

**136A.127 ACHIEVE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.**

Subdivision 1. **Establishment.** The achieve scholarship program is established to provide scholarships to eligible students within the limits of appropriations for the program.

Subd. 2. **Definition; qualifying program.** For the purposes of this section, a "qualifying program" means a rigorous secondary school program of study defined by the Department of Education under agreement with the Secretary of Education for the purposes of determining eligibility for the federal Academic Competitiveness Grant Program under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended.

Subd. 3. **Documentation of qualifying programs.** The student shall request a transcript from the high school. The high school shall provide a transcript to the Office of Higher Education or to the eligible institution in which the student is enrolling, documenting the qualifying program. If the transcript is not sufficient to document a qualifying program, the student may be required to submit further documentation that the office deems sufficient.

Subd. 4. **Student eligibility.** To be eligible to receive a scholarship under this section, in addition to the requirements listed under section 136A.121, a student must:

- (1) submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA);
- (2) take and receive at least a grade of C for courses that comprise a rigorous secondary school program of study in a high school or in a home-school setting under section 120A.22, and graduate from a Minnesota high school;
- (3) have a family adjusted gross income of less than \$75,000 in the last complete calendar year prior to the academic year of postsecondary attendance in which the scholarship is used;
- (4) be a United States citizen or eligible noncitizen, as defined in section 484 of the Higher Education Act, United States Code, title 20, sections 1091 et seq., as amended, and Code of Federal Regulations, title 34, section 668.33;
- (5) be a Minnesota resident, as defined in section 136A.101, subdivision 8; and
- (6) be enrolled for at least three credits per quarter or semester or the equivalent at an eligible institution as defined under section 136A.101, subdivision 4.

Subd. 5. **Administration.** The achieve scholarship program shall be administered by the Minnesota Office of Higher Education. The director shall develop forms and procedures necessary to administer the program.

Subd. 6. **Application.** A student must complete and submit an application for the achieve scholarship.

Subd. 7. **Deadline.** The deadline for the office to accept applications for achieve scholarships is the same as that used for the state grant in section 136A.121, subdivision 13.

Subd. 8. **Documentation of qualifying household income.** Achieve scholarship program applicants must certify on the application that they meet the income eligibility requirement in subdivision 4, clause (3). The Office of Higher Education or the postsecondary institution may request documentation needed to confirm income eligibility.

Subd. 9. **Scholarship awards.** A student may not receive more than \$1,200 in Minnesota achieve scholarships, which must be for enrollment during the four-year availability period described in subdivision 12. The scholarships may be used to pay for qualifying expenses at eligible institutions.

Subd. 10. **Qualifying expenses.** Qualifying expenses are components included under the cost of attendance used for federal student financial aid programs, as defined in section 472 of the Higher Education Act, United States Code, title 20, sections 1091 et seq., as amended.

Subd. 11. **Eligible institutions.** The achieve scholarship may only be used to pay qualifying expenses at an eligible institution as defined under section 136A.101, subdivision 4.

Subd. 12. **Availability of scholarship funds.** A scholarship earned by a student is available for four years immediately following high school graduation. The office must certify to the commissioner of finance by October 1 of each year the amounts to be canceled from scholarship eligibility that have expired.

Subd. 13. **Disbursement of scholarships.** The office shall make two equal payments to a postsecondary institution on behalf of the student. After the student successfully completes the first term of enrollment, the second payment must be made during the student's next term of enrollment at an eligible institution. If the second disbursement is not within the same academic year as the first disbursement, the student must request the second disbursement.

Subd. 14. **Evaluation report.** By January 15 of each odd-numbered year, the Office of Higher Education shall submit a report, to the committees of the legislature with jurisdiction over higher education finance and policy, regarding the success of the program in increasing the enrollment of students in rigorous high school courses, including, at a minimum, the following information:

- (1) the demographics of individuals participating in the program;
- (2) the grades scholarship recipients received for courses in the qualifying program under subdivision 2;
- (3) the number of scholarship recipients who persisted at a postsecondary institution for a second year;

- (4) the high schools attended by the program participants;
  - (5) the postsecondary institutions attended by the program participants;
  - (6) the academic performance of the students after enrolling in a postsecondary institution;
- and
- (7) other information as identified by the director.

**History:** 2007 c 144 art 2 s 24; 2008 c 277 art 1 s 12; 2008 c 298 s 6