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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-THIRD SESSION

H. F. No. 2914

03/15/2023 Authored by Hanson, J., The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Higher Education Finance and Policy

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to higher education; establishing a last-dollar scholarship program for
1.3 students preparing to become licensed social workers; requiring a report;
1.4 appropriating money; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter
1.5 136A.

1.6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.7 Section 1. 136A.1285] SOCIAL WORK SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.

1.8 Subdivision 1. Program established. The commissioner of the Office of Higher
1.9 Education shall establish a scholarship program for eligible students preparing to become
1.10 licensed social workers in Minnesota.

1.11 Subd. 2. Eligible students. (a) A student is eligible for a scholarship under this section
1.12 if the student is:

1.13 (1) a resident student as defined in section 136A.101;

1.14 (2) enrolled in a baccalaureate or postbaccalaureate degree-granting social work program
1.15 at an eligible institution as defined in section 136A.101; and

1.16 (3) in good academic standing and making satisfactory academic progress as defined in
1.17 section 136A.101.

1.18 (b) To receive a scholarship under this section, a student must:

1.19 (1) apply in the form and manner specified by the commissioner;

1.20 (2) submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA); and

1.21 (3) sign a contract agreeing to fulfill the employment obligation under subdivision 4.

2.1 (c) A student may receive a scholarship under this section for no more than eight
2.2 semesters or the equivalent.

2.3 Subd. 3. **Scholarship amounts.** (a) The amount of a scholarship awarded under this
2.4 section shall be equal to the recipient's recognized cost of attendance after deducting:

2.5 (1) the amount of the federal Pell grant award for which the recipient is eligible;

2.6 (2) the amount of the state grant award for which the recipient is eligible;

2.7 (3) the amount of any other state or federal gift aid received; and

2.8 (4) the sum of all institutional scholarships, grants, tuition waivers, and tuition remission
2.9 amounts.

2.10 (b) For purposes of this section, the recognized cost of attendance for a public institution
2.11 has the meaning given in Code of Federal Regulations, title 20, chapter 28, subchapter IV,
2.12 part F, section 10871l. The recognized cost of attendance for a private institution equals the
2.13 lesser of:

2.14 (1) the cost of attendance for the institution as calculated under Code of Federal
2.15 Regulations, title 20, chapter 28, subchapter IV, part F, section 10871l; or

2.16 (2) an amount equal to the highest recognized cost of attendance at a public university.

2.17 (c) The scholarship shall be paid directly to the institution where the recipient is enrolled.

2.18 Subd. 4. **Employment obligation.** (a) Within six months after the completion of the
2.19 academic program for which the scholarship was awarded, a scholarship recipient must:

2.20 (1) be licensed with the Minnesota Board of Social Work; and

2.21 (2) be employed full time as a social worker in Minnesota.

2.22 (b) A recipient who has completed the program for which the scholarship was awarded,
2.23 but who has not been employed full time as a social worker in Minnesota for at least ten
2.24 years, must annually verify, in a form and manner specified by the commissioner, that the
2.25 recipient is employed in a position that fulfills the employment obligation.

2.26 (c) If a recipient fails to meet the employment requirement, the commissioner shall
2.27 convert the recipient's total scholarship award to a student loan and collect from the
2.28 participant the total amount paid plus interest at a rate established according to section
2.29 270C.40.

3.1 (d) The commissioner may waive or defer the employment obligation for a scholarship
3.2 recipient for continued graduate studies in social work or for circumstances involving
3.3 extreme hardship.

3.4 (e) Any obligation to fulfill the employment obligation cancels upon the death or
3.5 permanent and total disability of the scholarship recipient.

3.6 (f) The commissioner shall develop a contract to be signed by all scholarship applicants.
3.7 The contract shall bind the applicant to the employment obligation under this subdivision.

3.8 Subd. 5. **Insufficient appropriation.** If the amount appropriated for this program is
3.9 determined by the office to be insufficient to make full awards to all eligible applicants, the
3.10 commissioner shall prioritize awards to eligible applicants based on the applicants' individual
3.11 financial needs as determined by the federal needs analysis.

3.12 Subd. 6. **Report required.** By February 15 of each year, the commissioner of the Office
3.13 of Higher Education shall submit a report on the details of the program under this section
3.14 to the legislative committees with jurisdiction over higher education finance and policy and
3.15 to the Legislative Reference Library as provided by section 3.195. The report shall include
3.16 the following information:

3.17 (1) the number of students receiving an award in the previous year and the institutions
3.18 they attended;

3.19 (2) the average and total award amounts in the previous year, disaggregated by institution
3.20 attended;

3.21 (3) summary demographic data on award recipients in the previous year;

3.22 (4) data on recipients currently subject to the employment obligation under subdivision
3.23 4, including the number of recipients subject to the obligation, the number who are
3.24 successfully completing the obligation, the number who have had their scholarships converted
3.25 to loans, and the number who have had their obligation waived or deferred; and

3.26 (5) if the appropriation for the program was determined to be insufficient, an explanation
3.27 of measures taken under subdivision 5.

3.28 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective the day following final enactment. The
3.29 commissioner shall begin offering scholarships under this section in the 2024-2025 academic
3.30 year.

4.1 Sec. 2. **APPROPRIATION; SOCIAL WORK SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.**

4.2 (a) \$..... in fiscal year 2024 and \$..... in fiscal year 2025 are appropriated from the
4.3 general fund to the commissioner of the Office of Higher Education for the social work
4.4 scholarship program under section 136A.1285.

4.5 (b) The office may use no more than three percent of the amount appropriated under
4.6 this section to administer the scholarship program.