

Subject Higher Education: grant and waiver programs for students formerly in foster care

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Overview

This bill creates two programs to benefit certain students who were previously in the foster care system:

- for those who attend public postsecondary institutions, it establishes a last-dollar grant program to cover the entire cost of attendance after factoring in financial aid, scholarships, and grants; and
- for those who attend private postsecondary institutions, the bill requires the institution to waive any remaining cost of attendance after factoring in financial aid, scholarships, and grants.

Summary

Section	Description
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1	Fostering higher education grants.
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Creates a grant program for students at public postsecondary institutions who have been in foster care. The first round of grants would be awarded in the 2022-2023 academic year.

Subd. 1. Definitions. Provides definitions for this grant program as well as the waiver requirement under section 2 of the bill.

Subd. 2. Establishment. Establishes a program within the Office of Higher Education (OHE) to provide last-dollar grants to eligible students to cover the cost of attendance at public postsecondary institutions. A student may receive grants under this program for a total of five years (consecutive or nonconsecutive) or until the student turns 27 years old. Also establishes an account for the program within the special revenue fund and provides that, at the end of a fiscal year, remaining money will stay in the account rather than cancel back to the general fund.

Section	Description
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Subd. 3. Eligibility. Sets forth eligibility criteria for the grant program, which includes being in foster care at age 13 or older. Also requires OHE to proactively identify eligible students or students who will soon become eligible for the grants and inform them of their eligibility.

Subd. 4. Accessibility. Requires OHE to work with the Departments of Education, Labor, and Human Services to identify eligible students and assist them with applying for available federal and state grants.

Subd. 5. Dissemination of information. Requires OHE, in conjunction with the Department of Human Services (DHS), to prepare and disseminate information about this grant program and other federal and state higher education grants for foster youth.

Subd. 6. Assistance from eligible state institutions. Requires public postsecondary institutions to assist eligible students with applying for financial aid, including this grant program.

Subd. 7. Allocation to institutions. Allows OHE to channel program funds to postsecondary institutions to cover their administrative expenses related to the program.

Subd. 8. Report. Requires OHE and DHS to submit an annual legislative report on the program.

2 **Fostering higher education waiver.**

Requires private postsecondary institutions to waive any remaining cost of attendance (after financial aid, scholarships, and grants) for students who have been in foster care. The requirement first applies in the 2022-2023 academic year.

Subd. 1. Waiver. Requires private postsecondary institutions to waive any remaining cost of attendance (after all financial aid, scholarships, and grants) to students who would be eligible for a grant under section 1 of the bill.

Subd. 2. Assistance from eligible private institutions. Requires private postsecondary institutions to assist eligible students with applying for financial aid.

Subd. 3. Report. Requires OHE and DHS to submit an annual legislative report on the program.

Section	Description
3	Transfers. Transfers a currently-unspecified amount to the special revenue fund account created in section 1 of the bill to fund grants under that section.



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