

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2nd Session of the 59th Legislature (2024)

HOUSE BILL 3669

By: Miller

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to higher education; creating the Oklahoma Department of Transportation Educational Assistance Act; providing definitions; establishing assistance program for eligible students; clarifying details of assistance; providing criteria for eligibility; requiring repayment under certain circumstances; permitting both public and private funding of program; directing the Department of Transportation to promulgate rules; creating the Oklahoma Department of Transportation Educational Assistance Revolving Fund; providing for codification; and providing an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 3234 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Oklahoma Department of Transportation Educational Assistance Act".

B. As used in this act:

1        1. "Conditional grant program" means the Oklahoma Department of  
2 Transportation Educational Assistance Program established pursuant  
3 to the provisions of this section;

4        2. "Department" means the Oklahoma Department of  
5 Transportation;

6        3. "Eligible degree" means a baccalaureate degree from an  
7 institution in a field of study that satisfies the Department's  
8 minimum education requirement for an eligible profession;

9        4. "Eligible profession" means the profession of engineering or  
10 another profession as defined by Department rule for which the  
11 Department determines there is a need in the Department's workforce;

12       5. "Eligible Student" means a student who has a high school  
13 diploma or who has completed General Educational Development (GED)  
14 requirements and who:

15           a.    has completed and filed with the Department, on forms  
16                prescribed by the Department, a conditional grant  
17                application and a declaration of intent to become a  
18                member of an eligible profession and work for the  
19                Department for the five (5) academic years immediately  
20                following the date of the student's receipt of an  
21                eligible degree,

22           b.    has enrolled in an Oklahoma educational institution,  
23                and

24           c.    is an Oklahoma resident;  
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1       6. "Graduate program" means a program offered by an Oklahoma  
2 educational institution that leads to the award of a master's  
3 degree;

4       7. "Oklahoma educational institution" means an institution of  
5 higher education within the Oklahoma State System of Higher  
6 Education;

7       8. "Profession" means a state position for which the minimum  
8 requirements include a baccalaureate degree; and

9       9. "Undergraduate program" means a program offered by an  
10 Oklahoma educational institution that leads to the award of an  
11 associate's degree or a baccalaureate degree.

12       C. There is hereby created the Oklahoma Department of  
13 Transportation Educational Assistance Program to provide assistance  
14 to eligible students who enroll in an Oklahoma educational  
15 institution and who agree to work for the Department in an eligible  
16 profession for the five (5) academic years immediately following the  
17 date of the student's receipt of an eligible degree. The  
18 Department, by rule, shall prescribe criteria for the selection of  
19 applicants under this act. Subject to the availability of funds,  
20 the amount of assistance shall be equivalent to the amount of  
21 resident tuition, mandatory fees, and academic service fees for  
22 courses in which the eligible student is enrolled, not to exceed a  
23 maximum of eighteen (18) credit hours each semester.  
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1        1. The amount of assistance provided to an eligible student  
2 enrolled in an undergraduate program shall not exceed a maximum of  
3 one hundred twenty (120) credit hours in pursuit of an associate's  
4 degree and/or a baccalaureate degree;

5        2. Subject to the assistance for eligible students enrolled in  
6 undergraduate programs being fully funded, assistance shall be  
7 provided to an eligible student with a baccalaureate degree enrolled  
8 in a graduate program. The amount of assistance provided to an  
9 eligible student enrolled in a graduate program shall not exceed a  
10 maximum of forty (40) credit hours in pursuit of a master's degree;

11       3. Assistance provided pursuant to this section shall be  
12 granted without any limitation other than the amount of funds  
13 available for the program and the number of eligible students who  
14 apply;

15       4. Assistance allowed by this section shall not be allowed for  
16 courses taken in excess of the requirements for completion of an  
17 undergraduate program or a graduate program, whichever is applicable  
18 for the eligible student;

19       D. 1. To be eligible to apply for the conditional grant  
20 program, an eligible student shall:

- 21           a. complete and file with the Department, on forms  
22                 prescribed by the Department, a conditional grant  
23                 application and a declaration of intent to become a  
24                 member of an eligible profession and work for the  
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1 Department for the five (5) academic years immediately  
2 following the date of the student's receipt of an  
3 eligible degree,

4 b. be enrolled in an Oklahoma educational institution,  
5 and

6 c. be an Oklahoma resident;

7 2. To retain eligibility for the Program, an eligible student  
8 shall:

9 a. maintain good academic standing and satisfactory  
10 academic progress according to standards of the  
11 Oklahoma educational institution in which the member  
12 is enrolled,

13 b. maintain the requirements for retention and degree  
14 completion as established by the Oklahoma educational  
15 institution in which the member is enrolled, and

16 c. maintain a minimum grade point average of 2.0 on a 4.0  
17 scale;

18 3. An eligible student seeking assistance pursuant to the  
19 provisions of this section shall submit an application on a form  
20 prescribed by the Department prior to the semester for which  
21 assistance is sought; and

22 4. The eligible student may be denied continued assistance if  
23 he or she fails to comply with the provisions of this act.

24 E. Repayment of Conditional Grant:  
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1        1. The Department, by rule, may establish conditions under  
2 which a student who has received a conditional grant may be required  
3 to repay all or part of the grant because the student has withdrawn  
4 from or dropped out of the student's institution or has otherwise  
5 failed to maintain eligibility for the grant;

6        2. A student who does not become a member of an eligible  
7 profession and work for the Department for the five (5) academic  
8 years immediately following the date of the student's receipt of an  
9 eligible degree must repay all conditional grants received by the  
10 student;

11       3. An eligible student who has received assistance pursuant to  
12 the provisions of this conditional grant program and who fails to  
13 comply with the provisions of this act due to hardship circumstances  
14 may request a waiver from repayment;

15       4. Repayments shall be deposited into the Oklahoma Department  
16 of Transportation Educational Assistance Revolving Fund created  
17 pursuant to Section 2 of this act; and

18       5. The Department shall establish a schedule for installment  
19 payments under this section.

20       F. The Department may accept gifts and grants from any public  
21 or private source for the conditional grant program under this  
22 subchapter and may also use for that purpose available money  
23 credited to the state highway program. All funding received by the  
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1 Department for this purpose shall be transferred to the Oklahoma  
2 Department of Transportation Educational Assistance Revolving Fund.

3 G. The Oklahoma Department of Transportation shall promulgate  
4 rules to implement the provisions of this act.

5 SECTION 2. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified  
6 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 3235 of Title 70, unless there  
7 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

8 There is hereby created in the State Treasury a revolving fund  
9 to be designated the "Oklahoma Department of Transportation  
10 Educational Assistance Revolving Fund". The fund shall be a  
11 continuing fund, not subject to fiscal year limitations, and shall  
12 consist of monies received by the Department and allocated for the  
13 conditional grant program. All monies accruing to the credit of the  
14 fund are hereby appropriated and may be budgeted and expended by the  
15 Oklahoma Department of Transportation for the purpose of providing  
16 assistance to eligible students pursuant to the provisions of  
17 Section 1 of this act. Expenditures from the fund shall be made  
18 upon warrants issued by the State Treasurer against claims filed as  
19 prescribed by law with the Director of the Office of Management and  
20 Enterprise Services for approval and payment.

21 SECTION 3. This act shall become effective November 1, 2024.  
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