

CHAPTER 2023-93

Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 1272

An act relating to educational grants; creating s. 1009.521, F.S.; providing education grants under the William L. Boyd, IV, Effective Access to Student Education Grant Program to certain students who were eligible as of a specified date to receive grants under the former Access to Better Learning and Education Grant Program; providing education grants to eligible students at for-profit colleges or universities under certain conditions; prescribing criteria for participating institutions; requiring that institutions that wish to participate provide notice to the Department of Education by a certain date; requiring that such institutions comply with specified provision; amending s. 1009.40, F.S.; adding a cross reference to the eligibility requirement for residency; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 1009.521, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

1009.521 Educational grants to former eligible tuition assistance grant students.—

(1)(a) The department shall issue a grant pursuant to s. 1009.89 to any full-time degree-seeking undergraduate student who meets the requirements of s. 1009.89(4)(a) and (b)1. and is registered at an independent nonprofit university that, as of January 1, 2021, was eligible for the Access to Better Learning and Education Grant Program, as created by former s. 1009.891, if such university has been located in this state for more than 20 years; offers nursing programs at its Florida campus which include licensed practical nurse (LPN), registered nurse (RN), including associate of science in nursing (ASN) and bachelor of science in nursing (BSN), accelerated BSN, practical nurse bridge to ASN, and practical nurse bridge to BSN; and is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission.

(b) The department shall issue a grant pursuant to s. 1009.89 to any full-time degree-seeking undergraduate student who meets the requirements of s. 1009.89(4)(a) and (b)1. and is registered at an independent for-profit college or university located in and chartered by this state, accredited by an accrediting agency or association recognized by the database created and maintained by the United States Department of Education, was licensed by the department on or before October 1, 2021, and has Level 6 accreditation from the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

(2) An institution that meets the criteria specified in paragraph (1)(a) or paragraph (1)(b) may not be a state university or Florida College System institution. In addition, the institution must have a secular purpose, and the

receipt of state aid by students at the institution may not have the primary effect of advancing or impeding religion or result in an excessive entanglement between the state and any religious sect.

(3) To qualify for funding under this section, an institution must exercise a one-time option to participate by notifying the department, in writing, of its decision to participate on or before September 1, 2023, and must comply with s. 1009.89(5)(a)-(c).

Section 2. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section 1009.40, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1009.40 General requirements for student eligibility for state financial aid awards and tuition assistance grants.—

(1)(a) The general requirements for eligibility of students for state financial aid awards and tuition assistance grants consist of the following:

1. Achievement of the academic requirements of and acceptance at a state university or Florida College System institution; a nursing diploma school approved by the Florida Board of Nursing; a Florida college or university which is accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the State Board of Education; a Florida institution the credits of which are acceptable for transfer to state universities; a career center; or a private career institution accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the State Board of Education.

2. Residency in this state for no less than 1 year preceding the award of aid or a tuition assistance grant for a program established pursuant to s. 1009.50, s. 1009.505, s. 1009.51, s. 1009.52, s. 1009.521, s. 1009.53, s. 1009.60, s. 1009.62, s. 1009.72, s. 1009.73, s. 1009.75, s. 1009.77, s. 1009.89, or s. 1009.894. Residency in this state must be for purposes other than to obtain an education. Resident status for purposes of receiving state financial aid awards shall be determined in the same manner as resident status for tuition purposes pursuant to s. 1009.21.

3. Submission of certification attesting to the accuracy, completeness, and correctness of information provided to demonstrate a student's eligibility to receive state financial aid awards or tuition assistance grants. Falsification of such information shall result in the denial of a pending application and revocation of an award or grant currently held to the extent that no further payments shall be made. Additionally, students who knowingly make false statements in order to receive state financial aid awards or tuition assistance grants commit a misdemeanor of the second degree subject to the provisions of s. 837.06 and shall be required to return all state financial aid awards or tuition assistance grants wrongfully obtained.

Section 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

Approved by the Governor May 17, 2023.

Filed in Office Secretary of State May 17, 2023.