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CHAPTER 305. TEXAS CAREER OPPORTUNITY GRANT PROGRAM

Subchapter A. General Provisions

Sec. 305.001. Purpose

The purpose of the Texas Career Opportunity Grant Program is to help ensure a qualified workforce to meet the needs of this state by reducing the financial barriers to postsecondary career education and training for economically disadvantaged Texans.

Sec. 305.002. Definitions

In this chapter:

(1) **"Commission"** means the Texas Workforce Commission.

(2) **"Coordinating board"** means the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

(3) **"Eligible institution"** means a career school or college in this state that:

(A) holds a certificate of approval under Chapter 132, Education Code; and

(B) is approved by the commission under Section 305.023 for its students to participate in the grant program established under this chapter.

(4) **"Public technical institute"** has the meaning assigned by Section 61.003, Education Code.

(5) **"Qualified education program"** means a postsecondary education program that meets the requirements provided by Section 305.024.

Sec. 305.003. Memorandum of Understanding

The commission and the coordinating board shall enter into a memorandum of understanding for the coordination and administration of the grant program established under Subchapter B. Functions assigned to the commission under this chapter may be assigned to the coordinating board pursuant to the memorandum of understanding.

Subchapter B. Grant Program

Sec. 305.021. Tuition Assistance Grant; Amount of Grant

(a) The commission may provide tuition assistance grants to Texas residents enrolled in a qualified education program at an eligible institution.

(b) In selecting applicants to receive grants under this chapter and the amount of the grant for each applicant, the commission may consider:

(1) the financial need and resources of an applicant;

(2) the state's need for workforce development in the applicant's proposed career field;

(3) the efficient use of the money available for grants;

(4) the fair allocation of grants to promote workforce development in different career fields;

(5) the opportunity of applicants from all regions of this state to receive financial assistance under this chapter; and

(6) any other factor the commission considers appropriate to further the purposes of this chapter.

Sec. 305.022. Limitations on Grant Amount

(a) The amount of a grant under this chapter may not exceed the lower of:

(1) the maximum grant amount, if any, specified by the legislature in an appropriation act; or

(2) the amount by which the tuition and required fees at the eligible institution attended exceeds the average amount of tuition and required fees that would be charged at a public technical institute, as determined by the commission based on information provided by the coordinating board.

(b) The total amount of grants paid under this chapter on behalf of a student during a state fiscal year may not exceed an amount equal to 50 percent of the average state appropriation in the biennium preceding the biennium in which the grant is made for a full-time student or the equivalent at a public technical institute, as determined by the coordinating board and certified to the commission.

(c) The amount of a grant to a part-time student shall be made on a pro rata basis in relation to the amount of the grant the person would be entitled to receive if enrolled as a full-time student.

Sec. 305.023. Approval of Institutions

The commission shall approve a career school or college for its students to participate in the grant program established under this chapter if the school or college:

(1) has been accredited for not less than five years by an accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education and maintains that accreditation;

(2) has held a certificate of approval under Chapter 132, Education Code, for at least five years; and

(3) offers one or more qualified education programs.

Sec. 305.024. Qualified Education Programs

For purposes of this chapter, a qualified education program is a postsecondary course of instruction in a specific career field that:

(1) is at least one academic year in length as defined by the United States Department of Education; and

(2) leads to a certificate, certification, degree, or diploma in the career field.

Sec. 305.025. Nondiscrimination

The commission in administering this chapter shall ensure compliance with Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. Section 2000d et seq.), as amended, in regard to nondiscrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

Sec. 305.026. Application; Eligibility for Grant

(a) To receive a grant under this chapter, a person must apply to the eligible institution in which the person enrolls in the manner provided by commission rule.

(b) To be eligible to receive a grant under this chapter, an applicant must:

(1) be a Texas resident and meet the requirements to qualify as a Texas resident under Subchapter B, Chapter 54, Education Code, and the rules of the coordinating board for the payment of resident tuition at a public institution of higher education;

(2) be enrolled in a qualified education program at an eligible institution for at least one-half of a full course load;

(3) be required to pay more tuition and required fees than the amount required at a public technical institute and be charged not less than the regular tuition and required fees paid by other students enrolled at the eligible institution the person attends;

(4) establish financial need and eligibility for student financial assistance in accordance with procedures and regulations of the United States Department of Education for

financial aid programs under Title IV, Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. Section 1070 et seq.), as amended;

(5) not be in default on a loan made under the Federal Perkins Loan Program, Federal Family Education Loan Program, or William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program;

(6) not owe a refund on a grant received under the federal Pell Grant program or the federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant program; and

(7) comply with any other requirements adopted by the commission under this chapter.

Sec. 305.027. Payment of Grant

(a) On receipt of an enrollment report for a student awarded a grant under this chapter and certification of the amount of the student's financial need from the approved institution, the commission shall certify the amount of the grant awarded to the student.

(b) The grant shall be paid to the student through the eligible institution in which the student is enrolled.

Sec. 305.028. Adoption and Distribution of Rules

(a) The commission may adopt reasonable rules to administer and enforce this chapter.

(b) The commission shall distribute a copy of the rules to each eligible institution.

Sec. 305.029. Annual Report

The commission shall prepare and deliver to the legislature an annual report regarding the grant program established under this chapter. The report shall include for the period covered by the report:

(1) the number of students who received grants under this chapter; and

(2) the number of those students who attended each eligible institution, including information on the race or ethnicity of those students attending each institution.