

1 SENATE BILL 240

2 **55TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2021**

3 INTRODUCED BY

4 Cliff R. Pirtle

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10 AN ACT

11 RELATING TO HIGHER EDUCATION; ENACTING THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING
12 SCHOLARSHIP ACT; MAKING AN APPROPRIATION.

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14 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

15 SECTION 1. [NEW MATERIAL] SHORT TITLE.--This act may be
16 cited as the "Vocational Training Scholarship Act".

17 SECTION 2. [NEW MATERIAL] DEFINITIONS.--As used in the
18 Vocational Training Scholarship Act:

19 A. "community college" means a branch community
20 college of a four-year state educational institution, a two-
21 year state educational institution or a community college or
22 technical and vocational institute established pursuant to
23 Chapter 21, Article 13 or 16 NMSA 1978, respectively;

24 B. "department" means the higher education
25 department;

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1 C. "fund" means the vocational training scholarship
2 fund;

3 D. "program semesters" means those semesters for
4 which a student may receive a tuition scholarship;

5 E. "tuition scholarship" means the scholarship that
6 provides tuition assistance per program semester for a student
7 enrolled in a vocational training program at a community
8 college; and

9 F. "vocational training program" means career
10 technical education courses offered at a community college.

11 SECTION 3. [NEW MATERIAL] TUITION SCHOLARSHIPS

12 AUTHORIZED--STUDENTS.--

13 A. To the extent that funds are made available by
14 the legislature from the fund, the board of regents or
15 governing bodies of community colleges shall award tuition
16 scholarships in department-approved amounts to students
17 attending vocational training programs at their respective
18 community colleges.

19 B. A tuition scholarship may be awarded to a
20 student who:

- 21 (1) has completed tenth grade;
- 22 (2) had a cumulative grade point average of
23 2.0 or higher on a scale of 4.0 in ninth and tenth grades;
- 24 (3) has earned a high school equivalency
25 credential;

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1 (4) maintains residency in New Mexico; and
2 (5) completes any other requirements required
3 by the respective community college.

4 C. The residency requirement in Paragraph (4) of
5 Subsection B of this section notwithstanding, a New Mexico
6 resident who had to leave the state to receive an education
7 pursuant to the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education
8 Act shall be eligible for a tuition scholarship if the student
9 otherwise meets the qualifications for a tuition scholarship
10 pursuant to the Vocational Training Scholarship Act.

11 SECTION 4. [NEW MATERIAL] TUITION SCHOLARSHIP AMOUNT.--

12 A. Based on the amount appropriated by the
13 legislature from the fund and on the projected enrollment in
14 vocational training programs at all community colleges, the
15 department shall:

16 (1) determine the total amount of money
17 available for all tuition scholarships;

18 (2) determine the award amount for each
19 community college; and

20 (3) notify all community colleges of the
21 determinations made pursuant to Paragraphs (1) and (2) of this
22 subsection.

23 B. In determining distribution and award amounts
24 for the tuition scholarship program, the department shall:

25 (1) distribute to all participating community

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1 colleges an amount not to exceed the balance in the fund; and

2 (2) subject to the provisions of Paragraph (1)
3 of this subsection, distribute to each community college an
4 amount based on the projected enrollment at that community
5 college of students enrolled in vocational training programs in
6 their first through fourth program semesters.

7 C. If the total amount available pursuant to
8 Paragraph (1) of Subsection A of this section is less than the
9 amount available in the fund, the department shall decrease the
10 scholarship award amounts in a manner that maintains as equal
11 as possible the percentage of unpaid tuition for students
12 enrolled in vocational training programs in community colleges.

13 SECTION 5. [NEW MATERIAL] FUND--CREATED.--The "vocational
14 training scholarship fund" is created as a nonreverting fund in
15 the state treasury. The fund consists of appropriations,
16 gifts, grants, donations and income from investment of the
17 fund. The department shall administer the fund and, subject to
18 appropriation by the legislature, shall provide tuition
19 scholarships. Expenditures from the fund shall be by warrant
20 of the secretary of finance and administration pursuant to
21 vouchers signed by the secretary of higher education or the
22 secretary's authorized representative.

23 SECTION 6. APPROPRIATION.--Two million five hundred fifty
24 thousand dollars (\$2,550,000) is appropriated from the general
25 fund to the vocational training scholarship fund for

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1 expenditure in fiscal year 2022 and subsequent fiscal years to
2 carry out the provisions of the Vocational Training Scholarship
3 Act. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the
4 end of a fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund.

5 SECTION 7. EFFECTIVE DATE.--The effective date of the
6 provisions of this act is July 1, 2021.

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