

1 AN ACT concerning education.

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

4 Section 5. The Children and Family Services Act is amended  
5 by changing Section 44 as follows:

6 (20 ILCS 505/44)

7 Sec. 44. Pat McGuire Child Welfare Education Fellowship  
8 Pilot Program.

9 (a) The General Assembly makes all of the following  
10 findings:

11 (1) The Department of Children and Family Services is  
12 the sole State agency for the planning and coordination of  
13 programs and services for the prevention of child abuse  
14 and neglect. The Department also provides social services  
15 to children and their families, operates children's  
16 institutions, and provides certain other rehabilitative  
17 and residential services. The Department contracts with  
18 many child welfare contributing agencies ~~purchase of~~  
19 ~~service agencies~~ for the administration of these programs.

20 (2) Due to numerous factors, including the rate of  
21 pay, child welfare contributing agencies ~~purchase of~~  
22 ~~service agencies~~ have a high employee turnover rate and  
23 struggle to maintain consistent employment levels. This

1 high turnover is disruptive to the delivery of direct  
2 child welfare services to families and youth in care.

3 (3) A number of public institutions of higher  
4 education in this State offer child welfare social work  
5 programs that are designed to train and prepare students  
6 for employment in the child welfare social work field,  
7 including, but not limited to, employment at child welfare  
8 contributing agencies ~~purchase of service agencies~~ that  
9 provide direct child welfare services to families and  
10 youth in care.

11 (4) The Department and public institutions of higher  
12 education have a mutual interest in providing greater  
13 access to child welfare social work education for a  
14 professional workforce that is responsive to the work of  
15 the Department through child welfare contributing agencies  
16 ~~purchase of service agencies~~.

17 (b) As used in this Section:

18 "Department" means the Department of Children and Family  
19 Services.

20 "Direct service" means a position in foster care services,  
21 intact services, foster care licensing, adoption, or  
22 permanency or a supervisory position in the practice area.

23 "Eligible applicant" means a student who is enrolled in a  
24 social work program of study at a participating institution of  
25 higher education and who meets all of the qualifications as  
26 determined by the Department.

1 "Participating institution" means a ~~public~~ university in  
2 this State that is a party to an ~~intergovernmental~~ agreement  
3 entered into with the Department in order to participate in  
4 the program established under this Section.

5 "Tuition, university fees, and books" includes the  
6 customary charge for instruction and books or course material  
7 and the additional fixed fees charged for specified purposes  
8 that are required generally of students who are not program  
9 applicants under this Section for each academic year for which  
10 a program applicant under this Section actually enrolls, but  
11 does not include room and board, transportation fees, fees  
12 payable only once, breakage fees, and other contingent  
13 deposits that are refundable in whole or in part. The  
14 Department may adopt, by rule not inconsistent with this  
15 Section, detailed provisions concerning the computation of  
16 tuition, university fees, and books.

17 (c) Beginning with the 2021-2022 academic year and  
18 continuing for a period of 6 academic years, the Department  
19 shall establish and administer the Pat McGuire Child Welfare  
20 Education Fellowship Pilot Program to provide financial  
21 assistance to a diverse pool of eligible students who commit  
22 to seek and maintain employment at a child welfare  
23 contributing agency ~~purchase of service agency~~ that contracts  
24 with the Department upon graduation from a participating  
25 institution with a degree in social work. The goal of the  
26 program is to develop and support an effective and stable

1 direct service child welfare workforce. Each ~~Pursuant to the~~  
2 ~~Intergovernmental Cooperation Act,~~ each participating  
3 institution shall enter into and adhere to all of the  
4 provisions of an ~~intergovernmental~~ agreement between the  
5 Department and the participating institution. Subject to  
6 appropriation, the stipend program shall be available to  
7 eligible applicants in this State pursuing either a Bachelor  
8 of Social Work or a Master of Social Work degree at a  
9 participating institution. The Department may award a stipend  
10 of up to \$10,000 each academic year for a maximum of 2 academic  
11 years, up to a maximum total of \$20,000 in stipends for the 2  
12 academic years combined, to a student under this Section if  
13 the participating institution and the Department find that the  
14 applicant meets all criteria established by the Department.

15 (d) Each participating institution and the Department  
16 shall determine renewal criteria for assistance consistent  
17 with the requirements of this Section.

18 (e) Each participating institution shall post on its  
19 Internet website the criteria and eligibility requirements to  
20 receive a stipend award of funds under this Section and must  
21 identify that the stipend awards are up to a maximum of \$10,000  
22 per student per academic year for a maximum of 2 academic  
23 years, with the total amount of stipends awarded to an  
24 eligible applicant or student not to exceed \$20,000 for the  
25 duration of the eligible applicant's or student's  
26 participation in the program. This information must also be

1 reported to the Department and the Board of Higher Education,  
2 and the Department and the Board shall post the information on  
3 their respective Internet websites.

4 (f) Prior to receiving a stipend for any academic year, an  
5 eligible applicant under this Section shall be required by the  
6 participating institution to sign an agreement with the  
7 Department under which the stipend recipient pledges that,  
8 within 6 months from the date of the stipend recipient's  
9 graduation from the participating institution with a Bachelor  
10 of Social Work or a Master of Social Work degree for which  
11 stipend funds were paid by the Department, the stipend  
12 recipient must search for, apply to, and accept full-time  
13 employment in a direct service position at a Department child  
14 welfare contributing agency ~~purchase of service agency~~ located  
15 anywhere in this State. The stipend recipient must remain as a  
16 full-time employee in a direct service position at a  
17 Department child welfare contributing agency ~~purchase of~~  
18 ~~service agency~~ located anywhere in this State for at least 18  
19 months for each academic year the stipend recipient received a  
20 stipend from the Department under the program.

21 (g) If the recipient of a stipend award under this Section  
22 fails to search for, apply to, and accept full-time employment  
23 in a direct service position at a Department child welfare  
24 contributing agency ~~purchase of service agency~~ located  
25 anywhere in this State within 6 months following the stipend  
26 recipient's graduation from a social work program at a

1 participating institution, the Department shall require the  
2 stipend recipient to begin to repay the total amount of the  
3 stipend received within 90 calendar days after the end of the  
4 6-month period or as agreed to by the Department. The  
5 repayment amount shall be prorated according to the fraction  
6 of the employment obligation not completed, at a rate of  
7 interest equal to 5%, and, if applicable, reasonable  
8 attorney's and collection fees. All repayments collected under  
9 this Section shall be forwarded to the State Comptroller for  
10 deposit into the fund from which the stipend awards were paid.

11 (h) A stipend recipient under this Section must  
12 immediately notify the participating institution and the  
13 Department of any changes to the stipend recipient's  
14 enrollment status or if the stipend recipient withdraws from  
15 the social work program for which the recipient was awarded a  
16 stipend under the program.

17 (i) If a stipend recipient's qualified employment is  
18 terminated for any reason other than for cause, a stipend  
19 recipient must search for, apply to, and accept new,  
20 qualified, full-time employment in a direct service position  
21 at a Department child welfare contributing agency ~~purchase of~~  
22 ~~service agency~~ located anywhere in this State within 90  
23 calendar days from the stipend recipient's termination of  
24 full-time employment, otherwise the stipend recipient is  
25 subject to the repayment of stipend funds to the Department.

26 (j) If a stipend recipient's qualified employment is

1 terminated for cause prior to the completion of the program's  
2 employment requirement, the stipend recipient shall repay the  
3 total amount of stipends received under the program within 90  
4 calendar days from termination or as agreed to by the  
5 Department. The amount of repayment owed by the recipient  
6 shall be prorated based on the amount of the employment  
7 requirement that has been satisfied.

8 (k) On or before October 1, 2023 and each October 1  
9 thereafter during the Pat McGuire Child Welfare Education  
10 Fellowship Pilot Program, the Department shall provide a  
11 report and evaluation of the results of the program at each  
12 participating institution to the General Assembly and the  
13 Office of the Governor. Each participating institution shall  
14 track a student's eligibility under the program, the  
15 completion of educational requirements, the costs of each  
16 student's tuition, university fees, and books, and the  
17 application of the recipient's stipends during the recipient's  
18 enrollment at the participating institution. The report shall  
19 also include the location in this State where each stipend  
20 recipient was hired and shall identify the child welfare  
21 contributing agency ~~purchase of service agency~~, the duration  
22 of the recipient's employment, and the termination date of the  
23 recipient's employment.

24 (l) The sharing and reporting of student data under  
25 subsection (k) shall be in accordance with the federal Family  
26 Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 and the Illinois

1 School Student Records Act. All parties under this Section  
2 must preserve the confidentiality of information as required  
3 by law. The names of stipend recipients under this Section are  
4 not subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information  
5 Act.

6 (m) The Department is authorized to adopt rules to  
7 implement and administer this Section.

8 (Source: P.A. 102-80, eff. 7-9-21; 102-848, eff. 1-1-23.)