STATE OF NEW YORK

958

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

(Prefiled)

January 6, 2021

Introduced by Sen. MAY -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Higher Education

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to enacting the "essential workers student grant act" to provide student financial aid grants to individuals who served as essential workers during the state of emergency declared as a result of COVID-19

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

Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "essential workers student grant act".

§ 2. The education law is amended by adding a new section 669-i to read as follows:

§ 669-i. Essential workers student grant program. 1. Purpose. The essential workers student grant program is hereby created to provide financial aid grants to individuals who served as essential workers during the state of emergency declared as a result of COVID-19 and are seeking college education or career education and training.

2. Definitions. For purposes of this section:

a. "Good academic standing" means retaining a minimum grade point average of 2.5 or the equivalent.

b. "Participating institution" means any public or private college or university located within the state of New York.

c. "Cost of attendance" means tuition, required fees, laboratory and other instruction related to expenses, books, transportation, and room and board.

3. Eligibility. The essential workers student grant program shall be available to those persons:

a. who remain in good academic standing;

b. who attend a participating institution for at least three semester hours;

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

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c. who are not eligible for awards under section six hundred sixty-six, six hundred sixty-seven, or six hundred sixty-seven-c of this subpart;

d. who have been either a legal resident of the state for at least one year immediately preceding the beginning of the semester, quarter or term of attendance for which application for the essential workers student grant program is made. Notwithstanding any other provision of this article to the contrary, the New York state residency eligibility requirement for this program is waived for a member, or the spouse or dependent of a member, of the armed forces of the United States on full-time active duty and stationed in this state; and

e. who were employed in the following positions during the state of emergency declared as a result of COVID-19:

(i) healthcare personnel needed for direct care and critical administrative staff of the personnel needed for direct care, including:

(A) full-time and part-time long-term facility personnel, including, but not limited to, personnel working in group homes and supportive housing settings, residential homes, nursing homes, and residential mental health, substance use disorder, pediatric and adolescent residential treatment facilities;

(B) full-time and part-time post-acute care personnel, including, but not limited to, personnel working in long-term hospitals, in-patient rehabilitation, home health care, and skilled nurses;

(C) home health and personal care attendants;

(D) personnel working in adult, adolescent and pediatric residential mental health, behavioral health or substance use disorder treatment facilities, intensive residential treatment services, emergency shelters, health care for the homeless providers, and homeless drop-in centers;

(E) county and tribal financial/eligibility workers for public programs;

(F) state, tribal and county staff in emergency management or health and human services, including case managers and direct service delivery;

(G) personnel working in county and tribal child welfare;

(H) pharmacy employees necessary for filling prescriptions;

(ii) full-time emergency medical services personnel, including:

(A) paramedics;

(B) emergency medical technicians;

(C) immediate supervisory staff;

(D) emergency medical services operators and dispatchers;

(E) emergency medical services region medical directors necessary to make override decisions to direct ambulances to other emergency rooms based on medical needs;

(iii) law enforcement personnel, including:

(A) full-time police officers and their supervisory staff;

(B) full-time sheriffs and their supervisory staff;

(C) full-time department of environmental conservation sworn officers and their supervisory staff;

(D) full-time state police officers and their supervisory staff;

(E) 911 operators and dispatchers and their supervisory staff;

(F) full-time investigators, at the discretion of their agency chief;

(iv) firefighter personnel, including:

(A) full-time firefighters;

(B) paid on call duty crew;

(v) correctional services personnel, including:

(A) corrections officers;

(B) correctional lieutenants;
(C) correctional captains;
(D) correctional sergeants;
(E) physical plant personnel;
(F) correctional facility case managers;
(G) correctional facility educators and educational paraprofessionals;
(H) wardens;
(I) associate wardens;
(J) correctional facility office assistants;
(K) correctional facility nurses and supervisors;
(L) correctional program therapists;
(M) correctional facility personnel;
(N) informational technology staff;
(O) correctional facility human resources staff;
(P) correctional facility financial services personnel;
(Q) correctional facility records personnel;
(R) correctional facility safety officers;
(vi) centralized correctional operations personnel, including:
(A) medical directors;
(B) directors of health services;
(C) reentry services personnel;
(D) policy and legal services personnel;
(E) offender transportation personnel;
(F) centralized records personnel;
(G) centralized human resources personnel;
(H) investigators, including special investigations and professional accountability;
(I) personnel assigned to the disaster preparedness commission;
(J) government and community relations personnel;
(K) hearings and release personnel;
(L) behavioral health personnel;
(M) communications personnel;
(N) personnel in the office of the commissioner of corrections and community supervision;
(vii) correctional, transitional and supervision services personnel, including:
(A) state probation officers and supervisors;
(B) state probation agents and supervisors;
(C) state supervised release agents and supervisors;
(D) county probation officers and supervisors;
(E) county probation agents and supervisors;
(F) county supervised release agents and supervisors;
(viii) public health personnel, including:
(A) state, tribal and local public health employees directly support-ing the response of COVID-19 and other infectious disease operations;
(B) state, tribal and local public health officials responding to imminent public health threats;
(C) newborn health screeners;
(D) state, tribal and local public health lab priority services;
(E) state, city, county and tribal emergency management essential personnel supporting COVID-19;
(F) court personnel, including full-time court personnel;
(ix) educators;
(x) child care workers;
(xi) department of transportation employees;
(xii) state and local essential information technology personnel;

(xiii) substance disorder treatment workers;
(xiv) medical examiners;
(xv) janitorial, custodial and cleaning staff;
(xvi) delivery workers;
(xvii) national guard members (if activated);
(xviii) water treatment/wastewater personnel, including:
(A) water treatment plant operators;
(B) drinking water distribution system maintenance workers;
(C) safe drinking water delivery personnel;
(D) wastewater treatment plant operators;
(E) storm and sanitary sewer system maintenance workers;
(xix) day-to-day operations personnel for gas and electric utilities, including:
(A) electric utility lineworkers, substation technicians, meter technicians, dispatchers, power plant operators;
(B) operations managers and supervisors;
(C) fleet and maintenance technicians;
(D) transmission and distribution engineers and operators;
(E) construction coordinators and technicians;
(F) fuel technicians;
(G) relay coordinators;
(H) control room/center operators;
(I) cybersecurity related information technology personnel;
(J) gas safety personnel;
(K) gas utility operations personnel;
(L) water system operators, water treatment plant operators;
(M) wastewater system operators and wastewater treatment plant operators;
(N) managers with key responsibility for customer and community communications and response;
(xx) emergency response for gas and electric utilities personnel, including:
(A) damage assessment personnel;
(B) engineers;
(C) safety personnel;
(D) communications personnel;
(E) mutual aid crews from other utilities;
(xxi) restaurant workers, including:
(A) management;
(B) front of house staff;
(C) back of house staff;
(D) food delivery workers;
(xxii) food distribution workers, including street vendors;
(xxiii) food distribution centers personnel, including:
(A) drivers;
(B) order selectors;
(C) forklift loaders;
(D) information technology personnel;
(E) mechanics;
(F) sanitation workers;
(xxiv) in-store food personnel, including:
(A) store clerks;
(B) stockers;
(C) food preparation personnel;
(D) cleaning staff;
(E) deli and produce staff;

(xxv) public works personnel, including:
(A) city fleet (emergency equipment, fire trucks, police vehicles, etc.) maintenance workers;
(B) traffic signal system maintenance workers;
(C) emergency repair workers for bridges, water and sewer main breaks, and other emergent issues;
(D) administrative support personnel that ensure federal OSHA safety requirements and field support for operations;
(E) snowplow drivers;
(xxvi) solid waste management (waste, recyclable/organics) personnel, including:
(A) collection, transfer trailer truck drivers and fleet maintenance crews;
(B) transfer stations, landfills, resource recovery, recycling and organics facility operations staff;
(C) heavy equipment operators, facility operators (e.g. scale house operator, loader operator, line operators, boiler operator);
(D) environmental systems personnel (e.g. gas and leachate management, pollution control equipment);
(xxvii) infectious and hazardous waste management personnel, including:
(A) infectious and hazardous waste collection personnel;
(B) infectious facilities operations personnel (e.g. autoclave and incineration operators);
(C) hazardous waste treatment, storage, and disposal facilities operations personnel;
(xxviii) other shelter staff and outreach workers, including:
(A) outreach workers to people experiencing homelessness;
(B) shelter and drop-in center maintenance, housekeeping and janitorial staff;
(C) shelter and drop-in center security staff;
(D) shelter and free meal program food preparation staff;
(E) domestic violence and victims services shelter staff;
(xxix) telecommunication network operations personnel, including:
(A) outside plant technicians for infrastructure restoration;
(B) install/repair technicians for customer premise restoration as needed;
(C) customer service representatives that interface with customers on service troubles;
(D) dispatchers involved with service repair and restoration.
4. Grants. The annual essential workers student grants shall be for an amount up to one thousand five hundred dollars or the cost of tuition, whichever is less. In no event shall the amount of the annual grant exceed the recipient's cost of attendance at the institution attended. The corporation shall provide such grants within the amounts appropriated for such purpose and based on the availability of funds. A recipient shall receive no more than six thousand dollars in essential workers student grants.
5. Priority. Priority will be given to applicants that demonstrate financial need as determined by the corporation.
6. Rules. The corporation is authorized to promulgate rules and regulations, and may promulgate emergency regulations, for the necessary implementation of the provisions of this section.
§ 3. This act shall take effect immediately.