

LEGISLATIVE BILL 1270

Approved by the Governor April 15, 2024

Introduced by Murman, 38.

A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to the Door to College Scholarship Act; to amend sections 85-3202, 85-3204, and 85-3205, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2023; to redefine a term; to change provisions relating to the powers and duties of an eligible postsecondary educational institution and the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education under the act; to harmonize provisions; and to repeal the original sections.
Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

Section 1. Section 85-3202, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2023, is amended to read:

85-3202 For purposes of the Door to College Scholarship Act:

(1) Award means a grant of money under the act by the commission in the form of a Door to College Scholarship to an eligible student for educational expenses;

(2) Award year means the period beginning on July 1 through the following June 30;

(3) Commission means the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education;

(4) Educational expenses means student costs for tuition, mandatory fees, other education-related fees, room and board, books, and other costs related to a student's education;

(5) Eligible postsecondary educational institution means a public or private postsecondary educational institution:

(a) Located in Nebraska;

(b) Primarily engaged in the instruction of students;

(c) Satisfying state statutory requirements relating to the approval and licensure of schools, colleges, and universities and maintaining accreditation by an accrediting organization recognized by the United States Department of Education;

(d) Offering courses of instruction in regularly scheduled classes to regularly enrolled undergraduate students who reside in Nebraska and have received a high school diploma or the equivalent; and

(e) Which has adopted, and has available for inspection, award refund and repayment policies;

(6) Eligible student means an undergraduate student who:

(a) Graduated from high school from an accredited education program at a youth rehabilitation and treatment center operated and utilized in compliance with state law or graduated from an approved or accredited public, private, denominational, or parochial school ~~within one year~~ after being discharged from a youth rehabilitation and treatment center operated and utilized in compliance with state law;

(b) Is enrolled in an eligible postsecondary educational institution;

(c) Has applied for federal financial aid through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid for the applicable award year;

(d) Is a resident student who is domiciled in Nebraska as provided by section 85-502; and

(e) Complies with all other provisions of the Door to College Scholarship Act and any rules and regulations adopted and promulgated pursuant to the act;

(7) Full-time status means enrollment in at least twenty-four semester credit hours, thirty-six quarter credit hours, or nine hundred clock hours per award year;

(8) Part-time status means enrollment in at least twelve semester credit hours, eighteen quarter credit hours, or four hundred fifty clock hours per award year; and

(9) Undergraduate student means an individual who has not earned a first baccalaureate or professional degree and is enrolled in a postsecondary educational program which leads to, or is creditable toward, a first baccalaureate degree, associate degree, certificate, diploma, or the equivalent.

Sec. 2. Section 85-3204, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2023, is amended to read:

85-3204 (1) Eligible postsecondary educational institutions, acting as agents of the commission, shall:

(a) Receive and process applications for awards under the Door to College Scholarship Act;

(b) Determine eligibility of students based on criteria set forth in the act, except that such institutions shall not be responsible for determining if a student meets the requirements of subdivision (6)(a) of section 85-3202; and

(c) No later than the application deadline set by the commission, make recommendations to the commission for awards to eligible students, including the name and social security number of each eligible student.

(2) An award under the Door to College Scholarship Act shall not be used by a postsecondary educational institution to reduce institutional

scholarships, grants, or tuition or fee waivers that a student would otherwise be eligible to receive if such student did not receive an award under the act.

Sec. 3. Section 85-3205, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2023, is amended to read:

85-3205 (1) Within thirty days after receiving recommendations pursuant to section 85-3204, the commission shall review the recommended awards for compliance with the Door to College Scholarship Act and any rules and regulations adopted and promulgated pursuant to the act and notify each eligible postsecondary educational institution of the approval or disapproval of recommended awards.

(2) For purposes of such approval or disapproval of recommended awards, the submission of an application by a student for a scholarship pursuant to the Door to College Scholarship Act shall authorize the Department of Health and Human Services to verify for the commission the applicant's name and previous status at a youth rehabilitation and treatment center in order to determine a student's eligibility under subdivision (6)(a) of section 85-3202.

(3) ~~(2)~~ The commission shall distribute to each eligible postsecondary educational institution the total award amount approved for eligible students at such institution. The eligible postsecondary educational institution shall act as an agent of the commission to disburse the awards directly to eligible students during the award year.

Sec. 4. Original sections 85-3202, 85-3204, and 85-3205, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2023, are repealed.