



General Assembly

Substitute Bill No. 7161

January Session, 2019



AN ACT ESTABLISHING FINISH LINE GRANTS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2019*) (a) For the purposes of this
2 section:

3 (1) "Award" means (A) the unpaid portion, if any, of a qualifying
4 student's eligible institutional costs after subtracting his or her
5 financial aid, or (B) five hundred dollars, whichever is greater;

6 (2) "Eligible institutional costs" means the tuition and required fees
7 for an individual student that are published by each public institution
8 of higher education;

9 (3) "Financial aid" means the sum of all scholarships, grants and
10 federal, state and institutional aid received by a qualifying student.
11 "Financial aid" does not include any federal, state or private student
12 loans received by a qualifying student;

13 (4) "Qualifying student" means any person who (A) is a full-time
14 undergraduate student enrolled at a public institution of higher
15 education, (B) is classified as an in-state student pursuant to section
16 10a-29 of the general statutes, (C) possesses an undergraduate college
17 cumulative grade point average of at least 2.5 and has earned half of
18 the credit hours required for completion of an associate or bachelor's

19 degree, (D) has completed the Free Application for Federal Student
20 Aid or an institutionally accepted financial aid application, (E) has an
21 expected family contribution for educational costs, as computed from
22 the student's Free Application for Federal Student Aid or
23 institutionally accepted financial aid application, of seven thousand
24 five hundred dollars or less, and (F) has accepted all available financial
25 aid;

26 (5) "Full-time undergraduate student" means a student who is
27 enrolled at a public institution of higher education in a course of study
28 leading to an associate or bachelor's degree and who is carrying (A)
29 twelve or more semester credit hours in a semester, or (B) thirty or
30 more semester credit hours in an academic year; and

31 (6) "Public institution of higher education" means the constituent
32 units of the state system of higher education identified in subdivisions
33 (1) and (2) of section 10a-1 of the general statutes.

34 (b) Before the start of the fall semester of 2020, the state, acting
35 through the Office of Higher Education, shall establish the Finish Line
36 Grant program to annually make awards to qualifying students for
37 eligible institutional costs. An award shall be available to a qualifying
38 student when the qualifying student has earned half of the credit hours
39 required for completion of the qualifying student's first associate or
40 bachelor's degree program, provided the qualifying student meets and
41 continues to meet the requirements of this section.

42 (c) Before the start of the fall semester of 2020, and each semester
43 thereafter, each public institution of higher education shall conduct a
44 financial and academic audit to determine the number of qualifying
45 students enrolled at the institution and the amount of the award to be
46 made to each qualifying student under this section. A public
47 institution of higher education shall not use an award to supplant any
48 state or institutional aid otherwise available to a qualifying student.
49 The amount of the annual appropriation to be allocated to each public
50 institution of higher education shall be the sum of all awards made to

51 qualifying students enrolled at the public institution of higher
52 education during each semester of the prior academic year. If the sum
53 of all awards made to qualifying students exceeds the amount of the
54 annual appropriation for the Finish Line Grant program in any year,
55 the Office of Higher Education shall prioritize allocations in
56 accordance with criteria developed by the office. Not later than
57 September first and February first, annually, each public institution of
58 higher education shall report the sum of all awards made to qualifying
59 students and the results from the financial and academic audit
60 conducted each semester to the Office of Higher Education. Each
61 public institution of higher education shall expend all of the moneys
62 received under the Finish Line Grant program as direct financial
63 assistance only for eligible institutional costs.

64 (d) Any qualifying student receiving an award under this section
65 shall participate in a volunteer-based mentorship and counseling
66 program, as prescribed by the Office of Higher Education.

67 (e) Not later than January 1, 2021, and annually thereafter, the Office
68 of Higher Education shall report, in accordance with the provisions of
69 section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing committees of
70 the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to higher
71 education and employment advancement and appropriations on the
72 Finish Line Grant program.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	July 1, 2019	New section

HED *Joint Favorable Subst.*