

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 changing Section 62 as follows:

6 (110 ILCS 947/62)

7 Sec. 62. Grants for exonerated persons.

8 (a) In this Section:

9 "Dependent" means a spouse, natural child, legally adopted
10 child, or child in the legal custody of an exonerated person.

11 "Exonerated person" means an individual who has received a
12 pardon from the Governor of the State of Illinois stating that
13 such a pardon is issued on the grounds of innocence of the
14 crime for which he or she was imprisoned or an individual who
15 has received a certificate of innocence from a circuit court
16 pursuant to Section 2-702 of the Code of Civil Procedure.

17 "Satisfactory academic progress" means the qualified
18 applicant's maintenance of minimum standards of academic
19 performance, consistent with requirements for maintaining
20 federal financial aid eligibility, as determined by the
21 institution of higher learning.

22 (b) Subject to a separate appropriation for this purpose,
23 the Commission shall, each year, receive and consider

1 applications for grant assistance under this Section. Both an
2 exonerated person and all of his or her dependents qualify to
3 receive a grant ~~Recipients of grants~~ issued by the Commission
4 in accordance with this Section ~~must be exonerated persons~~.
5 Provided that the recipient is maintaining satisfactory
6 academic progress, the funds from the grant may be used to pay
7 up to 8 semesters or 12 quarters of full payment of tuition and
8 mandatory fees at any public university or public community
9 college located in this State for either full or part-time
10 study. This benefit may be used for undergraduate or graduate
11 study.

12 In addition, a qualified applicant ~~an exonerated person~~
13 who has not yet received a high school diploma or a high school
14 equivalency certificate and completes a high school
15 equivalency preparation course through an Illinois Community
16 College Board-approved provider may use grant funds to pay
17 costs associated with obtaining a high school equivalency
18 certificate, including payment of the cost of the high school
19 equivalency test and up to one retest on each test module, and
20 any additional fees that may be required in order to obtain an
21 Illinois High School Equivalency Certificate or an official
22 transcript of test scores after successful completion of the
23 high school equivalency test.

24 (c) An applicant for a grant under this Section need not
25 demonstrate financial need to qualify for the benefits.

26 (d) The Commission may adopt any rules necessary to

1 implement and administer this Section.

2 (Source: P.A. 99-199, eff. 1-1-16.)

3 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect July 1,
4 2021.