

HOUSE BILL NO. 5576

March 04, 2020, Introduced by Rep. Frederick and referred to the Committee on Government Operations.

A bill to establish certain financial aid programs for certain residents of this state seeking associate degrees or industry-recognized certificates or credentials from certain educational and jobs training programs; to provide for the administration of the financial aid programs; and to prescribe certain powers and duties of certain state officers, agencies, and departments.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN ENACT:

1

PART 1

2

Sec. 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the



1 "Michigan reconnect grant act".

2 Sec. 2. As used in this part:

3 (a) "Center" means the center for educational performance and
4 information created in section 94a of the school aid act of 1979,
5 1979 PA 94, MCL 388.1694a.

6 (b) "Continuous enrollment" means enrollment in at least 2
7 semesters or the equivalent in terms or quarters, as determined by
8 the department, during each 12-month period for a number of
9 consecutive years. For purposes of this subdivision, the 2 or more
10 semesters, terms, or quarters of enrollment within a 12-month
11 period need not be consecutive.

12 (c) "Department" means the department of labor and economic
13 opportunity.

14 (d) "Eligible institution" means a postsecondary educational
15 institution that meets all of the following:

16 (i) Is an accredited public community college in this state.

17 (ii) Complies with applicable restraints on fee and tuition
18 rate increases, if any, provided for in article II of the school
19 aid act of 1979, 1979 PA 94, MCL 388.1801 to 388.1830.

20 (iii) Participates in quality assurance protocols established by
21 the department for purposes of accurately tracking student outcomes
22 described in section 3(g) and (h).

23 (iv) Submits a written report of all of the following
24 information to the department by not later than June 30, 2020 and
25 each year thereafter by not later than June 30:

26 (A) The institution's goals, expressed numerically, for
27 student persistence and credential completion.

28 (B) An inventory of the institution's currently implemented
29 strategies to improve student success outcomes, including guided



1 pathways, proactive advising, and remediation. Regarding
 2 remediation, the report must detail the institution's current
 3 policy for determining whether a student is to be placed in
 4 developmental or credit-bearing courses.

5 (C) Policies for converting prior learning into community
 6 college credit wherever possible, including, but not limited to,
 7 prior learning demonstrated by coursework completed at the
 8 institution or any other postsecondary educational institution,
 9 including coursework completed in the distant past, or by college
 10 level equivalent courses, college level equivalent credit
 11 examinations, military training, education, or certification, or
 12 other relevant work or life experience. As used in this sub-
 13 subparagraph, "college level equivalent courses" and "college level
 14 equivalent credit examinations" mean those terms as described in
 15 section 1472 of the revised school code, 1976 PA 451, MCL 380.1472.

16 (v) By not later than January 1, 2022, for Michigan reconnect
 17 grant students who need academic remediation, provides accelerated
 18 courses aimed at enabling those students to raise their skills to
 19 college level and complete credit-bearing courses. To meet this
 20 criterion, an eligible institution must provide a remediation
 21 program that follows 1 of the following:

22 (A) A corequisite model under which a student concurrently
 23 enrolls in a developmental education course and a freshman-level
 24 course in the same subject area for each subject area needing
 25 remediation, to be completed concurrently. An institution providing
 26 a remediation program that follows the model described in this sub-
 27 subparagraph or sub-subparagraph (B), (C), or (D) remains eligible
 28 whether or not it charges tuition or fees for the program.

29 (B) A compression model under which a student enrolls in 2 or



1 more courses, either a combination of developmental and college-
2 level courses or 2 or more levels of developmental courses, within
3 a single semester, to be completed sequentially.

4 (C) A modularization model under which the content of 1 or
5 more developmental courses is divided into discrete sections with a
6 student assigned to complete only the modules that he or she needs
7 to qualify for the associated college-level gateway course required
8 in his or her program of study.

9 (D) Subject to the approval of the department, an alternative
10 model designed to promote accelerated completion of credit-bearing
11 courses.

12 (E) An independent model of the institution's own choosing. To
13 be eligible under this sub-subparagraph, the institution must
14 provide the remediation program at no charge to students or the
15 Michigan reconnect grant program.

16 (vi) Provides reasonable accommodations to Michigan reconnect
17 grant students with disabilities as required by section 504 of
18 title V of the rehabilitation act of 1973, 29 USC 794, and subtitle
19 A of title II of the Americans with disabilities act of 1990, 42
20 USC 12131 to 12134.

21 (vii) Designates an individual employed by the institution as
22 the institution's primary contact with the department for purposes
23 of coordinating the administration of the Michigan reconnect grant
24 program in accordance with this part.

25 (e) "Gift aid" means federal Pell grants under 20 USC 1070a
26 and tuition incentive program benefits under section 256 of the
27 school aid act of 1979, 1979 PA 94, MCL 388.1856. The term does not
28 include any of the following:

29 (i) Student loans.



1 (ii) Work-study awards.

2 (iii) Qualified withdrawals made from education savings accounts
3 to pay higher education expenses pursuant to the Michigan education
4 savings program act, 2000 PA 161, MCL 390.1471 to 390.1486.

5 (iv) Higher education expenses paid under the Michigan
6 educational trust program, pursuant to the Michigan education trust
7 act, 1986 PA 316, MCL 390.1421 to 390.1442.

8 (v) Higher education expenses paid under the Michigan promise
9 zone authority act, 2008 PA 549, MCL 390.1661 to 390.1679.

10 (f) "Half-time student" means a student enrolled in at least 6
11 credit hours in an academic semester or the equivalent number of
12 credit hours in a term or quarter, as determined by the department.

13 (g) "Industry-recognized certificate or credential" means a
14 certificate or credential that is sought or accepted by companies
15 within an industry for purposes of recruitment, hiring, or
16 promotion.

17 (h) "Michigan reconnect grant student" means a student
18 admitted to and enrolled in an eligible institution and receiving a
19 Michigan reconnect grant under this part.

20 (i) "Pell-eligible program" means a program eligible for grant
21 funding under 20 USC 1070a.

22 Sec. 3. The Michigan reconnect grant program is created in the
23 department for the purpose of providing Michigan reconnect grants
24 to individuals eligible for those grants under sections 5 and 6.

25 The department shall do all of the following:

26 (a) Develop and administer the program.

27 (b) Create and maintain a program website.

28 (c) Create and maintain a marketing campaign for the program.

29 (d) Operate a help desk for the program.



1 (e) Create and maintain a network of navigators to help
2 Michigan reconnect grant students navigate the path to college,
3 supporting but not supplanting the programming and assistance
4 offered by community colleges.

5 (f) Provide Michigan reconnect grant students with information
6 about skills in demand and related compensation in the local labor
7 market.

8 (g) Partner with the center to report, in a user-friendly
9 format, credential completion outcomes of Michigan reconnect grant
10 students.

11 (h) To facilitate the reporting of valid and reliable
12 longitudinal data under subdivision (g), ensure that all eligible
13 institutions and other individuals and entities that participate in
14 the implementation of the Michigan reconnect grant program use the
15 unique statewide student identification codes issued by the center
16 to track Michigan reconnect grant students in accordance with
17 section 94a of the school aid act of 1979, 1979 PA 94, MCL
18 388.1694a.

19 (i) Select and convene a workgroup to study developmental
20 education placement policies appropriate for eligible institutions,
21 subject to all of the following:

22 (i) The workgroup must include representatives from the
23 governor's office, the legislature, eligible institutions, the
24 department of education, secondary schools, nonprofit
25 organizations, and the business community.

26 (ii) Not later than 6 months after the effective date of this
27 act, the workgroup shall provide the department with written
28 recommendations that will assist the department in doing all of the
29 following:



1 (A) Identify placement practices and policies that ensure
2 students know when remediation is required, what types of academic
3 and nonacademic supports will be available during remediation, and
4 when they can expect to complete credit-bearing English and
5 mathematics courses. Policies must emphasize placement in college-
6 level courses for as many students as possible, with students
7 requiring remediation being placed in appropriate programs. For
8 purposes of this sub-subparagraph, on and after January 1, 2022, a
9 remediation program is appropriate only if it complies with section
10 2(d)(v).

11 (B) Encourage eligible institutions across this state to adopt
12 consistent placement policies.

13 (C) Clearly communicate sound policies for course placement
14 and options for remedial courses.

15 (iii) Following the department's acceptance of the workgroup's
16 recommendations under subparagraph (ii), the workgroup shall
17 disband.

18 (j) Not later than 6 months after the effective date of this
19 act, organize regional meetings of labor market stakeholders,
20 including business organizations, trade unions, community colleges,
21 Michigan works agencies, private training providers, and regional
22 workforce and economic development representatives, to plan
23 effective ways to ensure that occupational certificates provided by
24 eligible institutions provide skills in demand in the regional
25 labor market.

26 (k) As part of the department's responsibility to better
27 connect education and training demands in the labor market with
28 qualified degree, training, and apprenticeship programs, facilitate
29 efforts by businesses, unions, and community colleges to



1 effectively match skills provided with those in demand.

2 (l) Submit an annual report to both houses of the legislature
3 detailing the progress of the Michigan reconnect grant program,
4 including annual spending on administrative costs, marketing, and
5 Michigan reconnect grants.

6 Sec. 4. Subject to appropriation, the department may expend
7 Michigan reconnect grant program money in support of the purposes
8 described in section 3.

9 Sec. 5. To establish initial eligibility for a Michigan
10 reconnect grant, an individual must meet all of the following
11 conditions by the date of his or her enrollment described in
12 subdivision (d):

13 (a) Be at least 25 years old.

14 (b) Be a resident of this state for at least the immediately
15 preceding year.

16 (c) Have graduated from high school with a diploma or
17 certificate of completion or achieved a high school equivalency
18 certificate. As used in this subdivision, "high school equivalency
19 certificate" means that term as defined in section 4 of the school
20 aid act of 1979, 1979 PA 94, MCL 388.1604.

21 (d) Be admitted to, and enrolled as at least a half-time
22 student in, a Pell-eligible program at an eligible institution
23 leading to an associate degree or industry-recognized certificate
24 or credential.

25 (e) Not have previously earned an associate or baccalaureate
26 degree.

27 (f) Timely complete a Michigan reconnect grant application in
28 a form and manner determined by the department.

29 (g) Timely file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid



1 for the enrollment period described in subdivision (d).

2 (h) Timely apply for all available gift aid for the enrollment
3 period described in subdivision (d).

4 Sec. 6. To establish continuing eligibility for a Michigan
5 reconnect grant at an eligible institution, an individual must meet
6 all of the following conditions:

7 (a) Continue to be a resident of this state.

8 (b) Except as otherwise provided in section 8(1), maintain
9 continuous enrollment as at least a half-time student in a Pell-
10 eligible program at an eligible institution leading to an associate
11 degree or industry-recognized certificate or credential.

12 (c) Maintain a 2.0 grade point average in courses taken by the
13 individual as a Michigan reconnect grant student.

14 (d) Participate in relevant academic and career advising
15 programs offered by the eligible institution.

16 (e) Timely file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid
17 for each academic year in which he or she applies for a Michigan
18 reconnect grant.

19 (f) Timely apply for all available gift aid for each academic
20 year in which he or she applies for a Michigan reconnect grant.

21 Sec. 7. Regardless of which community college district that a
22 Michigan reconnect grant student resides in, if any, the amount of
23 a Michigan reconnect grant must not exceed the cost of tuition at
24 the in-district resident rate and mandatory fees at the eligible
25 institution attended less all gift aid. Gift aid must be credited
26 first to the student's tuition and mandatory fees. If awarded,
27 Michigan reconnect grant money must be paid to the eligible
28 institution for credit to the student's account.

29 Sec. 8. (1) A Michigan reconnect grant student who takes a



1 leave of absence from an eligible institution due to a medical or
2 family hardship may, subject to department approval, continue to
3 receive the grant upon resuming the student's education at an
4 eligible institution if the student continues to meet all
5 applicable eligibility requirements. A leave of absence under this
6 subsection does not disrupt the requirement of continuous
7 enrollment under section 6(b) and does not count toward the 4-year
8 limitation described in subsection (2)(a).

9 (2) A student is eligible for a Michigan reconnect grant until
10 the occurrence of either of the following:

11 (a) Subject to subsection (1), 4 years have passed since the
12 student became a Michigan reconnect grant student.

13 (b) The student has earned an associate degree. For purposes
14 of this subdivision, a student who has earned a certificate or
15 credential at an eligible institution remains eligible for the
16 Michigan reconnect grant if he or she has not yet earned an
17 associate degree and the completion of the certificate or
18 credential directly leads to an associate degree program.

19 (3) A student who participates in the Michigan reconnect grant
20 program may transfer from 1 eligible institution to another
21 eligible institution without loss of the grant so long as the
22 student continues to meet all eligibility requirements for the
23 grant.

24 Sec. 9. The department shall promulgate rules to implement
25 this part pursuant to the administrative procedures act of 1969,
26 1969 PA 306, MCL 24.201 to 24.328.

27 PART 2

28 Sec. 10. As used in this part:

29 (a) "Department" and "gift aid" mean those terms as defined in



1 section 2.

2 (b) "Qualified occupational training program" means a course
3 of study approved by the department that, subject to subparagraph
4 (vi), prepares students to earn an occupational credential that
5 meets all of subparagraphs (i) to (v), as follows:

6 (i) Is industry recognized.

7 (ii) Is portable and recognized by multiple employers.

8 (iii) Prepares students to successfully pass all relevant
9 certification examinations.

10 (iv) Is in demand in the local labor market.

11 (v) Is in an occupational area serving manufacturing,
12 construction, information technology, business management, or
13 health care.

14 (vi) If the course of study is provided by an apprenticeship
15 program, the program must be registered with the United States
16 Department of Labor under the national apprenticeship act, 29 USC
17 50 et seq.

18 (c) "Qualified private training institution" means either of
19 the following:

20 (i) A for-profit or nonprofit private organization in this
21 state that provides occupational training, but not 4-year
22 postsecondary degrees, that has been approved by this state's
23 eligible training provider list located within the department.

24 (ii) A consortium of businesses in this state offering
25 occupational training that guarantees employment for those who
26 successfully complete the training and has been approved by this
27 state's eligible training provider list located within the
28 department.



1 Sec. 11. The reconnect private training learning initiative is
2 created in the department for the purpose of providing skills
3 scholarships to individuals eligible for those scholarships under
4 this section. The department shall do all of the following:

5 (a) Develop and implement a process by which those seeking to
6 participate in the reconnect private training learning initiative
7 as a qualified private training institution offering qualified
8 occupational training programs must apply to the department.

9 (b) Develop criteria to be used to evaluate applications
10 submitted under subdivision (a), including, at a minimum, the
11 criteria described in section 10(b) and (c), and post these
12 criteria to the department's website.

13 (c) Ensure that an applicant under subdivision (a) is first
14 approved by this state's eligible training provider list as a
15 qualified private training institution under section 10(c), before
16 each of the applicant's programs receives separate approval from
17 the department as being a qualified occupational training program
18 under section 10(b).

19 (d) Require that qualified private training institutions
20 accepted to participate in the reconnect private training learning
21 initiative comply with data requests from the department as a
22 condition to continued participation, including, but not limited
23 to, requests made to institutions operating apprenticeship programs
24 subject to this part for data that tracks relevant work experience
25 required to verify a student's status as an apprentice.

26 (e) Maintain on its website a list of all qualified
27 occupational training program options available to potential skills
28 scholarship recipients.

29 (f) Award skills scholarships, subject to all of the



1 following:

2 (i) A skills scholarship is a 1-time grant not to exceed
 3 \$1,500.00 to contribute to tuition costs for a qualified
 4 occupational training program at a qualified private training
 5 institution, both of which are approved under this section, for a
 6 training program participant who meets the requirements of
 7 subparagraph (ii). A skills scholarship is available under this
 8 section only if the training program participant has applied for
 9 all other available gift aid and must not cause the total amount of
 10 all gift aid, including a skills scholarship awarded under this
 11 section, if any, to exceed the full amount of the tuition charged
 12 for the training program.

13 (ii) To receive the skills scholarship described in
 14 subparagraph (i), a qualified occupational training program
 15 participant must meet all of the following:

16 (A) Be at least 25 years old.

17 (B) Be a resident of this state for at least the immediately
 18 preceding year.

19 (C) Have graduated from high school with a diploma or
 20 certificate of completion or achieved a high school equivalency
 21 certificate. As used in this sub-subparagraph, "high school
 22 equivalency certificate" means that term as defined in section 4 of
 23 the school aid act of 1979, 1979 PA 94, MCL 388.1604.

24 (D) Not have previously earned an associate or baccalaureate
 25 degree.

26 (E) Timely complete a reconnect private training learning
 27 initiative skills scholarship application in a form and manner
 28 determined by the department.

29 (F) Timely apply for all available gift aid for the qualified



1 occupational training program.

2 (iii) The department may award skills scholarships under this
3 section only until money appropriated to the reconnect private
4 training learning initiative has been fully committed.

5 (g) Inform each recipient of a skills scholarship that he or
6 she will remain eligible for the Michigan reconnect grant program
7 created in section 3 to pursue an associate degree or occupational
8 certificate upon completion of a certification course of study at a
9 qualified private training institution, and that community colleges
10 will work to convert the coursework completed at a qualified
11 private training institution into community college credit wherever
12 possible.

13 Sec. 12. (1) The annual appropriation for the first full year
14 of the reconnect private training learning initiative must not
15 exceed \$1,500,000.00.

16 (2) The department shall annually submit a written report to
17 both houses of the legislature that explains the results of the
18 initiative. The report must include all of the following for the
19 immediately preceding year:

20 (a) The total number of applicants that sought approval as
21 qualified private training institutions under section 11(a) to (c);
22 the total number of institutions approved; a list of the names of
23 those approved institutions; and the total number and amount of
24 skills scholarships that were awarded by each approved institution.

25 (b) The total number of programs for which applications were
26 submitted for approval as qualified occupational training programs
27 under section 11(a) to (c); the total number of programs approved;
28 a list of the names or short descriptions of each of those approved
29 programs; and the total number and amount of skills scholarships



1 that were awarded for each approved program.

2 (c) The total number of individuals who applied for skills
3 scholarships under section 11(f) (ii); the total number of
4 individuals awarded skills scholarships; and the total number of
5 skills scholarships recipients who completed qualified occupational
6 training programs.

7 (d) Any other relevant information, as determined by the
8 department.

9 Sec. 13. The department shall promulgate rules to implement
10 this part pursuant to the administrative procedures act of 1969,
11 1969 PA 306, MCL 24.201 to 24.328.

