

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 2nd Session of the 59th Legislature (2024)

3 HOUSE BILL 2971

By: West (Rick)

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5  
6 AS INTRODUCED

7 An Act relating to the Oklahoma Higher Learning  
8 Access Program; amending 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2603,  
9 which relates to program eligibility; establishing  
10 minimum ACT score for all students; and providing an  
11 effective date.

12 BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

13 SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2603, is  
14 amended to read as follows:

15 Section 2603. A. Except as otherwise provided for in  
16 subsection B of this section and elsewhere in this section, to be  
17 eligible to participate in the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access  
18 Program and to qualify for an award which includes payment of an  
19 amount equivalent to resident tuition or other tuition pursuant to  
20 Section 2604 of this title for the first semester or other academic  
21 unit of postsecondary enrollment, a student shall:

22 1. Be a resident of this state or be enrolled in a school  
23 district located in this state that serves students who reside in  
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1 both this state and an adjacent state pursuant to a contract as  
2 authorized in Section 5-117.1 of this title;

3 2. Be a United States citizen or lawfully present in the United  
4 States. A student who is not a United States citizen or lawfully  
5 present in the United States shall not be eligible to participate in  
6 the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program and to qualify for an  
7 award notwithstanding the provisions of Section 3242 of this title.  
8 The provisions of this paragraph shall not apply to any student who  
9 was enrolled in the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program prior to  
10 the end of the 2006-2007 school year;

11 3. Have a record of satisfactory compliance with agreements  
12 executed pursuant to Section 2605 of this title;

13 4. a. ~~have~~ Have graduated within the previous three (3)  
14 years from a high school accredited by the State Board  
15 of Education, ~~or~~ the Oklahoma School of Science and  
16 Mathematics ~~with a minimum 2.5 cumulative grade point~~  
17 ~~average on a 4.0 scale for all work attempted in~~  
18 ~~grades nine through twelve,~~

19 ~~b. have graduated within the previous three (3) years~~  
20 ~~from~~ or a high school not accredited by the State  
21 Board of Education with a minimum 2.5 cumulative grade  
22 point average on a 4.0 scale for all work attempted in  
23 grades nine through twelve and have achieved a  
24 composite score of 22 or higher on the ACT test, or

1 e. ~~have~~

2 b. Have satisfactorily completed within the previous  
3 three (3) years an educational program that was  
4 provided through a means other than a public or  
5 private school and have achieved a composite score of  
6 22 or higher on the ACT test;

7 5. Have completed the curricular requirements for admission to  
8 an institution within The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education  
9 and one additional unit or set of competencies in a course that  
10 meets college admission requirements. The curriculum requirements  
11 shall include two units or sets of competencies in foreign or non-  
12 English language or technology courses that meet the college  
13 admission requirements and one unit or set of competencies of a fine  
14 arts course. Students shall also have attained a 2.5 grade point  
15 average in the core curriculum courses. Students who attended a  
16 high school which did not offer all the core curriculum courses or  
17 students who were educated by other means and were not offered all  
18 the core curriculum courses shall be allowed to satisfy this  
19 curriculum requirement by participating in a program approved by the  
20 State Regents for remediation of high school curricular  
21 deficiencies;

22 6. Have satisfied admission standards as determined by the  
23 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education for first-time-entering  
24 students for the appropriate type of institution, or, if attending a

1 private institution, have satisfied admission standards as  
2 determined by the private institution. No student participating in  
3 the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program shall be admitted into  
4 an institution of higher education by special admission standards;

5 7. Have secured admission to, and enrolled in, an institution  
6 which is a member of The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education,  
7 a postsecondary vocational-technical program offered by a technology  
8 center school that meets the requirements to be eligible for federal  
9 student financial aid, or a private institution of higher learning  
10 located within this state and accredited pursuant to Section 4103 of  
11 this title; and

12 8. a. have established financial need according to the  
13 provisions of subsection D of Section 2605 of this  
14 title and standards and provisions promulgated by the  
15 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education,

16 b. if the student was adopted between birth and twelve  
17 (12) years of age while in the permanent custody of  
18 the Department of Human Services, in the court-ordered  
19 custody of a licensed private nonprofit child-placing  
20 agency, or federally recognized Indian tribe, as  
21 defined by the federal Indian Child Welfare Act, have  
22 established financial need according to the provisions  
23 of paragraph 1 of subsection E of Section 2605 of this  
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1 title and standards and provisions promulgated by the  
2 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, or  
3 c. if the student was adopted between thirteen (13) and  
4 seventeen (17) years of age while in the permanent  
5 custody of the Department of Human Services, in the  
6 court-ordered custody of a licensed private nonprofit  
7 child-placing agency, or federally recognized Indian  
8 tribe, as defined by the federal Indian Child Welfare  
9 Act, have established financial need according to the  
10 provisions of paragraph 2 of subsection E of Section  
11 2605 of this title and standards and provisions  
12 promulgated by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher  
13 Education.

14 B. 1. A student shall be eligible to participate in the  
15 Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program and to qualify for an award  
16 which includes payment of an amount equivalent to resident tuition  
17 or other tuition pursuant to Section 2604 of this title for the  
18 first semester or other academic unit of postsecondary enrollment if  
19 the student meets all of the following criteria:

20 a. is a child of any person killed after January 1, 2000,  
21 in the line of duty in any branch of the United States  
22 Armed Forces or who died after January 1, 2000, as a  
23 result of an injury sustained while in the line of  
24 duty in any branch of the United States Armed Forces

1 and the person who was killed or died filed an  
2 individual or joint Oklahoma income tax return for the  
3 tax year prior to the year during which the person was  
4 killed or died,

5 b. is a resident of this state or is enrolled in a school  
6 district located in this state that serves students  
7 who reside in both this state and an adjacent state  
8 pursuant to a contract as authorized in Section 5-  
9 117.1 of this title,

10 c. enrolls in an institution within The Oklahoma State  
11 System of Higher Education prior to reaching the age  
12 of twenty-one (21),

13 d. has satisfied admission standards as determined by the  
14 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education for first-  
15 time-entering students for the appropriate type of  
16 institution, or, if attending a private institution,  
17 has satisfied admission standards as determined by the  
18 private institution. No student participating in the  
19 Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program shall be  
20 admitted into an institution of higher education by  
21 special admission standards,

22 e. has secured admission to, and enrolled in, an  
23 institution which is a member of The Oklahoma State  
24 System of Higher Education, a postsecondary

1 vocational-technical program offered by a technology  
2 center school that meets the requirements to be  
3 eligible for federal student financial aid, or a  
4 private institution of higher learning located within  
5 this state and accredited pursuant to Section 4103 of  
6 this title, and

7 f. executes an agreement pursuant to subsection C of  
8 Section 2605 of this title.

9 2. A student who is eligible to participate in the program  
10 pursuant to this subsection shall not be required to meet the  
11 eligibility requirements set forth in subsection A of this section.

12 C. To retain eligibility while pursuing the program of higher  
13 learning in which enrolled, the student shall:

14 1. Meet the requirements for retention and degree completion as  
15 established by the institution in which the student is enrolled;

16 2. Maintain good academic standing and satisfactory academic  
17 progress according to standards of the Oklahoma State Regents for  
18 Higher Education;

19 3. Maintain satisfactory academic progress as required for  
20 eligibility for federal Title IV student financial aid programs.

21 The provisions of this paragraph shall become effective for the  
22 2012-2013 school year;

1 4. Comply with the standards related to maintenance of  
2 eligibility as promulgated by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher  
3 Education; and

4 5. Refrain from conduct that leads to expulsion or suspension  
5 of more than one semester from an institution of higher education.  
6 A student who violates the provisions of this paragraph shall  
7 permanently lose eligibility for program benefits. The provisions  
8 of this paragraph shall become effective January 1, 2008.

9 D. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and the  
10 State Board of Career and Technology Education shall promulgate  
11 rules relating to maintenance of eligibility under the Oklahoma  
12 Higher Learning Access Act by a student.

13 E. It is the intent of the Legislature that students in the  
14 ninth grade for the 1992-93 school year who are determined to be  
15 eligible Oklahoma Higher Learning Access students pursuant to the  
16 Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Act shall be the first students  
17 eligible for benefits from the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Trust  
18 Fund.

19 F. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education are  
20 authorized to study, develop and propose criteria for determining  
21 award eligibility based upon the completion of seven semesters of  
22 high school coursework by a student.



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SECTION 2. This act shall become effective November 1, 2024.

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