



General Assembly

January Session, 2019

Raised Bill No. 7161

LCO No. 4331



Referred to Committee on HIGHER EDUCATION AND
EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT

Introduced by:
(HED)

AN ACT ESTABLISHING FINISH LINE GRANTS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General
Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2019*) (a) For the purposes of this
2 section:

3 (1) "Award" means (A) the unpaid portion, if any, of a qualifying
4 student's eligible institutional costs after subtracting his or her
5 financial aid, or (B) five hundred dollars, whichever is greater;

6 (2) "Eligible institutional costs" means the tuition and required fees
7 for an individual student that are published by each public institution
8 of higher education;

9 (3) "Financial aid" means the sum of all scholarships, grants and
10 federal, state and institutional aid received by a qualifying student.
11 "Financial aid" does not include any federal, state or private student
12 loans received by a qualifying student;

13 (4) "Qualifying student" means any person who (A) is a full-time
14 undergraduate student enrolled at a public institution of higher

15 education, (B) is classified as an in-state student pursuant to section
16 10a-29 of the general statutes, (C) possesses an undergraduate college
17 cumulative grade point average of at least 2.5 and has earned half of
18 the credit hours required for completion of an associate or bachelor's
19 degree, (D) has completed the Free Application for Federal Student
20 Aid, (E) has an expected family contribution for educational costs, as
21 computed from the student's Free Application for Federal Student Aid,
22 of seven thousand five hundred dollars or less, and (F) has accepted all
23 available financial aid;

24 (5) "Full-time undergraduate student" means a student who is
25 enrolled at a public institution of higher education in a course of study
26 leading to an associate or bachelor's degree and who is carrying (A)
27 twelve or more semester credit hours in a semester, or (B) thirty or
28 more semester credit hours in an academic year; and

29 (6) "Public institution of higher education" means the constituent
30 units of the state system of higher education identified in subdivisions
31 (1) and (2) of section 10a-1 of the general statutes.

32 (b) On or before the start of the fall semester of 2019, the state, acting
33 through the Office of Higher Education, shall establish the Finish Line
34 Grant program to annually make awards to qualifying students for
35 eligible institutional costs. An award shall be available to a qualifying
36 student when the qualifying student has earned half of the credit hours
37 required for completion of the qualifying student's first associate or
38 bachelor's degree program, provided the qualifying student meets and
39 continues to meet the requirements of this section.

40 (c) On or before the start of the fall semester of 2019, and each
41 semester thereafter, each public institution of higher education shall
42 conduct a financial and academic audit to determine the number of
43 qualifying students enrolled at the institution and the amount of the
44 award to be made to each qualifying student under this section. A
45 public institution of higher education shall not use an award to
46 supplant any state or institutional aid otherwise available to a

47 qualifying student. The amount of the annual appropriation to be
 48 allocated to each public institution of higher education shall be the
 49 sum of all awards made to qualifying students enrolled at the public
 50 institution of higher education during each semester of the prior
 51 academic year. If the sum of all awards made to qualifying students
 52 exceeds the amount of the annual appropriation for the Finish Line
 53 Grant program in any year, the Office of Higher Education shall
 54 prioritize allocations in accordance with criteria developed by the
 55 office. Not later than September first and February first, annually, each
 56 public institution of higher education shall report the sum of all
 57 awards made to qualifying students and the results from the financial
 58 and academic audit conducted each semester to the Office of Higher
 59 Education. Each public institution of higher education shall expend all
 60 of the moneys received under the Finish Line Grant program as direct
 61 financial assistance only for eligible institutional costs.

62 (d) Any qualifying student receiving an award under this section
 63 shall participate in a volunteer-based mentorship and counseling
 64 program, as prescribed by the Office of Higher Education.

65 (e) Not later than January 1, 2020, and annually thereafter, the Office
 66 of Higher Education shall report, in accordance with the provisions of
 67 section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing committees of
 68 the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to higher
 69 education and employment advancement and appropriations on the
 70 Finish Line Grant program.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

Section 1	July 1, 2019	New section
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Statement of Purpose:

To allow undergraduate students at public institutions of higher education to finish earning their degrees without student loans.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]