

1 SENATE BILL 195

2 **54TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2020**

3 INTRODUCED BY

4 Bill Tallman

5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10 AN ACT

11 RELATING TO HIGHER EDUCATION; ENACTING THE NEW MEXICO RECONNECT  
12 SCHOLARSHIP ACT; PROVIDING CERTAIN STUDENTS WITH TUITION  
13 SCHOLARSHIPS TO ATTEND COMMUNITY COLLEGE; MAKING AN  
14 APPROPRIATION.

15  
16 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

17 SECTION 1. [NEW MATERIAL] SHORT TITLE.--This act may be  
18 cited as the "New Mexico Reconnect Scholarship Act".

19 SECTION 2. [NEW MATERIAL] DEFINITIONS.--As used in the  
20 New Mexico Reconnect Scholarship Act:

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

.216373.4

underscored material = new  
~~[bracketed material] = delete~~

underscored material = new  
[bracketed material] = delete

1           B. "department" means the higher education  
2 department;

3           C. "student" means a resident of New Mexico who is  
4 enrolled or will be enrolled in a community college in New  
5 Mexico at the time the scholarship is awarded; and

6           D. "student aid" means aid offered by the community  
7 college to the student on a per-semester basis. "Student Aid"  
8 includes scholarships, grants, bequests and other forms of  
9 need-based aid and does not include student loans, except for  
10 loans issued by the department that may be waived in exchange  
11 for a period of service to the state.

12           SECTION 3. [NEW MATERIAL] CONDITIONS FOR ELIGIBILITY.--A  
13 New Mexico reconnect scholarship may only be awarded to an  
14 individual who:

15           A. complies with the rules adopted by the  
16 department pursuant to the New Mexico Reconnect Scholarship  
17 Act;

18           B. is a resident of New Mexico and has been a  
19 resident for at least the past year;

20           C. submits to the intended community college a  
21 completed:

22                   (1) New Mexico reconnect scholarship  
23 application form developed by the community college or the  
24 department; or

25                   (2) free application for federal student aid

.216373.4

underscored material = new  
[bracketed material] = delete

1 provided pursuant to the federal Higher Education Act of 1965;

2 D. is at least twenty-one years old;

3 E. has not earned an associate's, baccalaureate,  
4 master's or doctorate degree; and

5 F. has an adjusted gross income as defined in the  
6 Income Tax Act of less than thirty-six thousand dollars  
7 (\$36,000) per year.

8 SECTION 4. [NEW MATERIAL] SCHOLARSHIP AUTHORIZED--  
9 ADMINISTRATION--PREFERENCE IN SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS.--

10 A. The department shall administer the New Mexico  
11 Reconnect Scholarship Act and shall adopt all rules necessary  
12 to administer that act.

13 B. Scholarships shall be awarded to qualified  
14 applicants. Qualifications and preferences in scholarship  
15 awards shall be determined by the department pursuant to its  
16 adopted rules.

17 SECTION 5. [NEW MATERIAL] DURATION OF SCHOLARSHIP.--Each  
18 scholarship is for a period of one academic semester. A  
19 scholarship may be renewed until the award recipient has  
20 received four consecutive semester scholarship awards or until  
21 the student graduates from an eligible community college with  
22 an associate's degree or certificate, whichever occurs first.

23 SECTION 6. [NEW MATERIAL] TERMINATION OF SCHOLARSHIP.--A  
24 New Mexico reconnect scholarship awarded pursuant to the New  
25 Mexico Reconnect Scholarship Act is terminated upon occurrence

.216373.4

underscored material = new  
[bracketed material] = delete

1 of:

2 A. withdrawal of the award recipient from the  
3 community college;

4 B. failure of the award recipient to maintain a  
5 minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0 on a scale of 4.0  
6 in the immediately preceding semester;

7 C. failure to be enrolled in at least nine hours of  
8 course credits per semester;

9 D. failure to complete at least six hours of course  
10 credits in a semester in which the student received a  
11 scholarship pursuant to the New Mexico Reconnect Scholarship  
12 Act;

13 E. failure to maintain continuous enrollment in  
14 classes leading to an associate's degree or certificate; or

15 F. substantial noncompliance by the award recipient  
16 with the New Mexico Reconnect Scholarship Act or the rules  
17 adopted by the department pursuant to that act.

18 SECTION 7. [NEW MATERIAL] ORDER OF SCHOLARSHIP AWARD.--

19 Subject to the amount of money in the New Mexico reconnect  
20 scholarship fund, the amount of New Mexico reconnect  
21 scholarship awards shall not exceed the cost of tuition and  
22 mandatory fees charged to all students for coursework leading  
23 to completion of the eligible program of study at the eligible  
24 community college attended less all other student aid provided  
25 to students, which aid shall be credited first to tuition and

.216373.4

underscoring material = new  
[bracketed material] = delete

1 mandatory fees.

2 SECTION 8. [NEW MATERIAL] FUND CREATED.--The "New Mexico  
3 reconnect scholarship fund" is created in the state treasury.  
4 Money in the fund is appropriated to the department to  
5 administer the New Mexico Reconnect Scholarship Act. Money in  
6 the fund shall revert to the general fund at the end of a  
7 fiscal year. Money in the fund shall be disbursed on warrants  
8 signed by the secretary of finance and administration pursuant  
9 to vouchers signed by the secretary of higher education or the  
10 secretary's authorized representative.

11 SECTION 9. APPROPRIATION.--Seven million dollars  
12 (\$7,000,000) is appropriated from the general fund to the New  
13 Mexico reconnect scholarship fund for expenditure in fiscal  
14 year 2021 to carry out the provisions of the New Mexico  
15 Reconnect Scholarship Act. Up to seventy-five thousand dollars  
16 (\$75,000) of the appropriation may be used by the higher  
17 education department for administrative purposes. Any  
18 unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of  
19 fiscal year 2021 shall revert to the general fund.

20 SECTION 10. EFFECTIVE DATE.--The effective date of the  
21 provisions of this act is July 1, 2020.