
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 315 Session of
2023

INTRODUCED BY HUGHES, HAYWOOD, TARTAGLIONE, KANE, COSTA AND
CAPPELLETTI, NOVEMBER 28, 2023

REFERRED TO EDUCATION, NOVEMBER 28, 2023

AN ACT

1 Providing for the Pennsylvania Promise Pilot Program;
2 prescribing powers and duties of the Pennsylvania Higher
3 Education Assistance Agency; providing for scholarships for
4 tuition and fees, scholarships for room and board and aid for
5 adult reeducation; and establishing the Pennsylvania Promise
6 Pilot Program Fund.

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

9 Section 1. Short title.

10 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Pennsylvania
11 Promise Pilot Program Act.

12 Section 2. Definitions.

13 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
14 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
15 context clearly indicates otherwise:

16 "Academic year." A 12-month period commencing on or after
17 August 1 of the calendar year.

18 "Agency." The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance
19 Agency.

20 "Community college." An institution created under Article

1 XIX-A of the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the
2 Public School Code of 1949, or the act of August 24, 1963
3 (P.L.1132, No.484), known as the Community College Act of 1963.

4 "Eligible adult learner." An individual who:

5 (1) Is a resident of this Commonwealth at the time of
6 application to the agency for aid to assist with reeducation
7 programs under section 8.

8 (2) Has been a domiciled resident of this Commonwealth
9 as determined by the agency.

10 (3) Is 24 years of age or older at the time of
11 application to the agency for aid to assist with reeducation
12 programs under section 8.

13 (4) Has graduated from high school or an equivalent
14 approved by the Department of Education.

15 (5) Has applied for and been accepted to an institution
16 of higher education.

17 (6) Has completed a Free Application for Federal Student
18 Aid (FAFSA).

19 (7) Has applied for all available Federal Pell grants,
20 State grants and institution grants.

21 "Eligible student." An individual who:

22 (1) Is a resident of this Commonwealth at the time of
23 application to the agency for a scholarship under section 6
24 or 7.

25 (2) Has been a domiciled resident of this Commonwealth
26 as determined by the agency.

27 (3) Is less than 24 years of age or is an active member
28 of a branch of the armed services at the time of application
29 to the agency for a scholarship under section 6 or 7.

30 (4) Has graduated from high school or an equivalent

1 approved by the Department of Education within the previous
2 five years.

3 (5) Has applied for and been accepted to an institution
4 of higher education.

5 (6) Has completed a Free Application for Federal Student
6 Aid (FAFSA).

7 (7) Has applied for all available Federal Pell grants,
8 State grants and institution grants.

9 "Fees." Fixed charges to recover costs of certain services,
10 materials or activities provided. Fees may not exceed the
11 highest fixed charges set by the Board of Governors of the State
12 System of Higher Education.

13 "Full-time student." An individual enrolled in an
14 undergraduate degree program at an institution of higher
15 education and registered for a minimum of 12 credits per
16 semester or equivalent enrollment as set by the agency.

17 "Fund." The Pennsylvania Promise Pilot Program Fund
18 established under section 5.

19 "Institution of higher education." Any of the following:

20 (1) A community college.

21 (2) A State-owned institution.

22 (3) A State-related institution.

23 (4) The Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology.

24 "Part-time student." An individual enrolled in an
25 institution of higher education and registered for less than 12
26 credits per semester or equivalent enrollment as set by the
27 agency.

28 "Program." The Pennsylvania Promise Pilot Program
29 established under this act.

30 "Room and board." The standard educational expense allowance

1 for the most recent year as determined by the agency.

2 "Scholarship for room and board." A scholarship for room and
3 board awarded by the agency under section 7.

4 "Scholarship for tuition and fees." A scholarship for
5 tuition and fees awarded under section 6.

6 "State-owned institution." An institution which is part of
7 the State System of Higher Education under Article XX-A of the
8 Public School Code of 1949 and all branches and campuses of the
9 institution.

10 "State-related institution." The Pennsylvania State
11 University, Pennsylvania College of Technology, University of
12 Pittsburgh, Temple University, Lincoln University and associated
13 branch campuses of the universities.

14 "Tuition." An amount not to exceed the maximum undergraduate
15 in-State tuition rate established by the Board of Governors of
16 the State System of Higher Education for rendering educational
17 services, as enumerated in Article XX-A of the Public School
18 Code of 1949. The agency, at its discretion, may increase the
19 maximum amount.

20 Section 3. Pennsylvania Promise Pilot Program.

21 The Pennsylvania Promise Pilot Program is established within
22 the agency.

23 Section 4. Procedure.

24 (a) Agency.--The agency shall administer the program and
25 carry out this act.

26 (b) Regulations.--The agency may adopt rules and regulations
27 necessary to administer this act.

28 Section 5. Pennsylvania Promise Pilot Program Fund.

29 (a) Fund.--The Pennsylvania Promise Pilot Program Fund is
30 established in the State Treasury.

1 (b) Administration of fund.--Money in the fund is
2 appropriated to the agency on an ongoing basis to carry out this
3 act.

4 (c) Contributions and investment.--

5 (1) The fund may accept gifts, donations, legacies or
6 any other revenues.

7 (2) Interest earned by the fund shall remain in the
8 fund.

9 (d) Purpose.--Money in the fund shall be used for the
10 purpose stated in this act.

11 (e) Nonlapsing.--Money in the fund shall not lapse and shall
12 be available in subsequent fiscal years to be used in accordance
13 with the provisions of this act.

14 (f) Allocation.--For fiscal year 2024-2025, the agency shall
15 allocate:

16 (1) No more than \$10,000,000 from the fund for eligible
17 adult learners.

18 (2) No more than \$125,000,000 from the fund to eligible
19 students attending a State-owned institution in accordance
20 with sections 6 and 7.

21 (3) No more than \$50,000,000 from the fund to eligible
22 students attending a State-related institution in accordance
23 with sections 6 and 7.

24 (4) No more than \$35,000,000 from the fund to eligible
25 students attending a community college.

26 (g) Reallocation.--Notwithstanding subsection (f), the
27 agency may allocate money from the fund to eligible students
28 attending an institution of higher education in accordance with
29 sections 6 and 7.

30 (h) Administrative costs.--For fiscal year 2024-2025, the

1 agency may utilize no more than \$5,000,000 from the fund to
2 cover the agency's costs associated with administering and
3 operating the program.

4 (i) Interfund transfer.--No later than July 1, 2024, the sum
5 of \$225,000,000 shall be transferred from the General Fund to
6 the fund.

7 Section 6. Scholarship for tuition and fees.

8 (a) Application.--The agency shall accept applications, in a
9 form and manner as determined by the agency, from eligible
10 students for a scholarship for tuition and fees as provided in
11 this section.

12 (b) Scholarship at State-owned or State-related
13 institution.--An eligible student may receive a scholarship for
14 tuition and fees at a State-owned institution or State-related
15 institution for the academic year in an amount not to exceed the
16 outstanding tuition and fees after Federal, State and
17 institution grants have been applied, if the eligible student:

18 (1) has a total annual household income that does not
19 exceed \$200,000; and

20 (2) is enrolled full time.

21 (c) Scholarship at community college.--An eligible student
22 may receive a scholarship at a community college for the
23 academic year in an amount not to exceed the outstanding tuition
24 and fees after Federal, State and institution grants have been
25 applied if, at a minimum, the eligible student is enrolled full
26 time.

27 (d) Review and approval.--

28 (1) The agency shall review all applications submitted
29 under this section.

30 (2) The agency may approve an application if the

1 application meets the requirements under subsection (b) or
2 (c) and if the eligible student submitting the application
3 meets the requirements of this act.

4 (e) Distribution of scholarship.--Once an eligible student
5 has been approved for a scholarship for tuition and fees, the
6 agency shall, upon receipt of an outstanding balance from an
7 institution of higher education, pay the outstanding tuition and
8 fee balance owed by the eligible student directly to the
9 institution of higher education.

10 (f) Limitation on scholarship.--Notwithstanding any
11 provision of this act to the contrary, the agency may not issue
12 a scholarship in excess of the outstanding balance for tuition
13 and fees received from an institution of higher education.

14 (g) Renewal.--

15 (1) The scholarship for tuition and fees may not exceed
16 one academic year.

17 (2) The agency shall create an application to allow
18 previously approved eligible students to recertify their
19 eligibility.

20 (3) An eligible student at a State-owned institution or
21 State-related institution who has not exceeded the limitation
22 in subsection (i) may reapply for the scholarship for tuition
23 and fees if the eligible student:

24 (i) Is enrolled full time.

25 (ii) Is making satisfactory academic progress as
26 determined by the institution of higher education, unless
27 the eligible student is in the first year of college.

28 (iii) While attending a State-owned institution or
29 State-related institution, has a total annual household
30 income that does not exceed \$200,000.

1 (4) An eligible student at a community college who has
2 not exceeded the limitation in subsection (i) may reapply for
3 the scholarship for tuition and fees if the eligible student:

4 (i) Is enrolled full time or part time.

5 (ii) Is making satisfactory academic progress,
6 unless the eligible student is in the first year of
7 college.

8 (h) Continued eligibility.--An eligible student shall be
9 continuously enrolled in the institution of higher education for
10 the academic year which the eligible student received a
11 scholarship for tuition and fees. If the eligible student is not
12 continuously enrolled in the institution of higher education,
13 the agency, in its discretion, may deny renewal under subsection
14 (g).

15 (i) Limitation to scholarship.--

16 (1) An eligible student may not receive a scholarship
17 for tuition and fees if the eligible student:

18 (i) While attending a community college, has
19 completed no more than four academic years or has earned
20 an associate's degree, except as provided in paragraph
21 (2).

22 (ii) While attending a State-owned institution or
23 State-related institution, has completed four academic
24 years or has earned a bachelor's degree.

25 (2) A student who is otherwise eligible for a
26 scholarship for tuition and fees under this section may not
27 receive the scholarship if the local sponsor has not made the
28 payment required under section 1913-A(a)(2) of the act of
29 March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School
30 Code of 1949.

1 (3) An eligible student may receive a scholarship for no
2 more than four academic years at an institution of higher
3 education.

4 Section 7. Scholarship for room and board.

5 (a) Application.--The agency shall accept applications, in a
6 form and manner as determined by the agency, from eligible
7 students for a scholarship for room and board as provided in
8 this section.

9 (b) Scholarship at State-owned institution or State-related
10 institution.--An eligible student at a State-owned institution
11 or State-related institution may receive a scholarship for room
12 and board for the academic year after Federal, State and
13 institution grants have been applied if the eligible student:

14 (1) has a total annual household income that does not
15 exceed \$60,000; and

16 (2) is enrolled full time.

17 (c) Scholarship at community college.--An eligible student
18 at a community college may receive a scholarship for room and
19 board for the academic year after Federal, State and institution
20 grants have been applied, if the eligible student:

21 (1) has a total annual household income that does not
22 exceed \$60,000; and

23 (2) is enrolled full time or part time.

24 (d) Review and approval.--

25 (1) The agency shall review all applications submitted
26 under this section.

27 (2) The agency may approve an application if the
28 application meets the requirements under subsection (b) or

29 (c) and if the eligible student meets the requirements of
30 this act.

1 (e) Distribution of scholarship at State-owned institution
2 or State-related institution.--If an eligible student has been
3 approved for a scholarship for room and board, the agency shall,
4 upon receipt of an outstanding balance from the State-owned
5 institution or State-related institution, pay the outstanding
6 balance for room and board owed by the eligible student directly
7 to the institution.

8 (f) Distribution of scholarship at community colleges.--If
9 an eligible student has been approved for a scholarship for room
10 and board, the agency shall pay a scholarship for room and board
11 in a manner decided by the agency.

12 (g) Limitation on scholarship.--

13 (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) and
14 notwithstanding any provision of this act to the contrary,
15 the agency may not issue a scholarship for room and board in
16 excess of the outstanding balance received from a State-owned
17 institution or State-related institution.

18 (2) The agency may issue a scholarship for room and
19 board in excess of the outstanding balance received from a
20 community college.

21 (3) A student who is otherwise eligible for a
22 scholarship for room and board under this section may not
23 receive the scholarship if the local sponsor as defined under
24 section 1901-A(2) of the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30,
25 No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, has not made
26 the payment required under section 1913-A(a)(2) of the Public
27 School Code of 1949.

28 (h) Renewal.--

29 (1) A scholarship for room and board may not exceed one
30 academic year.

1 (2) The agency shall create an application to allow
2 previously approved eligible students to recertify the
3 eligible student's eligibility.

4 (3) An eligible student who has not exceeded the
5 limitation in subsection (j) may reapply for the scholarship
6 for room and board if the student is enrolled full time at a
7 State-owned institution or State-related institution or is
8 enrolled full time or part time at a community college and:

9 (i) is making satisfactory academic progress, unless
10 the eligible student is in the first year of college; and

11 (ii) has a total annual household income that does
12 not exceed \$60,000.

13 (i) Continued eligibility.--An eligible student shall be
14 continuously enrolled in the institution of higher education for
15 the academic year for which the eligible student received a
16 scholarship for room and board. If an eligible student is not
17 continuously enrolled in the institution of higher education,
18 the agency, in its discretion, may deny renewal under subsection
19 (h).

20 (j) Limitation to eligibility.--

21 (1) An eligible student may not receive a scholarship
22 for room and board if the eligible student:

23 (i) Except as provided in paragraph (2), has
24 completed four academic years or has earned an
25 associate's degree while attending a community college.

26 (ii) Has completed four academic years or has earned
27 a bachelor's degree while attending a State-owned
28 institution or State-related institution.

29 (2) An eligible student may receive a scholarship for
30 two academic years at a State-owned institution or State-

1 related institution if eligibility under paragraph (1)(i) has
2 been exhausted.

3 Section 8. Aid for adult reeducation.

4 (a) Application.--The agency shall accept applications, in a
5 form and manner as determined by the agency, from an eligible
6 adult learner for aid for adult reeducation.

7 (b) Eligibility.--An eligible adult learner may receive
8 assistance for aid for adult reeducation programs for the
9 academic year the eligible adult learner:

10 (1) has a total annual household income that does not
11 exceed \$200,000; and

12 (2) has applied for and been accepted into an adult
13 reeducation program or adult reeducation certificate program,
14 or is enrolled full time or part time in an institution of
15 higher education.

16 (c) Pennsylvania Targeted Industry Cluster Certificate
17 Scholarship Program.--Notwithstanding any provisions of law, the
18 agency may use money allocated for adult reeducation for the
19 Pennsylvania Targeted Industry Cluster Certificate Scholarship
20 Program.

21 (d) Review and approval.--

22 (1) The agency shall review all applications submitted
23 under this section.

24 (2) The agency may approve an application if the
25 application meets the requirements under subsection (b) and
26 if the eligible adult learner meets the requirements of this
27 section.

28 (e) Priority.--When reviewing an application for aid under
29 this section, the agency shall prioritize aid for programs that
30 lead to an industry-recognized credential that is articulated

1 with college credit. The agency shall annually determine and
2 post on its publicly accessible Internet website industry-
3 recognized credentialed programs which qualify for aid priority
4 under this section.

5 (f) Distribution of aid.--If an eligible adult learner has
6 been approved for aid under this section, the agency shall, upon
7 receipt of an outstanding balance from an institution of higher
8 education, pay the outstanding balance owed by an adult learner
9 directly to the institution of higher education.

10 (g) Limitation on aid.--Notwithstanding any provision of
11 this act, the agency may not issue any aid in excess of the
12 outstanding balance received from an institution of higher
13 education.

14 (h) Renewal.--

15 (1) Aid awarded to an eligible adult learner shall not
16 exceed one academic year.

17 (2) The agency shall create an application to allow
18 previously approved eligible adult learners to recertify
19 their eligibility.

20 (3) An eligible adult learner who has not exceeded the
21 limitation in subsection (i) may reapply for aid if:

22 (i) Enrolled as a full-time or part-time student at
23 an institution of higher education or a certificate
24 program approved by the agency.

25 (ii) Total annual household income does not exceed
26 \$200,000.

27 (i) Limitation to eligibility.--An eligible adult learner
28 may not receive aid if the eligible adult learner:

29 (1) Has:

30 (i) completed no more than four academic years while

1 attending a community college;

2 (ii) earned an associate's degree while attending a
3 community college; or

4 (iii) completed an industry-recognized credential
5 for which the eligible adult learner was enrolled in
6 order to qualify for aid.

7 (2) Has completed:

8 (i) four academic years or has earned a bachelor's
9 degree while attending a State-owned institution or
10 State-related institution; or

11 (ii) industry-recognized credential for which the
12 eligible adult learner was enrolled in order to qualify
13 for aid.

14 Section 9. Annual report.

15 Beginning one year after the first scholarship is awarded
16 under this act, the agency shall provide the Governor and the
17 chairperson and minority chairperson of the Appropriations
18 Committee of the Senate, the chairperson and minority
19 chairperson of the Appropriations Committee of the House of
20 Representatives, the chairperson and minority chairperson of the
21 Education Committee of the Senate and the chairperson and
22 minority chairperson of the Education Committee of the House of
23 Representatives with a report which includes the following:

24 (1) The total number of students served by the program.

25 (2) A breakdown by race, gender, ethnicity and
26 socioeconomic demographic for all students served by the
27 program, if known.

28 (3) The total number of scholarships awarded and the
29 average amount awarded.

30 (4) A year-over-year comparison of the net total costs

1 at all institutions of higher education in this Commonwealth
2 which shall be used to evaluate the adequacy and success of
3 the program in lowering college costs.

4 (5) Recommendations, if any, for improving access and
5 affordability of higher education.

6 (6) A breakdown of the institutions attended by eligible
7 students in the program.

8 (7) A breakdown of the majors in which the eligible
9 students in the program are enrolled.

10 (8) Any other information.

11 Section 10. Effective date.

12 This act shall take effect immediately.