



General Assembly

Substitute Bill No. 204

February Session, 2024



AN ACT EXPANDING THE DEBT-FREE COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROGRAM AND NAMING THE GRANTS AFTER MARY ANN HANDLEY.

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

1 Section 1. Section 10a-174 of the 2024 supplement to the general
2 statutes, as amended by section 134 of public act 23-204, is repealed and
3 the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2024*):

4 (a) As used in this section:

5 (1) ["Award"] "Grant" means the greater of: (A) The unpaid portion,
6 if any, of a qualifying student's eligible institutional costs after
7 subtracting his or her financial aid, or (B) a minimum [award] grant of
8 two hundred fifty dollars for a full-time student or one hundred fifty
9 dollars for a part-time student;

10 (2) "Eligible institutional costs" means the tuition and required fees
11 incurred each semester by an individual student that are established by
12 the Board of Regents for Higher Education for the regional community-
13 technical colleges;

14 (3) "Financial aid" means the sum of all scholarships, grants and
15 federal, state and institutional aid received by a qualifying student.

16 "Financial aid" does not include any federal, state or private student
17 loans received by a qualifying student;

18 (4) "Qualifying student" means any person who (A) [graduated from
19 a public or nonpublic high school in the state, (B)] enrolls as a full-time
20 or part-time student for the fall semester of 2020, or any semester
21 thereafter, at a regional community-technical college in a program
22 leading to a degree or certificate, [(C)] (B) is classified as an in-state
23 student pursuant to section 10a-29, [(D)] (C) is making satisfactory
24 academic progress while enrolled at a regional community-technical
25 college, [(E)] (D) has completed the Free Application for Federal Student
26 Aid, and [(F)] (E) has accepted all available financial aid;

27 (5) "Full-time student" means a student who is enrolled at a regional
28 community-technical college and (A) is carrying twelve or more credit
29 hours in a semester, or (B) has a learning disability documented with
30 the regional community-technical college in which he or she is enrolled
31 and is enrolled in the maximum number of credit hours that is feasible
32 for such student to attempt in a semester, as determined by such
33 student's academic advisor;

34 (6) "Semester" means the fall or spring semester of an academic year.
35 "Semester" does not include a summer semester or session; and

36 (7) "Part-time student" means a student who is enrolled at a regional
37 community-technical college and is carrying not less than six but fewer
38 than twelve credit hours in a semester.

39 (b) The Board of Regents for Higher Education shall (1) establish a
40 debt-free community college program to make [awards] grants to
41 qualifying students each semester, (2) adopt rules, procedures and
42 forms necessary to implement the debt-free community college
43 program, and (3) submit a report outlining such rules, procedures and
44 forms, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, to the joint
45 standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of
46 matters relating to higher education. Grants made to eligible students

47 pursuant to the debt-free community college program shall be
48 designated as the "Mary Ann Handley Grant".

49 (c) For the fall semester of 2020, and each semester thereafter, the
50 Board of Regents for Higher Education shall make [awards] grants to
51 qualifying students within available appropriations. [An award] A
52 grant shall be available to a qualifying student for the first seventy-two
53 credit hours earned by the qualifying student at a regional community-
54 technical college, provided the qualifying student meets and continues
55 to meet the requirements of this section. The board shall not use [an
56 award] a grant to supplant any financial aid, including, but not limited
57 to, state or institutional aid, otherwise available to a qualifying student.

58 (d) Not later than [March 1, 2021, and October 1, 2021] November 1,
59 2024, and March 1, 2025, and each semester thereafter, the Board of
60 Regents for Higher Education shall report, in accordance with the
61 provisions of section 11-4a, to the joint standing committees of the
62 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to higher
63 education and employment advancement and appropriations and the
64 budgets of the state agencies regarding the debt-free community college
65 program, including, but not limited to, (1) the number of qualifying
66 students enrolled at the regional community-technical colleges during
67 each semester, (2) the number of qualifying students receiving
68 minimum [awards] grants and the number of qualifying students
69 receiving [awards] grants for the unpaid portion of eligible institutional
70 costs, (3) the average number of credit hours the qualifying students
71 enrolled in each semester and the average number of credit hours the
72 qualifying students completed each semester, (4) the average amount of
73 the [award] grant made to qualifying students under this section for the
74 unpaid portion of eligible institutional costs, and (5) the completion
75 rates of qualifying students receiving [awards] grants under this section
76 by degree or certificate program.

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

Section 1	<i>July 1, 2024</i>	10a-174
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HED

Joint Favorable Subst. C/R

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