

# STATE OF NEW YORK

11734

## IN ASSEMBLY

September 16, 2026

Introduced by COMMITTEE ON RULES -- (at request of M. of A. Santabarbara) -- read once and referred to the Committee on Higher Education

AN ACT to amend the mental hygiene law and the education law, in relation to establishing a direct service professional credit and career ladder tuition assistance grant program

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

1 Section 1. Section 13.23 of the mental hygiene law is amended by  
2 adding a new subdivision (d) to read as follows:

3 (d) The commissioner shall work cooperatively with the state universi-  
4 ty boards of trustees and the city university boards of trustees to  
5 establish a grant program pursuant to section sixty-three hundred  
6 three-b of the education law in order to develop training programs and  
7 improve existing workforce development programs for the purpose of  
8 training direct support professionals and establishing a career ladder  
9 for individuals working with individuals with developmental disabili-  
10 ties. Within funds appropriated for such purpose, the commissioner may  
11 establish a direct service professional credit and career ladder tuition  
12 assistance grant program.

13 § 2. The education law is amended by adding a new section 6303-b to  
14 read as follows:

15 § 6303-b. Direct service professional credit and career ladder tuition  
16 assistance grant program. 1. For purposes of this section, the following  
17 terms shall have the following meanings:

18 (a) "Direct service professional credit program" shall mean the commu-  
19 nity college programs established pursuant to a memorandum of under-  
20 standing between the commissioner of the office for people with develop-  
21 mental disabilities and the board of trustees of the state university  
22 and the city university to develop training programs and a college  
23 certificate program that links theory with practice for the purpose of  
24 training direct support professionals employed by agencies who are fund-  
25 ed by the office for people with developmental disabilities and provid-  
26 ing supports and services to individuals with developmental disabili-  
27 ties.

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

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1 (b) "Career ladder program" shall mean the community college programs  
2 established pursuant to a memorandum of understanding between the  
3 commissioner of the office for people with developmental disabilities  
4 and the board of trustees of the state university and the city universi-  
5 ty to develop a career ladder supervisor/manager program leading to an  
6 associate's degree in health/human services or a related major and asso-  
7 ciated credit-bearing certificate programs in community residence  
8 management or developmental disabilities for participants who do not  
9 elect to obtain an associate's degree.

10 (c) "At least a part-time basis" shall mean enrollment for at least  
11 six hours per semester or four hours per quarter.

12 (d) "Tuition" shall mean the total semester, quarter or classroom hour  
13 cost of instruction at a state-operated community college, excluding  
14 mandatory fees, book charges and room and board.

15 (e) "Grant programs" shall mean the direct service professional credit  
16 program and the career ladder program.

17 2. The state university boards of trustees and the city university  
18 board of trustees may establish grant programs for community colleges to  
19 develop training programs and improve existing workforce development  
20 programs for the purpose of training direct support professionals and  
21 establishing a career ladder for individuals working with individuals  
22 with developmental disabilities pursuant to a memorandum of understand-  
23 ing with the commissioner of the office for people with developmental  
24 disabilities.

25 3. Pursuant to a memorandum of understanding with the community  
26 college and the commissioner of the office for people with developmental  
27 disabilities and within funds appropriated for such purpose, the office  
28 for people with developmental disabilities shall establish a tuition  
29 assistance grant program to provide tuition assistance to direct support  
30 professionals employed by agencies who are funded by such office and  
31 providing supports and services to individuals with developmental disa-  
32 bilities or for individuals working with individuals with developmental  
33 disabilities enrolled on at least a part-time basis at a community  
34 college as defined in section three hundred fifty of this chapter.

35 Any program established pursuant to this section shall provide tuition  
36 assistance grants to such direct support professionals employed by agen-  
37 cies who are funded by the office for people with developmental disabil-  
38 ities and providing supports and services to individuals with develop-  
39 mental disabilities or for individuals working with individuals with  
40 developmental disabilities in an amount up to fifty percent of the  
41 tuition required to be paid to such state-operated community college by  
42 such direct support professionals employed by agencies who are funded by  
43 such office and providing supports and services to individuals with  
44 developmental disabilities or for individuals working with individuals  
45 with developmental disabilities.

46 4. Upon successful completion of either the direct service profes-  
47 sional credit program or the career ladder program the office for people  
48 with developmental disabilities certified provider employing the direct  
49 support professional or individuals working with individuals with devel-  
50 opmental disabilities shall reimburse the community college for one-half  
51 of the cost of such employee training or tuition.

52 § 3. This act shall take effect immediately and shall apply to academ-  
53 ic semesters, quarters and classroom hours beginning on or after January  
54 1, 2027.