

MICHIGAN RECONNECT GRANT ACT
Act 84 of 2020

AN ACT 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.

History: 2020, Act 84, Imd. Eff. Apr. 2, 2020.

The People of the State of Michigan enact:

390.1701 Short title; intent.

Sec. 1. (1) This act may be cited as the "Michigan reconnect grant act".

(2) The reconnect program and reconnect initiative created respectively in this act and the Michigan reconnect grant recipient act, 2020 PA 68, MCL 390.1711 to 390.1723, are intended to provide last-dollar financial assistance to individuals age 25 and older seeking associate degrees or industry-recognized certificates or credentials; to provide those individuals with greater access to the education and skills needed to succeed in, and meet the demands of, an evolving economy in which there is continuing demand for a talented local workforce; to drive innovations specific to adult learners in this state's community colleges; to mitigate educational equity gaps in the furtherance of individual prosperity; and to achieve the goal of increasing the number of residents ages 25 to 64 with a college degree or skill certificate or credential to 60% by 2030.

History: 2020, Act 84, Imd. Eff. Apr. 2, 2020;—Am. 2022, Act 251, Eff. Mar. 29, 2023.

390.1703 Definitions.

Sec. 3. As used in this act:

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

(b) "Department" means the department of labor and economic opportunity.

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

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

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

(iii) Participates in quality assurance protocols established by the department for purposes of accurately tracking student outcomes described in section 5(g) and (h).

(iv) Submits a written report of all of the following information to the department by not later than October 1, 2020 and each year thereafter by not later than June 30:

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

(B) A demonstration of ways in which the institution follows best practices in providing programs of study and student support based on national evidence, including partnering with institutions that grant bachelor's degrees, providing coursework for general studies students and requirements of associate degrees and certificates, providing stackable industry-recognized micro credentials within certificate and associate degree programs, providing credit for prior learning, providing work-based learning opportunities, and providing holistic student support services.

(C) The institution's current policy for determining a student's eligibility to enroll directly into freshman-level courses without remediation.

(D) A description of and evidence base for all models of remediation currently offered by the institution.

(v) By not later than August 1, 2023, for all Michigan reconnect grant students who need academic remediation, provides appropriate academic support, including all of the following:

(A) A corequisite model of academic support for gateway English and mathematics pathway courses under which a student concurrently enrolls in a developmental education course and a freshman-level course in the same or a related subject area for each subject area needing remediation, to be completed during the same semester as the freshman-level course. An institution providing corequisite support as described in this sub-subparagraph remains eligible whether or not it charges tuition or fees for the developmental education portions of the program.

(B) Any additional remediation programs as the institution considers appropriate, subject to all of the following:

(I) An additional remediation program must serve as a supplement to, not as an alternative to, the

corequisite model described in sub-subparagraph (A).

(II) For each additional remediation program, the institution must include in its annual report, pursuant to subparagraph (iv)(D), an evidence-based rationale for the program.

(III) An additional remediation program must be offered at no charge to Michigan reconnect grant students or offered outside of the institutional tuition and fee structure. For a program offered outside of its tuition and fee structure, an institution may use foundation or other local funding sources or refer students to adult education providers.

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

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

(viii) Demonstrates, in a form and manner prescribed by the department, that the institution does all of the following:

(A) Is working to adopt best practices for partnering with bachelor's degree granting institutions, providing coursework for general studies and requirements of associate degrees and certificates, providing stackable industry-recognized micro credentials within certificate and associate degree programs, providing credit for prior learning, providing work-based learning opportunities, providing holistic student support services, and providing a guided pathways model by which students receive early advising and career exploration, set a pathway of interest during their first term, and develop a full program plan within their first or second term.

(B) Informs Michigan reconnect grant students upon admission of its policies for converting prior learning into community college credit and any means available to maximize acceleration, as described in subparagraph (iv)(B).

(C) Supports adult learners by offering competency-based courses and programs.

(D) Awards academic credit to learners scoring the minimum American Council on Education standard score on college-level credit exams from organizations such as CLEP and DSST.

(E) Encourages Michigan reconnect grant students to establish an account on the institution's employment database.

(F) Identifies best practices in student success, reviews evidence to support best practices, and discusses with relevant experts emerging opportunities to increase the success of Michigan reconnect grant students. Subject to section 5a, an institution must perform the requirements of this sub-subparagraph in consultation with the Michigan Center for Adult College Success.

(d) "Industry-recognized certificate or credential" means a certificate or credential that is portable and is sought or accepted by multiple employers within an industry for purposes of recruitment, hiring, or promotion.

(e) "Michigan reconnect grant student" means a student admitted to and enrolled in an eligible institution, regardless of whether the student is receiving a Michigan reconnect grant under this act.

History: 2020, Act 84, Imd. Eff. Apr. 2, 2020;—Am. 2022, Act 251, Eff. Mar. 29, 2023.

390.1705 Michigan reconnect grant program; powers and duties of department of labor and economic opportunity; program requirements; annual written progress report.

Sec. 5. The Michigan reconnect grant program is created in the department for the purpose of providing Michigan reconnect grants to individuals eligible for those grants under the Michigan reconnect grant recipient act, 2020 PA 68, MCL 390.1711 to 390.1723. The department shall do all of the following:

(a) Develop and administer the program.

(b) Create and maintain a program website.

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

(d) Operate a help desk for the program.

(e) Create and maintain a network of navigators to help Michigan reconnect grant students navigate the path to college, supporting but not supplanting the programming and assistance offered by community colleges. In connection with maintaining this network of navigators, the department shall ensure that navigators are instructed to inform Michigan reconnect grant applicants of any relevant policies for earning credit for prior learning, as described in section 3(c)(iv)(B), and connect Michigan reconnect grant applicants to their local workforce development agency for additional support services and registration with their local career services office.

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

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

(h) To facilitate the reporting of valid and reliable longitudinal data under subdivision (g), ensure that all eligible institutions and other individuals and entities that participate in the implementation of the Michigan reconnect grant program use the unique statewide student identification codes issued by the center to track Michigan reconnect grant students in accordance with section 94a of the school aid act of 1979, 1979 PA 94, MCL 388.1694a, and require eligible institutions to identify and report at the student level any attempts and completion for gateway English and mathematics courses in a form and manner as prescribed by the center.

(i) Establish a process to allow eligible institutions to be reimbursed for awarding credit for prior learning at a rate of \$80.00 per credit hour for credit awarded to Michigan reconnect grant students for Advanced Placement, CLEP, DSST, military training, industry credentials, work-based learning, portfolio assessment, and other types of credit for prior learning as determined by the department.

(j) As part of the department's responsibility to better connect education and training demands in the labor market with qualified degree, training, and apprenticeship programs, facilitate efforts by businesses, unions, and community colleges to effectively match skills provided with those in demand and encourage eligible institutions across this state to adopt consistent placement policies.

(k) To facilitate maximum 4-year completion rates for Michigan reconnect grant students, implement all of the following program requirements:

(i) The center shall provide each eligible institution with a 4-year adult completion rate baseline that reflects the percentage of degree-seeking adult students age 25 and up who enrolled at that institution in the fall of 2017 and earned an associate degree or occupational certificate, or transferred to a 4-year university or college, by August 2021. Degree-seeking adult students age 25 and up who enrolled at the institution in the fall of 2017 and transferred to another eligible institution must be subtracted from both the numerator and denominator in calculating the 4-year adult completion rate baseline.

(ii) The center shall annually provide the department each eligible institution's credential completion numbers and rates to determine whether the institution has maintained full program standing. To assist the center in this annual reporting, by a deadline set by the department, each eligible institution shall provide the center with a preliminary calculation of the institution's previous year's credential completion numbers and rates. The center shall consider an institution's preliminary calculations when making its independent determination of the institution's credential completion numbers and rates. To maintain full program standing, an institution must achieve 1 of the following, as applicable:

(A) For an institution with a 4-year adult completion rate baseline as provided by the center under subparagraph (i) of less than 30%, the institution must subsequently achieve each year a 4-year completion rate that is no less than 3 percentage points greater than its immediately preceding 4-year completion rate until a 30% 4-year completion rate is attained; then must subsequently achieve each year a 4-year completion rate that is no less than 2 percentage points greater than its immediately preceding 4-year rate until a 50% 4-year completion rate is attained; and then must subsequently achieve each year a 4-year completion rate that is greater, by no specific measure, than its immediately preceding 4-year completion rate until a 75% 4-year completion rate is attained.

(B) For an institution with a 4-year adult completion rate baseline as provided by the center under subparagraph (i) equal to or greater than 30% and less than 50%, the institution must subsequently achieve each year a 4-year completion rate that is no less than 2 percentage points greater than its immediately preceding 4-year completion rate until a 50% 4-year completion rate is attained; and then must subsequently achieve each year a 4-year completion rate that is greater, by no specific measure, than its immediately preceding 4-year completion rate until a 75% 4-year completion rate is attained.

(C) For an institution with a 4-year adult completion rate baseline as provided by the center under subparagraph (i) equal to or greater than 50% and less than 75%, the institution must subsequently achieve each year a 4-year completion rate that is greater, by no specific measure, than its immediately preceding 4-year completion rate until a 75% 4-year completion rate is attained.

(iii) An institution that fails to achieve its annual completion-gain target under subparagraph (ii) is placed on probationary status. If it meets its annual completion-gain target the subsequent year, it is returned to full program-standing status.

(iv) An institution that fails to meet its annual completion-gain target for 2 consecutive years is placed on low-performing status with the following consequences:

(A) In a time and manner prescribed by the department, the institution shall develop a corrective action plan in consultation with the department's Office of Sixty by 30 or its successor, the Michigan Community College Association, and, subject to section 5a, the Michigan Center for Adult College Success, and the institution shall submit its corrective action plan to the Office of Sixty by 30 or its successor for approval.

(B) In the first year after an institution is placed on low-performing status and each succeeding year in which the institution fails to meet its completion target, this state will reimburse the institution only 90% of the last-dollar tuition cost of each Michigan reconnect grant student, the institution being required to pay the remaining 10% of last-dollar tuition cost out of other institution revenues in order to remain eligible for participation in the Michigan reconnect program. An institution on low-performing status shall not charge Michigan reconnect grant students for the gap between tuition cost and reduced state reimbursement.

(C) In the year immediately following an institution placed on low-performing status achieving its annual completion-rate target, that institution must be returned to full program-standing status and receive a 100% state reimbursement for the cost of last-dollar tuition grants to Michigan reconnect grant students.

(I) By not later than June 1 each year, beginning in 2021, provide a written report detailing the progress of the Michigan reconnect grant program to the chairpersons of the standing committees and the appropriations subcommittees of the house of representatives and senate having jurisdiction over legislation or oversight of appropriations pertaining to workforce development. The report must be made available to the public on the department's website and, at minimum, must include all of the following information for the immediately preceding academic year:

(i) The total amount of Michigan reconnect grants awarded to Michigan reconnect grant students.

(ii) The total amount of funding used for oversight and implementation of the Michigan reconnect grant program, including, but not limited to, total funding used for each of the following:

(A) Full-time equated positions.

(B) System improvements.

(C) Training costs.

(iii) The total amount of funding used for program support services, including, but not limited to, total funding used for each of the following:

(A) Full-time equated positions.

(B) Case management.

(C) Technical assistance.

(iv) The total amount of funding used for marketing.

(v) The total number of navigators employed by the department; the total number of navigators assigned to each eligible institution; and the number of Michigan reconnect grant students assigned to each navigator, organized by eligible institution.

(vi) The total number of eligible institutions to which Michigan reconnect grants were paid for credit to student accounts under section 17 of the Michigan reconnect grant recipient act, 2020 PA 68, MCL 390.1717; a list of the names of those eligible institutions; and the total number and amount of Michigan reconnect grants that were awarded, organized by eligible institution.

(vii) The amount of credit awarded for prior learning by eligible institutions to be reimbursed at a rate of \$80.00 per credit hour for credit awarded to Michigan reconnect grant students for Advanced Placement, CLEP, DSST, military training, industry credentials, work-based learning, portfolio assessment, and other types of credit for prior learning as determined by the department.

(viii) The total number of individuals who applied for Michigan reconnect grants; the total number of individuals awarded those grants; the mean and median grant amounts; and the total number of grant recipients who earned either an associate degree or industry-recognized certificate or credential.

(ix) Any other relevant information, as determined by the department.

History: 2020, Act 84, Imd. Eff. Apr. 2, 2020;—Am. 2022, Act 251, Eff. Mar. 29, 2023.

Compiler's note: For the transfer or responsibilities of the Office of Sixty by 30 from the department of labor and economic opportunity to MiLEAP, see E.R.O. No. 2023-2, compiled at MCL 388.1283.

390.1705a Michigan Center for Adult College Success.

Sec. 5a. Subject to appropriation, there is created the Michigan Center for Adult College Success in the department or, as may be provided in connection with an appropriation implementing this section, another state department or agency or an appropriate nonprofit organization. The Michigan Center for Adult College Success shall serve as this state's primary resource for research, support models, and best practices on ensuring adult enrollment and completion of college degrees and certificates at eligible institutions.

History: Add. 2022, Act 251, Eff. Mar. 29, 2023.

390.1707 Appropriation for grants.

Sec. 7. Subject to appropriation, the department may expend Michigan reconnect grant program money to award grants and support its other duties as described in section 5.

History: 2020, Act 84, Imd. Eff. Apr. 2, 2020.

390.1709 Rules.

Sec. 9. Except as otherwise provided in this section, the department shall promulgate rules to implement section 5(h) only, pursuant to the administrative procedures act of 1969, 1969 PA 306, MCL 24.201 to 24.328. However, any data reporting system and penalties for noncompliance established by the department must be narrowly tailored to the purposes described in section 5(h). To facilitate implementation of the Michigan reconnect grant program prior to final rules being adopted, the department may develop and administer the data reporting system under the Michigan reconnect grant program in accordance with its proposed rules or other policy or directive of the department established pursuant to this act.

History: 2020, Act 84, Imd. Eff. Apr. 2, 2020.