

1 State of Arkansas
2 95th General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2025
4

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1446

5 By: Representative Lundstrum
6 By: Senator J. English
7

For An Act To Be Entitled

8
9 AN ACT TO AMEND THE ARKANSAS WORKFORCE CHALLENGE
10 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM; TO AMEND THE DEFINITION OF
11 "APPROVED INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION" TO INCLUDE
12 CERTAIN PUBLIC OR PRIVATE VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL
13 SCHOOLS AND TECHNICAL INSTITUTES; TO INCREASE THE
14 AWARD AMOUNTS; TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY; AND FOR OTHER
15 PURPOSES.
16

Subtitle

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19 TO AMEND THE ARKANSAS WORKFORCE
20 CHALLENGE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM; AND TO
21 DECLARE AN EMERGENCY.
22

23 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
24

25 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 6-85-302 is amended to read as follows:
26 6-85-302. Definitions.

27 As used in this subchapter:

28 (1) "Approved institution of higher education" means an
29 institution of higher education approved by the Division of Higher Education
30 to participate in the Arkansas Workforce Challenge Scholarship Program and
31 that is:

32 (A) A state-supported two-year or four-year college or
33 university; ~~or~~

34 (B) A private, nonprofit two-year or four-year college or
35 university with its primary headquarters located in Arkansas that is eligible
36 to receive Title IV federal student aid funds;



1 (C) A public or private vocational-technical school that
 2 is:

3 (i) Eligible to receive Title IV federal student aid
 4 funds;

5 (ii) Included on the Workforce Innovation and
 6 Opportunity Act eligible training provider list;

7 (iii) Qualified to receive approval for veteran’s
 8 education benefits from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs; or

9 (iv) Included on the State Board of Private Career
 10 Education list; or

11 (D) A public or private technical institute that is:

12 (i) Eligible to receive Title IV federal student aid
 13 funds;

14 (ii) Included on the Workforce Innovation and
 15 Opportunity Act eligible training provider list;

16 (iii) Qualified to receive approval for veteran’s
 17 education benefits from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs; or

18 (iv) Included on the State Board of Private Career
 19 Education list; and

20 (2)(A) “Certificate program” means a program that is offered or
 21 made available to a student by an approved institution of higher education
 22 that leads to the obtainment of a certification or license, including without
 23 limitation a program operated or sponsored by a third party or a United
 24 States Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship Program.

25 (B) The credit hours or contact hours awarded for a
 26 certificate program may include credit hours or contact hours that are not
 27 creditable toward an associate or a baccalaureate degree.

28
 29 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 6-85-304 is amended to read as follows:
 30 6-85-304. Eligibility.

31 (a) A student is eligible to receive an Arkansas Workforce Challenge
 32 Scholarship for an academic year if the student applies to the Division of
 33 Higher Education by a date determined by the Division of Higher Education
 34 preceding the academic year and:

35 (1) Is an Arkansas resident or, if the student is less than
 36 twenty-one (21) years of age, either the student or one (1) parent of the

1 student is an Arkansas resident;

2 (2) Is a citizen of the United States or is a lawful permanent
 3 resident;

4 (3) Meets either of the following requirements:

5 (A) Graduated from a:

6 (i) Public high school in Arkansas or another state;

7 (ii) Private high school in Arkansas or another
 8 state; or

9 (iii) Home school under § 6-15-501 et seq. or
 10 recognized by another state; or

11 (B) Received a high school equivalency diploma approved by
 12 the Adult Education Section or another state;

13 ~~(3)(4)~~ Is not receiving a scholarship under the Arkansas
 14 Academic Challenge Scholarship Program, § 6-85-201 et seq.;

15 ~~(4)(5)~~ Is accepted for admission in a program of study at an
 16 approved institution of higher education or a private trade school licensed
 17 to do business in Arkansas that leads to an associate degree or a certificate
 18 program that results in a portable license or certificate in one (1) of the
 19 following high-demand fields:

20 (A) ~~Industry Manufacturing;~~

21 (B) ~~Health care; and~~

22 ~~(C) Information technology; and~~

23 (C) Construction trades; and

24 (D) Logistics and distribution; and

25 ~~(5)(A)(6)~~ Whose program of study or certificate program will
 26 result in the student's being qualified to work in an occupation identified
 27 by the Division of Higher Education, in consultation with the Division of
 28 Workforce Services ~~under subdivision (a)(5)(B)(i) of this section.~~

29 ~~(B)(i) The Division of Workforce Services shall provide~~
 30 ~~annually to the Division of Higher Education by March 1 a list that~~
 31 ~~identifies the five (5) most in demand occupations in this state in each~~
 32 ~~high-demand field under subdivision (a)(4) of this section that require the~~
 33 ~~completion of a program of study that leads to an associate degree or a~~
 34 ~~certificate program.~~

35 ~~(ii) The Division of Workforce Services shall publish~~
 36 ~~on its website the list under subdivision (a)(5)(B)(i) of this section and~~

1 ~~data supporting the list.~~

2 ~~(b)(1) A student who received a scholarship under this subchapter and~~
 3 ~~successfully completed a program of study or certificate program that meets~~
 4 ~~the requirements under subdivision (a)(4) of this section is eligible to~~
 5 ~~reapply for a scholarship under this subchapter if the student is accepted~~
 6 ~~for admission in a different program of study or certificate program that~~
 7 ~~meets the requirements under subdivision (a)(4) of this section.~~

8 ~~(2) A student who received a scholarship under this subchapter~~
 9 ~~and does not successfully complete the program of study or certificate~~
 10 ~~program is eligible to reapply for and receive a scholarship one (1) time~~
 11 ~~only.~~

12 (b)(1) An instructor of the program of study or certificate program
 13 under subdivision (a)(6) of this section is required to be licensed or
 14 certified in the subject he or she teaches.

15 (2) If the program of study or certificate program is a United
 16 States Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship Program, the
 17 qualifications of the instructor shall be determined by the rules for
 18 Arkansas's Registered Apprenticeship Programs promulgated by the Office of
 19 Skills Development.

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 21 SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 6-85-305(b), concerning the award amounts
 22 distributed under the Arkansas Workforce Challenge Scholarship Program, is
 23 amended to read as follows:

24 (b)(1) The division shall distribute scholarships from the funds
 25 available in an equal amount to every student eligible to receive a
 26 scholarship under this subchapter.

27 (2) Except as provided in subsection (c) of this section, the
 28 maximum scholarship award a student may receive in an academic year shall be
 29 the lesser of:

30 (A) ~~Eight hundred dollars (\$800)~~ Two thousand five hundred
 31 dollars (\$2,500); or

32 (B)(i) The cost of the certificate program or program of
 33 study.

34 (ii) The cost of a certificate program or program of
 35 study shall include:

36 (a) Tuition, fees, or other charges;

(b) Textbooks or other course materials; and

(c) Equipment needed for a course.

(3) The scholarship awards may be used for expenses included in the cost of the certificate program or program of study.

(4) A scholarship under this section shall be only for the academic year for which it is awarded.

(5) If the program of study or certificate program extends beyond an academic year, a student who is making sufficient progress may carry over any unspent portion of the scholarship.

SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 6-85-307 is amended to read as follows:
6-85-307. Rules.

The Division of Higher Education, in consultation with the Division of Workforce Services, shall promulgate rules to implement this subchapter.

SECTION 5. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 85, Subchapter 3, is amended to add an additional section to read as follows:

6-85-308. Reporting.

(a) An approved institution of higher education or certificate program accepting funds under this subchapter shall submit an annual report to the Division of Higher Education that includes without limitation the following:

(1) The number of students who graduate with a degree, license, or certification from the approved institution of higher education;

(2) A comparison of the enrollment data and graduation data;

(3) Job placement statistics;

(4) Starting salaries of graduates; and

(5) Student information required to be provided to the division under § 6-85-216.

(b) The division shall submit the annual report required under subsection (a) of this section to the:

(1) House Committee on Education;

(2) Senate Committee on Education; and

(3) Lottery Oversight Subcommittee of the Legislative Council.

SECTION 6. DO NOT CODIFY. Rules.

(a) When adopting the initial rules required under this act, the

1 Division of Higher Education shall file the final rules with the Secretary of
2 State for adoption under § 25-15-204(f):

3 (1) On or before ninety (90) days from the effective date of
4 this act; or

5 (2) If approval under § 10-3-309 has not occurred by ninety (90)
6 days from the effective date of this act, as soon as practicable after
7 approval under § 10-3-309.

8 (b) The division shall file the proposed rules with the Legislative
9 Council under § 10-3-309(c) sufficiently in advance of ninety (90) days from
10 the effective date of this act, so that the Legislative Council may consider
11 the rules for approval before ninety (90) days from the effective date of
12 this act.

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14 SECTION 7. EMERGENCY CLAUSE. It is found and determined by the
15 General Assembly of the State of Arkansas that the Arkansas Constitution,
16 Article 19, § 14 was amended by Issue 1 of 2024 to allow state lottery
17 proceeds to fund vocational or technical school scholarships for Arkansans;
18 that there are workforce needs within the state, and the current law needs to
19 be amended immediately in order to effectuate this change voted for by the
20 people that would allow Arkansans to benefit from this change in the use of
21 lottery proceeds; and that this act is immediately necessary because the
22 process and procedures to distribute these scholarships need to be updated as
23 quickly as possible in order to provide scholarship funding for Arkansans
24 that would allow them to receive training and join the workforce of the
25 state. Therefore, an emergency is declared to exist, and this act being
26 immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health, and
27 safety shall become effective on:

28 (1) The date of its approval by the Governor;

29 (2) If the bill is neither approved nor vetoed by the Governor,
30 the expiration of the period of time during which the Governor may veto the
31 bill; or

32 (3) If the bill is vetoed by the Governor and the veto is
33 overridden, the date the last house overrides the veto.

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