

AN ACT concerning education.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 5. The Transitions in Education Act is amended by changing Section 130-5 as follows:

(110 ILCS 180/130-5)

Sec. 130-5. Findings; policies.

(a) The General Assembly finds the following:

(1) Teachers are the single most important in-school factor in supporting student outcomes and success; yet, Illinois is suffering from a profound teacher shortage across the State.

(2) To reverse this shortage, Illinois needs to develop and invest in a robust and diverse educator pipeline, addressing any barriers or gaps that limit high quality candidates, particularly candidates of color, from becoming teachers.

(3) Illinois loses many high quality, diverse educator candidates in postsecondary programs due to confusion or lack of course transfer credits and course articulation from Illinois's 2-year to 4-year institutions.

(4) Lack of alignment and transferability of course credits may often force candidates to spend additional

time and money to earn a degree or lead to an inability to complete a degree.

(5) In 1993, the Board of Higher Education, the Illinois Community College Board, and the Transfer Coordinators of Illinois Colleges and Universities brought together faculty from public and independent, associate, and baccalaureate degree-granting institutions across the State to develop the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI).

(6) The goal of IAI is to facilitate the transfer of courses from one participating college or university to another in order to complete a baccalaureate degree.

(7) The Student Transfer Achievement Reform (STAR) Act, as mandated by subsection (b) of Section 25 of the Act, is designed to facilitate transfer among Illinois public institutions, particularly for students with a completed Associate of Arts or an Associate of Science degree.

(8) While Illinois is a leading state for college completion rates for adult learners and transfer students from community colleges, it needs to increase the number of high-quality postsecondary teaching credentials to meet the demands of our schools and education workforce.

(9) With the rising costs of higher education for Illinois students and families, the State needs to ensure to the maximize extent possible that community college

courses will transfer with full credit for the student and be accepted at an Illinois public or private institution as they pursue a baccalaureate degree in education.

(10) Illinois can do this by improving transitions all along the education pipeline; for postsecondary education, this means strengthening articulation through stable funding and the expansion of transfer tools, such as Transferology and the IAI through development of an objective measure of transfer and acceptance of credits in education degrees.

(11) The IAI Education Pathway can be modeled off of existing IAI major pathways like Early Childhood Education and Criminal Justice.

(b) The General Assembly encourages the Board of Higher Education, the State Board of Education, and the Illinois Community College Board, as part of the IAI, to do the following:

(1) The Board of Higher Education, the State Board of Education, and the Illinois Community College Board are encouraged to jointly establish a task force for a Major Panel in Education and identify respective recommended major courses that would be accepted as credit toward the education major at the receiving institutions.

(2) As part of the report on the status of the Illinois Articulation Initiative pursuant to Section 25 of the Illinois Articulation Initiative Act, the Board of Higher

Education and the Illinois Community College Board are encouraged to include in the annual report to the General Assembly, the Governor, and the Illinois P-20 Council the progress made on the task force on the Education Major Panel.

(3) The Board of Higher Education, the State Board of Education, and the Illinois Community College Board are encouraged to further promote and encourage the enrollment of minority students into educator preparation programs, ~~such as the annual information session about the Minority Teachers of Illinois scholarship program pursuant to subsection (q) of Section 50 of the Higher Education Student Assistance Act.~~

(Source: P.A. 101-654, eff. 3-8-21.)

Section 10. The Diversifying Higher Education Faculty in Illinois Act is amended by changing Sections 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, and 11 and by adding Sections 7.5, 8.5, 11.10, and 11.15 as follows:

(110 ILCS 930/2) (from Ch. 144, par. 2302)

Sec. 2. Definitions. As used in this Act, unless the context otherwise requires:

"Academic year" means the period of time beginning with the fall term in one calendar year and running through the end of the summer term in the following calendar year.

"Board" means the Board of Higher Education.

"DFI" means the Diversifying Higher Education Faculty in Illinois Program of financial assistance ~~to minorities who are traditionally underrepresented as participants in postsecondary education.~~ The program shall assist successful applicants ~~them~~ in pursuing a graduate or professional degree and shall also assist program graduates to find employment at an Illinois institution of higher education, including a community college, in a faculty or staff position.

"Illinois resident" means any United States citizen or lawful permanent resident of the United States who meets at least one of the following requirements:

(1) has earned a degree from an institution of higher education authorized to operate in this State; or

(2) is a registered voter in this State and has lived in this State for a period of at least 3 years prior to applying for a grant under this Act.

The status of Illinois residency of a student at the time of initial matriculation in the DFI shall hold for his or her entire time in his or her graduate or professional study at the DFI institution.

"Institutional representative" means the designated individual who is responsible for coordinating DFI activities at each qualified institution of higher education.

"Program Board" means the entity created to administer the grant program authorized by this Act.

"Qualified institution of higher education" means a qualifying publicly ~~or privately~~ operated educational institution located within Illinois (i) that offers instruction leading toward or prerequisite to an academic or professional degree beyond the baccalaureate degree, excluding theological schools, ~~and~~ (ii) that is authorized to operate in the State of Illinois, and (iii) in which at least 45% of students receive federal Pell Grants, which shall be based on the 3-year average proportion of federal Pell Grant recipients at Illinois public universities using the most recent data available to the Board.

~~"Racial minority" means a person who is a citizen of the United States or a lawful permanent resident of the United States and who is any of the following:~~

~~(1) American Indian or Alaska Native (a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America, including Central America, and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment).~~

~~(2) Asian (a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent, including, but not limited to, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam).~~

~~(3) Black or African American (a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa).~~

~~(4) Hispanic or Latino (a person of Cuban, Mexican,~~

~~Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race).~~

~~(5) Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands).~~

(Source: P.A. 102-465, eff. 1-1-22; 102-1030, eff. 5-27-22.)

(110 ILCS 930/3) (from Ch. 144, par. 2303)

Sec. 3. Composition of the Program Board. The Program Board shall be comprised of 11 members and shall be appointed by the Board of Higher Education. The Board shall name the chair person of the Program Board. The Program Board shall name the vice chair person of the Program Board and make any necessary subcommittee appointments. Persons appointed to the Program Board shall include, but need not be limited to, individuals who are in leadership positions in public institutions of higher education, including community colleges. Program Board members shall serve 2-year terms and shall continue to serve until a replacement or reappointment is determined. There are no term limits for members of the Program Board. Illinois institutions that grant doctoral degrees must have representation on the Program Board.

~~The Board shall assure that racial minorities who are traditionally underrepresented in postsecondary education programs and activities are members of the Program Board.~~

(Source: P.A. 101-354, eff. 8-9-19.)

(110 ILCS 930/4) (from Ch. 144, par. 2304)

Sec. 4. Responsibilities of the Program Board. The Program Board shall be responsible for:

(a) Establishing policy for administration of the DFI grant program authorized under this Act, including program guidelines for the operation of the DFI and criteria to promote placement of grant recipients.

(b) Creating the application materials, setting application deadlines, reviewing applications, ~~Reviewing~~ and approving applications for participation in the DFI grant program.

(c) Establishing subcommittees or panels as necessary to review applications and promote student placement.

(d) Reporting annually to the Board on program outcomes and results, including lists of new and continuing scholarship award recipients by institution, level, and field of study; lists of recipients retained in the program from the previous year; lists of placements of most recent program graduates; a description of institutional efforts to place program graduates; and a description of policy and administrative actions designed to increase placement of grant recipients.

(e) Disseminating information regarding the DFI to qualified institutions of higher education for distribution.

(f) Prioritizing fields of study for awarding DFI funds annually.

(g) Meeting at least 3 times per year.

(Source: P.A. 93-862, eff. 8-4-04.)

(110 ILCS 930/6) (from Ch. 144, par. 2306)

Sec. 6. DFI grants. A program of financial assistance is established to implement the policy of encouraging ~~minority~~ students to enroll and complete academic programs at the postbaccalaureate level and to enhance the diversity of faculty and staff of Illinois institutions of higher education. The Board of Higher Education shall provide administrative assistance for the Program Board and shall distribute funds appropriated by the General Assembly for this purpose in accordance with decisions made by the Program Board.

(Source: P.A. 93-862, eff. 8-4-04.)

(110 ILCS 930/7) (from Ch. 144, par. 2307)

Sec. 7. Eligibility for DFI grants. Institutions of higher education shall verify that student applicants meet the eligibility requirements for DFI grants. An individual is eligible for an award under the provisions of this Act ~~if when~~ the Program Board finds:

(a) ~~that~~ ~~That~~ the individual is an Illinois ~~a~~ resident ~~of this State~~ and a citizen or lawful permanent resident

of the United States;

(b) (blank); ~~That the individual is a member of a racial minority as defined under the terms of this Act,~~

(c) that ~~That~~ the individual ~~has earned any educational diploma at an institution of education located in this State, or is an Illinois a resident of the State~~ for no less than 3 ~~three~~ years prior to applying for the grant, and the individual holds ~~must hold~~ a baccalaureate degree from an institution of higher education authorized to operate in this State ~~learning~~;

(d) that ~~That~~ the individual's financial resources are such that, in the absence of a DFI grant, the individual will be prevented from pursuing a graduate or professional degree at a qualified institution of higher education of his or her choice;

(e) that ~~That~~ the individual has above average academic ability to pursue a graduate or professional degree, as evidenced by the following:

(1) a minimum grade point average of a C+ (2.75 on a grade scale of 4.00 = A) in the last 60 hours of undergraduate work; and

(2) admission to a post-baccalaureate degree program at a qualified institution of higher education; and

(f) that ~~That~~ the individual meets other qualifications, which shall be established by the Program

Board;:-

(g) that the individual was a federal Pell Grant recipient at any point while earning a baccalaureate degree;

(h) that the individual is admitted as a full-time student, as defined by the institution of higher education, for at least 9 months of the year pursuing a doctoral, master's, or post-baccalaureate professional degree program at a qualified institution of higher education;

(i) that the individual has signed an agreement to meet this Act's employment conditions if a DFI award is accepted; and

(j) in order to maintain eligibility in the DFI and in order to be considered for subsequent DFI grants, that the individual meets the scholastic requirements and eligibility for financial assistance required by the institution of higher education in which he or she is enrolled as a DFI participant.

~~Grant funds shall be awarded only to those persons pursuing a graduate or professional degree program at a qualified institution of higher education.~~

~~The Board shall by rule promulgate, pursuant to the Illinois Administrative Procedure Act, precise standards to be used by the Program Board to determine whether a program applicant has above average academic ability to pursue a~~

~~graduate or professional degree.~~

(Source: P.A. 102-1030, eff. 5-27-22.)

(110 ILCS 930/7.5 new)

Sec. 7.5. Institution and institutional representative responsibilities.

(a) A DFI institution shall:

- (1) be a qualified institution of higher education;
- (2) commit to providing leadership, information, and placement opportunities for DFI fellows;
- (3) designate an institutional representative; and
- (4) recover funds provided to a student who does not meet the conditions of an award under Section 10 of this Act and return the funds to the Board.

(b) A DFI representative shall:

- (1) actively recruit students who will be eligible for DFI awards and verify to the Program Board that applicants for DFI financial assistance meet all eligibility requirements;
- (2) maintain records for award recipients, including DFI application materials, contracts, and records of award payments;
- (3) provide award recipients with academic and support services, such as mentoring, counseling, and other activities that would enhance the chances for degree completion and success in achieving the goals of the DFI;

(4) supervise the payment of awards from funds awarded by the Program Board;

(5) collect, process, and forward to the Program Board, by the announced deadline each spring, all new applications and renewal forms from eligible students; and

(6) assist award recipients who complete their program of study in seeking a full-time teaching or administrative position at an Illinois institution of higher education or a full-time position as an employee of this State in an educational-related capacity; such positions may include, without limitation, administrative positions in State elementary, secondary, or higher education agencies.

(110 ILCS 930/8) (from Ch. 144, par. 2308)

Sec. 8. Application. The Program Board shall design the application for the DFI award and determine the timetable for submission of the application. A student shall apply directly to the qualified institution of higher education that he or she plans to attend. All new applications and renewal forms shall be submitted by the institution of higher education on behalf of the student to the Program Board, with the institution's verification and endorsement.

(Source: P.A. 93-862, eff. 8-4-04.)

(110 ILCS 930/8.5 new)

Sec. 8.5. Determining and administering awards. In

determining the recipients of awards, the Program Board shall favor recipients who received awards in previous years and who maintain conditions of eligibility as set forth in Section 7 and have made satisfactory academic progress toward a degree, as determined by each institution of higher education, as long as no student receives assistance for more than 4 years. In administering awards, the Program Board shall:

(1) determine the award amount annually;

(2) direct the Board to deliver the awards to the institution of higher education to disburse to the recipients, conditioned upon the recipients' satisfactory academic progress; and

(3) attempt to achieve distribution of the awards among qualified institutions of higher education so that the awards are distributed equitably within fields of study.

A recipient who received an award in a previous year may not be disqualified from receiving a subsequent award if the applicant's qualified institution of higher education no longer meets the Pell Grant criteria described in Section 2, as long as the applicant and the qualified institution of higher education maintain all other conditions of eligibility.

Grant funds shall be distributed by an institution of higher education to grantees during the period of DFI enrollment, not to exceed 12 months per award.

(110 ILCS 930/10) (from Ch. 144, par. 2310)

Sec. 10. Conditions of award.

(a) As used in this Section, "good faith effort" includes actively seeking employment and maintaining contact with the institutional representative and Program Board.

(b) Conditions for acceptance of a DFI award are that the recipient shall agree to do the following:

(1) accept a teaching or nonteaching full-time appointment at an Illinois institution of higher education; ~~or~~

(2) accept a position as an employee of this State in an administrative, educational-related position, as determined by the Program Board, for the period equal to the number of years that he or she was a participant in the DFI; such positions shall include, without limitation, administrative positions in State elementary, secondary, or higher education agencies; or-

(3) make a good faith effort to secure such a position for a time period of no less than 5 years.

(Source: P.A. 93-862, eff. 8-4-04.)

(110 ILCS 930/11) (from Ch. 144, par. 2311)

Sec. 11. Penalty for failure to fulfill the conditions of a DFI award. If the obligation of the award is not met, repayment of the funds awarded shall ~~may~~ be required according to procedures developed by the ~~Program~~ Board. However, a

recipient of an award may not be penalized if the failure to fulfill the conditions of the award is because the recipient is no longer eligible due to changes made by this amendatory Act of the 104th General Assembly.

(Source: P.A. 93-862, eff. 8-4-04.)

(110 ILCS 930/11.10 new)

Sec. 11.10. Relation to Illinois Grant Funds Recovery Act.
All grants under this Act are subject to the Illinois Grant Funds Recovery Act.

(110 ILCS 930/11.15 new)

Sec. 11.15. Applicability. The changes made to this Act by this amendatory Act of the 104th General Assembly shall first apply beginning with awards made for the 2025-2026 academic year.

(110 ILCS 930/11.5 rep.)

Section 15. The Diversifying Higher Education Faculty in Illinois Act is amended by repealing Section 11.5.

Section 20. The Higher Education Student Assistance Act is amended by changing Sections 50, 52, 65.110, 65.115, and 65.120 as follows:

(110 ILCS 947/50)

Sec. 50. ~~Minority~~ Teachers of Illinois scholarship program.

(a) As used in this Section:

~~"Eligible applicant" means a minority student who has graduated from high school or has received a State of Illinois High School Diploma and has maintained a cumulative grade point average of no less than 2.5 on a 4.0 scale, and who by reason thereof is entitled to apply for scholarships to be awarded under this Section.~~

~~"Minority student" means a student who is any of the following:~~

~~(1) American Indian or Alaska Native (a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America, including Central America, and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment).~~

~~(2) Asian (a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent, including, but not limited to, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam).~~

~~(3) Black or African American (a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa).~~

~~(4) Hispanic or Latino (a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race).~~

~~(5) Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands).~~

"Qualified bilingual ~~minority~~ applicant" means a qualified student who demonstrates proficiency in a language other than English by (i) receiving a State Seal of Biliteracy from the State Board of Education or (ii) receiving a passing score on an educator licensure target language proficiency test.

"Qualified student" means a student who: ~~person~~

(i) was enrolled in a public school district in this State, at any point in kindergarten through grade 12, that had an average of least 70% of students who were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch during the most recent 3 school years for which data is available from the State Board of Education;

(ii) was either:

(A) enrolled in a public school district in this State, at any point in kindergarten through grade 12, that had a 3-year average teacher vacancy rate at or above the 3-year statewide average teacher vacancy rate, excluding public school districts that had zero vacancies, in any school year among the most recent 3 school years for which data is available from the State Board of Education; or

(B) enrolled in a public school district in this State, at any point in kindergarten through grade 12, in which the number of teacher vacancies in the district was at or above the statewide average number of teacher vacancies, excluding public school districts that had zero vacancies, in any school year among the most recent 3 school years for which data is available from the State Board of Education;

(iii) has graduated from high school or has received a State of Illinois High School Diploma;

(iv) who is an Illinois ~~a resident of this State~~ and a citizen or permanent resident of the United States; ~~(ii) who is a minority student, as defined in this Section; (iii) who, as an eligible applicant,~~

(v) has made a timely application for a teacher ~~minority teaching~~ scholarship under this Section;

(vi) ~~(iv) who~~ is enrolled on at least a half-time basis at a qualified Illinois institution of higher learning;

(vii) ~~(v) who~~ is enrolled in a course of study leading to teacher licensure, including alternative teacher licensure, to be a preschool, elementary, or secondary school teacher, or, if the student is already licensed to teach, in a course of study leading to an additional teaching endorsement or a

master's degree in an academic field in which he or she is teaching or plans to teach or who has received one or more College and Career Pathway Endorsements pursuant to Section 80 of the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act and commits to enrolling in a course of study leading to teacher licensure, including alternative teacher licensure, to be a preschool, elementary, or secondary school teacher;

(viii) ~~(vi)~~ who maintains a grade point average of no less than 2.5 on a 4.0 scale; and

(ix) ~~(vii)~~ who continues to advance satisfactorily toward the attainment of a degree.

(b) The Commission shall determine, at its discretion, how to verify whether an applicant is a qualified student. The Commission shall award teacher scholarships under this Section to qualified students who demonstrate to the Commission that they satisfy the requirements and purpose of this Section. All qualified students may apply. A student who received a scholarship under this Section in a previous academic year may not be disqualified from receiving a subsequent award if the public school district where the student had been enrolled no longer meets the criteria regarding free or reduced-price lunch or teacher vacancies described in this Section, as long as the student maintains all other conditions of eligibility.
~~In order to encourage academically talented Illinois minority students to pursue teaching careers at the preschool or~~

~~elementary or secondary school level and to address and alleviate the teacher shortage crisis in this State described under the provisions of the Transitions in Education Act, each qualified student shall be awarded a minority teacher scholarship to any qualified Illinois institution of higher learning. However, preference may be given to qualified applicants enrolled at or above the junior level.~~

(c) The annual teacher scholarship amount shall be computed by the institution. Each ~~minority~~ teacher scholarship awarded under this Section shall be in an amount sufficient to pay the total cost of attendance ~~tuition and fees and room and board costs~~ of the qualified Illinois institution of higher learning at which the recipient is enrolled, ~~up to an annual maximum of \$5,000; except that in the case of a recipient who does not reside on campus at the institution at which he or she is enrolled, the amount of the scholarship shall be sufficient to pay tuition and fee expenses and a commuter allowance, up to an annual maximum of \$5,000. However, if at least \$2,850,000 is appropriated in a given fiscal year for the Minority Teachers of Illinois scholarship program, then, in each fiscal year thereafter, each scholarship awarded under this Section shall be in an amount sufficient to pay the tuition and fees and room and board costs of the qualified Illinois institution of higher learning at which the recipient is enrolled, up to an annual maximum of \$7,500; except that in the case of a recipient who does not reside on campus at the institution at~~

~~which he or she is enrolled, the amount of the scholarship shall be sufficient to pay tuition and fee expenses and a commuter allowance, up to an annual maximum of \$7,500.~~

(d) The total amount of ~~minority~~ teacher scholarship assistance awarded by the Commission under this Section to an individual in any given fiscal year, when added to other financial assistance awarded to that individual for that year, shall not exceed the total cost of attendance at the institution at which the student is enrolled. If the amount of a minority teacher scholarship to be awarded to a scholarship recipient ~~qualified student~~ as provided in subsection (c) of this Section exceeds the total cost of attendance at the institution at which the student is enrolled, the ~~minority~~ teacher scholarship shall be reduced by an amount equal to the amount by which the combined financial assistance available to the recipient student ~~student~~ exceeds the total cost of attendance.

(e) The maximum number of academic terms for which a recipient ~~qualified student~~ can receive ~~minority~~ teacher scholarship assistance shall be 8 semesters or 12 quarters.

(f) In any academic year for which an eligible applicant under this Section accepts financial assistance through the Golden Apple Scholars of Illinois Program, the Special Education Teacher Tuition Waiver Program, or the Teach Illinois Scholarship Program, ~~Paul Douglas Teacher Scholarship Program, as authorized by Section 551 et seq. of the Higher Education Act of 1965,~~ the applicant shall not be eligible for

scholarship assistance awarded under this Section.

(g) All applications for ~~minority~~ teacher scholarships to be awarded under this Section shall be made to the Commission on forms which the Commission shall provide ~~for eligible applicants~~. Applicants must submit an application annually. Applicants must also complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. The form of applications and the information required to be set forth therein shall be determined by the Commission, and the Commission shall require ~~eligible~~ applicants to submit with their applications such supporting documents or recommendations as the Commission deems necessary. If an application is incomplete, the Commission shall notify the applicant. The applicant shall then have an opportunity to furnish the missing information; however, the application shall be considered for processing only as of the date when the application is complete and received by the Commission. Applicants may be required to furnish the institution at which they are enrolled with a copy of their high school transcripts, any other documentation verifying high school graduation, or a copy of their State of Illinois High School Diploma.

(h) Subject to a separate appropriation for such purposes, payment of any ~~minority~~ teacher scholarship awarded under this Section shall be determined by the Commission. All scholarship funds distributed in accordance with this subsection shall be paid to the institution and used only for payment of the

tuition and fee and room and board expenses incurred by the student in connection with his or her attendance at a qualified Illinois institution of higher learning. Any ~~minority~~ teacher scholarship awarded under this Section shall be applicable to 2 semesters or 3 quarters of enrollment within a regular academic year. If a recipient ~~qualified student~~ withdraws from enrollment prior to completion of the first semester or quarter for which the ~~minority~~ teacher scholarship is applicable, the school shall refund to the Commission the full amount of the ~~minority~~ teacher scholarship.

(i) The Commission shall administer the ~~minority~~ teacher scholarship ~~aid~~ program established by this Section and shall make all necessary and proper rules not inconsistent with this Section for its effective implementation. The Commission shall make information available on its website regarding school districts that meet the criteria set forth in the definition of a qualified student under subsection (a).

(j) When an appropriation to the Commission for a given fiscal year is insufficient to provide scholarships to all qualified students, the Commission shall allocate the appropriation in accordance with this subsection. If funds are insufficient to provide all qualified students with a scholarship as authorized by this Section, the Commission shall allocate the available scholarship funds for that fiscal year to qualified students who submit a timely complete

application form on or before a date specified by the Commission based on the following order of priority:

(1) To students who received a scholarship under this Section in the prior academic year and who remain eligible for a ~~minority~~ teacher scholarship under this Section.

(2) ~~To Except as otherwise provided in subsection (k),~~
~~to~~ students who demonstrate the most financial need, as determined by the Commission.

(3) To students with the earliest date of received completed applications.

(4) To students enrolled at or above the junior level.

~~(k) Notwithstanding paragraph (2) of subsection (j), at least 35% of the funds appropriated for scholarships awarded under this Section in each fiscal year shall be reserved for qualified male minority applicants, with priority being given to qualified Black male applicants beginning with fiscal year 2023. If the Commission does not receive enough applications from qualified male minorities on or before January 1 of each fiscal year to award 35% of the funds appropriated for these scholarships to qualified male minority applicants, then the Commission may award a portion of the reserved funds to qualified female minority applicants in accordance with subsection (j).~~

If Beginning with fiscal year 2023, if at least \$2,850,000 but less than \$4,200,000 is appropriated in a given fiscal year for scholarships awarded under this Section, then at

least 10% of the funds appropriated shall be reserved for qualified bilingual ~~minority~~ applicants, with priority being given to qualified bilingual ~~minority~~ applicants who are enrolled in an educator preparation program with a concentration in bilingual, bicultural education. ~~If Beginning with fiscal year 2023, if~~ at least \$4,200,000 is appropriated in a given fiscal year for the ~~Minority~~ Teachers of Illinois scholarship program, then at least 30% of the funds appropriated shall be reserved for qualified bilingual ~~minority~~ applicants, with priority being given to qualified bilingual ~~minority~~ applicants who are enrolled in an educator preparation program with a concentration in bilingual, bicultural education. For a fiscal year to which this subsection applies, if, on or after January 1 of that fiscal year, appropriated funds remain after awarding reserved funds ~~to Beginning with fiscal year 2023, if at least \$2,850,000 is appropriated in a given fiscal year for scholarships awarded under this Section but the Commission does not receive enough applications from~~ qualified bilingual ~~minority~~ applicants ~~on or before January 1 of that fiscal year to award at least 10% of the funds appropriated to qualified bilingual minority applicants,~~ then the Commission may, in its discretion, award a portion of the reserved funds to other qualified students in accordance with subsection (j).

(1) Prior to receiving scholarship assistance for any academic year, each recipient of a ~~minority~~ teacher

scholarship awarded under this Section shall be required by the Commission to sign and submit a teaching agreement or promissory note to the Commission ~~an agreement~~ under which the recipient pledges that, within the one-year period following the termination of the program for which the recipient was awarded a ~~minority~~ teacher scholarship, the recipient (i) shall begin teaching for a period of not less than one year for each year of scholarship assistance he or she was awarded under this Section and shall teach on a continuous basis for the required period of time; (ii) shall fulfill this teaching obligation at a ~~nonprofit Illinois public, private, or parochial preschool, elementary school, or secondary school district in this State that had a 3-year average teacher vacancy rate at or above the 3-year statewide average teacher vacancy rate, excluding public school districts that had zero vacancies, in any school year among the most recent 3 school years for which data is available from the State Board of Education or a public school district in this State in which the number of teacher vacancies in the district was at or above the statewide average number of teacher vacancies, excluding public school districts that had zero vacancies, in any school year among the most recent 3 school years for which data is available from the State Board of Education~~ ~~at which no less than 30% of the enrolled students are minority students~~ in the year during which the recipient begins teaching at the school or may instead, if the recipient received a scholarship as a

qualified bilingual ~~minority~~ applicant, fulfill this teaching obligation in a program in transitional bilingual education pursuant to Article 14C of the School Code or in a school in which 20 or more English learner students in the same language classification are enrolled; and (iii) shall, upon request by the Commission, provide the Commission with evidence that he or she is fulfilling or has fulfilled the terms of the teaching agreement provided for in this subsection. Recipients of a teacher scholarship under this Section are also required to provide the Commission with evidence of compliance with program requirements, including, but not limited to annual follow-up questionnaires. Recipients of a teacher scholarship under this Section must also promise to use the proceeds of the scholarship for educational expenses.

(1-5) If, prior to the 2025-2026 academic year, an individual received a scholarship under this Section and signed an agreement pledging to teach at a school meeting specified criteria and that individual receives a subsequent scholarship under this Section on or after the effective date of this amendatory Act of the 104th General Assembly, then that recipient may complete his or her entire teaching obligation at a school meeting the criteria described in subsection (1) of this Section and the Commission shall consider such employment to satisfy the terms of that recipient's agreement to teach signed before the effective date of this amendatory Act of the 104th General Assembly.

(m) If a recipient of a ~~minority~~ teacher scholarship awarded under this Section fails to fulfill the teaching obligation set forth in subsection (l) of this Section, the scholarship converts to a loan. The repayment period shall be completed within 10 years after the scholarship converts to a loan.

The 10-year period may be extended if the recipient (i) serves, for not more than 3 years, as a member of the United States Armed Forces; (ii) is temporarily disabled, for not more than 3 years, as established by the sworn affidavit of a licensed physician; (iii) is seeking and unable to find full-time employment, for one continuous period not to exceed 2 years, and is able to provide evidence of that fact; (iv) withdraws from a course of study leading to licensure as a teacher but is enrolled full time in another academic discipline; or (v) is pursuing a graduate course of study and is enrolled on a full-time basis for one continuous period of time not to exceed 3 years. During the time a recipient qualifies for any extensions, the recipient is not required to make payments and interest does not accrue.

The recipient shall enter repayment status on the earliest of the following: the first day of the first calendar month after the recipient has ceased to pursue a course of study leading to licensure as a teacher at the preschool, elementary, or secondary level, but not before 6 months have elapsed after the cessation of at least half-time enrollment

in such a course of study; the date the recipient informs the Commission that the recipient does not plan to fulfill the teaching obligation; or the day after the latest date upon which the recipient must have begun teaching after completing the postsecondary education for which the scholarship was awarded.

The ~~the~~ Commission shall require the recipient to repay the amount of the scholarships received, prorated according to the fraction of the teaching obligation not completed, at an annual ~~a~~ rate of interest equal to 5%, and, if applicable, reasonable collection fees. If a recipient who enters into repayment under this subsection (m) subsequently, within 5 years of entering repayment, begins to teach at a school meeting the description under subsection (l) of this Section, the Commission may reduce the amount owed by the recipient in proportion to the amount of the teaching obligation completed. ~~The Commission is authorized to establish rules relating to its collection activities for repayment of scholarships under this Section.~~ All repayments collected under this Section shall be forwarded to the State Comptroller for deposit into the State's General Revenue Fund.

A recipient is not required to repay the amount of the scholarship received if the recipient becomes permanently totally disabled, as established by the sworn affidavit of a qualified physician, or if the recipient's representative provides the Commission with a death certificate or other

evidence that the recipient has died.

(n) A recipient of a ~~minority~~ teacher scholarship shall not be considered in violation of the agreement entered into pursuant to subsection (l) if the recipient (i) enrolls on a full time basis as a graduate student in a course of study related to the field of teaching at a qualified Illinois institution of higher learning; (ii) is serving, not in excess of 3 years, as a member of the armed services of the United States; (iii) is a person with a temporary total disability for a period of time not to exceed 3 years as established by sworn affidavit of a qualified physician; (iv) is seeking full-time employment for one continuous period not to exceed 2 years and is unable to find full time employment as a teacher at a ~~an Illinois public, private, or parochial preschool or elementary or secondary school district in this State~~ that satisfies the criteria set forth in subsection (l) of this Section and is able to provide evidence of that fact; (v) becomes a person with a permanent total disability as established by sworn affidavit of a qualified physician; (vi) is taking additional courses, on at least a half-time basis, needed to obtain licensure as a teacher in Illinois; or (vii) is fulfilling teaching requirements associated with other programs administered by the Commission and cannot concurrently fulfill them under this Section in a period of time equal to the length of the teaching obligation.

(o) Scholarship recipients under this Section who withdraw

from a program of teacher education but remain enrolled in school to continue their postsecondary studies in another academic discipline shall not be required to commence repayment of their ~~Minority~~ Teachers of Illinois scholarship so long as they remain enrolled in school on a full-time basis or if they can document for the Commission special circumstances that warrant extension of repayment.

(o-5) The Commission may not require repayment of any Minority Teachers of Illinois scholarship from any recipient who:

(1) received that scholarship during the 2024-2025 academic year;

(2) would have remained eligible for the Minority Teachers of Illinois scholarship if it remained in effect for the 2025-2026 academic year;

(3) does not meet the definition of a qualified student under the Teachers of Illinois scholarship program established by this amendatory Act of the 104th General Assembly; and

(4) does not complete the educator preparation program in which the recipient was enrolled when receiving the Minority Teachers of Illinois scholarship.

(p) The State Board of Education shall furnish all appropriate data referenced within the definition of a qualified student under subsection (a) on a timely basis to the Commission. ~~If the Minority Teachers of Illinois~~

~~scholarship program does not expend at least 90% of the amount appropriated for the program in a given fiscal year for 3 consecutive fiscal years and the Commission does not receive enough applications from the groups identified in subsection (k) on or before January 1 in each of those fiscal years to meet the percentage reserved for those groups under subsection (k), then up to 3% of amount appropriated for the program for each of next 3 fiscal years shall be allocated to increasing awareness of the program and for the recruitment of Black male applicants. The Commission shall make a recommendation to the General Assembly by January 1 of the year immediately following the end of that third fiscal year regarding whether the amount allocated to increasing awareness and recruitment should continue.~~

(q) Each qualified Illinois institution of higher learning that receives funds from the ~~Minority~~ Teachers of Illinois scholarship program ~~shall host an annual information session at the institution about the program for teacher candidates of color in accordance with rules adopted by the Commission. Additionally, the institution~~ shall ensure that each scholarship recipient enrolled at the institution meets with an academic advisor at least once per academic year to facilitate on-time completion of the recipient's educator preparation program. Institutions shall also submit eligibility information for qualified students in sufficient time for the Commission to make award announcements.

Teacher scholarship awards under this Section shall be paid directly to the approved institution of record that certifies to the Commission that the applicant is an eligible recipient. The Commission shall annually establish priority claim dates for the submission of payment requests and inform institutions of the required priority dates. Late payment requests shall result in the delayed processing of payments. Payment requests shall be processed in the sequence of receipt by the Commission and as funds are available. Institutions may submit their payment requests beginning 10 days prior to the start of classes for the term for which payment is being requested.

The Commission shall disburse scholarship funds in 2 or 3 installments, depending on the number of terms financed by the scholarship, except that multiple disbursements are not required in cases in which the applicant's eligibility is not determined until the final term of the regular academic year for which the scholarship is being awarded or if a student is attending only one term and the maximum award does not exceed the student's cost of attendance.

Funds shall be remitted by the Commission to institutions on behalf of recipients. Upon receipt of scholarship funds, the institution shall verify the recipient's enrollment status for the term for which the award was intended. If enrolled, the institution may credit the scholarship funds to the recipient's account for expenses due and payable. The balance

of the disbursement shall be released to the recipient. Upon receipt of the scholarship funds, if the recipient has withdrawn from enrollment for the terms for which the award was intended, the institution shall return the amount of the scholarship payment to the Commission.

(r) The changes made to this Section by this amendatory Act of the 104th General Assembly shall first apply beginning with awards made for the 2025-2026 academic year. ~~The changes made to this Section by Public Act 101-654 will first take effect with awards made for the 2022-2023 academic year.~~

(Source: P.A. 102-465, eff. 1-1-22; 102-813, eff. 5-13-22; 102-1100, eff. 1-1-23; 103-448, eff. 8-4-23; revised 7-19-24.)

(110 ILCS 947/52)

Sec. 52. Golden Apple Scholars of Illinois Program; Golden Apple Foundation for Excellence in Teaching.

(a) In this Section, "Foundation" means the Golden Apple Foundation for Excellence in Teaching, a registered 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation.

(a-2) In order to encourage academically talented Illinois students, ~~especially minority students,~~ to pursue teaching careers, especially in teacher shortage disciplines (which shall be defined to include early childhood education) or at hard-to-staff schools (as defined by the Commission in consultation with the State Board of Education), to provide those students with the crucial mentoring, guidance, and

in-service support that will significantly increase the likelihood that they will complete their full teaching commitments and elect to continue teaching in targeted disciplines and hard-to-staff schools, and to ensure that students in this State will continue to have access to a pool of highly qualified ~~highly qualified~~ teachers, each qualified student shall be awarded a Golden Apple Scholars of Illinois Program scholarship to any Illinois institution of higher learning. The Commission shall administer the Golden Apple Scholars of Illinois Program, which shall be managed by the Foundation pursuant to the terms of a grant agreement meeting the requirements of Section 4 of the Illinois Grant Funds Recovery Act.

(a-3) For purposes of this Section, a qualified student shall be a student who meets the following qualifications:

(1) is a resident of this State and a citizen or eligible noncitizen of the United States;

(2) is a high school graduate or a person who has received a State of Illinois High School Diploma;

(3) is enrolled or accepted, on at least a half-time basis, at an institution of higher learning;

(4) is pursuing a postsecondary course of study leading to initial certification or pursuing additional course work needed to gain State Board of Education approval to teach, including alternative teacher licensure; and

(5) is a participant in programs managed by and is approved to receive a scholarship from the Foundation.

(a-5) (Blank).

(b) (Blank).

(b-5) Funds designated for the Golden Apple Scholars of Illinois Program shall be used by the Commission for the payment of scholarship assistance under this Section or for the award of grant funds, subject to the Illinois Grant Funds Recovery Act, to the Foundation. Subject to appropriation, awards of grant funds to the Foundation shall be made on an annual basis and following an application for grant funds by the Foundation.

(b-10) Each year, the Foundation shall include in its application to the Commission for grant funds an estimate of the amount of scholarship assistance to be provided to qualified students during the grant period. Any amount of appropriated funds exceeding the estimated amount of scholarship assistance may be awarded by the Commission to the Foundation for management expenses expected to be incurred by the Foundation in providing the mentoring, guidance, and in-service supports that will increase the likelihood that qualified students will complete their teaching commitments and elect to continue teaching in hard-to-staff schools. If the estimate of the amount of scholarship assistance described in the Foundation's application is less than the actual amount required for the award of scholarship assistance to qualified

students, the Foundation shall be responsible for using awarded grant funds to ensure all qualified students receive scholarship assistance under this Section.

(b-15) All grant funds not expended or legally obligated within the time specified in a grant agreement between the Foundation and the Commission shall be returned to the Commission within 45 days. Any funds legally obligated by the end of a grant agreement shall be liquidated within 45 days or otherwise returned to the Commission within 90 days after the end of the grant agreement that resulted in the award of grant funds.

(c) Each scholarship awarded under this Section shall be in an amount sufficient to pay the tuition and fees and room and board costs of the Illinois institution of higher learning at which the recipient is enrolled, up to an annual maximum of \$5,000; except that, in the case of a recipient who does not reside on campus at the institution of higher learning at which he or she is enrolled, the amount of the scholarship shall be sufficient to pay tuition and fee expenses and a commuter allowance, up to an annual maximum of \$5,000. All scholarship funds distributed in accordance with this Section shall be paid to the institution on behalf of recipients.

(d) The total amount of scholarship assistance awarded by the Commission under this Section to an individual in any given fiscal year, when added to other financial assistance awarded to that individual for that year, shall not exceed the

cost of attendance at the institution of higher learning at which the student is enrolled. In any academic year for which a qualified student under this Section accepts financial assistance through any other teacher scholarship program administered by the Commission, a qualified student shall not be eligible for scholarship assistance awarded under this Section.

(e) A recipient may receive up to 8 semesters or 12 quarters of scholarship assistance under this Section. Scholarship funds are applicable toward 2 semesters or 3 quarters of enrollment each academic year.

(f) All applications for scholarship assistance to be awarded under this Section shall be made to the Foundation in a form determined by the Foundation. Each year, the Foundation shall notify the Commission of the individuals awarded scholarship assistance under this Section. Each year, at least 30% of the Golden Apple Scholars of Illinois Program scholarships shall be awarded to students residing in counties having a population of less than 500,000.

(g) (Blank).

(h) The Commission shall administer the payment of scholarship assistance provided through the Golden Apple Scholars of Illinois Program and shall make all necessary and proper rules not inconsistent with this Section for the effective implementation of this Section.

(i) Prior to receiving scholarship assistance for any

academic year, each recipient of a scholarship awarded under this Section shall be required by the Foundation to sign an agreement under which the recipient pledges that, within the 2-year period following the termination of the academic program for which the recipient was awarded a scholarship, the recipient: (i) shall begin teaching for a period of not less than 5 years, (ii) shall fulfill this teaching obligation at a nonprofit Illinois public, private, or parochial preschool or an Illinois public elementary or secondary school that qualifies for teacher loan cancellation under Section 465(a)(2)(A) of the federal Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087ee(a)(2)(A)) or other Illinois schools deemed eligible for fulfilling the teaching commitment as designated by the Foundation, and (iii) shall, upon request of the Foundation, provide the Foundation with evidence that he or she is fulfilling or has fulfilled the terms of the teaching agreement provided for in this subsection. Upon request, the Foundation shall provide evidence of teacher fulfillment to the Commission.

(j) If a recipient of a scholarship awarded under this Section fails to fulfill the teaching obligation set forth in subsection (i) of this Section, the Commission shall require the recipient to repay the amount of the scholarships received, prorated according to the fraction of the teaching obligation not completed, plus interest at a rate of 5% and, if applicable, reasonable collection fees. If a recipient who

enters into repayment under this subsection (j) subsequently, within 5 years of entering repayment, begins to teach at a school meeting the description under subsection (i) of this Section, the Commission may reduce the amount owed by the recipient in proportion to the amount of the teaching obligation completed. Reduction of the amount owed shall not be construed as reinstatement in the Golden Apple Scholars program. Reinstatement in the program shall be solely at the discretion of the Golden Apple Foundation on terms determined by the Foundation. Payments received by the Commission under this subsection (j) shall be remitted to the State Comptroller for deposit into the General Revenue Fund, except that that portion of a recipient's repayment that equals the amount in expenses that the Commission has reasonably incurred in attempting collection from that recipient shall be remitted to the State Comptroller for deposit into the ISAC Accounts Receivable Fund, a special fund in the State treasury.

(k) A recipient of a scholarship awarded by the Foundation under this Section shall not be considered to have failed to fulfill the teaching obligations of the agreement entered into pursuant to subsection (i) if the recipient (i) enrolls on a full-time basis as a graduate student in a course of study related to the field of teaching at an institution of higher learning; (ii) is serving as a member of the armed services of the United States; (iii) is a person with a temporary total disability, as established by sworn affidavit of a qualified

physician; (iv) is seeking and unable to find full-time employment as a teacher at a school that satisfies the criteria set forth in subsection (i) and is able to provide evidence of that fact; (v) is taking additional courses, on at least a half-time basis, needed to obtain certification as a teacher in Illinois; (vi) is fulfilling teaching requirements associated with other programs administered by the Commission and cannot concurrently fulfill them under this Section in a period of time equal to the length of the teaching obligation; or (vii) is participating in a program established under Executive Order 10924 of the President of the United States or the federal National Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12501 et seq.). Any such extension of the period during which the teaching requirement must be fulfilled shall be subject to limitations of duration as established by the Commission.

(1) A recipient who fails to fulfill the teaching obligations of the agreement entered into pursuant to subsection (i) of this Section shall repay the amount of scholarship assistance awarded to them under this Section within 10 years.

(m) Annually, at a time determined by the Commission in consultation with the Foundation, the Foundation shall submit a report to assist the Commission in monitoring the Foundation's performance of grant activities. The report shall describe the following:

(1) the Foundation's anticipated expenditures for the

next fiscal year;

(2) the number of qualified students receiving scholarship assistance at each institution of higher learning where a qualified student was enrolled under this Section during the previous fiscal year;

(3) the total monetary value of scholarship funds paid to each institution of higher learning at which a qualified student was enrolled during the previous fiscal year;

(4) the number of scholarship recipients who completed a baccalaureate degree during the previous fiscal year;

(5) the number of scholarship recipients who fulfilled their teaching obligation during the previous fiscal year;

(6) the number of scholarship recipients who failed to fulfill their teaching obligation during the previous fiscal year;

(7) the number of scholarship recipients granted an extension described in subsection (k) of this Section during the previous fiscal year;

(8) the number of scholarship recipients required to repay scholarship assistance in accordance with subsection (j) of this Section during the previous fiscal year;

(9) the number of scholarship recipients who successfully repaid scholarship assistance in full during the previous fiscal year;

(10) the number of scholarship recipients who

defaulted on their obligation to repay scholarship assistance during the previous fiscal year;

(11) the amount of scholarship assistance subject to collection in accordance with subsection (j) of this Section at the end of the previous fiscal year;

(12) the amount of collected funds to be remitted to the Comptroller in accordance with subsection (j) of this Section at the end of the previous fiscal year; and

(13) other information that the Commission may reasonably request.

(n) Nothing in this Section shall affect the rights of the Commission to collect moneys owed to it by recipients of scholarship assistance through the Illinois Future Teacher Corps Program, repealed by Public Act 98-533.

(o) The Auditor General shall prepare an annual audit of the operations and finances of the Golden Apple Scholars of Illinois Program. This audit shall be provided to the Governor, General Assembly, and the Commission.

(p) The suspension of grant making authority found in Section 4.2 of the Illinois Grant Funds Recovery Act shall not apply to grants made pursuant to this Section.

(Source: P.A. 102-1071, eff. 6-10-22; 102-1100, eff. 1-1-23; 103-154, eff. 6-30-23; 103-448, eff. 8-4-23; revised 10-16-24.)

Sec. 65.110. Post-Master of Social Work School Social Work Professional Educator License scholarship.

(a) Subject to appropriation, beginning with awards for the 2022-2023 academic year, the Commission shall award annually up to 250 Post-Master of Social Work School Social Work Professional Educator License scholarships to a person who:

(1) holds a valid Illinois-licensed clinical social work license or social work license;

(2) has obtained a master's degree in social work from an approved program;

(3) is a United States citizen or eligible noncitizen; and

(4) submits an application to the Commission for such scholarship and agrees to take courses to obtain an Illinois Professional Educator License with an endorsement in School Social Work.

(b) If an appropriation for this Section for a given fiscal year is insufficient to provide scholarships to all qualified applicants, the Commission shall allocate the appropriation as follows ~~in accordance with this subsection (b). If funds are insufficient to provide all qualified applicants with a scholarship as authorized by this Section, the Commission shall allocate the available scholarship funds for that fiscal year to qualified applicants who submit a complete application on or before a date specified by the~~

~~Commission, based on the following order of priority:~~

(1) first ~~firstly~~, to students who received a scholarship under this Section in the prior academic year and who remain eligible for a scholarship under this Section;

(2) (blank) ~~secondly, to new, qualified applicants who are members of a racial minority, as defined in subsection (e); and~~

(3) then finally, to ~~other~~ new, qualified applicants in accordance with this Section.

(c) Scholarships awarded under this Section shall be issued pursuant to rules adopted by the Commission. ~~In awarding scholarships, the Commission shall give priority to those applicants who are members of a racial minority. Racial minorities are underrepresented as school social workers in elementary and secondary schools in this State, and the General Assembly finds that it is in the interest of this State to provide them with priority consideration for programs that encourage their participation in this field and thereby foster a profession that is more reflective of the diversity of Illinois students and the parents they will serve. A more reflective workforce in school social work allows improved outcomes for students and a better utilization of services. Therefore, the Commission shall give priority to those applicants who are members of a racial minority. In this subsection (c), "racial minority" means a person who is a~~

~~citizen of the United States or a lawful permanent resident of the United States and who is:~~

~~(1) Black (a person having origins in any of the black racial groups in Africa);~~

~~(2) Hispanic (a person of Spanish or Portuguese culture with origins in Mexico, South or Central America, or the Caribbean Islands, regardless of race);~~

~~(3) Asian American (a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian Subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands); or~~

~~(4) American Indian or Alaskan Native (a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North America).~~

(d) Each scholarship shall be applied to the payment of tuition and mandatory fees at the University of Illinois, Southern Illinois University, Chicago State University, Eastern Illinois University, Governors State University, Illinois State University, Northeastern Illinois University, Northern Illinois University, and Western Illinois University. Each scholarship may be applied to pay tuition and mandatory fees required to obtain an Illinois Professional Educator License with an endorsement in School Social Work.

(e) The Commission shall make tuition and fee payments directly to the qualified institution of higher learning that the applicant attends.

(f) Any person who has accepted a scholarship under this Section must, within one year after graduation or termination

of enrollment in a Post-Master of Social Work Professional Education License with an endorsement in School Social Work program, begin working as a school social worker at a public or nonpublic not-for-profit preschool, elementary school, or secondary school located in this State for at least 2 of the 5 years immediately following that graduation or termination, excluding, however, from the computation of that 5-year period: (i) any time up to 3 years spent in the military service, whether such service occurs before or after the person graduates; (ii) the time that person is a person with a temporary total disability for a period of time not to exceed 3 years, as established by the sworn affidavit of a qualified physician; and (iii) the time that person is seeking and unable to find full-time employment as a school social worker at a State public or nonpublic not-for-profit preschool, elementary school, or secondary school.

(g) If a recipient of a scholarship under this Section fails to fulfill the work obligation set forth in subsection (f), the Commission shall require the recipient to repay the amount of the scholarships received, prorated according to the fraction of the obligation not completed, at a rate of interest equal to 5%, and, if applicable, reasonable collection fees. The Commission is authorized to establish rules relating to its collection activities for repayment of scholarships under this Section. All repayments collected under this Section shall be forwarded to the State Comptroller

for deposit into this State's General Revenue Fund.

A recipient of a scholarship under this Section is not considered to be in violation of the failure to fulfill the work obligation under subsection (f) if the recipient (i) enrolls on a full-time basis as a graduate student in a course of study related to the field of social work at a qualified Illinois institution of higher learning; (ii) is serving, not in excess of 3 years, as a member of the armed services of the United States; (iii) is a person with a temporary total disability for a period of time not to exceed 3 years, as established by the sworn affidavit of a qualified physician; (iv) is seeking and unable to find full-time employment as a school social worker at an Illinois public or nonpublic not-for-profit preschool, elementary school, or secondary school that satisfies the criteria set forth in subsection (f) and is able to provide evidence of that fact; or (v) becomes a person with a permanent total disability, as established by the sworn affidavit of a qualified physician.

(Source: P.A. 102-621, eff. 1-1-22; 102-813, eff. 5-13-22; 102-1030, eff. 5-27-22.)

(110 ILCS 947/65.115)

Sec. 65.115. School and Municipal Social Work Shortage Loan Repayment Program.

(a) To encourage Illinois students to work, and to continue to work, as a school social worker in public school

districts in this State or in State municipalities, the Commission shall, each year, receive and consider applications for loan repayment assistance under this Section. This program shall be known as the School and Municipal Social Work Shortage Loan Repayment Program. The Commission shall administer the program and shall adopt all necessary and proper rules to effectively implement the program.

(b) Beginning July 1, 2022, subject to a separate appropriation made for such purposes, the Commission shall award a grant, up to a maximum of \$6,500, to each qualified applicant. The Commission may encourage the recipient of a grant under this Section to use the grant award for repayment of the recipient's educational loan. ~~If an appropriation for this program for a given fiscal year is insufficient to provide grants to all qualified applicants, the Commission shall allocate the appropriation in accordance with this subsection.~~ If funds are insufficient to provide all qualified applicants with a grant as authorized by this Section, the Commission shall allocate the available grant funds for the ~~that~~ fiscal year to qualified applicants who submit a complete application on or before a date specified by the Commission, based on the following order of priority:

(1) first, to students who received a grant under this Section in the prior fiscal year and who remain eligible for a grant under this Section ~~new, qualified applicants who are members of a racial minority as defined in~~

~~subsection (e); and~~

(2) then ~~second~~, to ~~other~~ new, qualified applicants in accordance with this Section.

(c) A person is a qualified applicant under this Section if he or she meets all of the following qualifications:

(1) The person is a United States citizen or eligible noncitizen.

(2) The person is a resident of this State.

(3) The person is a borrower with an outstanding balance due on an educational loan related to obtaining a degree in social work.

(4) The person has been employed as a school social worker by a public elementary school or secondary school in this State for at least 12 consecutive months or as a social worker for an Illinois municipality who did not report directly to a police department.

(5) The person is currently employed as a school social worker by a public elementary school or secondary school in this State or as a social worker for an Illinois municipality who does not report directly to a police department.

(d) An applicant shall submit an application, in a form determined by the Commission, for grant assistance under this Section to the Commission. An applicant is required to submit, with the application, supporting documentation as the Commission may deem necessary.

(e) (Blank). ~~Racial minorities are underrepresented as school social workers in elementary and secondary schools and in municipalities in Illinois, and the General Assembly finds that it is in the interest of this State to provide them priority consideration for programs that encourage their participation in this field and thereby foster a profession that is more reflective of the diversity of Illinois residents, students and parents they will serve. A more reflective workforce in social work allows improved outcomes for individuals and a better utilization of services. Therefore, the Commission shall give priority to those applicants who are members of a racial minority. In this subsection (c), "racial minority" means a person who is a citizen of the United States or a lawful permanent resident alien of the United States and who is:~~

~~(1) Black (a person having origins in any of the black racial groups in Africa);~~

~~(2) Hispanic (a person of Spanish or Portuguese culture with origins in Mexico, South or Central America, or the Caribbean Islands, regardless of race);~~

~~(3) Asian American (a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian Subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands); or~~

~~(4) American Indian or Alaskan Native (a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North America).~~

(Source: P.A. 102-622, eff. 7-1-22; 102-813, eff. 5-13-22;

102-1022, eff. 1-1-23.)

(110 ILCS 947/65.120)

Sec. 65.120. iGROW Tech Scholarship Program.

(a) As used in this Section:

"Eligible applicant" means a student who has graduated from high school or has received a State of Illinois High School Diploma, who has maintained a cumulative grade point average of no less than 2.5 on a 4.0 scale, who is pursuing or intends to pursue a qualifying degree in a qualified institution, and who is entitled to apply for assistance under this Section.

"Full-time" means the number of credit hours the Commission determines is full-time enrollment for a student for purposes of the program created under this Section.

~~"Minority student" has the same meaning as the term is defined under Section 50 of the Higher Education Student Assistance Act (110 ILCS 947).~~

"Program" means the iGROW Tech Scholarship Program created under this Section.

"Qualifying degree" means an associate or a bachelor's degree granted by a qualified institution in the field of computer information sciences; information technology; information science; computer science; computer systems networking and telecommunications; computer and information systems security or information assurance, including

cybersecurity; or management information systems.

"Qualifying job" means a job with an employer in this State performing work that is directly related to the field of study that qualified the candidate for assistance under this Section.

"Qualified student" means a person (i) who is a resident of this State; (ii) who, as an eligible applicant, has made a timely application for an iGROW tech scholarship under this Section; (iii) who is enrolled on at least a half-time basis at a qualified institution; (iv) who is enrolled in a course of study in the field of computer and information sciences; information technology; information science; computer science; computer systems networking and telecommunications; computer and information systems security or information assurance, including cybersecurity; or management information systems; (v) who maintains a grade point average of no less than a 2.5 on a 4.0 scale; and (vi) who continues to advance satisfactorily toward the attainment of a degree.

"Recipient" means an Illinois resident enrolled in a qualified institution who receives an award under this Section.

(b) Subject to appropriation, and no sooner than the 2024-2025 academic year, there is established the Illinois Graduate and Retain Our Workforce (iGROW) Tech Scholarship Program to recruit and train individuals to work in technology jobs that have a high demand for new employees and offer high

wages by awarding scholarships.

(c) Each iGROW tech scholarship awarded under this Section shall be determined by the Commission in an amount up to and including the full costs of tuition and fees and room and board of the qualified institution at which the recipient is enrolled if the institution is public, or an equivalent rate established by the Commission for private institutions. The total amount of iGROW tech scholarship assistance awarded by the Commission under this Section to an eligible applicant in any given fiscal year, when added to other financial assistance awarded to that individual for that year, shall not exceed the cost of attendance at the institution at which the student is enrolled. If the amount of financial assistance to be awarded to a qualified student exceeds the cost of attendance at the institution at which the student is enrolled, the iGROW tech scholarship shall be reduced by an amount equal to the amount by which the combined financial assistance available to the student exceeds the cost of attendance.

(d) The maximum number of academic terms for which a qualified student can receive iGROW tech scholarship assistance shall be 8 semesters or 12 quarters.

(e) All applications for scholarships awarded under this Section shall be made to the Commission on forms which the Commission shall provide for eligible applicants. The form of applications and the information required to be set forth

therein shall be determined by the Commission, and the Commission shall require eligible applicants to submit with their applications such supporting documents or recommendations as the Commission deems necessary.

(f) Subject to appropriation for such purposes, payment of any iGROW tech scholarship awarded under this Section shall be determined by the Commission. All scholarship funds distributed in accordance with this subsection shall be paid to the qualified institution and used only for payment of the tuition and fees assessed by the institution and the standard housing and food allowance used for all undergraduate students by the qualified student in connection with his or her attendance at a qualified institution.

Any iGROW tech scholarship awarded under this Section shall be applicable to 2 semesters or 3 quarters of enrollment annually. The qualified institution can only request payment for tuition and fees up to the amount of actual tuition and fee expenses incurred.

If a student withdraws after the expiration of the tuition refund or withdrawal adjustment period, the student may receive payment for tuition and fees incurred up to the term award. The housing and food allowance shall be prorated based on the qualified institution's return of funds policy.

(g) Prior to receiving scholarship assistance for any academic year, each recipient of an iGROW tech scholarship awarded under this Section shall be required by the Commission

to sign an agreement under which the recipient pledges that the recipient (i) shall work in the State in a qualified job for a period of not less than one year for each year of scholarship assistance he or she was awarded under this Section; however, in no event shall he or she agree to work in the State in a qualified job for a period of less than 2 years; and (ii) shall, upon request by the Commission, provide the Commission with evidence that he or she is fulfilling or has fulfilled the terms of the agreement provided for in this subsection.

If a recipient of an iGROW tech scholarship awarded under this Section fails to fulfill the obligations set forth in this subsection, the Commission shall require the recipient to repay the amount of the scholarships received, prorated according to the fraction of the employment obligation not completed, at a rate of interest equal to 5%, and, if applicable, reasonable collection fees. The Commission is authorized to establish rules relating to its collection activities for repayment of scholarships under this Section. All repayments collected under this Section shall be forwarded to the State Comptroller for deposit into the State's General Revenue Fund.

A recipient of an iGROW tech scholarship shall not be considered in violation of the agreement entered into pursuant to this subsection if the recipient (I) enrolls on a full-time basis as a graduate student in a course of study related to the

technology degree for which he or she qualified for the iGROW tech scholarship at a qualified institution; (II) is serving, not in excess of 3 years, as a member of the armed services of the United States; (III) is a person with a temporary total disability for a period of time not to exceed 3 years as established by sworn affidavit of a qualified physician; (IV) is seeking and unable to find full-time employment with a State employer that satisfies the criteria set forth in this subsection and is able to provide evidence of that fact; (V) becomes a person with a permanent total disability as established by sworn affidavit of a qualified physician; or (VI) meets any other criteria that the Commission may deem necessary.

(h) Scholarship recipients under this Section who withdraw from a program of computer science or other related major area of study provided under this Section but remain enrolled in school to continue their postsecondary studies in another academic discipline shall not be required to commence repayment of their iGROW tech scholarship so long as they remain enrolled in school on a full-time basis or if they can document for the Commission special circumstances that warrant extension of repayment.

(i) If the Program does not expend at least 90% of the amount appropriated for the Program in a given fiscal year for 3 consecutive fiscal years on or before January 1 in each of those fiscal years, then up to 3% of amount appropriated for

the Program for each of next 3 fiscal years shall be allocated to increasing awareness of the program.

(j) The Commission shall administer the Program and shall make all necessary and proper rules not inconsistent with this Section for its effective implementation.

(k) The Commission shall establish a methodology for prioritizing applications from applicants who demonstrate a financial need or hardship, ~~applications from minority students,~~ and applications from applicants demonstrating academic excellence. After the first academic year that the Program operates, the Commission shall prioritize the applications of those applicants who received a scholarship under this Section during the prior academic year and who remain eligible for a scholarship under this Section.

(l) Each fiscal year, the Commission may use up to 5% of money appropriated for the Program for administration.

(m) Scholarships may be made under this Section through the 2029-30 academic year.

(n) The Illinois Graduate and Retain Our Workforce (iGROW) Tech Scholarship Fund is created as a special fund in the State treasury. Moneys in the fund may come from both public entities and institutional, organizational, or other private entities. All money in the Fund shall be used, subject to appropriation, by the Commission to implement and administer the Program pursuant to this Section.

(Source: P.A. 103-519, eff. 1-1-24.)

(110 ILCS 947/65.30 rep.)

Section 25. The Higher Education Student Assistance Act is amended by repealing Section 65.30.

Section 30. The Community Behavioral Health Care Professional Loan Repayment Program Act is amended by changing Section 25 as follows:

(110 ILCS 996/25)

Sec. 25. Award; maximum loan time; maximum amount. Subject to appropriation, the Commission shall award a grant to each qualified applicant for a maximum of 4 years. The Commission must encourage the recipient of a grant awarded under this Act to use the grant award for payments towards the recipient's educational loans. The amount of the grant shall not exceed (i) \$40,000 per year for a psychiatrist, (ii) \$20,000 per year for an advanced practice registered nurse or a physician assistant, (iii) \$20,000 per year for a psychologist who holds a doctoral degree, (iv) \$15,000 per year for a licensed clinical social worker, a licensed clinical professional counselor, or a licensed marriage and family therapist, (v) \$4,000 per year for a substance use professional, a certified alcohol and drug counselor, or a certified recovery support specialist, (vi) \$12,000 per year for a professional possessing a master's degree in counseling, psychology, social

work, or marriage and family therapy, and (vii) \$6,000 per year for a professional possessing a bachelor's degree in counseling, psychology, or social work.

~~No less than 30% of the funding for grants under this Section each fiscal year shall be reserved for awards to minority applicants of African American or Black, Hispanic or Latinx, Asian, or Native American origin. If the Commission does not receive enough applications from qualified minorities on or before January 1 of a given fiscal year to award 30% of the funding to qualified minority applicants, then the Commission may award a portion of these reserved funds to other qualified applicants.~~

(Source: P.A. 103-56, eff. 7-1-24.)

Section 97. Severability. The provisions of this Act are severable under Section 1.31 of the Statute on Statutes.

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon becoming law.