

1 Legislature further recognizes that the financial consequence
2 of repaying loans, on which graduates have placed high
3 reliance, negatively influences these graduates' ability to
4 provide positive reinforcement for the state's economy.

5 (b) It is the purpose of this act to promote
6 successful student participation in the economic development
7 of their communities and the state by:

8 1. Providing financial support that will enable
9 working students to achieve their degrees and increase their
10 earning and spending potential.

11 2. Offering grant assistance to working students to
12 minimize the use of loans for entry-level training. Student
13 loans are more appropriate for students who have already moved
14 beyond entry-level jobs and have the income that will allow
15 repayment of loans.

16 (c) There is created the Florida Public Community
17 College and Career Center Working Student Assistance Program
18 to provide financial support for working students in this
19 state. This program will provide assistance to students whose
20 employment income makes them ineligible for federal and state
21 grant assistance and for whom their income is insufficient to
22 commit to long-term debt through any financial assistance
23 through federal or other loans.

24 (2)(a) Student grants through the program may be made
25 to students who enroll in at least 6 semester hours, or the
26 equivalent, or 10 hours per week of adult vocational training
27 per term and who meet other requirements for student
28 eligibility provided in this section or by rule. The grants
29 shall be awarded annually for an amount of need determined by
30 the institution but may not exceed an amount specified in the
31 General Appropriations Act.

1 (b) The primary purpose of this grant is to serve
2 students who are not receiving state or federal grants.
3 Therefore, a student applying for a grant under this section
4 must also complete the application for federal financial aid,
5 so that access to federal and state grants is the first avenue
6 of support. However, for purposes of this grant, the
7 institutional assessment of financial resources available to
8 the student may consider issues beyond that identified in the
9 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) calculations
10 to determine the unmet need of the student. Such issues
11 include, but are not limited to:

12 1. The inability of family members to contribute to
13 the educational expenses of those under age 24 who must report
14 family income on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid
15 (FAFSA) application.

16 2. Independent or dependent students whose income and
17 expenses only qualify the student for loan programs, but for
18 whom loan debt will be an unreasonable burden.

19 (c) Institutions shall prioritize awards to students
20 having the greatest need and may require students to meet
21 additional criteria for eligibility.

22 (3) The Department of Education shall develop a method
23 to distribute funds to community colleges and career centers
24 and adopt rules necessary to administer this section, and
25 shall require annual reports of such colleges and centers.
26 Community college boards of trustees and school boards shall
27 adopt rules to administer this section locally.

28 Section 2. Paragraph (e) is added to subsection (2) of
29 section 1009.50, Florida Statutes, to read:

30 1009.50 Florida Public Student Assistance Grant
31 Program; eligibility for grants.--

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31

(2)

(e) For community college students, Pell Grant entitlements shall be considered in the award, but may not be required as a condition of award. The maximum expected family contribution established by the department for community colleges shall recognize that students at community colleges are working and supporting families and that the expected contribution to education cannot equal that at other institutions.

Section 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

SENATE SUMMARY

Creates a Florida Public Community College and Career Center Working Student Assistance Program to provide a funding source for community college and adult vocational training students as an alternative to student loans.