per semester; and

8 (5) Must complete the FAFSA and any required FAFSA verification, or for persons who
9 are legally unable to complete the FAFSA, must complete a comparable form created by the
10 institution by the applicable deadline for each year in which the student seeks to receive funding
11 under the aforesaid incentive grant;

12 (b) To be eligible for a Workforce Development Incentive Grant, a youth:

13 (1) Must have been in foster care in Rhode Island through the department for at least six
14 (6) months on or after their fourteenth birthday. The six (6) months can be non-consecutive periods
15 of foster care placement or participation in the voluntary extension of care pursuant to § 14-1-6;

16 (2) Retains eligibility through the academic year in which the student reaches their twenty-
17 third birthday;

18 (3) Must have graduated from high school or received a high school equivalency diploma;
19 and

20 (4) Must be enrolled and attend a workforce development program at the community
21 college of Rhode Island approved by the commissioner of postsecondary education;

22 (c) Youth shall only be eligible for one of the incentive grants per academic year.

23 (d) Youth who meet the eligibility requirements in subsection (a) or (b) and who are
24 adopted or placed in guardianship through the department after their sixteenth birthday are eligible
25 to receive the incentive grant.

26 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN,
YOUTH AND FAMILIES' HIGHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY INCENTIVE GRANT

- 1 This act would modify the eligibility and administration provisions of the higher education
- 2 opportunity incentive grant program.
- 3 This act would take effect upon passage.

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