

SB1345



104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2025 and 2026

SB1345

Introduced 1/28/2025, by Sen. Michael W. Halpin

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

110 ILCS 947/40

Amends the Higher Education Student Assistance Act. Provides that a qualified applicant for the Illinois Veteran grant program includes a person who, among other requirements, served less than one year of federal active duty and received an uncharacterized discharge as a result of a service-connected disability.

LRB104 07179 LNS 17216 b

A BILL FOR

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 Higher Education Student Assistance Act is
5 amended by changing Section 40 as follows:

6 (110 ILCS 947/40)

7 Sec. 40. Illinois Veteran grant program.

8 (a) As used in this Section:

9 "Qualified applicant" means a person who served in the
10 Armed Forces of the United States, a Reserve component of the
11 Armed Forces, or the Illinois National Guard, excluding
12 members of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps and those
13 whose only service has been attendance at a service academy,
14 and who meets all of the qualifications of either paragraphs
15 (1) through (4) or paragraphs (2), (3), and (5):

16 (1) At the time of entering federal active duty
17 service the person was one of the following:

18 (A) An Illinois resident.

19 (B) An Illinois resident within 6 months of
20 entering such service.

21 (C) Enrolled at a State-controlled university or
22 public community college in this State.

23 (2) The person meets one of the following

1 requirements:

2 (A) He or she served at least one year of federal
3 active duty.

4 (B) He or she served less than one year of federal
5 active duty and received an honorable discharge for
6 medical reasons directly connected with such service.

7 (C) He or she served less than one year of federal
8 active duty and was discharged prior to August 11,
9 1967.

10 (D) He or she served less than one year of federal
11 active duty in a foreign country during a time of
12 hostilities in that foreign country.

13 (E) He or she served less than one year of federal
14 active duty and received an uncharacterized discharge
15 as a result of a service-connected disability.

16 (3) The person received an honorable discharge or an
17 uncharacterized discharge as a result of a
18 service-connected disability after leaving federal active
19 duty service.

20 (4) The person returned to this State within 6 months
21 after leaving federal active duty service, or, if married
22 to a person in continued military service stationed
23 outside this State, returned to this State within 6 months
24 after his or her spouse left service or was stationed
25 within this State.

26 (5) The person does not meet the requirements of

1 paragraph (1), but (i) is a resident of Illinois at the
2 time of application to the Commission and (ii) at some
3 point after leaving federal active duty service, was a
4 resident of Illinois for at least 15 consecutive years.

5 "Time of hostilities" means any action by the Armed Forces
6 of the United States that is recognized by the issuance of a
7 Presidential proclamation or a Presidential executive order
8 and in which the Armed Forces expeditionary medal or other
9 campaign service medals are awarded according to Presidential
10 executive order.

11 (b) A person who otherwise qualifies under subsection (a)
12 of this Section but has not left federal active duty service
13 and has served at least one year of federal active duty or has
14 served for less than one year of federal active duty in a
15 foreign country during a time of hostilities in that foreign
16 country and who can provide documentation demonstrating an
17 honorable service record is eligible to receive assistance
18 under this Section.

19 (c) A qualified applicant is not required to pay any
20 tuition or mandatory fees while attending a State-controlled
21 university or public community college in this State for a
22 period that is equivalent to 4 years of full-time enrollment,
23 including summer terms.

24 A qualified applicant who has previously received benefits
25 under this Section for a non-mandatory fee shall continue to
26 receive benefits covering such fees while he or she is

1 enrolled in a continuous program of study. The qualified
2 applicant shall no longer receive a grant covering
3 non-mandatory fees if he or she fails to enroll during an
4 academic term, unless he or she is serving federal active duty
5 service.

6 (d) A qualified applicant who has been or is to be awarded
7 assistance under this Section shall receive that assistance if
8 the qualified applicant notifies his or her postsecondary
9 institution of that fact by the end of the school term for
10 which assistance is requested.

11 (e) Assistance under this Section is considered an
12 entitlement that the State-controlled college or public
13 community college in which the qualified applicant is enrolled
14 shall honor without any condition other than the qualified
15 applicant's maintenance of minimum grade levels and a
16 satisfactory student loan repayment record pursuant to
17 subsection (c) of Section 20 of this Act.

18 (f) The Commission shall administer the grant program
19 established by this Section and shall make all necessary and
20 proper rules not inconsistent with this Section for its
21 effective implementation.

22 (g) All applications for assistance under this Section
23 must be made to the Commission on forms that the Commission
24 shall provide. The Commission shall determine the form of
25 application and the information required to be set forth in
26 the application, and the Commission shall require qualified

1 applicants to submit with their applications any supporting
2 documents that the Commission deems necessary. Upon request,
3 the Department of Veterans' Affairs shall assist the
4 Commission in determining the eligibility of applicants for
5 assistance under this Section.

6 (h) Assistance under this Section is available as long as
7 the federal government provides educational benefits to
8 veterans. Assistance must not be paid under this Section after
9 6 months following the termination of educational benefits to
10 veterans by the federal government, except for persons who
11 already have begun their education with assistance under this
12 Section. If the federal government terminates educational
13 benefits to veterans and at a later time resumes those
14 benefits, assistance under this Section shall resume.

15 (Source: P.A. 101-334, eff. 8-9-19; 102-800, eff. 5-13-22.)