STATE OF NEW YORK

11734

IN ASSEMBLY

September 16, 2026

Introduced by COMMITTEE ON RULES -- (at request of M. of A. Santabarbara) -- read once and referred to the Committee on Higher Education

AN ACT to amend the mental hygiene law and the education law, in relation to establishing a direct service professional credit and career ladder tuition assistance grant program

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Section 13.23 of the mental hygiene law is amended by adding a new subdivision (d) to read as follows:

(d) The commissioner shall work cooperatively with the state university boards of trustees and the city university boards of trustees to establish a grant program pursuant to section sixty-three hundred three-b of the education law in order to develop training programs and improve existing workforce development programs for the purpose of training direct support professionals and establishing a career ladder for individuals working with individuals with developmental disabilities. Within funds appropriated for such purpose, the commissioner may establish a direct service professional credit and career ladder tuition assistance grant program.

§ 2. The education law is amended by adding a new section 6303-b to read as follows:

§ 6303-b. Direct service professional credit and career ladder tuition assistance grant program. 1. For purposes of this section, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

(a) "Direct service professional credit program" shall mean the community college programs established pursuant to a memorandum of understanding between the commissioner of the office for people with developmental disabilities and the board of trustees of the state university and the city university to develop training programs and a college certificate program that links theory with practice for the purpose of training direct support professionals employed by agencies who are funded by the office for people with developmental disabilities and providing supports and services to individuals with developmental disabilities.

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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(b) "Career ladder program" shall mean the community college programs established pursuant to a memorandum of understanding between the commissioner of the office for people with developmental disabilities and the board of trustees of the state university and the city university to develop a career ladder supervisor/manager program leading to an associate's degree in health/human services or a related major and associated credit-bearing certificate programs in community residence management or developmental disabilities for participants who do not elect to obtain an associate's degree.

(c) "At least a part-time basis" shall mean enrollment for at least six hours per semester or four hours per quarter.

(d) "Tuition" shall mean the total semester, quarter or classroom hour cost of instruction at a state-operated community college, excluding mandatory fees, book charges and room and board.

(e) "Grant programs" shall mean the direct service professional credit program and the career ladder program.

2. The state university boards of trustees and the city university board of trustees may establish grant programs for community colleges to develop training programs and improve existing workforce development programs for the purpose of training direct support professionals and establishing a career ladder for individuals working with individuals with developmental disabilities pursuant to a memorandum of understanding with the commissioner of the office for people with developmental disabilities.

3. Pursuant to a memorandum of understanding with the community college and the commissioner of the office for people with developmental disabilities and within funds appropriated for such purpose, the office for people with developmental disabilities shall establish a tuition assistance grant program to provide tuition assistance to direct support professionals employed by agencies who are funded by such office and providing supports and services to individuals with developmental disabilities or for individuals working with individuals with developmental disabilities enrolled on at least a part-time basis at a community college as defined in section three hundred fifty of this chapter.

Any program established pursuant to this section shall provide tuition assistance grants to such direct support professionals employed by agencies who are funded by the office for people with developmental disabilities and providing supports and services to individuals with developmental disabilities or for individuals working with individuals with developmental disabilities in an amount up to fifty percent of the tuition required to be paid to such state-operated community college by such direct support professionals employed by agencies who are funded by such office and providing supports and services to individuals with developmental disabilities or for individuals working with individuals with developmental disabilities.

4. Upon successful completion of either the direct service professional credit program or the career ladder program the office for people with developmental disabilities certified provider employing the direct support professional or individuals working with individuals with developmental disabilities shall reimburse the community college for one-half of the cost of such employee training or tuition.

§ 3. This act shall take effect immediately and shall apply to academic semesters, quarters and classroom hours beginning on or after January 1, 2027.