

SB3279



104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2025 and 2026

SB3279

Introduced 2/3/2026, by Sen. Mike Porfirio

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

110 ILCS 947/40

Amends the Higher Education Student Assistance Act with respect to the Illinois Veteran grant program. Changes the definition of "qualified applicant" to include a person who, among satisfying other requirements, does not meet requirements regarding residency or public institution of higher education enrollment in the State, but (i) at least 12 months of his or her federal active duty took place in the State, (ii) he or she resided in the State for 2 years after leaving federal active duty service, and (iii) he or she now serves in a reserve component of the Armed Forces.

LRB104 20153 LNS 33604 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), or
16 paragraphs (2), (3), and (6):

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

19 (A) An Illinois resident.

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

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

1 (2) The person meets one of the following
2 requirements:

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

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

8 (C) He or she served less than one year of federal
9 active duty and was discharged prior to August 11,
10 1967.

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

14 (3) The person received an honorable discharge after
15 leaving federal active duty service.

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

22 (5) The person does not meet the requirements of
23 paragraph (1), but (i) is a resident of Illinois at the
24 time of application to the Commission and (ii) at some
25 point after leaving federal active duty service, was a
26 resident of Illinois for at least 15 consecutive years.

1 (6) The person does not meet the requirements of
2 paragraph (1), but (i) at least 12 months of his or her
3 federal active duty took place in this State, (ii) he or
4 she resided in this State for 2 years after leaving
5 federal active duty service, and (iii) he or she now
6 serves in a reserve component of the Armed Forces.

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

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

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

26 A qualified applicant who has previously received benefits

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

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

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

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

24 (g) All applications for assistance under this Section
25 must be made to the Commission on forms that the Commission
26 shall provide. The Commission shall determine the form of

1 application and the information required to be set forth in
2 the application, and the Commission shall require qualified
3 applicants to submit with their applications any supporting
4 documents that the Commission deems necessary. Upon request,
5 the Department of Veterans Affairs shall assist the Commission
6 in determining the eligibility of applicants for assistance
7 under this Section.

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

17 (Source: P.A. 104-234, eff. 8-15-25.)