

2024 -- H 7544

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2024

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- RHODE ISLAND PROMISE SCHOLARSHIP -- RHODE
ISLAND HOPE SCHOLARSHIP PILOT PROGRAM

Introduced By: Representatives Azzinaro, Kennedy, Corvese, Solomon, Casey, Lima,
O'Brien, Ackerman, and McNamara

Date Introduced: February 07, 2024

Referred To: House Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 16-107-6 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-107 entitled "Rhode
2 Island Promise Scholarship" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **16-107-6. Eligibility for scholarship.**

4 (a) Beginning with the students who enroll at the community college of Rhode Island in
5 the fall of 2017, to be considered for the scholarship, a student:

6 (1) Must qualify for in-state tuition and fees pursuant to the residency policy adopted by
7 the council on postsecondary education, as amended, supplemented, restated, or otherwise modified
8 from time to time ("residency policy"); provided, that, the student must have satisfied the high
9 school graduation/equivalency diploma condition prior to reaching nineteen (19) years of age;
10 provided, further, that in addition to the option of meeting the requirement by receiving a high
11 school equivalency diploma as described in the residency policy, the student can satisfy the
12 condition by receiving other certificates or documents of equivalent nature from the state or its
13 municipalities as recognized by applicable regulations promulgated by the council on elementary
14 and secondary education;

15 (2) Must be admitted to, and must enroll and attend the community college of Rhode Island
16 on a full-time basis by the semester immediately following high school graduation or the semester
17 immediately following receipt of a high school equivalency diploma; provided, on and after July
18 1, 2024, the time for students to enroll and attend the community college of Rhode Island and

1 [qualify for the scholarship pursuant to this section shall be extended to up to one year after the](#)
2 [student's high school graduation;](#)

3 (3) Must complete the FAFSA and any required FAFSA verification, or for persons who
4 are legally unable to complete the FAFSA must complete a comparable form created by the
5 community college of Rhode Island, by the deadline prescribed by the community college of Rhode
6 Island for each year in which the student seeks to receive funding under the scholarship program;

7 (4) Must continue to be enrolled on a full-time basis;

8 (5) Must maintain an average annual cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 or
9 greater, as determined by the community college of Rhode Island;

10 (6) Must remain on track to graduate on time as determined by the community college of
11 Rhode Island;

12 (7) Must not have already received an award under this scholarship program; and

13 (8) Must commit to live, work, or continue their education in Rhode Island after graduation.

14 The community college of Rhode Island shall develop a policy that will secure this
15 commitment from recipient students.

16 (b) Notwithstanding the eligibility requirements under subsection (a) of this section
17 (“specified conditions”):

18 (1) In the case of a recipient student who has an approved medical or personal leave of
19 absence or is unable to satisfy one or more specified conditions because of the student’s medical
20 or personal circumstances, the student may continue to receive an award under the scholarship
21 program upon resuming the student’s education so long as the student continues to meet all other
22 applicable eligibility requirements;

23 (2) In the case of a recipient student who is a member of the national guard or a member
24 of a reserve unit of a branch of the United States military and is unable to satisfy one or more
25 specified conditions because the student is or will be in basic or special military training, or is or
26 will be participating in a deployment of the student’s guard or reserve unit, the student may continue
27 to receive an award under the scholarship program upon completion of the student’s basic or special
28 military training or deployment; and

29 (3) Any student with a disability, otherwise eligible for a scholarship pursuant to the
30 provisions of this section, as of May 15, 2021, shall be entitled to access this program and shall be
31 afforded all reasonable accommodations, as required by the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act of
32 1973, including, but not limited to, enrolling on a part-time basis, attaining a high school
33 diploma/GED by age twenty-one (21), and taking longer than two (2) years to graduate with an
34 associate’s degree.

1 SECTION 2. Section 16-113-6 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-113 entitled "Rhode
2 Island Hope Scholarship Pilot Program Act" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **16-113-6. Eligibility for merit-based tuition reduction scholarship at Rhode Island**
4 **college.**

5 (a) Beginning with the students who enrolled at Rhode Island college in the fall of 2023, a
6 student:

7 (1) Must qualify for in-state tuition and fees pursuant to the residency policy adopted by
8 the council on postsecondary education, as amended, supplemented, restated, or otherwise modified
9 from time to time ("residency policy");

10 (2) Must be a currently enrolled full-time student who has declared a major and earned a
11 minimum of sixty (60) total credit hours towards an eligible program of study, as determined by
12 Rhode Island college;

13 (3) Must complete the FAFSA and any required FAFSA verification by the deadline
14 prescribed by Rhode Island college for each year in which the student seeks to receive funding
15 under the scholarship program; provided that, persons who are legally unable to complete the
16 FAFSA must complete a comparable form created by Rhode Island college, by the deadline
17 prescribed by Rhode Island college, for each year in which the student seeks to receive funding
18 under the scholarship program;

19 (4) Must enroll or have enrolled full-time as a freshman as a first-time student and continue
20 to be enrolled on a full-time basis at Rhode Island college, by the dates indicated within this chapter;
21 [provided, on and after July 1, 2024, the time for students to enroll and attend Rhode Island college](#)
22 [and qualify for the scholarship pursuant to this section shall be extended to up to one year after the](#)
23 [student's high school graduation;](#)

24 (5) Must maintain an average annual cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 or
25 greater, as determined by Rhode Island college, prior to obtaining the scholarship and also as a
26 condition of being able to continue to be a scholarship recipient;

27 (6) Must remain on track to graduate on time as determined by Rhode Island college and
28 must complete both the student's freshman and sophomore years at Rhode Island college, or in the
29 case of an adult student, have completed sixty (60) credit hours of tuition and mandatory fees at
30 Rhode Island college over a duration of no more than four (4) years;

31 (7) Must not have already received an award under this program or under chapter 107 of
32 this title; and

33 (8) Must commit to live, work, or continue their education in Rhode Island after graduation.

34 (b) Rhode Island college, in conjunction with the office of the postsecondary

1 commissioner, shall develop a policy that will secure the commitment set forth in subsection (a) of
2 this section from recipient students.

3 (c) Notwithstanding the eligibility requirements under subsection (a) of this section
4 (“specified conditions”):

5 (1) In the case of a recipient student who has an approved medical or personal leave of
6 absence or is unable to satisfy one or more specified conditions because of the student’s medical
7 or personal circumstances, the student may continue to receive an award under the scholarship
8 program upon resuming the student’s education so long as the student continues to meet all other
9 applicable eligibility requirements;

10 (2) In the case of a recipient student who is a member of the national guard or a member
11 of a reserve unit of a branch of the United States military and is unable to satisfy one or more
12 specified conditions because the student is or will be in basic or special military training, or is or
13 will be participating in a deployment of the student’s guard or reserve unit, the student may continue
14 to receive an award under the scholarship program upon completion of the student’s basic or special
15 military training or deployment; and

16 (3) Students enrolled in Rhode Island college as of July 1, 2021, who have attained junior
17 status at Rhode Island college as of July 1, 2023, or who enrolled in Rhode Island college as of July
18 1, 2022, and who have attained junior status at Rhode Island college as of July 1, 2024, and who
19 are otherwise in compliance with this chapter, shall be eligible for a hope scholarship under this
20 chapter.

21 (4) Any student with a disability, otherwise eligible for a scholarship pursuant to the
22 provisions of this section, shall be entitled to access this program and shall be afforded all
23 reasonable accommodations, as required by the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, including,
24 but not limited to, enrolling on a part-time basis and taking longer than four (4) years to graduate
25 with a bachelor’s degree.

26 (d) The decision of whether or not a student has attained junior or senior status by the
27 appropriate date shall be determined by the appropriate body of Rhode Island college, subject to
28 the rules, regulations, and procedures established pursuant to § 16-113-8.

29 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- RHODE ISLAND PROMISE SCHOLARSHIP -- RHODE
ISLAND HOPE SCHOLARSHIP PILOT PROGRAM

1 This act would extend the time for which a student may enroll in either the community
2 college of Rhode Island or Rhode Island college in order to qualify for the Promise Scholarship or
3 the Hope Scholarship would be extended up to one year after the student's high school graduation.

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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