

Chapter 647

(House Bill 1222)

AN ACT concerning

Ruth M. Kirk Public Social Work Scholarship

FOR the purpose of altering the workforce shortage fields eligible for a Workforce Shortage Student Assistance grant to include social workers under certain circumstances; naming a certain grant to be the Ruth M. Kirk Public Social Work Scholarship; and generally relating to social workers as a workforce shortage field under the Workforce Shortage Student Assistance grants program.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Article – Education
Section 18–708
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2008 Replacement Volume and 2013 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Education

18–708.

- (a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.
- (2) “Advisory Council” means the Advisory Council on Workforce Shortage.
- (3) “Eligible institution” means a public or private nonprofit institution of higher education in this State that possesses a certificate of approval from the Commission.
- (4) “Fund” means the Workforce Shortage Student Assistance Grant Fund.
- (5) “Grant” means the Workforce Shortage Student Assistance grant.
- (6) “Public good or benefit” means service to low-income or underserved residents or areas of the State in an occupation in the public sector or in

an organization, institution, association, society, or corporation that is exempt from taxation under § 501(c)(3) or (4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

(b) There is a program of Workforce Shortage Student Assistance grants under this section for students who pledge to work in fields of critical shortage in the State on completion of their studies.

(c) The purpose of the program is to:

(1) Provide financial assistance to students enrolled at institutions of higher education in the State; and

(2) Address the workforce shortage needs of the State.

(d) A recipient of a Workforce Shortage Student Assistance grant under this section shall:

(1) Be a resident of the State;

(2) Be selected by the Office from qualified applicants;

(3) Sign a letter of intent to enroll at an eligible institution in the State in an eligible program as specified for each field in which there is a critical shortage in this State as provided in this section;

(4) Sign a letter of intent to perform the service obligation on completion of the recipient's required studies;

(5) Accept any other conditions attached to the grant;

(6) Satisfy any additional criteria the Commission may establish; and

(7) After completion of studies in an eligible program, perform the service obligation as specified for each field in which there is a critical shortage, as provided in this section.

(e) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (5) of this subsection, the Commission shall on a biennial basis:

(i) Identify workforce shortage fields in the State;

(ii) Designate eligible workforce shortage fields under the grant program; and

(iii) Remove from the grant program any field that the Commission determines no longer qualifies as a workforce shortage.

(2) The Secretary shall appoint an Advisory Council on Workforce Shortage to:

- (i) Identify workforce shortage fields in the State; and
- (ii) Recommend to the Commission:
 - 1. Priority workforce shortage fields to be included in the grant program; and
 - 2. The removal of fields that in the Advisory Council's judgment no longer qualify as workforce shortage fields.

(3) In making recommendations to the Commission, the Advisory Council shall consider whether a workforce shortage field provides a public good or benefit to the citizens of Maryland.

- (4) The Advisory Council shall include the following members:
- (i) The Secretary of Higher Education or designee;
 - (ii) The Secretary of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation or designee;
 - (iii) One representative from the Governor's Workforce Investment Board, appointed by the Governor;
 - (iv) The Secretary of Business and Economic Development or designee;
 - (v) The Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene or designee;
 - (vi) The State Superintendent of Schools or designee;
 - (vii) One representative of the Senate of Maryland, appointed by the President of the Senate;
 - (viii) One representative of the Maryland House of Delegates, appointed by the Speaker of the House;
 - (ix) Two representatives from the University System of Maryland, appointed by the Chancellor;
 - (x) The President of Morgan State University or designee;

(xi) The President of St. Mary's College or designee; and

(xii) Representatives nominated by the following organizations and appointed by the Secretary of Higher Education:

1. One representative from the Maryland Chamber of Commerce;
2. One representative from the Washington Board of Trade;
3. One representative from the Greater Baltimore Committee;
4. Two representatives from the Maryland Independent College and University Association;
5. Two representatives from the Maryland Association of Community Colleges;
6. One representative from the Maryland Association of Nonprofit Associations; and
7. One representative from the Financial Assistance Advisory Council representing a financial aid office at an institution of higher education.

(5) (i) Except as provided in subparagraph (ii) of this paragraph, the following workforce shortage fields shall be included in the grant program:

1. School teachers (the grant to be known as the Sharon Christa McAuliffe Memorial Teacher Scholarship);

- 2. SOCIAL WORKERS (THE GRANT TO BE KNOWN AS THE RUTH M. KIRK PUBLIC SOCIAL WORK SCHOLARSHIP);**

- [2.] 3.** Nurses;

- [3.] 4.** Child care providers;

- [4.] 5.** Developmental disabilities, mental health, child welfare, and juvenile justice providers (the grant to be known as the Ida G. and L. Leonard Ruben Scholarships);

- [5.] 6.** Physical and occupational therapists and assistants; and

[6.] 7. Public servants (the grant to be known as the William Donald Schaefer Scholarship and the grant to be known as the Parren J. Mitchell Public Service Scholarship).

(ii) The Commission may remove a shortage field specified in subparagraph (i) of this paragraph if in the Commission's judgment the field no longer qualifies as a workforce shortage field.

(6) A grant recipient in a workforce shortage field that is removed from the grant program may continue to receive renewal awards under the program.

(f) Each fiscal year, the Commission shall determine the number of grants to be awarded in eligible workforce shortage fields based on the:

- (1) Priority of the workforce shortage field;
- (2) Severity of the workforce shortage in the field; and
- (3) Availability of funds.

(g) (1) The Office shall annually select eligible students and offer a grant to each student selected to be used at an eligible institution of the student's choice.

(2) Eligible students shall be selected based on academic accomplishment and financial need, as determined by standards established and approved by the Commission.

(3) Each grant shall be renewable for a maximum of 5 years subsequent to the original grant if the recipient:

(i) Continues to meet the qualifications specified in subsection (d) of this section; and

(ii) Meets satisfactory academic progress standards as determined by the eligible institution.

(h) A grant recipient:

(1) May be enrolled at an eligible institution on a part-time or full-time basis;

(2) Shall earn at least 12 undergraduate or 9 graduate credit hours in each academic year, including summer sessions;

(3) Except as provided in paragraph (4) of this subsection, shall be an undergraduate student at an eligible institution; and

(4) May be a graduate student if the Office determines that the shortage field requires employees with a graduate level education.

(i) (1) In this subsection, “cost of attendance” means the equivalent annual tuition and mandatory fees of a resident undergraduate student at the 4–year public institution of higher education within the University System of Maryland, other than the University of Maryland University College and University of Maryland, Baltimore, with the highest annual expenses for a full–time resident undergraduate.

(2) Subject to paragraphs (3), (4), and (5) of this subsection, the Commission shall establish in guidelines the annual grant awards under this section.

(3) Annual grant awards shall be within the following ranges:

(i) For a part–time student attending a 2–year eligible institution – \$1,000 and 12.5% of cost of attendance;

(ii) For a full–time student attending a 2–year eligible institution – \$2,000 and 25% of cost of attendance;

(iii) For a part–time student attending a 4–year eligible institution – \$2,000 and 25% of cost of attendance; and

(iv) For a full–time student attending a 4–year eligible institution – \$4,000 and 50% of cost of attendance.

(4) For a student taking courses during a summer session to meet the minimum number of credit hours for full–time or part–time status, the Commission shall distribute grant awards to the student in the spring and summer sessions in amounts it determines to be appropriate.

(5) A student who is enrolled in an academic program that includes a mandatory summer academic session as part of the approved curriculum may receive an additional award not to exceed \$1,000 per calendar year.

(j) The grant award may be used at any eligible institution for educational expenses as defined by the Commission, including tuition, mandatory fees, and room and board.

(k) (1) A grant recipient shall perform a service obligation in the recipient’s field of critical shortage in:

(i) A full-time position at a rate of 1 year for each year that the recipient receives a grant awarded under this section; or

(ii) A part-time position at a rate of 2 years for each year that the recipient receives a grant awarded under this section.

(2) The Commission may establish alternative service obligation requirements for designated workforce shortage fields to address statewide and regional needs.

(1) (1) A grant recipient shall repay the Commission the funds received as set forth in § 18-112 of this title if the recipient does not:

(i) Earn at least 12 undergraduate or 9 graduate credit hours in each academic year in which the student receives assistance, including summer sessions;

(ii) Complete the specified degree, attain the licensure or certification required, or fulfill other requirements as provided in this section; or

(iii) Perform the service obligation required under subsection (k) of this section.

(2) The Office shall waive the repayment of a grant award at a rate of:

(i) 1 year for each year that the recipient performs the service obligation on a full-time basis; or

(ii) 6 months for each year that the recipient performs the service obligation on a part-time basis.

(3) A recipient shall begin repayment at any time during the period that the recipient is no longer performing the service obligation.

(4) A recipient may delay repayment as long as the recipient remains a student enrolled at least part-time in a degree-granting program.

(5) Except as otherwise provided in this section, repayment shall be made to the State within 6 years after the repayment period begins and shall follow a repayment schedule established by the Office.

(6) The Office may waive or defer repayment in the event of disability or extended sickness which prevents the recipient from fulfilling the service obligation required under this section.

(7) The Office shall grant a deferment from the service obligation required under this section to:

(i) An individual who has been assigned military duty outside the State; or

(ii) The spouse of an individual who has been assigned military duty outside the State.

(m) (1) This subsection applies to recipients of the William Donald Schaefer Scholarship specified in subsection (e)(5) of this section.

(2) The Commission shall annually select eligible students and offer grants to students who demonstrate outstanding potential for and who plan to pursue a career in public service to assist in providing legal services to low-income residents in the State.

(3) In making William Donald Schaefer Scholarship awards under this section, the Commission shall endeavor to select award recipients who are representative of the State's rich cultural, geographic, racial, ethnic, and gender diversity.

(4) Each individual awarded a William Donald Schaefer Scholarship under this section must have indicated and demonstrated to the Commission a serious intent to enter public service on the completion of the student's educational program.

(n) (1) This subsection applies to recipients of the Parren J. Mitchell Public Service Scholarship specified in subsection (e)(5) of this section.

(2) The Commission shall annually select eligible students and offer grants to students who demonstrate outstanding potential for and who plan to pursue a career in public service and assist in providing:

(i) Social work services to low-income residents in the State;

(ii) Nursing services in nursing shortage areas in the State as defined in § 18-802 of this title; or

(iii) Other services in the public or nonprofit sectors in which there is a shortage of qualified practitioners to low-income or underserved residents or areas of the State.

(3) In making Parren J. Mitchell Public Service Scholarship awards under this section, the Commission shall endeavor to select award recipients who are representative of the State's rich cultural, geographic, racial, ethnic, and gender diversity.

(4) Each individual awarded a Parren J. Mitchell Public Service Scholarship under this section must have indicated and demonstrated to the Commission a serious intent to enter public service on the completion of the student's educational program.

(o) (1) There is a Workforce Shortage Student Assistance Grant Fund in the Commission.

(2) The Commission shall administer the Fund.

(3) The Fund is a special, nonlapsing fund that is not subject to § 7-302 of the State Finance and Procurement Article.

(4) The State Treasurer shall hold the Fund separately and the Comptroller shall account for the Fund.

(5) The Commission:

(i) May accept any gift or grant from any person or corporation for the Fund;

(ii) Shall use any gift or grant that it receives for a grant award from the Fund; and

(iii) Shall deposit any gift or grant that it receives for the Fund with the State Treasurer.

(6) (i) At the end of the fiscal year, the Commission shall prepare an annual report on the Fund that includes an accounting of all financial receipts and expenditures to and from the Fund.

(ii) The Commission shall submit a copy of the report to the General Assembly as provided under § 2-1246 of the State Government Article.

(p) A recipient may hold a Workforce Shortage Student Assistance grant and any other State grant or scholarship awarded by the Office provided that the total of all grants and scholarships does not exceed:

(1) The student's total cost of attendance, as certified by the institution where the student is enrolled; and

(2) The cost of attendance, as defined in subsection (i) of this section.

(q) Funds for the Workforce Shortage Student Assistance grant program shall be as provided in the annual budget of the Commission by the Governor.

(r) The Commission shall adopt guidelines or regulations necessary to implement this section.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2014.

Approved by the Governor, May 15, 2014.