

AN ACT concerning State government.

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

Section 5. The Children and Family Services Act is amended by changing Section 8 as follows:

(20 ILCS 505/8) (from Ch. 23, par. 5008)

Sec. 8. Scholarships and fee waivers; tuition waiver.

(a) Each year the Department shall select a minimum of 53 students (at least 4 of whom shall be children of veterans) to receive scholarships and fee waivers which will enable them to attend and complete their post-secondary education at a community college, university, or college. Youth shall be selected from among the youth for whom the Department has court-ordered legal responsibility, youth who aged out of care at age 18 or older, or youth formerly under care who have been adopted or who have been placed in private guardianship. Recipients must have earned a high school diploma from an accredited institution or a high school equivalency certificate or diploma or have met the State criteria for high school graduation before the start of the school year for which they are applying for the scholarship and waiver. Scholarships and fee waivers shall be available to students for at least 5 years, provided they are continuing to work toward graduation.

Unused scholarship dollars and fee waivers shall be reallocated to new recipients. No later than January 1, 2015, the Department shall promulgate rules identifying the criteria for "continuing to work toward graduation" and for reallocating unused scholarships and fee waivers. Selection shall be made on the basis of several factors, including, but not limited to, scholastic record, aptitude, and general interest in higher education. The selection committee shall include at least 2 individuals formerly under the care of the Department who have completed their post-secondary education. In accordance with this Act, tuition scholarships and fee waivers shall be available to such students at any university or college maintained by the State of Illinois. The Department shall provide maintenance and school expenses, except tuition and fees, during the academic years to supplement the students' earnings or other resources so long as they consistently maintain scholastic records which are acceptable to their schools and to the Department. Students may attend other colleges and universities, if scholarships are awarded them, and receive the same benefits for maintenance and other expenses as those students attending any Illinois State community college, university, or college under this Section. Beginning with recipients receiving scholarships and waivers in August 2014, the Department shall collect data and report annually to the General Assembly on measures of success, including (i) the number of youth applying for and receiving

scholarships or waivers, (ii) the percentage of scholarship or waiver recipients who complete their college or university degree within 5 years, (iii) the average length of time it takes for scholarship or waiver recipients to complete their college or university degree, (iv) the reasons that scholarship or waiver recipients are discharged or fail to complete their college or university degree, (v) when available, youths' outcomes 5 years and 10 years after being awarded the scholarships or waivers, and (vi) budget allocations for maintenance and school expenses incurred by the Department.

(b) Youth who are not selected to receive a scholarship or fee waiver under subsection (a) shall receive a tuition and fee waiver to assist them in attending and completing their post-secondary education at any community college, university, or college maintained by the State of Illinois if they are youth for whom the Department has court-ordered legal responsibility, youth who aged out of care at age 18 or older, or youth formerly under care who have been adopted and were the subject of an adoption assistance agreement or who have been placed in private guardianship and were the subject of a subsidized guardianship agreement.

To receive a waiver under this subsection, an applicant must:

(1) have earned a high school diploma from an accredited institution or a high school equivalency certificate or have met the State criteria for high school

graduation before the start of the school year for which the applicant is applying for the waiver;

(2) enroll in a qualifying post-secondary education before the applicant reaches the age of 26; and

(3) apply for federal and State grant assistance by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

The community college or public university that an applicant attends must waive any tuition and fee amounts that exceed the amounts paid to the applicant under the federal Pell Grant Program or the State's Monetary Award Program.

Tuition and fee waivers shall be available to a student for at least the first 5 years the student is enrolled in a community college, university, or college maintained by the State of Illinois so long as the student makes satisfactory progress toward completing his or her degree. The age requirement and 5-year cap on tuition and fee waivers under this subsection shall be waived and eligibility for tuition and fee waivers shall be extended for any applicant or student who the Department determines was unable to enroll in a qualifying post-secondary school or complete an academic term because the applicant or student: (i) was called into active duty with the United States Armed Forces; (ii) was deployed for service in the United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps; or (iii) volunteered in the Peace Corps or the AmeriCorps. The Department shall extend eligibility for a qualifying applicant or student by the total number of months or years during which

the applicant or student served on active duty with the United States Armed Forces, was deployed for service in the United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, or volunteered in the Peace Corps or the AmeriCorps. The number of months an applicant or student served on active duty with the United States Armed Forces shall be rounded up to the next higher year to determine the maximum length of time to extend eligibility for the applicant or student.

The Department may provide the student with a stipend to cover maintenance and school expenses, except tuition and fees, during the academic years to supplement the student's earnings or other resources so long as the student consistently maintains scholastic records which are acceptable to the student's school and to the Department.

The Department shall develop outreach programs to ensure that youths who qualify for the tuition and fee waivers under this subsection who are high school students in grades 9 through 12 or who are enrolled in a high school equivalency testing program are aware of the availability of the tuition and fee waivers.

(Source: P.A. 98-718, eff. 1-1-15; 98-805, eff. 1-1-15; 99-78, eff. 7-20-15.)