



Section-by-Section

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION & THE WORKFORCE DEMOCRATS

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The Hon. Bobby Scott • Ranking Member

The America's College Promise Act of 2017

Sec. 1. Short title: America's College Promise Act of 2017.

Sec. 2. Purpose: Authorizes the Secretary of Education ("Secretary") to make grants to States and Indian Tribes ("grantees") to waive tuition and fees at participating community colleges for eligible students. It also authorizes the creation of partnerships with minority-serving institutions to encourage more students to enroll and promote reforms to improve outcomes at these schools

Title I- State and Indian Grants

Sec. 101. Program Authorization; Statement of Purpose: Authorizes the Secretary of Education ("Secretary") to make grants to States and Indian Tribes ("grantees") to waive tuition and fees at participating community colleges for eligible students.

Sec. 102. Federal Share; Non-Federal Share: Authorizes the Secretary to devise a formula where the Federal Government will contribute 75 percent of total costs, and grantees will contribute between 25 percent of total costs.

Sec. 103. Eligibility: Outlines the condition grantees must meet to be eligible for a grant: waiving tuition and fees for eligible students at community colleges.

Sec. 104. Applications: Outlines the required contents of grantee applications for funds. Applications must include: an estimate of the number of students that will be served by the grant, a description of evidence-based institutional reforms community colleges will undertake to improve student outcomes, a description of how the grantee will ensure that programs provided that lead to a postsecondary credential are high-quality, and a description of how grantees will promote alignment between their secondary and their two-year and four-year postsecondary education systems.

Sec. 105. Uses of Funds: States that the primary allowable use of grant funds is to allow grantees to waive tuition and fees for eligible students at their community colleges. It also outlines additional allowable uses after grantees have met the need of waiving community college tuition and fees for all participating eligible students, and the requirement that states maintain their financial support for higher education in order to receive their full allotment of funds. Reporting requirements are included in this section as well.

Sec. 106. Definitions: Provides various definitions of key terms, including career pathway, community college, and eligible students: any student at a community college on at least a half-time basis, who maintains satisfactory academic progress, qualifies for in-state tuition, and is enrolled in an eligible program.

Sec. 10. Authorization of Appropriations: Creates mandatory funding for the State Grant program for ten years.

Title II – Grants to HBCUs, HSIs, AANAPISIs, Tribal Colleges and Universities, ANNHSIs, PBIS, and Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institutions

Sec. 201. Pathways for Student Success for HBCUs: Provides grants to eligible HBCUs based on actual tuition and fees for eligible students for two years. The per-student amount granted will not exceed the national average of public, four-year institutional tuition and fees. In order to be eligible, HBCUs must have a student body that is at least 35 percent low-income, including Pell-eligible students. Additionally eligible HBCUs must commit to maintain or adopt evidence-based institutional reforms designed to improve student outcomes, and to set performance goals for improving those outcomes. Eligible HBCUs who enter into articulation agreements with community colleges can also receive grant funds for eligible students who transfer from those community colleges to complete their degrees.

Sec. 202. Pathways for Student Success for HSIs, AANAPISIs, Tribal Colleges and Universities, ANNHSIs, PBIS, and Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institutions: Provides grants to eligible MSIs based on actual tuition and fees for eligible students. The per-student amount granted will not exceed the national average of public, four-year institutional tuition and fees. In order to be eligible, an MSI must have a student body that is at least 35 percent low-income including Pell-eligible students. Additionally eligible MSIs must commit to maintain or adopt evidence-based institutional reforms designed to improve student outcomes, and to set performance goals for improving those outcomes. MSIs who enter into articulation agreements with community colleges can also receive grant funds for eligible students who transfer from those community colleges to complete their degrees.

Sec. 203. Definitions: Provides various definitions of key terms. Eligible students must be enrolled at an HBCU or MSI on at least a half-time basis, who maintain satisfactory academic progress and are low-income, including Pell-eligible students. Students whose parents were denied a Parent PLUS loan between November 2011 and March 2015, who subsequently withdrew from an HBCU or MSI, may also participate in the program even though they are returning students. HBCUs are defined as institutions that meet the requirements described in Section 322 (2) part B of the Higher Education Act. MSIs are defined as institutions that meet the requirements described in any of paragraphs (2) through (7) of section 371(a) of the Higher Education Act.

Sec. 204. Authorization of Appropriations: Creates mandatory funding for the HBCU/MSI programs for ten years.