

STATE OF NEW YORK

9033

IN SENATE

April 10, 2024

Introduced by Sens. COONEY, RHOADS, OBERACKER, ROLISON -- 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 providing free SUNY, CUNY and community college tuition to active volunteer firefighters, volunteer emergency medical services providers, and volunteer auxiliary police officers

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

Section 1. Paragraph h of subdivision 2 of section 355 of the education law is amended by adding a new subparagraph 1-a to read as follows:

(1-a) The trustees shall implement a program to permit any student who has been admitted to a state-operated institution of the state university to attend without the payment of tuition and fees if such student serves as an active volunteer firefighter, as defined in subdivision one of section two hundred fifteen of the general municipal law, volunteer emergency medical services provider, or volunteer auxiliary police officer. The provisions of this subparagraph shall only apply to costs of one undergraduate degree and any additional costs associated with more than one simultaneous undergraduate degree shall not be covered by this program.

(i) The trustees shall provide an application process and administer the program according to the following criteria:

(A) Any student eligible for resident tuition rates is eligible for this program, provided that at the time of application, such student submits proof of membership in good standing of a volunteer fire company or department, volunteer emergency medical services provider or a volunteer auxiliary police officer of a police department within the state of New York.

(B) The student shall be required to maintain status as a member in good standing of the volunteer fire company or department, volunteer emergency medical service provider or police department in which such student serves as an auxiliary police officer through the completion of such student's academic program.

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

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1 (C) The student shall be required to maintain a cumulative grade point
2 average (G.P.A.) of at least 2.5 in order to remain eligible for the
3 program.

4 (ii) If a student or former student fails to fulfill any of the
5 requirements set forth in clause (i) of this subparagraph, the trustees
6 shall convert to a student loan the full amount of the tuition which
7 would have been paid by such student, as determined by the New York
8 state higher education services corporation, plus interest, according to
9 a schedule to be determined by such corporation. Such repayment may also
10 be required if a recipient fails to respond to requests for information
11 necessary to determine continued eligibility or for administration of
12 the program.

13 (iii) Any student who elects to participate in the program under this
14 subparagraph shall be required to apply for tuition assistance program
15 funding. Funds awarded on the tuition assistance program shall be
16 applied towards the cost of tuition prior to an award under this clause.

17 (iv) Any student who elects to participate in the program under this
18 subparagraph and is otherwise eligible for the excelsior scholarship
19 program shall be required to apply for same. Funds awarded through the
20 excelsior scholarship program shall be applied towards the cost of
21 tuition prior to an award under this clause.

22 (v) Students shall be responsible for all other costs including hous-
23 ing, fees and other non-tuition related charges.

24 § 2. Subdivision 7 of section 6206 of the education law is amended by
25 adding a new paragraph (g) to read as follows:

26 (g) The trustees shall implement a program to permit any student who
27 has been admitted to an institution operated by the city university to
28 attend without the payment of tuition and fees if such student fulfills
29 the requirements of such program pursuant to the provisions of this
30 paragraph.

31 (i) The trustees shall provide an application process and administer
32 the program according to the following criteria:

33 (A) Any student eligible for resident tuition rates is eligible for
34 this program, provided that at the time of application, such student
35 submits proof of membership in good standing of a volunteer fire company
36 or department, volunteer medical services provider or a volunteer auxil-
37 iary police officer of a police department within the state of New York.

38 (B) The student shall be required to maintain status as a member in
39 good standing of the volunteer fire company or department, volunteer
40 emergency medical service provider or police department in which such
41 student serves as an auxiliary police officer through the completion of
42 such student's academic program.

43 (C) The student shall be required to maintain a cumulative grade point
44 average (G.P.A.) of at least 2.5 in order to remain eligible for the
45 program.

46 (ii) If a student or former student fails to fulfill any of the
47 requirements set forth in subparagraph (i) of this paragraph, the trus-
48 tees shall convert to a student loan the full amount of the tuition
49 which would have been paid by such student, as determined by the New
50 York state higher education services corporation, plus interest, accord-
51 ing to a schedule to be determined by such corporation. Such repayment
52 may also be required if a recipient fails to respond to requests for
53 information necessary to determine continued eligibility or for adminis-
54 tration of the program.

55 (iii) Any student who elects to participate in the program under this
56 paragraph shall be required to apply for tuition assistance program

1 funding. Funds awarded on the tuition assistance program shall be
2 applied towards the cost of tuition prior to an award under this subpar-
3 agraph.

4 (iv) Any student who elects to participate in the program under this
5 subparagraph and is otherwise eligible for the excelsior scholarship
6 program shall be required to apply for same. Funds awarded through the
7 excelsior scholarship program shall be applied towards the cost of
8 tuition prior to an award under this clause.

9 (v) Students shall be responsible for all other costs including hous-
10 ing, fees and other non-tuition related charges.

11 § 3. Subdivision 1 of section 6304 of the education law is amended by
12 adding a new paragraph e to read as follows:

13 e. The trustees, sponsors or other governing body of a community
14 college shall implement a program to permit any student who has been
15 admitted to such community college to attend without the payment of
16 tuition and fees if such student fulfills the requirements of such
17 program pursuant to the provisions of this paragraph.

18 (i) The trustees shall provide an application process and administer
19 the program according to the following criteria:

20 (A) Any student eligible for resident tuition rates is eligible for
21 this program, provided that at the time of application, such student
22 submits proof of membership in good standing of a volunteer fire company
23 or department, volunteer medical services provider or a volunteer auxil-
24 iary police officer of a police department within the state of New York.

25 (B) The student shall be required to maintain status as a member in
26 good standing of the volunteer fire company or department, volunteer
27 emergency medical service provider or police department in which such
28 student serves as an auxiliary police officer through the completion of
29 such student's academic program.

30 (C) The student shall be required to maintain a cumulative grade point
31 average (G.P.A.) of at least 2.5 in order to remain eligible for the
32 program.

33 (ii) If a student or former student fails to fulfill any of the
34 requirements set forth in subparagraph (i) of this paragraph, the trus-
35 tees shall convert to a student loan the full amount of the tuition
36 which would have been paid by such student, as determined by the New
37 York state higher education services corporation, plus interest, accord-
38 ing to a schedule to be determined by such corporation. Such repayment
39 may also be required if a recipient fails to respond to requests for
40 information necessary to determine continued eligibility or for adminis-
41 tration of the program.

42 (iii) Any student who elects to participate in the program under this
43 paragraph shall be required to apply for tuition assistance program
44 funding. Funds awarded on the tuition assistance program shall be
45 applied towards the cost of tuition prior to an award under this subpar-
46 agraph.

47 (iv) Any student who elects to participate in the program under this
48 subparagraph and is otherwise eligible for the excelsior scholarship
49 program shall be required to apply for same. Funds awarded through the
50 excelsior scholarship program shall be applied towards the cost of
51 tuition prior to an award under this clause.

52 (v) Students shall be responsible for all other costs including hous-
53 ing, fees and other non-tuition related charges.

54 § 4. This act shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall
55 have become a law.