

SB72 INTRODUCED



1 SB72
2 L5CI4AA-1
3 By Senator Chesteen
4 RFD: Education Policy
5 First Read: 13-Jan-26



SYNOPSIS:

Under existing law, the ReEngage Alabama Grant Program administered by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education provides grant award payments to adult learners pursuing a first associate or baccalaureate degree to assist them in earning short-term credentials.

This bill would decrease the minimum age of an adult learner from 25 to 22 years of age.

This bill would also include as an eligible student an individual who, in addition to other specific criteria, has not previously received a grant award and is pursuing a first baccalaureate degree following a two-year stop-out period after receiving his or her first associate degree.

A BILL
TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

Relating to the Alabama Commission on Higher Education and the ReEngage Alabama Grant Program; to amend Sections 16-33D-3 and 16-33D-6, Code of Alabama 1975, to decrease the minimum age of an adult learner from 25 to 22 years of age;



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and to provide further for the definition of an eligible student.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. Sections 16-33D-3 and 16-33D-6 of the Code of Alabama 1975, are amended to read as follows:

"§16-33D-3

For the purposes of this chapter, the following terms have the following meanings:

(1) ACADEMIC TERM. A portion of an academic year, such as a quarter or semester, during which an institution of higher education holds classes including, but not limited to, Fall, Winter, Spring, or Summer semesters.

(2) ADULT LEARNER. An individual who is ~~25~~ 22 years of age or older and returning to college.

(3) ALABAMA RESIDENT. An individual who has been classified as an in-state resident by an authorized institution, who has established residency within this state for at least a 12-month period prior to the beginning of the term for which financial assistance is requested, and who is in this state for other than a temporary purpose.

(4) APPROVED INSTITUTION. A state-supported institution of higher education or a private nonprofit institution of higher education that satisfies all of the following:

a. Is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, or the Council on Occupational Education.

b. Is eligible to receive Title IV federal student aid program funds.



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c. Maintains its primary headquarters in Alabama.

(5) AUTHORIZED INSTITUTION. An approved institution that files a signed agreement with the commission to comply with all rules and procedures of the ReEngage Alabama Grant Program as provided by the commission.

(6) COMMISSION. The Alabama Commission on Higher Education.

(7) CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT. When an adult learner is making academic progress toward degree completion without a stop-out in enrollment of more than one consecutive semester or quarter, such as Fall/Winter to Spring, Spring to Summer/Fall, or Summer to Fall.

(8) ELIGIBLE PROGRAM. A nonsectarian, secular educational program that is aligned with Alabama's high demand workforce needs adopted by the Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways.

(9) ELIGIBLE STUDENT. An individual who completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) ~~and~~ and who is ~~in~~ either of the following:

a. In pursuit of his or her first associate or baccalaureate degree, ~~who~~ satisfies the criteria set out in this chapter, and ~~who~~ is found to be eligible by rules adopted by the commission.

b. In pursuit of his or her first baccalaureate degree following a two-year stop-out period after receiving his or her first associate degree and did not previously receive a grant award, satisfies the criteria set out in this chapter, and is found to be eligible by rules adopted by the



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commission.

(10) GRANT. A financial award by the State of Alabama to defray the cost of tuition and mandatory fees to an eligible adult learner who is currently enrolled in an authorized institution.

(11) PROGRAM. The ReEngage Alabama Grant Program created by this chapter.

(12) YEAR. An academic year that shall be divided into Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer terms. The term does not mean calendar or fiscal year.

"§16-33D-6

(a) The program shall be used to provide grant award payments for eligible adult learners up to the maximum award amount of three thousand dollars (\$3,000) for universities and one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500) for community colleges per academic semester for a full-time student. Proportional awards shall be given for students taking six to 11 hours and students enrolled in less common academic terms, such as quarters, Summer terms, and intersessions.

(b) (1) Each grant shall be renewable for the number of terms normally required by the institution for the course of study in which the adult learner is enrolled as long as the student is continuously enrolled until the student receives ~~an~~ either of the following:

a. His or her first associate degree or ~~a~~ baccalaureate degree.

b. His or her first baccalaureate degree following a two-year stop-out period after receiving his or her first



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associate degree without previously receiving a grant award.

(2) The commission shall grant a renewal upon verification that the student remains an eligible student.

(c) Grant award payments shall be distributed directly to the approved institution on behalf of the student during the applicable year.

(d) The requirements of this chapter are contingent upon available funding for the program.

(e) The commission shall determine the necessary procedures for awarding grant award payments if the number of eligible applicants and recipients exceeds available funding.

(f) Any funds appropriated to the program shall be nonreverting.

(g) A percentage of the grant program's appropriations may be expended for the operation and maintenance of the program.

(h) Each authorized institution that enrolls an adult learner who is eligible for the tuition and mandatory fees benefits provided by this program shall take necessary action to ensure that the student is aware of all other benefits that he or she may be entitled to under any other federal and state educational benefits, and any student grant or scholarship. In order to receive the benefits provided by this program, the student shall take the necessary steps to utilize all of the above benefits."

Section 2. This act shall become effective on October 1, 2026.