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S T A T E O F R H O D E I S L A N D

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- RHODE ISLAND PROMISE SCHOLARSHIP

Introduced By: Senators Gu, DiPalma, Murray, Gallo, Vargas, Felag, Valverde, Urso, Thompson, and Bell

Date Introduced: January 16, 2026

Referred To: Senate Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Sections 16-107-4, 16-107-5 and 16-107-6 of the General Laws in Chapter

2 16-107 entitled "Rhode Island Promise Scholarship" are hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **16-107-4. Definitions.**

4 When used in this chapter, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

5 (1) "ADA" means the American with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq., as may

6 be amended from time to time;

7 (2) "FAFSA" means the Free Application for Federal Student Aid form;

8 (3) "Mandatory fees and tuition" are the costs that every student is required to pay in order

9 to enroll in classes, and does not include room and board, textbooks, program fees that may exist

10 in some majors, course fees that may exist for some specific courses, meal plans, or travel;

11 (4) "On track to graduate on time" means the standards determined by the community

12 college of Rhode Island in establishing the expectation of a student to graduate with an accredited

13 certificate or associate's degree within two (2) years of enrollment (recognizing that some students,

14 including students who require developmental education, are double majors, or are enrolled in

15 certain professional programs may require an extended time period for certificate or degree

16 completion);

17 (5) "Reasonable accommodations" means any necessary modifications or adjustment to a

18 facility, equipment, program, or manner of operation as required by the Americans with Disabilities

19 Act ("ADA") and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794, as may be

1 amended from time to time;

2 (6) "Recipient student" means a student attending the community college of Rhode Island
3 who qualifies to receive the Rhode Island promise scholarship pursuant to § 16-107-6;

4 (7) "Scholarship program" means the Rhode Island promise scholarship program that is
5 established pursuant to § 16-107-3;

6 (8) "State" means the state of Rhode Island; and

7 (9) "Student with a disability" means any student otherwise eligible pursuant to § 16-107-
8 6 who has a physical, developmental, or hidden disability or disabilities, as defined in § 42-87-1,
9 that would create a hardship or other functional obstacles preventing participation in this program.

10 **16-107-5. Administration of scholarship program.**

11 (a) The financial aid office, in conjunction with the office of enrollment management or
12 their respective equivalent offices, at the community college of Rhode Island, shall administer the
13 scholarship program for state residents seeking accredited certificates or associate degrees who
14 meet the eligibility requirements in this chapter.

15 (b) An award of the scholarship program shall cover the cost of two (2) years of tuition and
16 mandatory fees, less federal and all other financial aid monies available to the recipient student. No
17 grant received by students from the College Crusade Scholarship Act as established in chapter 70
18 of this title shall be considered federal or financial aid for the purposes of this chapter.

19 (c) The scholarship program is limited to one award per student as required by § 16-107-
20 6(a)(7).

21 **16-107-6. Eligibility for scholarship.**

22 (a) Beginning with the students who enroll at the community college of Rhode Island in
23 the fall of 2017, to be considered for the scholarship, a student:

24 (1) Must qualify for in-state tuition and fees pursuant to the residency policy adopted by
25 the council on postsecondary education, as amended, supplemented, restated, or otherwise modified
26 from time to time ("residency policy"); provided, that, the student must have satisfied the high
27 school graduation/equivalency diploma condition prior to reaching nineteen (19) years of age;
28 provided, further, that in addition to the option of meeting the requirement by receiving a high
29 school equivalency diploma as described in the residency policy, the student can satisfy the
30 condition by receiving other certificates or documents of equivalent nature from the state or its
31 municipalities as recognized by applicable regulations promulgated by the council on elementary
32 and secondary education;

33 (2) Must be admitted to, and must enroll and attend the community college of Rhode Island
34 on a full-time basis by the semester immediately following high school graduation or the semester

1 immediately following receipt of a high school equivalency diploma;

2 (3) Must complete the FAFSA and any required FAFSA verification, or for persons who

3 are legally unable to complete the FAFSA must complete a comparable form created by the

4 community college of Rhode Island, by the deadline prescribed by the community college of Rhode

5 Island for each year in which the student seeks to receive funding under the scholarship program;

6 (4) Must continue to be enrolled on a full-time basis;

7 (5) Must maintain an average annual cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 or

8 greater, as determined by the community college of Rhode Island;

9 (6) Must remain on track to graduate on time as determined by the community college of

10 Rhode Island;

11 (7) Must not have already received an award under this scholarship program; and

12 (8) Must commit to live, work, or continue their education in Rhode Island after graduation.

13 The community college of Rhode Island shall develop a policy that will secure this

14 commitment from recipient students.

15 (b) Notwithstanding the eligibility requirements under subsection (a) of this section

16 (“specified conditions”):

17 (1) In the case of a recipient student who has an approved medical or personal leave of

18 absence or is unable to satisfy one or more specified conditions because of the student’s medical

19 or personal circumstances, the student may continue to receive an award under the scholarship

20 program upon resuming the student’s education so long as the student continues to meet all other

21 applicable eligibility requirements;

22 (2) In the case of a recipient student who is a member of the national guard or a member

23 of a reserve unit of a branch of the United States military and is unable to satisfy one or more

24 specified conditions because the student is or will be in basic or special military training, or is or

25 will be participating in a deployment of the student’s guard or reserve unit, the student may continue

26 to receive an award under the scholarship program upon completion of the student’s basic or special

27 military training or deployment; **and**

28 (3) Any student with a disability, otherwise eligible for a scholarship pursuant to the

29 provisions of this section, as of May 15, 2021, shall be entitled to access this program and shall be

30 afforded all reasonable accommodations, as required by the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act of

31 1973, including, but not limited to, enrolling on a part-time basis, attaining a high school

32 diploma/GED by age twenty-one (21), and taking longer than two (2) years to graduate with an

33 accredited certificate or associate’s degree;

34 (4) Any student who enrolled in a postsecondary institution by the semester immediately

1 following high school graduation or the semester immediately following receipt of a high school
2 equivalency diploma and remained in the institution for only up to one semester may enroll and
3 attend the community college of Rhode Island in the semester immediately following and qualify
4 for the scholarship pursuant to this section; and

5 (5) Any student may defer initial enrollment for one semester at the community college of
6 Rhode Island for the semester immediately following high school graduation or the semester
7 immediately following receipt of a high school equivalency diploma with an approved written
8 request and reason and qualifies for the scholarship pursuant to this section.

9 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N A C T
RELATING TO EDUCATION -- RHODE ISLAND PROMISE SCHOLARSHIP

- 1 This act would make students in workforce-ready certificate programs at the community
- 2 college of Rhode Island eligible to receive the Rhode Island Promise Scholarship.
- 3 This act would take effect upon passage.

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