

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to student financial assistance; creating
 3 s. 1009.895, F.S.; creating the Florida Independent
 4 Collegiate Assistance Grant Program; providing for program
 5 administration; authorizing tuition assistance grants to
 6 certain postsecondary education students enrolling in
 7 undergraduate degree programs for specified occupations;
 8 providing institution eligibility requirements; providing
 9 an effective date.

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11 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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13 Section 1. Section 1009.895, Florida Statutes, is created
 14 to read:

15 1009.895 Florida Independent Collegiate Assistance Grant
 16 Program.--

17 (1) The Legislature finds and declares that independent
 18 institutions licensed by the Commission for Independent
 19 Education are an integral part of the higher education system in
 20 this state through which Florida residents seek higher
 21 education. The Legislature finds that a significant number of
 22 state residents choose to pursue higher education at these
 23 institutions and that these institutions and the students they
 24 educate and train make a substantial contribution to the
 25 development of the state's economy. The Legislature intends to
 26 create a tuition assistance grant program for state residents
 27 that is not based upon a student's financial need or other
 28 criteria upon which financial aid programs are based.

29 (2) The Florida Independent Collegiate Assistance Grant
 30 Program, to be known as the FICA Grant Program, is created as a
 31 student tuition assistance grant program.

32 (a) The program shall be administered by the Department of
 33 Education according to rules adopted by the State Board of
 34 Education.

35 (b) The department may issue a tuition assistance grant
 36 under the program to any full-time student who:

37 1. Meets student residency requirements as provided in s.
 38 1009.40(1)(a)2.

39 2. Is enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student at an
 40 eligible independent institution of higher education as defined
 41 in this section and is seeking an associate degree or higher.

42 3. Is making satisfactory academic progress as defined by
 43 the independent institution of higher education in which the
 44 student is enrolled.

45 4. Enrolls in an undergraduate degree program that leads
 46 to employment in an occupation that is listed on a regional
 47 targeted occupations list of a Florida workforce board at the
 48 time of enrollment.

49 (3) An "eligible independent institution of higher
 50 education" is:

51 (a) An institution that is licensed by the Commission for
 52 Independent Education under chapter 1005, is accredited by an
 53 accrediting agency that is recognized by the United States
 54 Secretary of Education as a reliable authority as to the quality
 55 of education or training offered at its accredited institutions,
 56 and has established performance requirements for student

HB 943

2005

57 achievement that include minimum objective quantitative
58 standards, including completion rates and placement rates.

59 (b) An institution whose students are not eligible to
60 participate in the Access to Better Learning and Education Grant
61 Program or the William L. Boyd, IV, Florida Resident Access
62 Grant Program.

63 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2005.