

By: Reynolds

H.B. No. 141

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the establishment of the Texas Promise Grant Program for certain students at two-year public institutions of higher education.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Chapter 56, Education Code, is amended by adding Subchapter U to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER U. TEXAS PROMISE GRANT PROGRAM

Sec. 56.601. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Coordinating board" means the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

(2) "Eligible institution" means:

(A) a public junior college;

(B) a public technical institute; or

(C) a public state college.

(3) "Public junior college," "public technical institute," and "public state college" have the meanings assigned by Section 61.003.

(4) "Program" means the Texas Promise Grant Program established under this subchapter.

Sec. 56.602. PROGRAM PURPOSE. The purpose of the Texas Promise Grant Program is to provide assistance in the payment of tuition and mandatory fees to enable eligible students to attend two-year institutions of higher education.

1        Sec. 56.603. ADMINISTRATION OF PROGRAM; AWARD OF GRANT.

2        (a) The coordinating board shall administer the program and adopt  
3        any rules necessary to implement the program or this subchapter.  
4        The coordinating board shall consult with the student financial aid  
5        officers of eligible institutions in developing the rules.

6        (b) The coordinating board shall award a grant to each  
7        eligible student under the program.

8        Sec. 56.604. INITIAL ELIGIBILITY FOR GRANT. (a) To be  
9        eligible initially for a grant under the program, a person must:

10        (1) be a resident of this state as determined by  
11        coordinating board rules;

12        (2) have graduated from high school or received a high  
13        school equivalency certificate within the last 12 months;

14        (3) be enrolled in an associate degree or certificate  
15        program at an eligible institution;

16        (4) be enrolled as an entering student for at least  
17        one-half of a full course load for an entering student in the  
18        associate degree or certificate program, as determined by the  
19        coordinating board;

20        (5) have applied for any available financial aid or  
21        assistance; and

22        (6) comply with any additional nonacademic or  
23        nonfinancial requirement adopted by the coordinating board under  
24        this subchapter.

25        (b) A person is not eligible to receive a grant under the  
26        program if the person has:

27        (1) been granted:

1                   (A) a certificate for completion of a certificate  
2 program; or

3                   (B) an associate or baccalaureate degree; or  
4                   (2) completed more than 90 semester credit hours or  
5 the equivalent at an institution of higher education, excluding  
6 semester credit hours or the equivalent earned for a dual credit  
7 course.

8                   (c) A person may not receive a grant under the program for  
9 more than 75 semester credit hours or the equivalent.

10                   (d) A person's eligibility for a grant under the program  
11 ends on the third anniversary of the initial award of a grant under  
12 the program to the person and the person's enrollment in an eligible  
13 institution.

14                   Sec. 56.605. CONTINUING ELIGIBILITY AND ACADEMIC  
15 PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS. (a) After initially qualifying for a  
16 grant under the program, a person may continue to receive a grant  
17 under the program during each semester or term in which the person  
18 is enrolled at an eligible institution only if the person:

19                   (1) is enrolled in an associate degree or certificate  
20 program at an eligible institution;

21                   (2) is enrolled for at least one-half of a full course  
22 load for a student in an associate degree or certificate program, as  
23 determined by the coordinating board;

24                   (3) makes satisfactory academic progress toward an  
25 associate degree or certificate; and

26                   (4) complies with any additional nonacademic or  
27 nonfinancial requirement adopted by the coordinating board.

1       (b) If a person fails to meet any of the requirements of  
2 Subsection (a) after the completion of any semester or term, the  
3 person may not receive a grant under the program during the next  
4 semester or term in which the person enrolls. A person may become  
5 eligible to receive a grant under the program in a subsequent  
6 semester or term if the person:

7           (1) completes a semester or term during which the  
8 student is not eligible for a grant; and

9           (2) meets all the requirements of Subsection (a).

10       (c) For the purpose of this section, a person makes  
11 satisfactory academic progress toward an associate degree or  
12 certificate only if:

13           (1) in the person's first academic year, the person  
14 meets the satisfactory academic progress requirements of the  
15 institution at which the person is enrolled; and

16           (2) in the subsequent academic year, the person:

17                   (A) completes at least 75 percent of the semester  
18 credit hours or the equivalent attempted in the person's most  
19 recent academic year; and

20                   (B) has earned an overall grade point average of  
21 at least 2.5 on a four-point scale or the equivalent on coursework  
22 previously attempted at institutions of higher education.

23       (d) A person who is eligible to receive a grant under the  
24 program continues to remain eligible to receive the grant if the  
25 person enrolls in or transfers to another eligible institution.

26       (e) The coordinating board shall adopt rules to allow a  
27 person who is otherwise eligible to receive a grant under the

1 program, in the event of a hardship or for other good cause shown,  
2 including a showing of a severe illness or other debilitating  
3 condition that may affect the person's academic performance or a  
4 showing that the person is responsible for the care of a sick,  
5 injured, or needy person and that the person's provision of care may  
6 affect the person's academic performance, to receive a grant under  
7 the program:

8 (1) while enrolled in a number of semester credit  
9 hours that is less than the number of semester credit hours or the  
10 equivalent required under Subsection (a)(2); or

11 (2) if the student's grade point average or completion  
12 rate falls below the satisfactory academic progress requirements of  
13 Subsection (c).

14 Sec. 56.606. GRANT USE. A grant awarded under the program  
15 must be applied first to the payment of tuition and mandatory fees  
16 at an eligible institution.

17 Sec. 56.607. GRANT AMOUNT. (a) The amount of a grant  
18 awarded to an eligible student under the program for a semester or  
19 other academic term in which the student is enrolled at an eligible  
20 institution is an amount not to exceed the greater of:

21 (1) the difference between the amount of tuition and  
22 mandatory fees charged to the student by the institution for that  
23 semester or term and the amount of any other gift aid, including  
24 state or federal grants or scholarships, awarded to the student for  
25 that semester or term; or

26 (2) \$1,000.

27 (b) The coordinating board may adopt rules that allow the

1 coordinating board to decrease, in proportion to the number of  
2 semester credit hours or the equivalent in which a student is  
3 enrolled, the amount of a grant award under Subsection (a)(2) to a  
4 student who is enrolled in less than a full course load for a  
5 student in an associate degree or certificate program, as  
6 determined by the coordinating board.

7 (c) A grant may not be awarded under the program to an  
8 eligible student for a semester or other academic term until any  
9 other gift aid for which the student is eligible has been awarded to  
10 the student and the amount of tuition and mandatory fees owed by the  
11 student has been established for purposes of determining the  
12 appropriate amount of the student's grant under Subsection (a).

13 (d) The coordinating board shall issue to each eligible  
14 student a certificate indicating the amount of the grant awarded to  
15 the student.

16 Sec. 56.608. NOTIFICATION OF PROGRAM; RESPONSIBILITIES OF  
17 SCHOOL DISTRICTS. (a) The coordinating board, in consultation  
18 with all eligible institutions, shall prepare materials designed to  
19 inform prospective students, their parents, and high school  
20 counselors about the program and eligibility for a grant under the  
21 program. The coordinating board shall distribute to each eligible  
22 institution and to each school district a copy of the materials  
23 prepared under this section.

24 (b) Each school district shall notify its high school  
25 students, those students' teachers and school counselors, and those  
26 students' parents or guardians of the program and the eligibility  
27 requirements of the program.

1           SECTION 2. (a) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating  
2 Board shall adopt rules to administer Subchapter U, Chapter 56,  
3 Education Code, as added by this Act, as soon as practicable after  
4 the effective date of this Act. For that purpose, the coordinating  
5 board may adopt the initial rules in the manner provided by law for  
6 emergency rules.

7           (b) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall  
8 begin awarding grants under Subchapter U, Chapter 56, Education  
9 Code, as added by this Act, for the first academic year for which  
10 money is appropriated for that purpose, except that the  
11 coordinating board may not award grants under that subchapter for  
12 an academic year before the 2022-2023 academic year.

13           SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
14 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
15 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
16 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
17 Act takes effect September 1, 2021.