

SENATE BILL NO. 268

April 16, 2019, Introduced by Senator HORN and referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

A bill to establish a financial aid program for certain residents of this state seeking associate degrees or industry-recognized certificates or credentials from certain educational and jobs training programs; to provide for the administration of the financial aid program; and to prescribe certain powers and duties of certain state officers, agencies, and departments.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN ENACT:

1 Sec. 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the
2 "Michigan reconnect grant act".

1 Sec. 2. As used in this act:

2 (a) "Continuous enrollment" means enrollment in at least 2
3 semesters or the equivalent in terms or quarters, as determined by
4 the department, during each academic year for a number of
5 consecutive academic years.

6 (b) "Department" means the department of talent and economic
7 development.

8 (c) "Eligible institution" means an entity described in
9 subparagraph (i) and (ii) that meets the condition described in
10 subparagraph (iii), as follows:

11 (i) Is an accredited degree- or certificate-granting public
12 community college in this state.

13 (ii) Is a provider of an educational component of a registered
14 apprenticeship program or other jobs training program leading to an
15 industry-recognized certificate or credential if the provider is an
16 accredited degree- or certificate-granting public community college
17 in this state and is charging tuition and mandatory fees to the
18 apprentice or trainee.

19 (iii) Complies with applicable restraints on fee and tuition
20 rate increases, if any, provided for in article II of the school
21 aid act of 1979, 1979 PA 94, MCL 388.1801 to 388.1830.

22 (d) "Gift aid" means scholarships or grants from sources that
23 do not require repayment. The term does not include student loans,
24 work-study awards, or qualified withdrawals made from education
25 savings accounts to pay higher education expenses pursuant to the
26 Michigan education savings program act, 2000 PA 161, MCL 390.1471
27 to 390.1486.

28 (e) "Half-time student" means a student enrolled in at least 6
29 credit hours in an academic semester or the equivalent number of

1 credit hours in a term or quarter, as determined by the department.

2 (f) "Michigan reconnect grant student" means a student
3 admitted to and enrolled in an eligible institution and receiving a
4 Michigan reconnect grant under this act.

5 Sec. 3. The department shall administer the Michigan reconnect
6 grant program for residents of this state seeking associate degrees
7 or industry-recognized certificates or credentials from eligible
8 institutions, subject to all of the following:

9 (a) To be eligible for the grant, an individual must meet all
10 of the following conditions by the date of his or her enrollment
11 described in subparagraph (iv):

12 (i) Be at least 25 years old.

13 (ii) Be a resident of this state for at least the immediately
14 preceding year.

15 (iii) Have graduated from high school with a diploma or
16 certificate of completion or achieved a high school equivalency
17 certificate. As used in this subparagraph, "high school equivalency
18 certificate" means that term as defined in section 4 of the school
19 aid act of 1979, 1979 PA 94, MCL 388.1604.

20 (iv) Be admitted to, and enrolled as at least a half-time
21 student in, a program at an eligible institution leading to an
22 associate degree or industry-recognized certificate or credential.

23 (v) Not have previously earned an associate or baccalaureate
24 degree.

25 (b) Students applying for the grant must complete a Michigan
26 reconnect grant application for their initial year of enrollment in
27 accordance with a schedule determined by the department. Students
28 must also complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid
29 each academic year in which they seek to receive the Michigan

1 reconnect grant.

2 (c) To continue to receive a Michigan reconnect grant at an
3 eligible institution, a student must do all of the following:

4 (i) Except as otherwise provided in subdivision (e), maintain
5 continuous enrollment as at least a half-time student in a program
6 at an eligible institution leading to an associate degree or
7 industry-recognized certificate or credential.

8 (ii) Maintain satisfactory academic standing as determined by
9 the eligible institution and department rules.

10 (iii) Participate in relevant academic and career advising
11 programs offered by the eligible institution and the department.

12 (d) The amount of a Michigan reconnect grant award is equal to
13 the cost of tuition and mandatory fees at the eligible institution
14 attended less all other gift aid. Gift aid shall be credited first
15 to the student's tuition and mandatory fees. If awarded, Michigan
16 reconnect grant money shall be paid to the eligible institution for
17 credit to the student's account.

18 (e) A Michigan reconnect grant student who takes a leave of
19 absence from an eligible institution due to a medical or family
20 hardship may, subject to department approval, continue to receive
21 the grant upon resuming the student's education at an eligible
22 institution if the student continues to meet all applicable
23 eligibility requirements. A leave of absence under this subdivision
24 does not disrupt the requirement of continuous enrollment under
25 subdivision (c) (i) and does not count toward the 4-year limitation
26 described in subdivision (f) (i).

27 (f) A student is eligible for a Michigan reconnect grant until
28 the occurrence of either of the following:

29 (i) Subject to subdivision (e), 4 years have passed since the

1 student became a Michigan reconnect grant student.

2 (ii) The student has earned an associate degree. For purposes
3 of this subparagraph, a student who has earned a certificate or
4 credential at an eligible institution remains eligible for the
5 Michigan reconnect grant if he or she has not yet earned an
6 associate degree and the completion of the certificate or
7 credential directly leads to an associate degree program.

8 (g) A student who participates in the Michigan reconnect grant
9 program may transfer from 1 eligible institution to another
10 eligible institution without loss of the grant so long as the
11 student continues to meet all eligibility requirements for the
12 grant.

13 Sec. 4. The department shall promulgate rules to implement
14 this act pursuant to the administrative procedures act of 1969,
15 1969 PA 306, MCL 24.201 to 24.328.

16 Enacting section 1. It is the intent of the legislature that
17 money in the talent investment fund created in section 8a of the
18 higher education loan authority act, 1975 PA 222, MCL 390.1158a,
19 shall be expended, upon appropriation, for the purpose of funding
20 the Michigan reconnect grant program established in the Michigan
21 reconnect grant act, in accordance with section 8a of the higher
22 education loan authority act, 1975 PA 222, MCL 390.1158a, which
23 states that money in the talent investment fund, upon
24 appropriation, shall be expended "for the purpose of enhancing the
25 economic talent of Michigan residents, increasing access to
26 academic and technical credentials or certifications, improving
27 educational opportunities, or other purposes as provided by law".