

COMMITTEE STATEMENT:**ASSEMBLY:** No**SENATE:** Yes Higher
Education
Budget &
Appropriations

(Audio archived recordings of the committee meetings, corresponding to the date of the committee statement, *may possibly* be found at www.njleg.state.nj.us)

(continued)

FLOOR AMENDMENT STATEMENT:

No

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE:

Yes 12/22/2020

VETO MESSAGE:

No

GOVERNOR'S PRESS RELEASE ON SIGNING:

Yes

FOLLOWING WERE PRINTED:

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REPORTS:

No

HEARINGS:

No

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES:

Yes

Saulsbery, Gabrielle. "A lost generation'." NJBIZ (New Brunswick, NJ), March 1, 2021.

Johnson, Brent. "N.J. makes 'free' community college program permanent Under new law, students in households earning \$65K or less qualify." Times, The (Trenton, NJ), February 27, 2021: 001.

LOWE, CLAIRE. "Murphy signs free 2-year college program into law Free two-year college grant program now law in New Jersey." Press of Atlantic City, The (NJ), February 27, 2021: 3A.

Munoz, Daniel J.. "Murphy approves bill making tuition-free community college permanent." NJBIZ (New Brunswick, NJ), February 26, 2021.

RH/CL

Title 18A.
Subtitle 12A.
Part 2.
Article 16. (New)
Community
College
Opportunity Grant
Program
§§1-6 -
C.18A:71B-111 to
18A:71B-116
§7 - Note

P.L. 2021, CHAPTER 26, *approved February 26, 2021*
Assembly, No. 4410 (*Third Reprint*)

1 AN ACT concerning financial aid for county college students and
2 supplementing chapter 71B of Title 18A of the New Jersey
3 Statutes.

4

5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
6 of New Jersey:

7

8 1. As used in this act:

9 “Annual adjusted gross income” means:

10 a. for a dependent student, the annual adjusted gross income of
11 the student’s parent or legal guardian, as reported on the student’s
12 Free Application for Federal Student Aid or other financial aid form;
13 and

14 b. for an independent student, the annual adjusted gross income
15 of the student and, if applicable, the spouse of the student, as reported
16 on the student’s Free Application for Federal Student Aid or other
17 financial aid form.

18 “Approved educational fees” means general education fees,
19 registration fees, facility fees, technology fees, laboratory fees,
20 student service and activity fees, and program and course fees,
21 including fees associated with coursework in nursing, culinary, and
22 other career and technical education programs as determined by the
23 Higher Education Student Assistance Authority in consultation with
24 the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education ¹, subject to the limit
25 of funds appropriated or otherwise made available for the program¹.

26 “Authority” means the Higher Education Student Assistance
27 Authority established pursuant to N.J.S.18A:71A-3.

28 ³ [“Home county college” means the county college that serves a
29 student’s county of residence.]³

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Assembly AHI committee amendments adopted October 8, 2020.

²Assembly AAP committee amendments adopted November 12, 2020.

³Senate SBA committee amendments adopted December 14, 2020.

1 “Out-of-county college” means a county college that is outside of
2 a student’s county of residence.

3 “Program” means the Community College Opportunity Grant
4 Program created pursuant to section 2 of this act.

5 “Three plus one degree program” means a baccalaureate degree
6 program created pursuant to section 1 of P.L.2018, c.144 (C.18A:3B-
7 78).

8
9 2. There is hereby created the Community College Opportunity
10 Grant Program. The purpose of the program shall be to provide
11 financial aid grants to eligible county college students, to cover the
12 costs of tuition and approved educational fees that are not already
13 covered by any other State, federal, and institutional need-based
14 grants or merit scholarships and to provide county colleges with
15 Student Success Incentive funding for outreach and student success
16 initiatives. The financial aid grants distributed to eligible students
17 under the program shall be administered by the Higher Education
18 Student Assistance Authority, while the Student Success Incentive
19 funding distributed to county colleges under the program shall be
20 administered by the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education.

21
22 3. a. To be eligible to receive a financial aid grant under the
23 Community College Opportunity Grant Program, a student shall:

24 (1) be a legal resident of the State in accordance with the provisions
25 of N.J.S.18A:71B-2 or be eligible for student financial aid pursuant to
26 P.L.2018, c.12 (C.18A:71B-2.1);

27 (2) be enrolled in at least six credits at a county college established
28 pursuant to chapter 64A of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes;

29 (3) ³(a)³ be enrolled at the county college that serves the student’s
30 county of residence ³[, except that a student may ³]; or

31 (b) be enrolled at an out-of-county college, in which case the
32 student, if otherwise eligible, shall³ receive a grant under the program
33 to cover the remaining costs of tuition and approved educational fees,
34 charged at the in-district rate for ³[the home county college, to attend a
35 county college outside of the county of residence] the county college at
36 which the student is enrolled, provided that the amount of a grant
37 provided to a student under this subparagraph does not exceed the
38 amount of tuition and approved educational fees actually charged to the
39 student³;

40 (4) not have an annual adjusted gross income that is negative;

41 (5) have an annual adjusted gross income between \$0 and \$65,000,
42 except that the authority, in consultation with the Office of the Secretary
43 of Higher Education and the New Jersey Council of County Colleges,
44 may annually establish maximum annual adjusted gross income
45 eligibility limits of no less than \$65,000;

46 (6) have applied for all other available forms of State, federal, and
47 institutional need-based grants and merit scholarships and, in

1 accordance with annually established deadline dates, have completed
2 and submitted a Free Application for Federal Student Aid, other
3 financial aid form, or, as applicable, a State financial aid form as
4 required by the authority pursuant to subsection b. of section 1 of
5 P.L.2018, c.12 (C.18A:71B-2.1);

6 (7) not owe a refund on a grant or scholarship previously received
7 from a State or federal program through any institution or be in default
8 on any loan made under any State or federal student loan program at any
9 institution, unless the student makes arrangements with the authority to
10 repay the debt; and

11 (8) be in good academic standing and meet the minimum standards
12 for academic performance and satisfactory academic progress as
13 defined by the county college which the student is attending.

14 A county college shall not impose additional eligibility requirements
15 for the program, other than the requirements set forth in this subsection.

16 b. A grant under the program may be renewed for a student who:

17 (1) annually completes and submits a Free Application for Federal
18 Student Aid, other financial aid form, or, as applicable, a State financial
19 aid form as required by the authority pursuant to subsection b. of section
20 1 of P.L.2018, c.12 (C.18A:71B-2.1);

21 (2) meets the standards for academic performance and satisfactory
22 academic progress, as defined by the county college which the student
23 is attending, to determine eligibility for federal student aid programs
24 under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 or, in the semester
25 immediately prior to receiving an award, attains a minimum level of
26 academic success as determined by the authority; and

27 (3) maintains all eligibility requirements established pursuant to
28 subsection a. of this section.

29 c. (1) A student shall be eligible for a grant under the program for
30 up to five semesters, unless the student is enrolled in a program regularly
31 requiring at least six semesters for completion, in which case the
32 authority shall permit up to six semesters of eligibility.

33 (2) A student enrolled in a three plus one degree program shall be
34 eligible for a grant under the program for up to six semesters.

35 (3) Semesters for which a student is enrolled in at least six credits
36 but less than 12 credits shall be counted as one-half of a full-time
37 semester.

38 d. A student may be eligible for a grant under the program during
39 a fall ²[,] or² spring ²[,] or summer ² semester in an academic year.

40 e. If a student, the student's family, or a county college deems that
41 the authority made an unfair determination of eligibility, an appeal may
42 be filed with the authority within 60 days of initial notification of
43 eligibility or ineligibility.

44 f. The county college which a student attends shall notify the
45 student of the student's eligibility for the program and the amount of the
46 grant.

1 4. a. A grant distributed to an eligible student under the
2 Community College Opportunity Grant Program shall cover the
3 remaining cost of tuition and approved educational fees, which is not
4 covered by State, federal, or any other need-based grant or merit
5 scholarship, for up to 18 credits in any semester. The full amount of
6 State, federal, and institutional need-based grant or merit
7 scholarships received by an eligible student shall be applied to the
8 amount of tuition and approved educational fees charged to an
9 eligible student. The remaining balance of tuition and approved
10 educational fees shall be covered by a grant under the program.

11 b. A full award under the program to a student at a county
12 college shall be equal to the student's full cost of approved tuition
13 and approved educational fees, subject to the prior application of all
14 other State, federal, and institutional need-based grants and merit
15 scholarships against those costs, for up to 18 credits in any semester,
16 for an eligible student for a full-time semester in an associate's
17 degree, certificate, or three plus one degree program. For an eligible
18 student enrolled in at least six credits but less than 12 credits in an
19 associate's degree, certificate, or three plus one degree program, a
20 grant under the program shall be pro-rated from the full-time
21 approved tuition and approved educational fees based on the number
22 of credits for which that student is enrolled.

23 c. The authority shall, for each county college, annually
24 establish a maximum individual grant amount awarded under the
25 program. The maximum individual grant amount for each county
26 college shall not increase by more than three percent over the prior
27 year.

28

29 5. a. The Legislature shall annually appropriate to the Office of
30 the Secretary of Higher Education such funds as may be necessary
31 for Student Success Incentive funding to provide capacity-building
32 grants to each county college to support the goals of the Community
33 College Opportunity Grant Program. The Secretary of Higher
34 Education shall distribute funding made available pursuant to this
35 section to county colleges for outreach, recruitment, and promoting
36 the success of county college students. The secretary shall establish
37 the purposes for which a county college may use a grant received
38 pursuant to this section, which shall include, but not be limited to:

39 (1) establishing mentorship programs;

40 (2) hosting events to assist students and families in completing
41 financial aid applications; and

42 (3) addressing students' material hardships, such as lack of access
43 to food, medical care, housing, child care, and transportation.

44 b. The secretary shall distribute the funding made available
45 pursuant to this section. ¹The secretary may retain up to five percent
46 of the funding for grant administration activities designed to increase
47 the effectiveness of the program.¹ Fifty percent of the ¹remaining¹
48 appropriation shall be distributed equally among all of the county

1 colleges, while the ~~1~~¹~~remaining~~ other¹ fifty percent of the
2 ¹~~remaining~~ appropriation shall be distributed based on the total
3 number of students at each county college who received awards under
4 the program during the previous academic year.

5
6 6. The authority shall adopt in accordance with the
7 “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et
8 seq.), rules and regulations as may be necessary to implement the
9 provisions of sections 1 through 4 of this act. The Office of the
10 Secretary of Higher Education shall adopt in accordance with the
11 “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et
12 seq.), rules and regulations as may be necessary to implement the
13 provisions of section 5 of this act.

14
15 7. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to
16 the first full academic year following the date of enactment.

17
18
19
20

21 _____
22 Establishes Community College Opportunity Grant Program in
23 Higher Education Student Assistance Authority to provide last-dollar
24 financial aid grants to county college students and Student Success
Incentive funding to county colleges.

ASSEMBLY, No. 4410

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JULY 16, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman LOUIS D. GREENWALD

District 6 (Burlington and Camden)

Assemblywoman MILA M. JASEY

District 27 (Essex and Morris)

Assemblyman DANIEL R. BENSON

District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblymen Moen, Giblin, Zwicker, Assemblywomen Reynolds-Jackson and Murphy

SYNOPSIS

Establishes Community College Opportunity Grant Program in Higher Education Student Assistance Authority to provide last-dollar financial aid grants to county college students and Student Success Incentive funding to county colleges.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 10/8/2020)

1 AN ACT concerning financial aid for county college students and
2 supplementing chapter 71B of Title 18A of the New Jersey
3 Statutes.

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
6 *of New Jersey:*

7
8 1. As used in this act:

9 “Annual adjusted gross income” means:

10 a. for a dependent student, the annual adjusted gross income of
11 the student’s parent or legal guardian, as reported on the student’s
12 Free Application for Federal Student Aid or other financial aid
13 form; and

14 b. for an independent student, the annual adjusted gross income
15 of the student and, if applicable, the spouse of the student, as
16 reported on the student’s Free Application for Federal Student Aid
17 or other financial aid form.

18 “Approved educational fees” means general education fees,
19 registration fees, facility fees, technology fees, laboratory fees,
20 student service and activity fees, and program and course fees,
21 including fees associated with coursework in nursing, culinary, and
22 other career and technical education programs as determined by the
23 Higher Education Student Assistance Authority in consultation with
24 the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education.

25 “Authority” means the Higher Education Student Assistance
26 Authority established pursuant to N.J.S.18A:71A-3.

27 “Home county college” means the county college that serves a
28 student’s county of residence.

29 “Out-of-county college” means a county college that is outside
30 of a student’s county of residence.

31 “Program” means the Community College Opportunity Grant
32 Program created pursuant to section 2 of this act.

33 “Three plus one degree program” means a baccalaureate degree
34 program created pursuant to section 1 of P.L.2018, c.144
35 (C.18A:3B-78).

36
37 2. There is hereby created the Community College Opportunity
38 Grant Program. The purpose of the program shall be to provide
39 financial aid grants to eligible county college students, to cover the
40 costs of tuition and approved educational fees that are not already
41 covered by any other State, federal, and institutional need-based
42 grants or merit scholarships and to provide county colleges with
43 Student Success Incentive funding for outreach and student success
44 initiatives. The financial aid grants distributed to eligible students
45 under the program shall be administered by the Higher Education
46 Student Assistance Authority, while the Student Success Incentive
47 funding distributed to county colleges under the program shall be
48 administered by the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education.

1 3. a. To be eligible to receive a financial aid grant under the
2 Community College Opportunity Grant Program, a student shall:

3 (1) be a legal resident of the State in accordance with the
4 provisions of N.J.S.18A:71B-2 or be eligible for student financial
5 aid pursuant to P.L.2018, c.12 (C.18A:71B-2.1);

6 (2) be enrolled in at least six credits at a county college
7 established pursuant to chapter 64A of Title 18A of the New Jersey
8 Statutes;

9 (3) be enrolled at the county college that serves the student's
10 county of residence, except that a student may receive a grant under
11 the program to cover the remaining costs of tuition and approved
12 educational fees, charged at the in-district rate for the home county
13 college, to attend a county college outside of the county of
14 residence;

15 (4) not have an annual adjusted gross income that is negative;

16 (5) have an annual adjusted gross income between \$0 and
17 \$65,000, except that the authority, in consultation with the Office of
18 the Secretary of Higher Education and the New Jersey Council of
19 County Colleges, may annually establish maximum annual adjusted
20 gross income eligibility limits of no less than \$65,000;

21 (6) have applied for all other available forms of State, federal,
22 and institutional need-based grants and merit scholarships and, in
23 accordance with annually established deadline dates, have
24 completed and submitted a Free Application for Federal Student
25 Aid, other financial aid form, or, as applicable, a State financial aid
26 form as required by the authority pursuant to subsection b. of
27 section 1 of P.L.2018, c.12 (C.18A:71B-2.1);

28 (7) not owe a refund on a grant or scholarship previously
29 received from a State or federal program through any institution or
30 be in default on any loan made under any State or federal student
31 loan program at any institution, unless the student makes
32 arrangements with the authority to repay the debt; and

33 (8) be in good academic standing and meet the minimum
34 standards for academic performance and satisfactory academic
35 progress as defined by the county college which the student is
36 attending.

37 A county college shall not impose additional eligibility
38 requirements for the program, other than the requirements set forth
39 in this subsection.

40 b. A grant under the program may be renewed for a student
41 who:

42 (1) annually completes and submits a Free Application for
43 Federal Student Aid, other financial aid form, or, as applicable, a
44 State financial aid form as required by the authority pursuant to
45 subsection b. of section 1 of P.L.2018, c.12 (C.18A:71B-2.1);

46 (2) meets the standards for academic performance and
47 satisfactory academic progress, as defined by the county college
48 which the student is attending, to determine eligibility for federal

1 student aid programs under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of
2 1965 or, in the semester immediately prior to receiving an award,
3 attains a minimum level of academic success as determined by the
4 authority; and

5 (3) maintains all eligibility requirements established pursuant to
6 subsection a. of this section.

7 c. (1) A student shall be eligible for a grant under the program
8 for up to five semesters, unless the student is enrolled in a program
9 regularly requiring at least six semesters for completion, in which
10 case the authority shall permit up to six semesters of eligibility.

11 (2) A student enrolled in a three plus one degree program shall
12 be eligible for a grant under the program for up to six semesters.

13 (3) Semesters for which a student is enrolled in at least six
14 credits but less than 12 credits shall be counted as one-half of a full-
15 time semester.

16 d. A student may be eligible for a grant under the program
17 during a fall, spring, or summer semester in an academic year.

18 e. If a student, the student's family, or a county college deems
19 that the authority made an unfair determination of eligibility, an
20 appeal may be filed with the authority within 60 days of initial
21 notification of eligibility or ineligibility.

22 f. The county college which a student attends shall notify the
23 student of the student's eligibility for the program and the amount
24 of the grant.

25
26 4. a. A grant distributed to an eligible student under the
27 Community College Opportunity Grant Program shall cover the
28 remaining cost of tuition and approved educational fees, which is
29 not covered by State, federal, or any other need-based grant or merit
30 scholarship, for up to 18 credits in any semester. The full amount
31 of State, federal, and institutional need-based grant or merit
32 scholarships received by an eligible student shall be applied to the
33 amount of tuition and approved educational fees charged to an
34 eligible student. The remaining balance of tuition and approved
35 educational fees shall be covered by a grant under the program.

36 b. A full award under the program to a student at a county
37 college shall be equal to the student's full cost of approved tuition
38 and approved educational fees, subject to the prior application of all
39 other State, federal, and institutional need-based grants and merit
40 scholarships against those costs, for up to 18 credits in any
41 semester, for an eligible student for a full-time semester in an
42 associate's degree, certificate, or three plus one degree program.
43 For an eligible student enrolled in at least six credits but less than
44 12 credits in an associate's degree, certificate, or three plus one
45 degree program, a grant under the program shall be pro-rated from
46 the full-time approved tuition and approved educational fees based
47 on the number of credits for which that student is enrolled.

1 c. The authority shall, for each county college, annually
2 establish a maximum individual grant amount awarded under the
3 program. The maximum individual grant amount for each county
4 college shall not increase by more than three percent over the prior
5 year.

6
7 5. a. The Legislature shall annually appropriate to the Office
8 of the Secretary of Higher Education such funds as may be
9 necessary for Student Success Incentive funding to provide
10 capacity-building grants to each county college to support the goals
11 of the Community College Opportunity Grant Program. The
12 Secretary of Higher Education shall distribute funding made
13 available pursuant to this section to county colleges for outreach,
14 recruitment, and promoting the success of county college students.
15 The secretary shall establish the purposes for which a county
16 college may use a grant received pursuant to this section, which
17 shall include, but not be limited to:

18 (1) establishing mentorship programs;

19 (2) hosting events to assist students and families in completing
20 financial aid applications; and

21 (3) addressing students' material hardships, such as lack of
22 access to food, medical care, housing, child care, and transportation.

23 b. The secretary shall distribute the funding made available
24 pursuant to this section. Fifty percent of the appropriation shall be
25 distributed equally among all of the county colleges, while the
26 remaining fifty percent of the appropriation shall be distributed
27 based on the total number of students at each county college who
28 received awards under the program during the previous academic
29 year.

30
31 6. The authority shall adopt in accordance with the
32 "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et
33 seq.), rules and regulations as may be necessary to implement the
34 provisions of sections 1 through 4 of this act. The Office of the
35 Secretary of Higher Education shall adopt in accordance with the
36 "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et
37 seq.), rules and regulations as may be necessary to implement the
38 provisions of section 5 of this act.

39
40 7. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to
41 the first full academic year following the date of enactment.

42
43

44 STATEMENT

45

46 This bill establishes the Community College Opportunity Grant
47 (CCOG) Program, which is to be administered by the Higher
48 Education Student Assistance Authority. The purpose of the

1 program is to provide last-dollar grants to eligible county college
2 students, to pay for the remaining costs of tuition and approved
3 educational fees that are not already covered by any other State,
4 federal, and institutional need-based grants and merit scholarships
5 for which a grant recipient is eligible. The program would also
6 provide county colleges with Student Success Incentive funding for
7 outreach and student success initiatives.

8 To be eligible for grants under the CCOG program, a student is
9 required to: be a legal resident of the State or, for undocumented
10 students, be eligible for student financial aid pursuant to
11 P.L.2018, c.12 (C.18A:71B-2.1); be enrolled in at least six credits
12 at a county college in the State; be enrolled at the county college
13 that serves the student's county of residence, although a student
14 attending an out-of-county college may receive a grant to cover
15 tuition and approved educational fees charged at the in-district rate
16 for the student's home county college; have an annual adjusted
17 gross income between \$0 and \$65,000, except that the authority, in
18 consultation with the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education
19 and the New Jersey Council of County Colleges, may annually
20 establish maximum annual adjusted gross income eligibility limits
21 of no less than \$65,000; have applied for all other available forms
22 of State, federal, and institutional need-based grants and merit
23 scholarships and completed and submitted a financial aid form; not
24 owe a refund on a grant or scholarship previously received from a
25 State or federal program through any institution or be in default on
26 any loan made under any State or federal student loan program at
27 any institution, unless the student makes arrangements with the
28 authority to repay the debt; and be in good academic standing and
29 meet the minimum standards for academic performance and
30 satisfactory academic progress as defined by the county college
31 which the student is attending.

32 A student will be eligible for a grant under the program for up to
33 five semesters, unless the student is enrolled in a program regularly
34 requiring at least six semesters for completion, in which case the
35 authority will permit up to six semesters of eligibility. A student
36 enrolled in a three plus one degree program will be eligible for a
37 grant under the program for up to six semesters.

38 The bill also directs the Legislature to annually appropriate funds
39 to the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) to
40 provide Student Success Incentive funding to each county college
41 for outreach and student success initiatives and to support the goals
42 of the Community College Opportunity Grant Program. The
43 funding may be used to fund initiatives, such as establishing
44 mentorship programs; hosting events to assist students and families
45 in completing financial aid applications; and addressing students'
46 material hardships, such as lack of access to food, medical care,
47 housing, child care, and transportation.

ASSEMBLY HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 4410

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: OCTOBER 8, 2020

The Assembly Higher Education Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 4410 with committee amendments.

As amended, this bill establishes the Community College Opportunity Grant (CCOG) Program, which is to be administered by the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority. The purpose of the program is to provide last-dollar grants to eligible county college students, to pay for the remaining costs of tuition and approved educational fees, subject to the limit of funds appropriated or otherwise made available for the program, that are not already covered by any other State, federal, and institutional need-based grants and merit scholarships for which a grant recipient is eligible. The program would also provide county colleges with Student Success Incentive funding for outreach and student success initiatives.

To be eligible for grants under the CCOG program, a student is required to: be a legal resident of the State or, for undocumented students, be eligible for student financial aid pursuant to P.L.2018, c.12 (C.18A:71B-2.1); be enrolled in at least six credits at a county college in the State; be enrolled at the county college that serves the student's county of residence, although a student attending an out-of-county college may receive a grant to cover tuition and approved educational fees charged at the in-district rate for the student's home county college; have an annual adjusted gross income between \$0 and \$65,000, except that the authority, in consultation with the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education and the New Jersey Council of County Colleges, may annually establish maximum annual adjusted gross income eligibility limits of no less than \$65,000; have applied for all other available forms of State, federal, and institutional need-based grants and merit scholarships and completed and submitted a financial aid form; not owe a refund on a grant or scholarship previously received from a State or federal program through any institution or be in default on any loan made under any State or federal student loan program at any institution, unless the student makes arrangements with the authority to repay the debt; and be in good academic standing and meet the minimum standards for academic performance and

satisfactory academic progress as defined by the county college which the student is attending.

A student will be eligible for a grant under the program for up to five semesters, unless the student is enrolled in a program regularly requiring at least six semesters for completion, in which case the authority will permit up to six semesters of eligibility. A student enrolled in a three plus one degree program will be eligible for a grant under the program for up to six semesters.

The bill also directs the Legislature to annually appropriate funds to the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) to provide Student Success Incentive funding to each county college for outreach and student success initiatives and to support the goals of the Community College Opportunity Grant Program. The funding may be used to fund initiatives, such as establishing mentorship programs; hosting events to assist students and families in completing financial aid applications; specify that and addressing students' material hardships, such as lack of access to food, medical care, housing, child care, and transportation.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to:

1. clarify that grants awarded under the Community College Opportunity Grant Program to cover the costs of approved educational fees are subject to the limit of funds appropriated or otherwise made available for the program; and

2. specify how the program funding will be distributed. As amended, the Secretary of Higher Education is authorized to retain up to five percent of the funding for grant administration activities designed to increase the effectiveness of the program. Fifty percent of the remaining appropriation will be distributed equally among all of the county colleges, while the other fifty percent of the remaining appropriation will be distributed based on the total number of students at each county college who received awards under the program during the previous academic year.

ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 4410

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: NOVEMBER 12, 2020

The Assembly Appropriations Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 4410 (1R).

This bill establishes the Community College Opportunity Grant (CCOG) Program, which is to be administered by the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority. The purpose of the program is to provide last-dollar grants to eligible county college students, to pay for the remaining costs of tuition and approved educational fees, subject to the limit of funds appropriated or otherwise made available for the program, that are not already covered by any other State, federal, and institutional need-based grants and merit scholarships for which a grant recipient is eligible. The program would also provide county colleges with Student Success Incentive funding for outreach and student success initiatives.

To be eligible for grants under the CCOG program, a student is required to: be a legal resident of the State or, for undocumented students, be eligible for student financial aid pursuant to P.L.2018, c.12 (C.18A:71B-2.1); be enrolled in at least six credits at a county college in the State; be enrolled at the county college that serves the student's county of residence, although a student attending an out-of-county college may receive a grant to cover tuition and approved educational fees charged at the in-district rate for the student's home county college; have an annual adjusted gross income between \$0 and \$65,000, except that the authority, in consultation with the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education and the New Jersey Council of County Colleges, may annually establish maximum annual adjusted gross income eligibility limits of no less than \$65,000; have applied for all other available forms of State, federal, and institutional need-based grants and merit scholarships and completed and submitted a financial aid form; not owe a refund on a grant or scholarship previously received from a State or federal program through any institution or be in default on any loan made under any State or federal student loan program at any institution, unless the student makes arrangements with the authority to repay the debt; and be in good academic standing and meet the minimum standards for academic

performance and satisfactory academic progress as defined by the county college which the student is attending.

A student will be eligible for a grant under the program for up to five semesters, unless the student is enrolled in a program regularly requiring at least six semesters for completion, in which case the authority will permit up to six semesters of eligibility. A student enrolled in a three plus one degree program will be eligible for a grant under the program for up to six semesters.

The bill also directs the Legislature to annually appropriate funds to the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) to provide Student Success Incentive funding to each county college for outreach and student success initiatives and to support the goals of the CCOG program. The funding may be used to fund initiatives, such as establishing mentorship programs; hosting events to assist students and families in completing financial aid applications; specify that and addressing students' material hardships, such as lack of access to food, medical care, housing, child care, and transportation.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendment provides that a student may be eligible for a grant under the program only during the fall or spring semester of an academic year. The bill originally permitted eligibility during the fall, spring, or summer semester of an academic year.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) estimates that the bill will result in indeterminate annual State cost increases and annual increases in revenues for county colleges beginning in FY 2022 related to the establishment of the CCOG Program.

The CCOG Program was first enacted through budget language in the FY 2019 Appropriations Act and received a \$25 million appropriation in both FY 2019 and FY 2020. The appropriation to the program for the FY 2020 three-month extension period totaled \$10 million and the appropriation in the FY 2021 Appropriations Act for the nine-month period was also \$10 million, making the total for that 12-month period \$20 million.

The OLS estimates an indeterminate increase in the annual revenues of county colleges and a corresponding indeterminate annual cost increase to the State for the Student Success Incentive. In FY 2019 and FY 2020, \$5 million of the appropriations for the CCOG Program was allocated for capacity building grants to county colleges. The Student Success Incentive funding is likely to be issued in a similar manner as capacity building grants have been issued to county colleges.

SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[Second Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 4410

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: DECEMBER 15, 2020

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 4410 (2R), with committee amendments.

As amended, this bill establishes the Community College Opportunity Grant (CCOG) Program, which is to be administered by the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority. The purpose of the program is to provide last-dollar grants to eligible county college students, to pay for the remaining costs of tuition and approved educational fees, subject to the limit of funds appropriated or otherwise made available for the program, that are not already covered by any other State, federal, and institutional need-based grants and merit scholarships for which a grant recipient is eligible. The program would also provide county colleges with Student Success Incentive funding for outreach and student success initiatives.

To be eligible for financial aid grants under the CCOG program, a student is required to: be a legal resident of the State or, for undocumented students, be eligible for student financial aid pursuant to P.L.2018, c.12 (C.18A:71B-2.1); be enrolled in at least six credits at a county college in the State; be enrolled at the county college that serves the student's county of residence, although a student attending an out-of-county college may receive a grant to cover tuition and approved educational fees charged at the in-district rate for the county college that the student is attending; have an annual adjusted gross income between \$0 and \$65,000, except that the authority, in consultation with the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education and the New Jersey Council of County Colleges, may annually establish maximum annual adjusted gross income eligibility limits of no less than \$65,000; have applied for all other available forms of State, federal, and institutional need-based grants and merit scholarships and completed and submitted a financial aid form; not owe a refund on a grant or scholarship previously received from a State or federal program through any institution or be in default on any loan made under any State or federal student

loan program at any institution, unless the student makes arrangements with the authority to repay the debt; and be in good academic standing and meet the minimum standards for academic performance and satisfactory academic progress as defined by the county college which the student is attending.

A student may be eligible for a grant under the CCOG program during a fall or spring semester in an academic year.

A student will be eligible for a grant under the program for up to five semesters, unless the student is enrolled in a program regularly requiring at least six semesters for completion, in which case the authority will permit up to six semesters of eligibility. A student enrolled in a three plus one degree program will be eligible for a grant under the program for up to six semesters.

The bill also directs the Legislature to annually appropriate funds to the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) to provide Student Success Incentive funding to each county college for outreach and student success initiatives and to support the goals of the Community College Opportunity Grant Program. The funding may be used to fund initiatives, such as establishing mentorship programs; hosting events to assist students and families in completing financial aid applications; and addressing students' material hardships, such as lack of access to food, medical care, housing, child care, and transportation.

As amended and reported by the committee, this bill is identical to Senate Bill No. 2743 (2R), which was also amended and reported by the committee on this same date.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to:

- remove the bill's definition of "home county college"; and
- provide that a Community College Opportunity Grant (CCOG) financial aid award for an eligible student attending an out-of-county college will be computed based on the amount of tuition and approved educational fees charged by the county college that the student is attending. The amendments provide that the amount of a grant would not exceed the amount of tuition and approved educational fees actually charged to the student.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) estimates that the bill will result in indeterminate annual State cost increases and annual increases in revenues for county colleges beginning in FY 2022 related to the establishment of the Community College Opportunity Grant (CCOG) program.

The CCOG program was first enacted through budget language in the FY 2019 Appropriations Act and received a \$20 million appropriation for financial aid grants in both FY 2019 and FY 2020.

The appropriation to the program for the FY 2020 three-month extension totaled \$10 million and the appropriation in the FY 2021 Appropriations Act for the nine-month period was also \$10 million, making the total funding for that 12-month period \$20 million.

The OLS estimates an indeterminate increase in the annual revenues of county colleges and a corresponding indeterminate annual cost increase to the State for the Student Success Incentive. In FY 2019 and FY 2020, \$5 million of the total \$25 million appropriations for the CCOG program was allocated for capacity building grants to county colleges. The Student Success Incentive funding is likely to be issued in a similar manner as capacity building grants have been issued to county colleges.

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 4410

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

DATED: NOVEMBER 10, 2020

SUMMARY

- Synopsis:** Establishes Community College Opportunity Grant Program in Higher Education Student Assistance Authority to provide last-dollar financial aid grants to county college students and Student Success Incentive funding to county colleges.
- Type of Impact:** Annual increase in State costs; annual increase in revenues for county colleges
- Agencies Affected:** Higher Education Student Assistance Authority; County Colleges

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Fiscal Impact	<u>FY 2022 & Thereafter</u>
State Cost Increase	Indeterminate
Revenue Increase – County Colleges	Indeterminate

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) estimates that the bill will result in indeterminate annual State cost increases and annual increases in revenues for county colleges beginning in FY 2022 related to the establishment of the Community College Opportunity Grant (CCOG) program.
- The CCOG program was first enacted through budget language in the FY 2019 Appropriations Act and received a \$25 million appropriation in both FY 2019 and FY 2020. The appropriation to the program for the FY 2020 three-month extension totaled \$10 million and the appropriation in the FY 2021 Appropriations Act for the nine-month period was also \$10 million, making the total funding for that 12-month period \$20 million.
- The OLS estimates an indeterminate increase in the annual revenues of county colleges and a corresponding indeterminate annual cost increase to the State for the Student Success Incentive. In FY 2019 and FY 2020, \$5 million of the appropriations for the CCOG program was allocated for capacity building grants to county colleges. The Student Success Incentive funding is likely to be issued in a similar manner as capacity building grants have been issued to county colleges.

BILL DESCRIPTION

This bill establishes the CCOG Program, which is to be administered by the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority. The program provides last-dollar grants to eligible county college students, to pay for the remaining costs of tuition and approved educational fees, subject to the limit of funds appropriated or otherwise made available for the program, that are not already covered by any other State, federal, and institutional need-based grants and merit scholarships for which a grant recipient is eligible. The program would also provide county colleges with Student Success Incentive funding for outreach and student success initiatives.

To be eligible for grants under the CCOG program, a student is required to: be a legal resident of the State or, for undocumented students, be eligible for student financial aid; be enrolled in at least six credits at a county college in the State; be enrolled at the county college that serves the student's county of residence, although a student attending an out-of-county college may receive a grant to cover tuition and approved educational fees charged at the in-district rate for the student's home county college; have an annual adjusted gross income between \$0 and \$65,000, except that the authority, in consultation with the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education and the New Jersey Council of County Colleges, may annually establish maximum annual adjusted gross income eligibility limits of no less than \$65,000; have applied for all other available forms of State, federal, and institutional need-based grants and merit scholarships and completed and submitted a financial aid form; not owe a refund on a grant or scholarship previously received from a State or federal program through any institution or be in default on any loan made under any State or federal student loan program at any institution, unless the student makes arrangements with the authority to repay the debt; and be in good academic standing and meet the minimum standards for academic performance and satisfactory academic progress as defined by the county college which the student is attending.

A student will be eligible for a grant under the program for up to five semesters, unless the student is enrolled in a program regularly requiring at least six semesters for completion, in which case the authority will permit up to six semesters of eligibility. A student enrolled in a three plus one degree program will be eligible for a grant under the program for up to six semesters.

The bill also directs the Legislature to annually appropriate funds to the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education to provide Student Success Incentive funding to each county college for outreach and student success initiatives and to support the goals of the Community College Opportunity Grant Program. The funding may be used to fund initiatives, such as establishing mentorship programs; hosting events to assist students and families in completing financial aid applications; addressing students' material hardships, such as lack of access to food, medical care, housing, child care, and transportation.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The OLS estimates that the bill will result in indeterminate annual State cost increases and annual increases in revenues for county colleges beginning in FY 2022 related to the establishment of the CCOG program.

The program was first enacted through budget language in the FY 2019 Appropriations Act and received a \$25 million appropriation in both FY 2019 and FY 2020. The appropriation to the program for the FY 2020 three-month extension totaled \$10 million and the appropriation in the FY 2021 Appropriations Act for the nine-month period was also \$10 million, making the total funding for that 12-month period \$20 million. Although FY 2020 included an adjusted appropriation of \$25 million for the program, only \$19.7 million was expended with a total of 15,387 semester awards. According to the authority's responses to the OLS discussion points for the FY 2020 budget, the increased awareness of CCOG awards led to increased applications for aid and newly-found eligibility for both Tuition Aid Grants and federal Pell grants. The CCOG program awards last-dollar grants, so increased eligibility for other forms of financial aid reduced the level of unmet need.

With the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is unclear how the demand for CCOG awards will be impacted. If fewer eligible students enroll at county colleges, expenditures for CCOG awards to students may fall below FY 2020 levels. On the other hand, CCOG award expenditures may increase if financial need grows among a greater number of county college students due to ongoing economic conditions. Considering that last-dollar CCOG grants cover the remaining costs of tuition and approved educational fees after first accounting for students' other federal, state, or institutional grants and scholarships, CCOG costs would increase if the cohort of eligible students has, on average, a higher level of unmet need.

The OLS also estimates an indeterminate increase in the annual revenues of county colleges and a corresponding indeterminate annual cost increase to the State for the Student Success Incentive. In the FY 2019 and FY 2020 appropriations acts, \$5 million of the appropriation for the CCOG program was allocated to capacity building grants for county colleges. The OLS believes that the capacity building activities undertaken by county colleges in FY 2019 and FY 2020 will be similar in nature to those that may be initiated with Student Success Incentive funding under the bill. No allocation for capacity building grants was included in the FY 2020 three-month extension or the FY 2021 Appropriations Act.

Section: Education
Analyst: William Owens
Associate Fiscal Analyst
Approved: Thomas Koenig
Assistant Legislative Budget and Finance Officer

This legislative fiscal estimate has been produced by the Office of Legislative Services due to the failure of the Executive Branch to respond to our request for a fiscal note.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67 (C.52:13B-6 et seq.).

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE

[Second Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 4410

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

DATED: NOVEMBER 19, 2020

SUMMARY

- Synopsis:** Establishes Community College Opportunity Grant Program in Higher Education Student Assistance Authority to provide last-dollar financial aid grants to county college students and Student Success Incentive funding to county colleges.
- Type of Impact:** Annual increase in State costs; annual increase in revenues for county colleges
- Agencies Affected:** Higher Education Student Assistance Authority; County Colleges

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Fiscal Impact	<u>FY 2022 & Thereafter</u>
State Cost Increase	Indeterminate
Revenue Increase – County Colleges	Indeterminate

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) estimates that the bill will result in indeterminate annual State cost increases and annual increases in revenues for county colleges beginning in FY 2022 related to the establishment of the Community College Opportunity Grant (CCOG) program.
- The CCOG program was first enacted through budget language in the FY 2019 Appropriations Act and received a \$25 million appropriation in both FY 2019 and FY 2020. The appropriation to the program for the FY 2020 three-month extension totaled \$10 million and the appropriation in the FY 2021 Appropriations Act for the nine-month period was also \$10 million, making the total funding for that 12-month period \$20 million.
- The OLS estimates an indeterminate increase in the annual revenues of county colleges and a corresponding indeterminate annual cost increase to the State for the Student Success Incentive. In FY 2019 and FY 2020, \$5 million of the appropriations for the CCOG program was allocated for capacity building grants to county colleges. The Student Success Incentive funding is likely to be issued in a similar manner as capacity building grants have been issued to county colleges.

BILL DESCRIPTION

This bill establishes the CCOG Program, which is to be administered by the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority. The program provides last-dollar grants to eligible county college students, to pay for the remaining costs of tuition and approved educational fees, subject to the limit of funds appropriated or otherwise made available for the program, that are not already covered by any other State, federal, and institutional need-based grants and merit scholarships for which a grant recipient is eligible. The program would also provide county colleges with Student Success Incentive funding for outreach and student success initiatives.

To be eligible for grants under the CCOG program, a student is required to: be a legal resident of the State or, for undocumented students, be eligible for student financial aid; be enrolled in at least six credits at a county college in the State; be enrolled at the county college that serves the student's county of residence, although a student attending an out-of-county college may receive a grant to cover tuition and approved educational fees charged at the in-district rate for the student's home county college; have an annual adjusted gross income between \$0 and \$65,000, except that the authority, in consultation with the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education and the New Jersey Council of County Colleges, may annually establish maximum annual adjusted gross income eligibility limits of no less than \$65,000; have applied for all other available forms of State, federal, and institutional need-based grants and merit scholarships and completed and submitted a financial aid form; not owe a refund on a grant or scholarship previously received from a State or federal program through any institution or be in default on any loan made under any State or federal student loan program at any institution, unless the student makes arrangements with the authority to repay the debt; and be in good academic standing and meet the minimum standards for academic performance and satisfactory academic progress as defined by the county college which the student is attending.

A student will be eligible for a grant under the program for up to five semesters, unless the student is enrolled in a program regularly requiring at least six semesters for completion, in which case the authority will permit up to six semesters of eligibility. A student enrolled in a three plus one degree program will be eligible for a grant under the program for up to six semesters.

The bill also directs the Legislature to annually appropriate funds to the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education to provide Student Success Incentive funding to each county college for outreach and student success initiatives and to support the goals of the Community College Opportunity Grant Program. The funding may be used to fund initiatives, such as establishing mentorship programs; hosting events to assist students and families in completing financial aid applications; addressing students' material hardships, such as lack of access to food, medical care, housing, child care, and transportation.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The OLS estimates that the bill will result in indeterminate annual State cost increases and annual increases in revenues for county colleges beginning in FY 2022 related to the establishment of the CCOG program.

The program was first enacted through budget language in the FY 2019 Appropriations Act and received a \$25 million appropriation in both FY 2019 and FY 2020. The appropriation to the program for the FY 2020 three-month extension totaled \$10 million and the appropriation in the FY 2021 Appropriations Act for the nine-month period was also \$10 million, making the total funding for that 12-month period \$20 million. Although FY 2020 included an adjusted appropriation of \$25 million for the program, only \$19.7 million was expended with a total of 15,387 semester awards. According to the authority's responses to the OLS discussion points for the FY 2020 budget, the increased awareness of CCOG awards led to increased applications for aid and newly-found eligibility for both Tuition Aid Grants and federal Pell grants. The CCOG program awards last-dollar grants, so increased eligibility for other forms of financial aid reduced the level of unmet need.

With the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is unclear how the demand for CCOG awards will be impacted. If fewer eligible students enroll at county colleges, expenditures for CCOG awards to students may fall below FY 2020 levels. On the other hand, CCOG award expenditures may increase if financial need grows among a greater number of county college students due to ongoing economic conditions. Considering that last-dollar CCOG grants cover the remaining costs of tuition and approved educational fees after first accounting for students' other federal, state, or institutional grants and scholarships, CCOG costs would increase if the cohort of eligible students has, on average, a higher level of unmet need.

The OLS also estimates an indeterminate increase in the annual revenues of county colleges and a corresponding indeterminate annual cost increase to the State for the Student Success Incentive. In the FY 2019 and FY 2020 appropriations acts, \$5 million of the appropriation for the CCOG program was allocated to capacity building grants for county colleges. The OLS believes that the capacity building activities undertaken by county colleges in FY 2019 and FY 2020 will be similar in nature to those that may be initiated with Student Success Incentive funding under the bill.

Section: Education

Analyst: Christopher Myles
Associate Fiscal Analyst

Approved: Thomas Koenig
Assistant Legislative Budget and Finance Officer

This legislative fiscal estimate has been produced by the Office of Legislative Services due to the failure of the Executive Branch to respond to our request for a fiscal note.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67 (C.52:13B-6 et seq.).

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE

[Third Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 4410

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

DATED: DECEMBER 22, 2020

SUMMARY

- Synopsis:** Establishes Community College Opportunity Grant Program in Higher Education Student Assistance Authority to provide last-dollar financial aid grants to county college students and Student Success Incentive funding to county colleges.
- Type of Impact:** Annual increase in State costs; annual increase in revenues for county colleges.
- Agencies Affected:** Higher Education Student Assistance Authority; County Colleges

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Fiscal Impact	FY 2022 & Thereafter
State Cost Increase	Indeterminate
Revenue Increase – County Colleges	Indeterminate

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) estimates that the bill will result in indeterminate annual State cost increases and annual increases in revenues for county colleges beginning in FY 2022 related to the establishment of the Community College Opportunity Grant (CCOG) program.
- The CCOG program was first enacted through budget language in the FY 2019 appropriations act. The program received a \$20 million appropriation for financial aid grants in FY 2019 and a \$25 million appropriation for financial aid grants in FY 2020. The appropriation to the program for the FY 2020 three-month extension totaled \$10 million and the appropriation in the FY 2021 appropriations act for the nine-month period was also \$10 million, making the total financial aid funding for that 12-month period \$20 million.
- The OLS estimates an indeterminate increase in the annual revenues of county colleges and a corresponding indeterminate annual cost increase to the State for Student Success Incentive funding. In both FY 2019 and FY 2020, \$5 million of the total appropriations for the CCOG program was allocated for capacity building grants to county colleges. The Student Success

Incentive funding is likely to be issued in a similar manner as capacity building grants have been issued to county colleges.

BILL DESCRIPTION

This bill establishes the CCOG Program, which is to be administered by the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority. The purpose of the program is to provide last-dollar grants to eligible county college students, to pay for the remaining costs of tuition and approved educational fees, subject to the limit of funds appropriated or otherwise made available for the program, that are not already covered by any other State, federal, and institutional need-based grants and merit scholarships for which a grant recipient is eligible.

To be eligible for financial aid grants under the CCOG program, a student is required to: be a legal resident of the State or, for undocumented students, be eligible for student financial aid; be enrolled in at least six credits at a county college in the State; be enrolled at the county college that serves the student's county of residence, although a student attending an out-of-county college may receive a grant to cover tuition and approved educational fees charged at the in-district rate for the county college that the student is attending; have an annual adjusted gross income between \$0 and \$65,000, except that the authority, in consultation with the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education and the New Jersey Council of County Colleges, may annually establish maximum annual adjusted gross income eligibility limits of no less than \$65,000; have applied for all other available forms of State, federal, and institutional need-based grants and merit scholarships and completed and submitted a financial aid form; not owe a refund on a grant or scholarship previously received from a State or federal program through any institution or be in default on any loan made under any State or federal student loan program at any institution, unless the student makes arrangements with the authority to repay the debt; and be in good academic standing and meet the minimum standards for academic performance and satisfactory academic progress as defined by the county college which the student is attending.

A student may be eligible for a grant under the CCOG program during a fall or spring semester in an academic year.

A student will be eligible for a grant under the program for up to five semesters, unless the student is enrolled in a program regularly requiring at least six semesters for completion, in which case the authority will permit up to six semesters of eligibility. A student enrolled in a three plus one degree program will be eligible for a grant under the program for up to six semesters.

The bill also directs the Legislature to annually appropriate funds to the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education to provide Student Success Incentive funding to each county college for outreach and student success initiatives and to support the goals of the Community College Opportunity Grant Program. The funding may be used to fund initiatives, such as establishing mentorship programs; hosting events to assist students and families in completing financial aid applications; and addressing students' material hardships, such as lack of access to food, medical care, housing, child care, and transportation.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The OLS estimates that the bill will result in indeterminate annual State cost increases and annual increases in revenues for county colleges beginning in FY 2022 related to the establishment of the CCOG program.

The program was first enacted through budget language in the FY 2019 appropriations act. The program received a \$20 million appropriation for financial aid grants FY 2019 and a \$25 million appropriation for financial aid grants in FY 2020. The appropriation to the program for the FY 2020 three-month extension totaled \$10 million and the appropriation in the FY 2021 appropriations act for the nine-month period was also \$10 million, making the total financial aid funding for that 12-month period \$20 million. In FY 2019, approximately \$6 million of the \$20 million dedicated to financial aid grants was expended for eligible students during only the spring 2019 semester. Meanwhile, in the 12-month FY 2020 period, approximately \$19.7 million was expended for eligible students during the fall 2019 and spring 2020 semesters. According to the authority's responses to the OLS discussion point questions for the FY 2020 budget, the increased awareness of CCOG awards led to increased applications for aid and newly-found eligibility for both Tuition Aid Grants and federal Pell grants. The CCOG program awards last-dollar grants, so increased eligibility for other forms of financial aid reduced the level of unmet need among students eligible under the CCOG program.

With the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is unclear how the demand for CCOG awards will be impacted. If fewer eligible students enroll at county colleges, expenditures for CCOG awards to students may fall below FY 2020 levels. On the other hand, CCOG award expenditures may increase if financial need grows among a greater number of county college students due to ongoing economic conditions. Considering that last-dollar CCOG grants cover the remaining costs of tuition and approved educational fees after first accounting for students' other federal, State, or institutional grants and scholarships, CCOG costs would increase if the cohort of eligible students has, on average, a higher level of unmet need.

The OLS also estimates an indeterminate increase in the annual revenues of county colleges and a corresponding indeterminate annual cost increase to the State for Student Success Incentive funding. In both the FY 2019 and FY 2020 appropriations acts, \$5 million of the total appropriations for the CCOG program was allocated to capacity building grants for county colleges. The combined 12-month FY 2021 fiscal period included a separate \$5 million line item for Student Success Incentive Funding. The OLS believes that the capacity building activities undertaken by county colleges in FY 2019 and FY 2020 will be similar in nature to those that may be initiated with Student Success Incentive funding.

Section: Education
Analyst: Christopher Myles
Associate Fiscal Analyst
Approved: Thomas Koenig
Assistant Legislative Budget and Finance Officer

This legislative fiscal estimate has been produced by the Office of Legislative Services due to the failure of the Executive Branch to respond to our request for a fiscal note.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67 (C.52:13B-6 et seq.).

SENATE, No. 2743

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JULY 28, 2020

Sponsored by:

Senator SANDRA B. CUNNINGHAM
District 31 (Hudson)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senators Singleton, Diegnan, Ruiz and Pou

SYNOPSIS

Establishes Community College Opportunity Grant Program in Higher Education Student Assistance Authority to provide last-dollar financial aid grants to county college students and Student Success Incentive funding to county colleges.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 10/19/2020)

1 AN ACT concerning financial aid for county college students and
2 supplementing chapter 71B of Title 18A of the New Jersey
3 Statutes.

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
6 *of New Jersey:*

7
8 1. As used in this act:

9 “Annual adjusted gross income” means:

10 a. for a dependent student, the annual adjusted gross income of
11 the student’s parent or legal guardian, as reported on the student’s
12 Free Application for Federal Student Aid or other financial aid
13 form; and

14 b. for an independent student, the annual adjusted gross income
15 of the student and, if applicable, the spouse of the student, as
16 reported on the student’s Free Application for Federal Student Aid
17 or other financial aid form.

18 “Approved educational fees” means general education fees,
19 registration fees, facility fees, technology fees, laboratory fees,
20 student service and activity fees, and program and course fees,
21 including fees associated with coursework in nursing, culinary, and
22 other career and technical education programs as determined by the
23 Higher Education Student Assistance Authority in consultation with
24 the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education.

25 “Authority” means the Higher Education Student Assistance
26 Authority established pursuant to N.J.S.18A:71A-3.

27 “Home county college” means the county college that serves a
28 student’s county of residence.

29 “Out-of-county college” means a county college that is outside
30 of a student’s county of residence.

31 “Program” means the Community College Opportunity Grant
32 Program created pursuant to section 2 of this act.

33 “Three plus one degree program” means a baccalaureate degree
34 program created pursuant to section 1 of P.L.2018, c.144
35 (C.18A:3B-78).

36
37 2. There is hereby created the Community College Opportunity
38 Grant Program. The purpose of the program shall be to provide
39 financial aid grants to eligible county college students, to cover the
40 costs of tuition and approved educational fees that are not already
41 covered by any other State, federal, and institutional need-based
42 grants or merit scholarships and to provide county colleges with
43 Student Success Incentive funding for outreach and student success
44 initiatives. The financial aid grants distributed to eligible students
45 under the program shall be administered by the Higher Education
46 Student Assistance Authority, while the Student Success Incentive
47 funding distributed to county colleges under the program shall be
48 administered by the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education.

1 3. a. To be eligible to receive a financial aid grant under the
2 Community College Opportunity Grant Program, a student shall:

3 (1) be a legal resident of the State in accordance with the
4 provisions of N.J.S.18A:71B-2 or be eligible for student financial
5 aid pursuant to P.L.2018, c.12 (C.18A:71B-2.1);

6 (2) be enrolled in at least six credits at a county college
7 established pursuant to chapter 64A of Title 18A of the New Jersey
8 Statutes;

9 (3) be enrolled at the county college that serves the student's
10 county of residence, except that a student may receive a grant under
11 the program to cover the remaining costs of tuition and approved
12 educational fees, charged at the in-district rate for the home county
13 college, to attend a county college outside of the county of
14 residence;

15 (4) not have an annual adjusted gross income that is negative;

16 (5) have an annual adjusted gross income between \$0 and
17 \$65,000, except that the authority, in consultation with the Office of
18 the Secretary of Higher Education and the New Jersey Council of
19 County Colleges, may annually establish maximum annual adjusted
20 gross income eligibility limits of no less than \$65,000;

21 (6) have applied for all other available forms of State, federal,
22 and institutional need-based grants and merit scholarships and, in
23 accordance with annually established deadline dates, have
24 completed and submitted a Free Application for Federal Student
25 Aid, other financial aid form, or, as applicable, a State financial aid
26 form as required by the authority pursuant to subsection b. of
27 section 1 of P.L.2018, c.12 (C.18A:71B-2.1);

28 (7) not owe a refund on a grant or scholarship previously
29 received from a State or federal program through any institution or
30 be in default on any loan made under any State or federal student
31 loan program at any institution, unless the student makes
32 arrangements with the authority to repay the debt; and

33 (8) be in good academic standing and meet the minimum
34 standards for academic performance and satisfactory academic
35 progress as defined by the county college which the student is
36 attending.

37 A county college shall not impose additional eligibility
38 requirements for the program, other than the requirements set forth
39 in this subsection.

40 b. A grant under the program may be renewed for a student
41 who:

42 (1) annually completes and submits a Free Application for
43 Federal Student Aid, other financial aid form, or, as applicable, a
44 State financial aid form as required by the authority pursuant to
45 subsection b. of section 1 of P.L.2018, c.12 (C.18A:71B-2.1);

46 (2) meets the standards for academic performance and
47 satisfactory academic progress, as defined by the county college
48 which the student is attending, to determine eligibility for federal

S2743 CUNNINGHAM

1 student aid programs under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of
2 1965 or, in the semester immediately prior to receiving an award,
3 attains a minimum level of academic success as determined by the
4 authority; and

5 (3) maintains all eligibility requirements established pursuant to
6 subsection a. of this section.

7 c. (1) A student shall be eligible for a grant under the program
8 for up to five semesters, unless the student is enrolled in a program
9 regularly requiring at least six semesters for completion, in which
10 case the authority shall permit up to six semesters of eligibility.

11 (2) A student enrolled in a three plus one degree program shall
12 be eligible for a grant under the program for up to six semesters.

13 (3) Semesters for which a student is enrolled in at least six
14 credits but less than 12 credits shall be counted as one-half of a full-
15 time semester.

16 d. A student may be eligible for a grant under the program
17 during a fall, spring, or summer semester in an academic year.

18 e. If a student, the student's family, or a county college deems
19 that the authority made an unfair determination of eligibility, an
20 appeal may be filed with the authority within 60 days of initial
21 notification of eligibility or ineligibility.

22 f. The county college which a student attends shall notify the
23 student of the student's eligibility for the program and the amount
24 of the grant.

25
26 4. a. A grant distributed to an eligible student under the
27 Community College Opportunity Grant Program shall cover the
28 remaining cost of tuition and approved educational fees, which is
29 not covered by State, federal, or any other need-based grant or merit
30 scholarship, for up to 18 credits in any semester. The full amount
31 of State, federal, and institutional need-based grant or merit
32 scholarships received by an eligible student shall be applied to the
33 amount of tuition and approved educational fees charged to an
34 eligible student. The remaining balance of tuition and approved
35 educational fees shall be covered by a grant under the program.

36 b. A full award under the program to a student at a county
37 college shall be equal to the student's full cost of approved tuition
38 and approved educational fees, subject to the prior application of all
39 other State, federal, and institutional need-based grants and merit
40 scholarships against those costs, for up to 18 credits in any
41 semester, for an eligible student for a full-time semester in an
42 associate's degree, certificate, or three plus one degree program.
43 For an eligible student enrolled in at least six credits but less than
44 12 credits in an associate's degree, certificate, or three plus one
45 degree program, a grant under the program shall be pro-rated from
46 the full-time approved tuition and approved educational fees based
47 on the number of credits for which that student is enrolled.

S2743 CUNNINGHAM

1 c. The authority shall, for each county college, annually
2 establish a maximum individual grant amount awarded under the
3 program. The maximum individual grant amount for each county
4 college shall not increase by more than three percent over the prior
5 year.

6
7 5. a. The Legislature shall annually appropriate to the Office
8 of the Secretary of Higher Education such funds as may be
9 necessary for Student Success Incentive funding to provide
10 capacity-building grants to each county college to support the goals
11 of the Community College Opportunity Grant Program. The
12 Secretary of Higher Education shall distribute funding made
13 available pursuant to this section to county colleges for outreach,
14 recruitment, and promoting the success of county college students.
15 The secretary shall establish the purposes for which a county
16 college may use a grant received pursuant to this section, which
17 shall include, but not be limited to:

18 (1) establishing mentorship programs;

19 (2) hosting events to assist students and families in completing
20 financial aid applications; and

21 (3) addressing students' material hardships, such as lack of
22 access to food, medical care, housing, child care, and transportation.

23 b. The secretary shall distribute the funding made available
24 pursuant to this section. Fifty percent of the appropriation shall be
25 distributed equally among all of the county colleges, while the
26 remaining fifty percent of the appropriation shall be distributed
27 based on the total number of students at each county college who
28 received awards under the program during the previous academic
29 year.

30
31 6. The authority shall adopt in accordance with the
32 "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et
33 seq.), rules and regulations as may be necessary to implement the
34 provisions of sections 1 through 4 of this act. The Office of the
35 Secretary of Higher Education shall adopt in accordance with the
36 "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et
37 seq.), rules and regulations as may be necessary to implement the
38 provisions of section 5 of this act.

39
40 7. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to
41 the first full academic year following the date of enactment.

42
43

44 **STATEMENT**

45

46 This bill establishes the Community College Opportunity Grant
47 (CCOG) Program, which is to be administered by the Higher
48 Education Student Assistance Authority. The purpose of the

S2743 CUNNINGHAM

1 program is to provide last-dollar grants to eligible county college
2 students, to pay for the remaining costs of tuition and approved
3 educational fees that are not already covered by any other State,
4 federal, and institutional need-based grants and merit scholarships
5 for which a grant recipient is eligible. The program would also
6 provide county colleges with Student Success Incentive funding for
7 outreach and student success initiatives.

8 To be eligible for grants under the CCOG program, a student is
9 required to: be a legal resident of the State or, for undocumented
10 students, be eligible for student financial aid pursuant to
11 P.L.2018, c.12 (C.18A:71B-2.1); be enrolled in at least six credits
12 at a county college in the State; be enrolled at the county college
13 that serves the student's county of residence, although a student
14 attending an out-of-county college may receive a grant to cover
15 tuition and approved educational fees charged at the in-district rate
16 for the student's home county college; have an annual adjusted
17 gross income between \$0 and \$65,000, except that the authority, in
18 consultation with the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education
19 and the New Jersey Council of County Colleges, may annually
20 establish maximum annual adjusted gross income eligibility limits
21 of no less than \$65,000; have applied for all other available forms
22 of State, federal, and institutional need-based grants and merit
23 scholarships and completed and submitted a financial aid form; not
24 owe a refund on a grant or scholarship previously received from a
25 State or federal program through any institution or be in default on
26 any loan made under any State or federal student loan program at
27 any institution, unless the student makes arrangements with the
28 authority to repay the debt; and be in good academic standing and
29 meet the minimum standards for academic performance and
30 satisfactory academic progress as defined by the county college
31 which the student is attending.

32 A student will be eligible for a grant under the program for up to
33 five semesters, unless the student is enrolled in a program regularly
34 requiring at least six semesters for completion, in which case the
35 authority will permit up to six semesters of eligibility. A student
36 enrolled in a three plus one degree program will be eligible for a
37 grant under the program for up to six semesters.

38 The bill also directs the Legislature to annually appropriate funds
39 to the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) to
40 provide Student Success Incentive funding to each county college
41 for outreach and student success initiatives and to support the goals
42 of the Community College Opportunity Grant Program. The
43 funding may be used to fund initiatives, such as establishing
44 mentorship programs; hosting events to assist students and families
45 in completing financial aid applications; and addressing students'
46 material hardships, such as lack of access to food, medical care,
47 housing, child care, and transportation.

SENATE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 2743

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: OCTOBER 19, 2020

The Senate Higher Education Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 2743 with committee amendments.

As amended, this bill establishes the Community College Opportunity Grant (CCOG) Program, which is to be administered by the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority. The purpose of the program is to provide last-dollar grants to eligible county college students, to pay for the remaining costs of tuition and approved educational fees, subject to the limit of funds appropriated or otherwise made available for the program, that are not already covered by any other State, federal, and institutional need-based grants and merit scholarships for which a grant recipient is eligible. The program would also provide county colleges with Student Success Incentive funding for outreach and student success initiatives.

To be eligible for grants under the CCOG program, a student is required to: be a legal resident of the State or, for undocumented students, be eligible for student financial aid pursuant to P.L.2018, c.12 (C.18A:71B-2.1); be enrolled in at least six credits at a county college in the State; be enrolled at the county college that serves the student's county of residence, although a student attending an out-of-county college may receive a grant to cover tuition and approved educational fees charged at the in-district rate for the student's home county college; have an annual adjusted gross income between \$0 and \$65,000, except that the authority, in consultation with the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education and the New Jersey Council of County Colleges, may annually establish maximum annual adjusted gross income eligibility limits of no less than \$65,000; have applied for all other available forms of State, federal, and institutional need-based grants and merit scholarships and completed and submitted a financial aid form; not owe a refund on a grant or scholarship previously received from a State or federal program through any institution or be in default on any loan made under any State or federal student loan program at any institution, unless the student makes arrangements with the authority to repay the debt; and be in good academic standing and

meet the minimum standards for academic performance and satisfactory academic progress as defined by the county college which the student is attending.

A student will be eligible for a grant under the program for up to five semesters, unless the student is enrolled in a program regularly requiring at least six semesters for completion, in which case the authority will permit up to six semesters of eligibility. A student enrolled in a three plus one degree program will be eligible for a grant under the program for up to six semesters.

The bill also directs the Legislature to annually appropriate funds to the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) to provide Student Success Incentive funding to each county college for outreach and student success initiatives and to support the goals of the Community College Opportunity Grant Program. The funding may be used to fund initiatives, such as establishing mentorship programs; hosting events to assist students and families in completing financial aid applications; specify that and addressing students' material hardships, such as lack of access to food, medical care, housing, child care, and transportation.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to:

1. clarify that grants awarded under the Community College Opportunity Grant Program to cover the costs of approved educational fees are subject to the limit of funds appropriated or otherwise made available for the program; and

2. specify how the program funding will be distributed. As amended, the Secretary of Higher Education is authorized to retain up to five percent of the funding for grant administration activities designed to increase the effectiveness of the program. Fifty percent of the remaining appropriation will be distributed equally among all of the county colleges, while the other fifty percent of the remaining appropriation will be distributed based on the total number of students at each county college who received awards under the program during the previous academic year.

As reported by the committee, this bill is identical to Assembly Bill No. 4410(1R).

SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 2743

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: DECEMBER 15, 2020

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 2743 (1R), with committee amendments.

As amended, this bill establishes the Community College Opportunity Grant (CCOG) Program, which is to be administered by the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority. The purpose of the program is to provide last-dollar grants to eligible county college students, to pay for the remaining costs of tuition and approved educational fees, subject to the limit of funds appropriated or otherwise made available for the program, that are not already covered by any other State, federal, and institutional need-based grants and merit scholarships for which a grant recipient is eligible. The program would also provide county colleges with Student Success Incentive funding for outreach and student success initiatives.

To be eligible for financial aid grants under the CCOG program, a student is required to: be a legal resident of the State or, for undocumented students, be eligible for student financial aid pursuant to P.L.2018, c.12 (C.18A:71B-2.1); be enrolled in at least six credits at a county college in the State; be enrolled at the county college that serves the student's county of residence, although a student attending an out-of-county college may receive a grant to cover tuition and approved educational fees charged at the in-district rate for the county college that the student is attending; have an annual adjusted gross income between \$0 and \$65,000, except that the authority, in consultation with the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education and the New Jersey Council of County Colleges, may annually establish maximum annual adjusted gross income eligibility limits of no less than \$65,000; have applied for all other available forms of State, federal, and institutional need-based grants and merit scholarships and completed and submitted a financial aid form; not owe a refund on a grant or scholarship previously received from a State or federal program through any institution or be in default on any loan made under any State or federal student

loan program at any institution, unless the student makes arrangements with the authority to repay the debt; and be in good academic standing and meet the minimum standards for academic performance and satisfactory academic progress as defined by the county college which the student is attending.

A student may be eligible for a grant under the CCOG program during a fall or spring semester in an academic year.

A student will be eligible for a grant under the program for up to five semesters, unless the student is enrolled in a program regularly requiring at least six semesters for completion, in which case the authority will permit up to six semesters of eligibility. A student enrolled in a three plus one degree program will be eligible for a grant under the program for up to six semesters.

The bill also directs the Legislature to annually appropriate funds to the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) to provide Student Success Incentive funding to each county college for outreach and student success initiatives and to support the goals of the Community College Opportunity Grant Program. The funding may be used to fund initiatives, such as establishing mentorship programs; hosting events to assist students and families in completing financial aid applications; and addressing students' material hardships, such as lack of access to food, medical care, housing, child care, and transportation.

As amended and reported by the committee, this bill is identical to Assembly Bill No. 4410 (3R), which was also amended and reported by the committee on this same date.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to:

- remove the bill's definition of "home county college";
- provide that a Community College Opportunity Grant (CCOG) financial aid award for an eligible student attending an out-of-county college will be computed based on the amount of tuition and approved educational fees charged by the county college that the student is attending. The amendments provide that the amount of a grant would not exceed the amount of tuition and approved educational fees actually charged to the student; and
- remove student eligibility for a CCOG financial aid award during a summer semester.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) estimates that the bill will result in indeterminate annual State cost increases and annual increases in revenues for county colleges beginning in FY 2022 related to the establishment of the Community College Opportunity Grant (CCOG) program.

The CCOG program was first enacted through budget language in the FY 2019 Appropriations Act and received a \$20 million appropriation for financial aid grants in both FY 2019 and FY 2020. The appropriation to the program for the FY 2020 three-month extension totaled \$10 million and the appropriation in the FY 2021 Appropriations Act for the nine-month period was also \$10 million, making the total funding for that 12-month period \$20 million.

The OLS estimates an indeterminate increase in the annual revenues of county colleges and a corresponding indeterminate annual cost increase to the State for the Student Success Incentive. In FY 2019 and FY 2020, \$5 million of the total \$25 million appropriations for the CCOG program was allocated for capacity building grants to county colleges. The Student Success Incentive funding is likely to be issued in a similar manner as capacity building grants have been issued to county colleges.

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE

[Second Reprint]

SENATE, No. 2743

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

DATED: DECEMBER 22, 2020

SUMMARY

- Synopsis:** Establishes Community College Opportunity Grant Program in Higher Education Student Assistance Authority to provide last-dollar financial aid grants to county college students and Student Success Incentive funding to county colleges.
- Type of Impact:** Annual increase in State costs; annual increase in revenues for county colleges.
- Agencies Affected:** Higher Education Student Assistance Authority; County Colleges

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Fiscal Impact	FY 2022 & Thereafter
State Cost Increase	Indeterminate
Revenue Increase – County Colleges	Indeterminate

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) estimates that the bill will result in indeterminate annual State cost increases and annual increases in revenues for county colleges beginning in FY 2022 related to the establishment of the Community College Opportunity Grant (CCOG) program.
- The CCOG program was first enacted through budget language in the FY 2019 appropriations act. The program received a \$20 million appropriation for financial aid grants in FY 2019 and a \$25 million appropriation for financial aid grants in FY 2020. The appropriation to the program for the FY 2020 three-month extension totaled \$10 million and the appropriation in the FY 2021 appropriations act for the nine-month period was also \$10 million, making the total financial aid funding for that 12-month period \$20 million.
- The OLS estimates an indeterminate increase in the annual revenues of county colleges and a corresponding indeterminate annual cost increase to the State for Student Success Incentive funding. In both FY 2019 and FY 2020, \$5 million of the total appropriations for the CCOG program was allocated for capacity building grants to county colleges. The Student Success

Incentive funding is likely to be issued in a similar manner as capacity building grants have been issued to county colleges.

BILL DESCRIPTION

This bill establishes the CCOG Program, which is to be administered by the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority. The purpose of the program is to provide last-dollar grants to eligible county college students, to pay for the remaining costs of tuition and approved educational fees, subject to the limit of funds appropriated or otherwise made available for the program, that are not already covered by any other State, federal, and institutional need-based grants and merit scholarships for which a grant recipient is eligible.

To be eligible for financial aid grants under the CCOG program, a student is required to: be a legal resident of the State or, for undocumented students, be eligible for student financial aid; be enrolled in at least six credits at a county college in the State; be enrolled at the county college that serves the student's county of residence, although a student attending an out-of-county college may receive a grant to cover tuition and approved educational fees charged at the in-district rate for the county college that the student is attending; have an annual adjusted gross income between \$0 and \$65,000, except that the authority, in consultation with the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education and the New Jersey Council of County Colleges, may annually establish maximum annual adjusted gross income eligibility limits of no less than \$65,000; have applied for all other available forms of State, federal, and institutional need-based grants and merit scholarships and completed and submitted a financial aid form; not owe a refund on a grant or scholarship previously received from a State or federal program through any institution or be in default on any loan made under any State or federal student loan program at any institution, unless the student makes arrangements with the authority to repay the debt; and be in good academic standing and meet the minimum standards for academic performance and satisfactory academic progress as defined by the county college which the student is attending.

A student may be eligible for a grant under the CCOG program during a fall or spring semester in an academic year.

A student will be eligible for a grant under the program for up to five semesters, unless the student is enrolled in a program regularly requiring at least six semesters for completion, in which case the authority will permit up to six semesters of eligibility. A student enrolled in a three plus one degree program will be eligible for a grant under the program for up to six semesters.

The bill also directs the Legislature to annually appropriate funds to the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education to provide Student Success Incentive funding to each county college for outreach and student success initiatives and to support the goals of the Community College Opportunity Grant Program. The funding may be used to fund initiatives, such as establishing mentorship programs; hosting events to assist students and families in completing financial aid applications; and addressing students' material hardships, such as lack of access to food, medical care, housing, child care, and transportation.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The OLS estimates that the bill will result in indeterminate annual State cost increases and annual increases in revenues for county colleges beginning in FY 2022 related to the establishment of the CCOG program.

The program was first enacted through budget language in the FY 2019 appropriations act. The program received a \$20 million appropriation for financial aid grants FY 2019 and a \$25 million appropriation for financial aid grants in FY 2020. The appropriation to the program for the FY 2020 three-month extension totaled \$10 million and the appropriation in the FY 2021 appropriations act for the nine-month period was also \$10 million, making the total financial aid funding for that 12-month period \$20 million. In FY 2019, approximately \$6 million of the \$20 million dedicated to financial aid grants was expended for eligible students during only the spring 2019 semester. Meanwhile, in the 12-month FY 2020 period, approximately \$19.7 million was expended for eligible students during the fall 2019 and spring 2020 semesters. According to the authority's responses to the OLS discussion point questions for the FY 2020 budget, the increased awareness of CCOG awards led to increased applications for aid and newly-found eligibility for both Tuition Aid Grants and federal Pell grants. The CCOG program awards last-dollar grants, so increased eligibility for other forms of financial aid reduced the level of unmet need among students eligible under the CCOG program.

With the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is unclear how the demand for CCOG awards will be impacted. If fewer eligible students enroll at county colleges, expenditures for CCOG awards to students may fall below FY 2020 levels. On the other hand, CCOG award expenditures may increase if financial need grows among a greater number of county college students due to ongoing economic conditions. Considering that last-dollar CCOG grants cover the remaining costs of tuition and approved educational fees after first accounting for students' other federal, State, or institutional grants and scholarships, CCOG costs would increase if the cohort of eligible students has, on average, a higher level of unmet need.

The OLS also estimates an indeterminate increase in the annual revenues of county colleges and a corresponding indeterminate annual cost increase to the State for Student Success Incentive funding. In both the FY 2019 and FY 2020 appropriations acts, \$5 million of the total appropriations for the CCOG program was allocated to capacity building grants for county colleges. The combined 12-month FY 2021 fiscal period included a separate \$5 million line item for Student Success Incentive Funding. The OLS believes that the capacity building activities undertaken by county colleges in FY 2019 and FY 2020 will be similar in nature to those that may be initiated with Student Success Incentive funding.

Section: Education
Analyst: Christopher Myles
Associate Fiscal Analyst
Approved: Thomas Koenig
Assistant Legislative Budget and Finance Officer

This legislative fiscal estimate has been produced by the Office of Legislative Services due to the failure of the Executive Branch to respond to our request for a fiscal note.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67 (C.52:13B-6 et seq.).

Governor Murphy Signs Landmark Legislation to Permanently Establish the Community College Opportunity Grant Program

02/26/2021

New Law Will Continue to Guarantee Tuition-Free Community College Education to More than 50,000 New Jersey Students Each Academic Year

JERSEY CITY – Fulfilling his promise to make tuition-free community college a reality, Governor Phil Murphy today signed A4410, permanently establishing the Community College Opportunity Grant Program (CCOG), which will allow qualified students to attend any New Jersey community college without tuition or educational fees.

“For far too long, higher education has been out of reach for countless New Jerseyans due to its high cost,” **said Governor Murphy**. “Today’s bill signing underscores our continued commitment to college affordability, ensuring that our young people and working adults have the opportunity to earn post-secondary degrees and advance their promising careers.”

“Today represents a huge win for college affordability and a transformative moment in our state’s history. In the years to come, CCOG will continue offering thousands more eligible students equitable access to a college education for free,” **said Dr. Brian Bridges, Secretary of Higher Education**. “To emerge stronger and fairer from the COVID-19 pandemic, we are investing in future generations today by expanding affordable options to ensure students’ lifelong success.”

“New Jersey now sends a clear message: county college is tuition-free for students with family incomes of \$65,000 or below,” **said David Socolow, Executive Director of the New Jersey Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA)**. “Governor Murphy has enabled HESAA to back up that promise by filling students’ remaining financial aid gaps with more than 25,000 Community College Opportunity Grants since the spring 2019 semester. The impact of this commitment reaches still further, by making an up-front, tuition-free price guarantee that enables tens of thousands of additional students to focus on their postsecondary education without concern about paying the tuition sticker price. Many students can now consider enrolling in college with full confidence that their entire county college tuition will be covered by the State of New Jersey. By raising awareness that college is more affordable, we can encourage more students to pursue courses of study that will enhance their lives and careers here in the Garden State.”

CCOG, which will be administered by the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA), will provide last-dollar grants to eligible county college students for those tuition costs and fees not already covered by any other State, federal, and institutional need-based grants and merit scholarships. Students with adjusted gross incomes of \$65,000 or less will be eligible to receive this financial grant for a total of five (5) semesters. This legislation also directs the Legislature to appropriate funding for the “Student Success Incentive” to the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, for distribution to each county college. This funding will be used to support outreach and student success initiatives to further the goals of the CCOG grant program.

Since taking office, the Murphy Administration has taken meaningful steps toward tuition-free community college. The CCOG grant program was first enacted through budget language in the Fiscal Year 2019 appropriations act. The grant program received a \$20 million appropriation in Fiscal Year 2019 and a \$25 million appropriation in Fiscal Year 2020. The appropriation to the grant program for the Fiscal Year 2020

three-month budget extension totaled \$10 million and the appropriation in the Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations act for the nine-month period was also \$10 million, making the total financial aid funding for that 12-month period \$20 million. For the current Fiscal Year budget of 2022, the Governor has proposed \$27 million to support the CCOG grant program.

“County colleges have long played a vital role in educating students from working-class families across New Jersey. By providing ‘last dollar’ financial aid to eligible students, we will make sure they have every opportunity to graduate without having to take on burdensome student loans,” **said Senator Sandra Cunningham, chair of the Senate Higher Education Committee.** “I am grateful to see this meaningful initiative codified into law, ensuring it will continue to help low-income New Jerseyans for many years to come.”

“The Community College Opportunity Grant Program has provided valuable opportunities for low-income students and working parents to advance their education and expand their career opportunities. It represents a monumental step towards a more equitable higher education landscape by ensuring an associate’s degree is accessible to all New Jersey residents regardless of their economic status,” **said Senator Teresa Ruiz, chair of the Senate Education Committee.** “Education is our greatest equalizer and today, by codifying this program into state law, we have assured that it will be available to all who need it in the years to come.”

“The rising costs of college tuition, books and fees are often out of reach for many college students and their families,” **said Assembly Majority Leader Louis Greenwald, Assemblywoman Mila Jasey, and Assemblyman Daniel Benson, in a joint statement.** “A college degree has become the standard for entry into many industries and workplaces, but too many students must take on enormous debt in pursuit of higher education and a successful career. The Community College Opportunity Grant closes the gap for middle class and low-income students, helping to balance costs not covered by State and federal aid. It makes college more affordable and accessible for students who may not otherwise be able to further their education. We’ve already seen this program’s outstanding potential to open doors for students across New Jersey. We are proud this new State law will benefit future generations.”

“CCOG is an important investment in our students and in our state’s economic future. The program has the potential of transforming the lives of a generation of New Jersey residents,” **said Assemblyman Nicholas A. Chiaravalloti.** “This tuition scholarship program supports our most vulnerable residents, for whom a college education is unaffordable. CCOG not only assists individuals in earning a degree or credential, but also builds a skilled workforce that will close critical skills gaps in our state. As someone who works in higher education, I have seen the incredible benefit of the CCOG program. At Hudson County Community College (HCCC), I am constantly amazed by the perseverance of the students who attend. They come to class every day prepared and ready to learn, and I have found that this has not changed even though we have switched to remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They serve as a daily inspiration. CCOG will help remove a barrier to their success.”

“As a result of this investment, thousands of New Jerseyans are able to embark on career pathways, to prepare for jobs that pay family-supporting wages, and to contribute directly to the state’s economic growth and recovery,” **said Aaron Fichtner, President of New Jersey Council of County Colleges.**

“Our Hudson County Community College family is honored to welcome Governor Murphy to our campus for the signing of Community College Opportunity Grant (CCOG) legislation that will permanently fund this vital financial aid program,” **said Dr. Chris Reber, President of Hudson County Community College (HCCC).** “We thank the Governor, our state and local officials, HCCC Trustees, students, alumni, friends, and colleagues. CCOG is an investment in the people of our communities and their dreams. The program is providing life-changing opportunities for students to acquire postsecondary educational credentials that open doors to fulfilling careers with family-sustaining wages. We are exceedingly grateful to Governor Murphy for his leadership and support for CCOG and New Jersey’s 18 community colleges.”

This Week in NJ: February 26th, 2021

02/26/2021



Governor Murphy Presents Fiscal Year 2022 Budget: Investing in a Stronger, Fairer, and More Resilient Post-Pandemic New Jersey

Governor Phil Murphy delivered his fourth annual budget address on Tuesday, outlining a responsible spending proposal for Fiscal Year 2022 (FY2022) that includes critical investments to help New Jersey emerge from the pandemic stronger, fairer, and more resilient, while making a full pension payment for the first time in more than a quarter of a century, providing the highest level of school funding in history, delivering direct tax rebates to over 760,000 middle-class families, and providing \$200 million in relief for small businesses.

"This budget lives up to our stronger and fairer mission," **said Governor Murphy**. "Stronger to come out of the pandemic with an economy that works for every New Jersey family. Fairer to help families and small businesses hit hard and left behind in the pandemic's brutal wake. This budget will continue to stabilize property taxes for hardworking families. This budget will continue the hard work of moving forward – not only from the pandemic – but from years of neglect. Our problems weren't created overnight and, frankly, they won't be fixed overnight. But I know that brighter days lay ahead."

The proposed FY2022 budget makes good on the Governor's promise to public employees by including an additional \$1.6 billion to meet the goal of contributing 100 percent of the Actuarially Determined Contribution (ADC) to New Jersey's pension system a year earlier than initially planned. The proposed \$6.4 billion pension payment, which includes contributions from the State lottery, would mark the first time the State has made a full contribution since FY1996.

The State has been on a 1/10 ramp up plan as it works its way up to meeting the full pension contribution and was initially slated to contribute 90 percent of the full contribution this year. The Governor's decision to make a 100 percent contribution a year early will substantially reduce the State's obligation in the coming years, saving taxpayers \$861 million over the next 30 years. The combined pension contributions by the Murphy Administration in four years will roughly total an unprecedented \$18 billion, which is \$9.4 billion more than the prior Governor contributed over two terms.

The \$44.83 billion spending proposal assumes 2.4 percent growth in total revenue and includes a sizable surplus of \$2.193 billion, just under five percent of budgeted appropriations and dwarfing the average of the previous administration. Revenue projections have improved in part due to record high stock markets, federal stimulus that directly aided individuals and businesses, as well as what economists describe as a K-shaped recession, which has seen middle and high-income households recover more quickly while low-income households have continued to struggle.

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Governor Murphy Signs Historic Adult-Use Cannabis Reform Bills Into Law

Governor Phil Murphy signed historic adult-use cannabis reform bills into law, legalizing and regulating cannabis use and possession for adults 21 years and older (A21 – “The New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory, Enforcement Assistance, and Marketplace Modernization Act”) and decriminalizing marijuana and hashish possession (A1897). The Governor also signed S3454, clarifying marijuana and cannabis use and possession penalties for individuals younger than 21 years old.

“Our current marijuana prohibition laws have failed every test of social justice, which is why for years I’ve strongly supported the legalization of adult-use cannabis. Maintaining a status quo that allows tens of thousands, disproportionately people of color, to be arrested in New Jersey each year for low-level drug offenses is unjust and indefensible,” **said Governor Murphy**. “This November, New Jerseyans voted overwhelmingly in support of creating a well-regulated adult-use cannabis market. Although this process has taken longer than anticipated, I believe it is ending in the right place and will ultimately serve as a national model.



“This legislation will establish an industry that brings equity and economic opportunity to our communities, while establishing minimum standards for safe products and allowing law enforcement to focus their resources on real public safety matters,” **continued Governor Murphy**. “Today, we’re taking a monumental step forward to reduce racial disparities in our criminal justice system, while building a promising new industry and standing on the right side of history. I’d like to thank the Legislature, advocates, faith leaders, and community leaders for their dedicated work and partnership on this critical issue.”

“At long last, New Jersey is turning the page on our previous treatment of marijuana use,” **said Dianna Houenou, incoming Chair of the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Commission (CRC)**. “I am excited to get to work building on the successes of the medical program and standing up the adult-use cannabis industry. It’s an honor to be part of this historic movement in New Jersey.”

“Today, Governor Murphy signed legislation into law that reflects the will of New Jerseyans who made their voices loud and clear last November when they voted to legalize recreational cannabis use for adults,” **said U.S. Senator Robert Menendez**. “As always, the needs of our state will guide my work in the U.S. Senate, and I stand ready to advocate for federal policies that respect and protect the ability of local enterprises and law-abiding citizens to do business in a cannabis marketplace that is transparent, equitable, safe and accountable.”

“The failed War on Drugs has systematically targeted people of color and the poor, disproportionately impacting Black and Brown communities and hurting families in New Jersey and across our nation,” **said U.S Senator Cory Booker**. “Today is a historic day, and I applaud Governor Murphy, the legislature, and the many advocates for racial and social justice whose leadership is ensuring that New Jersey is at the forefront of equitable marijuana legalization policy. I will continue to work with my colleagues in the Senate to end the federal marijuana prohibition so we can finally begin healing the wounds of decades of injustice.”

“This is a historic reform that will have a real-life impact on social justice, law enforcement and the state’s economy,” **said Senate President Steve Sweeney**. “We can now move forward to correct social injustices at the same time that marijuana is made legal for adults. This will launch a new cannabis industry with the potential to create jobs and generate economic activity at a time when it is desperately needed. The

decriminalization law is the most sweeping measure of its kind in the country and is a groundbreaking step in our continued effort to make criminal justice reforms that are fairer and more effective. This will help reduce the racial disparities and social inequities that have long plagued our criminal justice system.”

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Governor Murphy Signs Landmark Legislation to Permanently Establish the Community College Opportunity Grant Program

Fulfilling his promise to make tuition-free community college a reality, Governor Phil Murphy signed A4410, permanently establishing the Community College Opportunity Grant Program (CCOG), which will allow qualified students to attend any New Jersey community college without tuition or educational fees.

“For far too long, higher education has been out of reach for countless New Jerseyans due to its high cost,” **said Governor Murphy**. “Today’s bill signing underscores our continued commitment to college affordability, ensuring that our young people and working adults have the opportunity to earn post-secondary degrees and advance their promising careers.”



“Today represents a huge win for college affordability and a transformative moment in our state’s history. In the years to come, CCOG will continue offering thousands more eligible students equitable access to a college education for free,” **said Dr. Brian Bridges, Secretary of Higher Education**. “To emerge stronger and fairer from the COVID-19 pandemic, we are investing in future generations today by expanding affordable options to ensure students’ lifelong success.”

“New Jersey now sends a clear message: county college is tuition-free for students with family incomes of \$65,000 or below,” **said David Socolow, Executive Director of the New Jersey Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA)**. “Governor Murphy has enabled HESAA to back up that promise by filling students’ remaining financial aid gaps with more than 25,000 Community College Opportunity Grants since the spring 2019 semester. The impact of this commitment reaches still further, by making an up-front, tuition-free price guarantee that enables tens of thousands of additional students to focus on their postsecondary education without concern about paying the tuition sticker price. Many students can now consider enrolling in college with full confidence that their entire county college tuition will be covered by the State of New Jersey. By raising awareness that college is more affordable, we can encourage more students to pursue courses of study that will enhance their lives and careers here in the Garden State.”

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Governor Murphy and Acting Department of Education Commissioner Allen-McMillan Visit Thomas Jefferson Middle School in Fair Lawn to Discuss Historic Pre-K Through 12 Investments in Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Proposal

Governor Phil Murphy and Acting Education Commissioner Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan visited Thomas Jefferson Middle School in Fair Lawn to highlight the \$18.1 billion in pre-K through 12 school aid funding in the Governor’s Fiscal Year 2022 (FY2022) budget proposal.

The proposed FY2022 budget furthers the Governor’s historic commitment to education, with \$578 million in additional K-12 school aid and nearly \$50 million in additional preschool funding. When paired with additional investments in Extraordinary Special Aid and stabilization aid, the FY2022 budget increases school funding by \$700 million. Governor Murphy’s four budgets will have increased direct pre-K through 12 spending statewide by nearly \$1.5 billion. School districts will be able to use State funds in conjunction with federal resources to address COVID-19-related learning loss, stand up mental health programs, train educators, and remediate buildings, among other uses.

“The budget proposal unveiled this week furthers our commitment to ensuring that school districts have the resources they need to the unique needs of their students and educators, an especially critical priority as districts manage challenges caused by COVID-19,” **said Governor Murphy**. “I have long believed that investments in our students are investments in the future of our state, and now more than ever I am proud that our students continue to be a priority.”

“The Governor’s budget will help provide necessary resources to help schools navigate the countless challenges they have faced throughout the global pandemic,” **said Acting Department of Education Commissioner Dr. Allen-McMillan**. “Ultimately, the beneficiaries of our commitment to education will be the students, from the youngest preschoolers to high school graduates.”

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Governor Murphy, Secretary Bridges Announce \$29.5 Million to Support College and University Students Amid COVID-19 Pandemic

Governor Phil Murphy and Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Brian Bridges announced that \$29.5 million in federal funding will be available to New Jersey’s institutions of higher education amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic to support the goals of the [State Plan for Higher Education](#) through a competitive challenge grant and address student food insecurities across college campuses.

About \$28.5 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Education through the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER II) Fund will be awarded to New Jersey’s public and public-mission private institutions that receive state operating aid to implement vetted [best practices](#) that increase college completion, address barriers to student success, and develop sustainable systemic reforms. Another \$1 million will be awarded to public institutions to combat food insecurity among students.

“As we continue to fight the pandemic and look toward recovery, it is critical to provide immediate relief and support for our higher education institutions to meet the challenges brought by COVID-19,” **said Governor Murphy**. “Now more than ever, this necessary funding will provide the financial assistance for our colleges and universities to better serve our students and continue propelling them toward their fullest potentials.”

“The COVID-19 pandemic only intensified the challenges many students already faced in the pursuit of higher education, including college affordability and food insecurity, making our State Plan priorities even more critical,” **said Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Brian Bridges**. “New Jersey’s higher education sector will experience long-term effects from the pandemic. However, we remain committed to ensuring students have equitable access to postsecondary education now and in the future, and are equipped with the supports needed to increase their likelihood of completion. This funding allows us to further that commitment. We look forward to continuing to explore innovative ways to



strengthen higher education supports and carry out our student-centered vision.”

“Colleges are often overlooked as places where you might find students struggling for their next meal, but food insecurity is very real and prevalent on New Jersey college campuses,” **said Speaker Craig Coughlin**. “The Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program will become another tool in our fight against hunger throughout the state. I implore all eligible colleges and universities to apply to receive the assistance they need to help college students facing food insecurity.”

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