



101ST GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2019 and 2020

SB2091

Introduced 2/15/2019, by Sen. Omar Aquino

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

110 ILCS 947/65.105 new
30 ILCS 105/5.891 new

Amends the Higher Education Student Assistance Act. Provides that, beginning with the 2019-2020 academic year, the Illinois Student Assistance Commission must implement and administer a program to award Early Childhood Workforce Free College grants to all eligible child care workers seeking an associate or bachelor's degree from a public institution or a regionally accredited, online-only early childhood education degree program; defines terms. Specifies grant eligibility and renewal requirements. Creates the Early Childhood Workforce Advisory Committee to advise the Commission on all matters relating to the Early Childhood Workforce Free College grant program and on the ways to improve and expand the early childhood workforce in this State. Provides for the membership and support of the Committee and requires the Committee to (i) study and make recommendations to the Commission that are related to the implementation of the Early Childhood Workforce Free College grant program, (ii) conduct an analysis from data received by the Commission to ensure the program is at full utilization, (iii) address access issues to the program, including, but not limited to, geographic, financial, cultural, and workplace settings, and (iv) address ways to expand the early childhood workforce in this State. Amends the State Finance Act to create the Early Childhood Workforce Free College Fund. Effective immediately.

LRB101 10646 AXK 55752 b

FISCAL NOTE ACT
MAY APPLY

A BILL FOR

1 AN ACT concerning education.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The Higher Education Student Assistance Act is
5 amended by adding Section 65.105 as follows:

6 (110 ILCS 947/65.105 new)

7 Sec. 65.105. Early Childhood Workforce Free College grant
8 program.

9 (a) In this Section:

10 "Child care or early childhood education setting" means a
11 facility licensed under the Child Care Act of 1969, a licensed
12 or license-exempt child care provider under Section 9A-11 of
13 the Illinois Public Aid Code, a federal Head Start or Early
14 Head Start program, or a preschool program funded under Section
15 2-3.71 of the School Code.

16 "Child care worker" means an Illinois resident who has been
17 working in any child care or early childhood education setting
18 for at least 2 years or has worked in such a setting within the
19 past 5 years.

20 "Early childhood degree program" means a regionally
21 accredited, online-only degree program through which a child
22 care worker may attain a degree or credential or maintain a
23 classroom role in any child care or early childhood education

1 setting, including a Child Development Associate Credential
2 program or an Early Childhood Education (ECE) degree program.

3 "Public institution" means the University of Illinois,
4 Southern Illinois University, Chicago State University,
5 Eastern Illinois University, Governors State University,
6 Illinois State University, Northeastern Illinois University,
7 Northern Illinois University, Western Illinois University, any
8 public community college in this State, or any other public
9 university, college, or community college now or hereafter
10 established or authorized by the General Assembly.

11 "Student aid" means a scholarships or grant, other than an
12 Early Childhood Workforce Free College grant created under this
13 Section, awarded to a student from any source that does not
14 require repayment. "Student aid" does not include student loans
15 and work-study awards.

16 (b) Beginning with the 2019-2020 academic year, the
17 Commission must implement and administer a program to award
18 Early Childhood Workforce Free College grants to all eligible
19 child care workers seeking an associate or bachelor's degree
20 from a public institution or an early childhood degree program.
21 All of the following terms and conditions shall apply to the
22 program:

23 (1) To be eligible for a grant, a student must (i)
24 possess a high school diploma or a high school equivalency
25 certificate and (ii) be admitted to and enrolled in a
26 public institution or an early childhood degree program.

1 Exceptions to initial enrollment may be made for
2 extenuating circumstances as provided in rules adopted by
3 the Commission.

4 (2) Students applying for a grant must annually
5 complete the Early Childhood Education Workforce Free
6 College grant application. A student who has the capacity
7 to draw federal student aid shall complete the Free
8 Application for Federal Student Aid each academic year in
9 which he or she seeks to receive a grant.

10 (3) To continue to receive a grant, a student must
11 maintain Illinois residency.

12 (4) Each academic year, a grant shall be equal to the
13 cost of tuition and mandatory fees at the public
14 institution or early childhood degree program attended,
15 less all other student aid. Student aid shall be credited
16 first to the student's tuition and mandatory fees. Eligible
17 students who receive student aid exceeding their tuition
18 cost and mandatory fees and demonstrate additional need
19 shall be eligible to receive additional financial support,
20 including, but not limited to, funds for the purchase of
21 required books and supplies, lab fees, and activity fees,
22 through procedures set forth in rules adopted by the
23 Commission. Each public institution or early childhood
24 degree program must annually report to the Commission its
25 undergraduate tuition rate for Illinois residents and the
26 number of its undergraduate students who are Illinois

1 residents.

2 (5) A student is eligible for a grant and any grant
3 renewals until he or she has earned an associate or
4 bachelor's degree.

5 (c) In awarding grants under this Section, the Commission
6 shall, by rule, develop the selection and renewal criteria for
7 students.

8 (d) The Early Childhood Workforce Free College Fund is
9 created as a special fund in the State treasury. The Fund shall
10 consist of money appropriated by the General Assembly and any
11 gifts, bequests, or donations made to the Fund. All money in
12 the Fund shall be used, subject to appropriation, only by the
13 Commission for the purposes of this Section.

14 (e) The Early Childhood Workforce Advisory Committee is
15 created to advise the Commission on all matters related to the
16 Early Childhood Workforce Free College grant program and on the
17 ways to improve and expand the early childhood workforce in
18 this State. The Advisory Committee shall be comprised of all of
19 the following members:

20 (1) One representative each from the Department of
21 Human Services, the Governor's Office of Early Childhood
22 Development, the Illinois Community College Board, and the
23 Board of Higher Education, each of whom shall be selected
24 by his or her respective director and one of whom shall
25 serve as a chairperson, as designated by the Illinois Early
26 Learning Council, and the remaining members shall be ex

1 officio and nonvoting members.

2 (2) Ten members appointed by the Illinois Early
3 Learning Council, with the recommendation of statewide
4 associations and organizations, as follows:

5 (A) one member representing the Illinois Network
6 of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies;

7 (B) one member representing public universities in
8 this State;

9 (C) one member representing the Illinois Head
10 Start Association;

11 (D) one member representing the Department of
12 Human Services' Child Care Assistance Program;

13 (E) one member who is a child care center preschool
14 teacher;

15 (F) one member who is a child care center infant or
16 toddler teacher;

17 (G) one member who is a child care center teacher's
18 assistant;

19 (H) one member who is a home child care provider;

20 (I) one member representing statewide trade or
21 labor unions; and

22 (J) one member representing organizations engaging
23 in advocacy of the early childhood workforce.

24 Appointed members of the Advisory Committee, other than
25 initial appointees, shall serve for a term of 3 years or until
26 a replacement is named. All initial members shall be appointed

1 no later than August 1, 2019. Of the initial appointees, 10
2 members shall serve a term of 2 years and 10 members shall
3 serve a term of 3 years. Any member appointed to fill a vacancy
4 occurring prior to the expiration of the term for which his or
5 her predecessor was appointed shall be appointed for the
6 remainder of that term. The Advisory Committee shall meet at
7 least quarterly and may meet more frequently at the call of the
8 chairperson. A simple majority of those appointed shall
9 constitute a quorum. The affirmative vote of a majority of
10 those present and voting shall be necessary for Advisory
11 Committee action. Members of the Advisory Committee shall
12 receive no compensation for their services, but may be
13 reimbursed for their expenses incurred in performing their
14 duties from funds appropriated to the Commission for that
15 purpose. The Commission must provide administrative and other
16 support to the Advisory Committee.

17 The Advisory Committee shall do all of the following:

18 (1) Study and make recommendations to the Commission
19 that are related to the implementation of the Early
20 Childhood Workforce Free College grant program.

21 (2) Conduct an analysis from data received by the
22 Commission to ensure the program is at full utilization.

23 (3) Address access issues to the program, including,
24 but not limited to, geographic, financial, cultural, and
25 workplace settings.

26 (4) Address ways to expand the early childhood

1 workforce in this State.

2 Section 10. The State Finance Act is amended by adding
3 Section 5.891 as follows:

4 (30 ILCS 105/5.891 new)

5 Sec. 5.891. The Early Childhood Workforce Free College
6 Fund.

7 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon
8 becoming law.