

# STATE OF NEW YORK

5824

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

## IN ASSEMBLY

February 20, 2025

Introduced by M. of A. SOLAGES, STECK -- read once and referred 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 volunteer firefighters

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

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

3 (1-a) The trustees shall implement a program to permit any student who  
4 has been admitted to a state-operated institution of the state universi-  
5 ty to attend without the payment of tuition and fees if such student  
6 serves as an active volunteer firefighter as defined in subdivision one  
7 of section two hundred fifteen of the general municipal law. The  
8 provisions of this subparagraph shall only apply to costs of one under-  
9 graduate degree and any additional costs associated with more than one  
10 simultaneous undergraduate degree shall not be covered by this program.

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

13 (A) Any student eligible for resident tuition rates is eligible for  
14 this program.

15 (B) The student shall be required to serve as an active volunteer  
16 firefighter through the completion of the student's academic program.

17 (C) Students shall be required to complete their degree program within  
18 a minimum period of time to be set by the trustees which shall be no  
19 fewer than three years and no more than five years.

20 (D) The student shall be required to maintain a cumulative grade point  
21 average (G.P.A.) of at least 2.5 in order to remain eligible for the  
22 program.

23 (ii) If a student or former student fails to fulfill any of the  
24 requirements set forth in clause (i) of this subparagraph, the trustees  
25 shall convert to a student loan the full amount of the tuition which

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

LBD10061-01-5

1 would have been paid by such student, as determined by the New York  
2 state higher education services corporation, plus interest, according to  
3 a schedule to be determined by such corporation. Such repayment may also  
4 be required if a recipient fails to respond to requests for information  
5 necessary to determine continued eligibility or for administration of  
6 the program.

7 (iii) Any student who elects to participate in the program under this  
8 subparagraph shall be required to apply for tuition assistance program  
9 funding. Funds awarded on the tuition assistance program shall be  
10 applied towards the cost of tuition prior to an award under this subpar-  
11 agraph.

12 (iv) Students shall be responsible for all other costs including hous-  
13 ing, fees and other non-tuition related charges.

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

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

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

23 (A) Any student eligible for resident tuition rates is eligible for  
24 this program.

25 (B) The student shall be required to serve as an active volunteer  
26 firefighter through the completion of the student's academic program.

27 (C) Students shall be required to complete their degree program within  
28 a minimum period of time to be set by the trustees which shall be no  
29 fewer than three years and no more than five years.

30 (D) 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) Students shall be responsible for all other costs including hous-  
48 ing, fees and other non-tuition related charges.

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

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

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

3 (A) Any student eligible for resident tuition rates is eligible for  
4 this program.

5 (B) The student shall be required to serve as an active volunteer  
6 firefighter through the completion of the student's academic program.

7 (C) Students shall be required to complete their degree program within  
8 a minimum period of time to be set by the trustees which shall be no  
9 fewer than three years and no more than five years.

10 (D) The student shall be required to maintain a cumulative grade point  
11 average (G.P.A.) of at least 2.5 in order to remain eligible for the  
12 program.

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

22 (iii) Any student who elects to participate in the program under this  
23 paragraph shall be required to apply for tuition assistance program  
24 funding. Funds awarded on the tuition assistance program shall be  
25 applied towards the cost of tuition prior to an award under this subpar-  
26 agraph.

27 (iv) Students shall be responsible for all other costs including hous-  
28 ing, fees and other non-tuition related charges.

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