

CHAPTER 168

AN ACT concerning the NJ STARS Program and amending P.L.2004, c.59.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. Section 5 of P.L.2004, c.59 (C.18A:71B-85) is amended to read as follows:

C.18A:71B-85 NJ STARS scholarships; eligibility.

5. a. A scholarship under the NJ STARS Program shall cover the full cost of tuition and fees, subject to the prior application of other grants and scholarships against those costs as provided under paragraph (2) of subsection c. of this section, for up to 15 credit hours in any semester, for an eligible student enrolled in a full-time course of study at the New Jersey county college serving the student's county of residence. An otherwise eligible student who demonstrates to the authority, in accordance with such criteria and by means of such documentation as the authority shall establish by regulation, that the county college serving the student's county of residence does not offer the curriculum that the student chooses to study shall be eligible for such scholarship at another New Jersey county college offering that curriculum. The amount of any scholarship allowed hereunder to a student at a county college serving a county other than the student's county of residence shall be computed as though the student were a resident of the county served by that college, and the college shall likewise compute the amount of any additional payment, required with respect to the enrollment of that student for credit hours of study during a semester in which the scholarship is awarded that are not covered by that scholarship, as though the student were a resident of the county.

b. A student shall be eligible for a scholarship under the NJ STARS Program for up to five semesters. The scholarship shall be payable for the first year of enrollment in a county college to a student who graduated in the top 20% of the student's high school graduating class, provided that in the case of students graduating from high schools that do not calculate the class rank of their students, the student's ranking shall be determined by the high school in consultation with the authority. During a student's enrollment in a county college after the first year of enrollment, the scholarship shall be payable to that student if the student attains a grade point average of at least 3.0 by the start of the student's second year of county college enrollment. A student who attains a grade point average of less than 3.0 at the start of the second semester of the student's first year of county college enrollment shall participate in an enrichment program designed by the county college during the second semester of the student's first year of enrollment.

c. To be eligible to receive a scholarship under the NJ STARS Program a student shall:

- (1) be a State resident pursuant to guidelines established by the authority;
- (2) have applied for all other available forms of State and federal need-based grants and merit scholarships, exclusive of loans, the full amount of which grants and scholarships shall be applied to tuition and fee charges to reduce the amount of any scholarship that the student shall receive under the provisions of this act;
- (3) be enrolled in a full-time course of study at a New Jersey county college;
- (4) have graduated from high school in 2004 or later, and not earlier than the calendar year two years prior to the first calendar year in which a scholarship payment is to be made; and
- (5) maintain continuous enrollment in a full-time course of study, unless on medical leave due to the illness of the student or a member of the student's immediate family or emergency leave because of a family emergency, which medical or emergency leave shall have been approved by the county college.

d. A student who is dismissed for academic or disciplinary reasons from a county college shall no longer be eligible for a scholarship under this act. If a student participating in the program is dismissed for disciplinary reasons, the student shall repay in full all amounts received under the program. The county college shall be responsible for collecting the repayment, or the amount of any overpayment or other improper payment, of any State awards under the program, in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.18A:71B-10.

e. A student scholarship under the NJ STARS Program may be renewed upon the student's filing of a renewal financial aid application and providing evidence that the student has satisfied the requirements pursuant to subsection b. of this section.

2. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved August 5, 2005.