



AN ACT ESTABLISHING A GRANT PROGRAM TO REDUCE OR ELIMINATE TUITION COSTS FOR CERTAIN POSTSECONDARY PROGRAMS; AUTHORIZING THE BOARD OF REGENTS TO ADMINISTER THE PROGRAM; PROVIDING PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS INCLUDING STUDENT ELIGIBILITY; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

Section 1. Short title. [Sections 1 through 3] may be cited as the "Montana Promise Act".

Section 2. Purpose. The purpose of [sections 1 through 3] is to increase college affordability and attainment for and decrease the amount of college debt incurred by Montana residents who utilize community and tribal colleges and 2-year institutions of the Montana university system.

Section 3. Montana promise grant program -- student eligibility -- administration. (1) There is a Montana promise grant program for the purpose of providing grants to students who meet the criteria for certain postsecondary programs pursuant to subsection (2). The program is administered by the board of regents through the office of the commissioner of higher education. The board of regents shall adopt policies for the administration of the program consistent with [sections 1 through 3].

(2) To be eligible for a grant under the program, a student must:

(a) be enrolled at least half-time in a community or tribal college located in the state of Montana or in a 2-year institution of the Montana university system and taking courses that lead to:

- (i) the ability to transfer to another postsecondary institution entering as at least a second-year student;
- (ii) an associate degree offered by the institution; or
- (iii) a professional credential offered by the institution;

(b) have been a resident of Montana for at least 12 months prior to applying for the grant program;

(c) have graduated from high school or received a secondary education equivalency certificate;

(d) have demonstrated academic ability through earning a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.5 in high school or through other measures as determined by the board of regents;

(e) have completed and submitted the free application for federal student aid for the current academic year and accepted all federal and state aid grants available; and

(f) have not completed more than 60 credit hours or the equivalent at a postsecondary institution or earned an associate degree.

(3) A student awarded a grant under the Montana promise grant program may receive a grant for no more than 2 years and is eligible for grants only if the student is making satisfactory progress as determined by the board of regents in courses described in subsection (2)(a), maintaining a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.7, and contributing a minimum of 8 hours of community service each semester.

(4) Montana promise grants must be awarded based on each term for which a student is eligible. The amount of the grant must be the greater of \$75 per enrolled credit or the amount of tuition remaining due after any other federal, state, or private aid grants or waivers have reduced the tuition amount.

(5) (a) Except as provided in subsection (5)(b), the total amount in grants awarded under this section may not exceed \$2 million in each fiscal year or any lesser amount appropriated by the legislature.

(b) The board of regents may accept donations from private or out-of-state public sources for this program and shall distribute any funding received in accordance with [sections 1 through 3].

(6) If the amount of funding is not sufficient to provide grants to all eligible students, the board of regents may adopt policies for the prioritization of grants based on the following criteria in order:

(a) previous participation in the grant program with students who have previously received grants through the program receiving priority;

(b) financial need;

(c) students in programs for professional credentialing in high-demand labor markets; and

(d) recency of graduation from high school or completion of secondary education equivalency certification, with priority to more recent graduates and completers.

Section 4. Notification to tribal governments. The secretary of state shall send a copy of [this act] to each tribal government located on the seven Montana reservations and to the Little Shell Chippewa tribe.

Section 5. Codification instruction. [Sections 1 through 3] are intended to be codified as an integral part of Title 20, chapter 26, part 6, and the provisions of Title 20, chapter 26, part 6, apply to [sections 1 through

3].

Section 6. Effective date. [This act] is effective July 1, 2017.

- END -

I hereby certify that the within bill,
HB 0185, originated in the House.

Speaker of the House

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2017.

Chief Clerk of the House

President of the Senate

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2017.

HOUSE BILL NO. 185

INTRODUCED BY S. MORIGEAU, T. WOODS, S. WEBBER, S. STEWART-PEREGOY, R. SHAW,
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