

STATE OF NEW YORK

3696

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

January 29, 2025

Introduced by Sen. SANDERS -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Finance

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to the establishment of the New York promise program for community colleges; and making an appropriation therefor

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

1 Section 1. The education law is amended by adding a new section 6311
2 to read as follows:

3 § 6311. New York promise program. 1. Establishment. There is hereby
4 established the New York promise program for community colleges.

5 2. Administration. The department shall administer the New York prom-
6 ise program as provided for in this section. Subject to subdivisions
7 five and six of this section, the department shall provide a waiver of
8 tuition for community college courses to a person who meets the criteria
9 described in subdivisions three and four of this section. Such waiver
10 shall be a grant and limited as provided in subdivisions five and six of
11 this section.

12 3. Eligibility. A grant shall be awarded under this section to a
13 person who:

14 (a) is enrolled in courses that are:

15 (i) offered at a community college in this state; and

16 (ii) determined by the department, to be required for completion of:

17 (1) a one-year curriculum for students who plan to transfer to another
18 post-secondary institution of education;

19 (2) an associate's degree; or

20 (3) a program in career and technical education.

21 (b) has been a resident of this state for at least twelve months prior
22 to enrolling in the courses described in paragraph (a) of this subdivi-
23 sion;

24 (c) attained their highest level of education in this state prior to:

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

LBD07863-01-5

1 (i) receiving a high school diploma; or

2 (ii) receiving a general educational development certificate.

3 (d) attained their highest level of education as described in para-
4 graph (c) of this subdivision within six months from the date the person
5 first enrolls in courses described in paragraph (a) of this subdivision
6 for the purpose of receiving a grant under this section;

7 (e) earned a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 or better in high
8 school or otherwise demonstrated an equivalent academic ability, as
9 determined by the department;

10 (f) completed and submitted the free application for federal student
11 aid (FAFSA) for each academic year and accepted all state and federal
12 aid grants available, if eligible to file the application; and

13 (g) has not completed either of the following:

14 (i) more than a total of ninety credit hours, or the equivalent, at a
15 post-secondary institution of education; or

16 (ii) a curriculum, degree or program, as described in subparagraph
17 (ii) of paragraph (a) of this subdivision.

18 4. Continued eligibility. (a) A person continues to remain eligible to
19 receive a grant under this section if the person, in addition to satis-
20 fying the criteria described in subdivision three of this section:

21 (i) maintains a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 or better during
22 each term for which such person has received a grant under this section;

23 (ii) makes satisfactory progress towards a one-year curriculum, degree
24 or program, as described in subparagraph (ii) of paragraph (a) of subdi-
25 vision three of this section, as determined by the department; and

26 (iii) enrolls in courses described in paragraph (a) of subdivision
27 three of this section for a sufficient number of credit hours to be
28 considered at least a half-time student each term for at least three
29 terms in each consecutive year.

30 (b) A person who fails to maintain the cumulative grade point average
31 specified in subparagraph (i) of paragraph (a) of this subdivision
32 becomes ineligible to receive a grant under this section for the term
33 after which the person fails to maintain the cumulative grade point
34 average, unless the eligibility requirement of subparagraph (i) of para-
35 graph (a) of this subdivision is waived by the department.

36 5. Awards. (a) The total amount of a grant awarded under this section
37 shall be based on each term that a person is enrolled in courses
38 described in paragraph (a) of subdivision three of this section. After
39 the amount of tuition for the person for the term is reduced by fifty
40 dollars, to be paid by the person, and reduced by any amounts received
41 by the person in state and federal aid grants, the person shall be
42 eligible for a grant under this section in an amount that equals:

43 (i) except as provided in subparagraph (ii) of this paragraph, not
44 less than the greater of:

45 (1) one thousand dollars; and

46 (2) the person's actual cost of tuition.

47 (ii) not more than the lesser of:

48 (1) the average cost of tuition at a community college in this state,
49 as determined by the department; and

50 (2) the person's actual cost for tuition.

51 (b) The minimum amount of a grant, as calculated under paragraph (a)
52 of this subdivision, may be prorated for a person who is enrolled in
53 courses described in paragraph (a) of subdivision three of this section
54 for a sufficient number of credit hours to be considered at least a
55 half-time student but not a full-time student.

1 (c) The department may prescribe by rule or regulation whether to
2 include fees, and any limitations related to the inclusion of fees, when
3 determining the actual cost of tuition or the average cost of tuition
4 under this subdivision.

5 6. Total grant amount. The total amount in grants awarded under this
6 section by the department may not exceed ten million dollars per fiscal
7 year, or any lesser amount available to the department for the purpose
8 of this section. The department may adopt by rule or regulation the
9 priority by which grants are awarded, which may allow for preference to
10 be given to persons enrolled in school districts or high schools that
11 meet specified criteria.

12 7. Rules and regulations. The department shall adopt any rules and
13 regulations necessary for the administration of this section including
14 any requirements related to:

15 (a) specifying the form and timelines for submitting an application
16 for a grant under this section;

17 (b) determining whether a person is eligible for a grant under this
18 section, including whether the person shall be given priority as allowed
19 under subdivision six of this section;

20 (c) implementing programs or policies that improve the academic
21 success or completion rates for persons who receive a grant under this
22 section;

23 (d) prescribing eligibility requirements and grant calculations for
24 persons dually enrolled in a community college and a public university;
25 and

26 (e) evaluating the impact of the program established under this
27 section, including any requirements for reporting data needed for evalu-
28 ation.

29 8. No later than December thirty-first of each even-numbered year, the
30 department shall submit to the governor, the temporary president of the
31 senate and the speaker of the assembly a report that summarizes the
32 department's findings on the impact of the program established under
33 this section. Such report shall include:

34 (a) student completion rates of curricula, degrees and programs
35 described in subparagraph (ii) of paragraph (a) of subdivision three of
36 this section;

37 (b) the amount of federal aid grants received by persons who received
38 a grant under this section;

39 (c) the financial impact of the program on school districts that had
40 students receive a grant under this section;

41 (d) the financial and enrollment impact of the program on community
42 colleges and public universities in this state; and

43 (e) the overall success rate of this program and financial impact of
44 the program.

45 § 2. The sum of four hundred fifty million dollars (\$ 450,000,000.00),
46 or so much thereof as may be necessary, is hereby appropriated to the
47 department of education from any moneys in the state treasury in the
48 general fund to the credit of the department of education not otherwise
49 appropriated for services and expenses of the New York State Promise
50 Program for the purposes of carrying out the provisions of this act.
51 Such sum shall be payable on the audit and warrant of the state comp-
52 troller on vouchers certified or approved by the commissioner of educa-
53 tion, or such commissioner's duly designated representative in the
54 manner provided by law. No expenditure shall be made from this appropri-
55 ation until a certificate of approval of availability shall have been
56 issued by the director of the budget and filed with the state comp-

1 troller and a copy filed with the chair of the senate finance committee
2 and the chair of the assembly ways and means committee. Such certificate
3 may be amended from time to time by the director of the budget and a
4 copy of each such amendment shall be filed with the state comptroller,
5 the chair of the senate finance committee and the chair of the assembly
6 ways and means committee.

7 § 3. This act shall take effect on the one hundred twentieth day after
8 it shall have become a law and apply to courses enrolled in beginning in
9 the 2025-2026 academic year.