

JAN 22 2016

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO COMMUNITY COLLEGES.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that although community
2 colleges offer vocational, technical, and professional courses
3 and programs that prepare students for immediate employment and
4 career advancement, Hawaii will still have a twenty-seven per
5 cent shortage of skilled workers by the year 2020. Despite the
6 nationally competitive tuition and course-related costs of
7 community colleges in Hawaii, Hawaii's high cost of living makes
8 community college an unaffordable financial expenditure for many
9 prospective students. Governments across the country have made
10 significant investments in workforce development programs by
11 providing financial assistance to students seeking in-demand
12 occupational skills. Financial assistance for students
13 participating in certificate programs for in-demand occupations
14 will ensure a growing skilled workforce while increasing the
15 graduation and retention rates of Hawaii's community colleges.

16 The purpose of this Act is to establish the gap tuition
17 assistance program to provide grants for need-based tuition



1 assistance to applicants to enable completion of continuing
2 education certificate training programs at the community
3 colleges for in-demand occupations.

4 SECTION 2. The Hawaii Revised Statutes is amended by
5 adding a new chapter to be appropriately designated and to read
6 as follows:

7 "CHAPTER

8 GAP TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

9 § -1 Definitions. As used in this chapter:

10 "Department" means the department of education.

11 "Eligible certificate program" means a program at a
12 community college that offers training or a credential in an in-
13 demand occupation and is not offered for credit, but is aligned
14 with a certificate, diploma, or degree for credit, and does any
15 of the following:

16 (1) Offers a state, national, or locally recognized
17 certificate;

18 (2) Offers preparation for a professional examination or
19 licensure;

20 (3) Provides endorsement for an existing credential or
21 license;



1 (4) Represents recognized skill standards defined by an
2 industrial sector; or

3 (5) Offers a similar credential or training.

4 "In-demand occupation" includes occupations in the
5 following industries:

6 (1) Information technology;

7 (2) Health care;

8 (3) Advanced manufacturing;

9 (4) Transportation and logistics; and

10 (5) Cybersecurity.

11 § -2 Gap tuition assistance program; gap tuition

12 assistance program special fund. (a) There is established the
13 gap tuition assistance program within the department to provide
14 grants for need-based tuition assistance to applicants to enable
15 completion of continuing education certificate training programs
16 at the community colleges for in-demand occupations. The
17 department shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter 91 necessary to
18 carry out the purposes of this chapter.

19 (b) There is established a gap tuition assistance program
20 special fund within the state treasury to be administered by the
21 department and into which shall be deposited all appropriations



1 made by the legislature to the fund. Moneys in the gap tuition
2 assistance program special fund shall be used by the department
3 for the gap tuition assistance program.

4 § -3 Applicant eligibility; program requirements. (a)

5 The department, in consultation with the department of business,
6 economic development, and tourism, shall adopt rules pursuant to
7 chapter 91 to define the eligibility criteria for persons
8 applying to receive tuition assistance. Eligibility for tuition
9 assistance shall be based on financial need. Criteria to be
10 assessed in determining financial need shall include but is not
11 limited to the applicant's:

- 12 (1) Family income for the twelve months prior to the date
13 of application;
- 14 (2) Family size; and
- 15 (3) County of residence.

16 (b) The department shall only approve an applicant for
17 tuition assistance if the community college receiving the
18 application determines the applicant has demonstrated a capacity
19 and has a strong likelihood to achieve the following outcomes:

- 20 (1) The ability to complete an eligible certificate
21 program;



1 (2) The ability to enter a postsecondary certificate,
2 diploma, or degree program for credit;

3 (3) The ability to gain full-time employment; and

4 (4) The ability to maintain full-time employment over
5 time.

6 (c) In considering the capacity and likelihood of an
7 applicant to achieve the outcomes in subsection (b), the
8 community college receiving the application shall consider
9 factors including but not limited to barriers that may prevent
10 an applicant from completing the certificate program or gaining
11 employment in an in-demand occupation. Applicants may be found
12 eligible for partial or total tuition assistance. Tuition
13 assistance shall not be approved if the community college
14 receiving the application determines that funding for an
15 applicant's participation in an eligible certificate program is
16 available from any other public or private funding source.

17 (d) An applicant for tuition assistance shall provide to
18 the community college receiving the application documentation of
19 all sources of income. Only an applicant eligible to work in
20 the United States shall be approved for tuition assistance. An
21 application shall be valid for six months from the date of



1 signature on the application. A person shall not be approved
2 for tuition assistance for more than one eligible certificate
3 program. Eligibility for tuition assistance shall not be
4 construed to guarantee enrollment in any community college
5 certificate program and shall be limited to persons earning
6 incomes at or below two hundred fifty per cent of the federal
7 poverty level as defined by the most recently revised poverty
8 income guidelines published by the United States Department of
9 Health and Human Services.

10 (e) Costs of a certificate program eligible for coverage
11 by tuition assistance shall include but are not limited to:

- 12 (1) Tuition;
- 13 (2) Direct training costs;
- 14 (3) Required books and equipment; and
- 15 (4) Fees, including but not limited to fees for industry
16 testing services and background check testing
17 services.

18 (f) An applicant for tuition assistance shall complete an
19 initial assessment administered by the community college
20 receiving the application to determine the applicant's readiness
21 to complete an eligible certificate program. The assessment



1 shall include assessments for completion of a national career
2 readiness certificate, including the areas of reading for
3 information, applied mathematics, and locating information. An
4 applicant shall achieve a bronze-level certificate or the
5 minimum score required for an eligible certificate program,
6 whichever is higher, in order to be approved for tuition
7 assistance. An applicant shall complete any additional
8 assessments and occupational research required by an eligible
9 certificate program.

10 (g) An applicant for tuition assistance shall meet with a
11 member of the staff for an eligible certificate program offered
12 by the community college receiving the application. The staff
13 member shall discuss the relevant industry, any applicable
14 occupational research, and any applicable training relating to
15 the eligible certificate program. The discussion shall include
16 an evaluation of the applicant's capabilities, needs, family
17 situation, work history, educational background, attitude and
18 motivation, employment skills, vocational potential, and
19 employment barriers. The discussion shall also include
20 potential start dates, support needs, and other requirements for
21 an eligible certificate program.



1 (h) A participant in an eligible certificate program who
2 receives tuition assistance pursuant to this chapter shall do
3 all of the following:

4 (1) Maintain regular contact with staff members for the
5 certificate program to document the applicant's
6 progress in the program;

7 (2) Sign a release form to provide relevant information to
8 community college faculty or case managers;

9 (3) Discuss with staff members for the certificate program
10 any issues that may impact the participant's ability
11 to complete the certificate program, obtain
12 employment, and maintain employment over time;

13 (4) Attend all required courses regularly; and

14 (5) Meet with staff members for the certificate program to
15 develop a job search plan.

16 (i) A community college may terminate tuition assistance
17 for a participant who fails to meet the requirements of this
18 section.

19 § -4 Gap tuition assistance program steering committee;

20 report. (a) The department, in coordination with the community
21 colleges, shall establish a steering committee. The steering



1 committee shall determine if the performance measures of the gap
2 tuition assistance program are being met and shall take
3 necessary steps to correct any deficiencies. The steering
4 committee shall meet at least quarterly to evaluate and monitor
5 the performance of the gap tuition assistance program.

6 (b) The department, in coordination with the community
7 colleges, shall develop a common intake tracking system that
8 shall be implemented consistently by each participating
9 community college.

10 (c) The department shall report its findings and
11 recommendations on the gap tuition assistance program, including
12 any proposed legislation, to the legislature no later than
13 twenty days prior to the convening of each regular session."

14 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
15 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
16 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2016-2017 to be
17 deposited into the gap tuition assistance program special fund
18 established pursuant to section -2, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

19 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the gap tuition
20 assistance program special fund the sum of \$ or so much



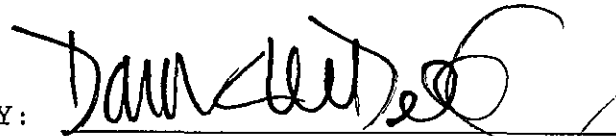
1 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2016-2017 for the
2 establishment of the gap tuition assistance program.

3 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
4 education for the purposes of this Act.

5 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect upon its approval;
6 provided that sections 3 and 4 shall take effect on July 1,
7 2016.

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INTRODUCED BY:

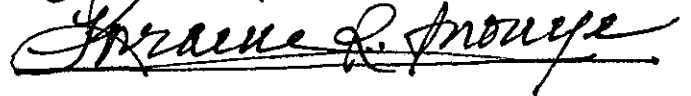














S.B. NO. 2530

Report Title:

Department of Education; Gap Tuition Assistance Program; Gap Tuition Assistance Program Special Fund; Appropriation

Description:

Establishes the gap tuition assistance program to provide grants for need-based tuition assistance to applicants to community colleges to enable completion of continuing education certificate training programs for in-demand occupations. Establishes the gap tuition assistance program special fund. Makes an appropriation.

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

