

# STATE OF NEW YORK

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5542--A

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

## IN ASSEMBLY

February 14, 2025

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Introduced by M. of A. HYNDMAN -- read once and referred to the Committee on Higher Education -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to including underrepresented ethnic groups in the admission criteria for the science and technology entry program and collegiate science and technology entry program

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

1 Section 1. Legislative findings. Science, Technology, Engineering,  
2 and Mathematics (STEM) professions play a crucial role in New York  
3 state's economy, workforce development, and innovation. STEM fields are  
4 a cornerstone of economic growth and workforce expansion in New York  
5 state.

6 STEM and allied health professions are essential to New York's econom-  
7 ic growth, technological advancement, and healthcare infrastructure.  
8 While STEM fields drive innovation and economic development, allied  
9 health professionals play a crucial role in ensuring accessible and  
10 high-quality healthcare services. Continued investment in education,  
11 workforce development, and industry partnerships will be critical to  
12 sustaining both fields. Moving forward, access to STEM and allied health  
13 training programs will be essential in meeting workforce demands and  
14 supporting the well-being of all New Yorkers.

15 The Science and Technology Entry Program (STEP) and Collegiate Science  
16 and Technology Entry Program (CSTEP) are important tools to ensure that  
17 these programs are available to all aspiring members of the STEM and  
18 licensed professional workforces. These programs will continue to build  
19 on their legacy of ensuring representation in the fields they serve,  
20 which will strengthen our state's workforce and economy.

21 Representation in the workforce is critical, especially in New York's  
22 healthcare workforce. A 2017 study published in the Journal of General

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

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1 Internal Medicine found that Black and Hispanic patients were more like-  
2 ly to report feeling comfortable discussing sensitive topics with a  
3 provider of the same race or ethnicity. A 2019 study published in the  
4 Journal of Health Care Administration found that culturally competent  
5 care was associated with improved patient satisfaction, adherence to  
6 treatment, and health outcomes. Further a 2020 report by the National  
7 Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine found that a diverse  
8 healthcare workforce can improve access to care for underserved popu-  
9 lations. These benefits are not limited to healthcare. A 2017 study  
10 published in Nature and a 2019 study in the Harvard Business Review  
11 found that diverse teams outperform homogenous teams in terms of creati-  
12 vity and problem-solving. This means that the health and economic future  
13 of our state is dependent on the diversity of our workforce.

14 STEP and CSTEP have a successful history of bringing underrepresented  
15 students into STEM licensed professions and health professions fields.  
16 These programs create academic opportunities for students who have faced  
17 disadvantages and discrimination. To ensure that these programs can  
18 continue to fulfill their mission of delivering opportunity and equity  
19 to students, the programs' admissions criteria must be updated to be in  
20 line with recent legal findings.

21 The STEP and CSTEP admissions criteria must allow for admission of any  
22 student from any group underrepresented in a STEM, licensed profession  
23 field or health profession field. This will require that the New York  
24 State Board of Regents identify underrepresentation in eligible career  
25 fields prior to the periodic release of RFPs for STEP and CSTEP. Under-  
26 representation shall be determined using available workforce statistics  
27 and defined in rules. This determination will provide "focused and meas-  
28 urable objectives" (as required by the U.S. Supreme Court) while also  
29 having a definable endpoint: the correction of underrepresentation in a  
30 specific professional field reviewed on a regular basis (the contractual  
31 period defined by an individual RFP).

32 Every ethnic or racial group is underrepresented in various workforce  
33 fields in New York. STEP and CSTEP will help rectify that issue and  
34 ultimately root out the pernicious impact of underrepresentation in  
35 various professions.

36 § 2. Subdivisions 1 and 5 of section 6454 of the education law, as  
37 added by chapter 31 of the laws of 1985, subparagraph 4 of paragraph a  
38 of subdivision 5 as amended by chapter 439 of the laws of 1988, are  
39 amended and a new subdivision 9 is added to read as follows:

40 1. As used in this section:

41 a. [~~"Council" means the council on professional career opportunity~~  
42 ~~created pursuant to article forty four of the executive law,~~

43 ~~b.] "Eligible students" shall mean secondary school students inter-  
44 ested in pursuing a career in an eligible profession as defined in para-  
45 graph c of this subdivision, who are either economically disadvantaged  
46 or [~~minorities historically~~] a member of an ethnic group that is under-  
47 represented in the [~~scientific, technical, health, and health-related~~  
48 ~~professions as defined by the regents after consultation with the coun-~~  
49 ~~cil, and~~] eligible profession they are interested in pursuing.~~

50 [~~e.] b. "Eligible applicant" shall mean an institution of postsecon-~~  
51 ~~dary education or a consortia of such institutions.~~

52 c. "Eligible profession" shall mean a scientific, technical, health,  
53 health-related profession or any profession licensed pursuant to title  
54 eight of this chapter.

1 5. a. Grants shall be awarded to eligible applicants based upon crite-  
2 ria established by the commissioner after consultation with the council,  
3 including, but not limited to, the following:

4 (1) an established record of conducting effective collaborative educa-  
5 tional programs with neighboring secondary schools;

6 (2) the ability and willingness to cooperate with other postsecondary  
7 institutions in operating a program funded pursuant to this section; and

8 (3) the capacity to secure or provide additional support in amounts  
9 equal to at least twenty-five percent of the grant sought under this  
10 section through private and other governmental sources and through  
11 in-kind services[†

12 ~~(4) a location within a school district with an enrollment comprised~~  
13 ~~of at least twenty percent minority group students or a location near~~  
14 ~~such a district that is accessible by public transportation].~~

15 b. [~~The commissioner shall select the grant recipients after consulta-~~  
16 ~~tion with the council.~~] To the fullest extent practicable the commis-  
17 sioner [~~and the council~~] shall ensure that grants are awarded to eligi-  
18 ble applicants in a diversity of regions of the state.

19 9. The department shall periodically review workforce data to deter-  
20 mine levels of ethnic representation in eligible professions.

21 § 3. Subdivisions 1, 2 and 3 of section 6455 of the education law, as  
22 added by chapter 285 of the laws of 1986, paragraph (a) of subdivision 2  
23 and paragraph (a) of subdivision 3 as amended by chapter 26 of the laws  
24 of 2019, and the opening paragraph of subparagraph (ii) of paragraph (a)  
25 of subdivision 2 and the opening paragraph of subparagraph (ii) of para-  
26 graph (a) of subdivision 3 as amended by chapter 669 of the laws of  
27 2022, are amended to read as follows:

28 1. General requirements. The commissioner shall award grants to  
29 degree-granting institutions in New York or to consortia of such insti-  
30 tutions to be used for the purpose of increasing access by [~~minority~~]  
31 underrepresented or disadvantaged students to academic programs that  
32 have been registered by the commissioner and that prepare students  
33 either for licensure in the professions or for employment in scientific  
34 and technical fields.

35 2. Undergraduate programs. (a) (i) Undergraduate science and technol-  
36 ogy entry program moneys may be used for tutoring, counseling, remedial  
37 and special summer courses, supplemental financial assistance, program  
38 administration, and other activities which the commissioner may deem  
39 appropriate. To be eligible for undergraduate collegiate science and  
40 technology entry program support, a student must be a resident of New  
41 York, or meet the requirements of subparagraph (ii) of this paragraph,  
42 and must be either economically disadvantaged or [~~from a minority~~] a  
43 member of an ethnic group [~~historically under represented in the scien-~~  
44 ~~tific, technical, health and health-related professions~~] that is under-  
45 represented in the eligible profession or field they are pursuing, as  
46 defined by the regents prior to the release of periodic applications for  
47 funding, and must demonstrate interest in and a potential for a profes-  
48 sional career if provided special services. Eligible students must be in  
49 good academic standing, enrolled full time in an approved, undergraduate  
50 level program of study, as defined by the regents.

51 (ii) An applicant who is not a legal resident of New York state, but  
52 who is a United States citizen, a permanent lawful resident, an individ-  
53 ual who is granted U or T non-immigrant status pursuant to the Victims  
54 of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, a person granted  
55 temporary protected status pursuant to the Federal Immigration Act of  
56 1990, an individual of a class of refugees paroled by the attorney

1 general of the United States under [~~his or her~~] such attorney general's  
2 parole authority pertaining to the admission of noncitizens to the  
3 United States, or an applicant without lawful immigration status, shall  
4 be eligible for an award at the undergraduate level of study provided  
5 that the student:

6 (1) attended a registered New York state high school for two or more  
7 years, graduated from a registered New York state high school and  
8 applied for attendance at the institution of higher education for the  
9 undergraduate study for which an award is sought within five years of  
10 receiving a New York state high school diploma; or

11 (2) attended an approved New York state program for a state high  
12 school equivalency diploma, received a state high school equivalency  
13 diploma and applied for attendance at the institution of higher educa-  
14 tion for the undergraduate study for which an award is sought within  
15 five years of receiving a state high school equivalency diploma; or

16 (3) is otherwise eligible for the payment of tuition and fees at a  
17 rate no greater than that imposed for resident students of the state  
18 university of New York, the city university of New York or community  
19 colleges as prescribed in subparagraph eight of paragraph h of subdivi-  
20 sion two of section three hundred fifty-five or paragraph (a) of subdivi-  
21 sion seven of section sixty-two hundred six of this chapter.

22 Provided, further, that a student without lawful immigration status  
23 shall also be required to file an affidavit with such institution of  
24 higher education stating that the student has filed an application to  
25 legalize [~~his or her~~] such student's immigration status, or will file  
26 such an application as soon as [~~he or she~~] such student is eligible to  
27 do so.

28 (b) Applications for funding shall be submitted by eligible insti-  
29 tutions to the department in accordance with requirements established by  
30 the commissioner. Priority consideration shall be given to institutions  
31 which coordinate their efforts to increase [~~minority access~~] represen-  
32 tation of underrepresented ethnic groups with similar activities for  
33 programs at the secondary level in accordance with this section. Grants  
34 shall be awarded based on criteria established by the commissioner.

35 3. Graduate programs. (a) (i) Graduate science and technology entry  
36 program moneys may be used for recruitment, academic enrichment, career  
37 planning, supplemental financial assistance, review for licensing exam-  
38 inations, program administration, and other activities which the commis-  
39 sioner may deem appropriate. To be eligible for graduate collegiate  
40 science and technology entry program support, a student must be a resi-  
41 dent of New York, or meet the requirements of subparagraph (ii) of this  
42 paragraph, and must be either economically disadvantaged or [~~from~~] a  
43 [~~minority~~] member of an ethnic group [~~historically~~] that is underrepre-  
44 sented in the [~~scientific, technical and health-related professions~~]  
45 eligible profession or field they are pursuing as defined by the regents  
46 prior to the release of periodic applications for funding. Eligible  
47 students must be in good academic standing, enrolled full time in an  
48 approved graduate level program, as defined by the regents.

49 (ii) An applicant who is not a legal resident of New York state, but  
50 either is a United States citizen, a permanent lawful resident, an indi-  
51 vidual who is granted U or T non-immigrant status pursuant to the  
52 Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, a person  
53 granted temporary protected status pursuant to the Federal Immigration  
54 Act of 1990, an individual of a class of refugees paroled by the attor-  
55 ney general of the United States under [~~his or her~~] such attorney gener-  
56 al's parole authority pertaining to the admission of noncitizens to the

1 United States, or an applicant without lawful immigration status shall  
2 be eligible for an award at the graduate level of study provided that  
3 the student:

4 (1) attended a registered approved New York state high school for two  
5 or more years, graduated from a registered New York state high school  
6 and applied for attendance at the institution of higher education for  
7 the graduate study for which an award is sought within ten years of  
8 receiving a New York state high school diploma; or

9 (2) attended an approved New York state program for a state high  
10 school equivalency diploma, received a state high school equivalency  
11 diploma and applied for attendance at the institution of higher educa-  
12 tion for the graduate study for which an award is sought within ten  
13 years of receiving a state high school equivalency diploma; or

14 (3) is otherwise eligible for the payment of tuition and fees at a  
15 rate no greater than that imposed for resident students of the state  
16 university of New York, the city university of New York or community  
17 colleges as prescribed in subparagraph eight of paragraph h of subdivi-  
18 sion two of section three hundred fifty-five or paragraph (a) of subdivi-  
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20 Provided, further, that a student without lawful immigration status  
21 shall also be required to file an affidavit with such institution of  
22 higher education stating that the student has filed an application to  
23 legalize [~~his or her~~] such student's immigration status, or will file  
24 such an application as soon as [~~he or she~~] such student is eligible to  
25 do so.

26 (b) Applications for funding shall be made by eligible institutions in  
27 accordance with requirements established by the commissioner. Grants  
28 shall be awarded based on criteria established by the commissioner.  
29 Priority consideration shall be given to institutions which coordinate  
30 their efforts to increase [~~minority access~~] representation of underrep-  
31 resented ethnic groups with similar activities at the undergraduate  
32 level.

33 § 4. This act shall take effect on the thirtieth day after it shall  
34 have become a law. Effective immediately, the addition, amendment and/or  
35 repeal of any rule or regulation necessary for the implementation of  
36 this act on its effective date are authorized to be made and completed  
37 on or before such effective date.