

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2nd Session of the 60th Legislature (2026)

SENATE BILL 2040

By: Goodwin

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to the Tulsa Reconciliation Education and Scholarship Program; amending 70 O.S. 2021, Sections 2621, 2623, and 2625, which relate to creation of and eligibility for the program; modifying eligibility for program; updating statutory language; increasing income limit for certain eligibility; exempting certain applicants from certain income limit; allowing certain form to be used to verify income; removing certain eligibility criteria; directing the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education to give first priority status to certain applicants; modifying process for verifying documentation of lineage; requiring application form to include certain language; directing awards to be made in certain specified manner; directing the State Regents to involve certain community advisory committee in selection process; providing for composition of and appointments to advisory committee; directing certain university president to submit a list of proposed members; directing advisory committee to review certain applications and make certain recommendations; directing the State Regents to select recipients from certain list; allowing certain remaining scholarship award funds to be used for certain purposes; directing certain applicants to always be given first priority status; and declaring an emergency.

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

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2621, is amended to read as follows:

Section 2621. There is hereby created the Tulsa Reconciliation Education and Scholarship Program. The purpose of the program is to provide a scholarship award to residents of the Tulsa School District, which was greatly impacted both socially and economically by the civil unrest that occurred in the City of Tulsa during 1921. Beginning with the 2002-2003 school year, or as soon thereafter as practicable, and subject to the availability of funds, the program shall each year make scholarships available to as many students as feasible, up to three hundred scholarships, to qualified residents of the Tulsa School District, and to qualified students of any other public school district in the United States who are direct lineal descendants as defined in subsection C of Section 2623 of this title and who meet the criteria set forth in Sections 2623 and 2624 of this title, and who are intending to pursue studies at an institution of higher education in The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education or a private institution of higher education, in this state or who are intending to pursue studies in a postsecondary career and technology education program in this state. The scholarship shall be an amount ~~of not more than~~ not exceeding the equivalent of the average amount of resident tuition for which an eligible Tulsa Reconciliation Education and Scholarship Program participant enrolled at an institution of higher education in The

1 Oklahoma State System of Higher Education or a postsecondary career
2 and technology education program, whichever is applicable, is
3 obligated to pay. The scholarship shall be paid as provided for in
4 Section 2625 of this title. The further purpose of this program is
5 to establish and maintain a variety of educational support services
6 whereby ~~residents~~ students who qualify for the program will be
7 prepared for success in postsecondary endeavors.

8 SECTION 2. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2623, is
9 amended to read as follows:

10 Section 2623. A. Subject to the availability of funds, the
11 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education may annually award a
12 maximum of three hundred full-time-equivalent scholarships for the
13 Tulsa Reconciliation Education and Scholarship Program to residents
14 of the Tulsa School District and to qualified students of any other
15 public school district in the United States who are direct lineal
16 descendants as defined in subsection C of this section and who are
17 intending to pursue studies at an institution of higher education in
18 The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education or a private
19 institution of higher education in this state or who are intending
20 to pursue studies in a postsecondary career and technology education
21 program in this state.

22 B. To qualify for a scholarship, the family income of an
23 applicant shall ~~satisfy the following criteria:~~
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1 ~~1. The family income of the applicant, from taxable sources is~~
2 ~~not more than Seventy Thousand Dollars (\$70,000.00), not exceed One~~
3 ~~Hundred Twenty-five Thousand Dollars (\$125,000.00) per year. There~~
4 ~~shall be no family income limit for an applicant who is a direct~~
5 ~~lineal descendant as defined in subsection C of this section. The~~
6 ~~Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form may be used to~~
7 ~~verify family income.~~

8 ~~2. The applicant attended a Tulsa public school where seventy-~~
9 ~~five percent (75%) or more of the students enrolled in the school~~
10 ~~qualify for the free and reduced lunch program; and~~

11 ~~3. The applicant resides in a census block area within the~~
12 ~~Tulsa School District where thirty percent (30%) or more of the~~
13 ~~residents are at or below the poverty level established by the~~
14 ~~United States Bureau of the Census.~~

15 ~~C. The Regents may consider as a factor, when determining the~~
16 ~~order of preference of applicants, whether~~ State Regents' selection
17 process shall give first priority status to an applicant who is a
18 direct lineal descendant of a person who resided in the Greenwood
19 Area in the City of Tulsa between April 30, 1921, and June 1, 1921,
20 and was a victim of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre. ~~If the Regents~~
21 ~~use~~ Use of ~~descent as a preference factor, it shall be applied to~~
22 ~~all applicants regardless of race. The applicants shall be required~~
23 ~~to present verifiable documentation of their lineage. The Oklahoma~~
24 ~~Historical Society~~ An organization or individual engaged in

1 genealogy and research of descendants and history of the 1921 Tulsa
2 Race Massacre and Greenwood Area shall verify the authenticity and
3 accuracy of the documentation submitted by an applicant and shall
4 ~~establish~~ confirm the boundaries of the Greenwood Area. Verifiable
5 documentation shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

6 1. Family records including family bibles, vital records,
7 correspondence, memoirs, journals, diaries, unrecorded deeds,
8 diplomas, certificates, or testimonials;

9 2. Public records including censuses, government records,
10 military records, pensions, land bounty records, passport
11 applications, passenger lists, original grants, naturalization or
12 immigration records, records of entry, or state, province, or local
13 records; or

14 3. Institutional records including church records, cemetery
15 records and inscriptions, education institutions, insurance records,
16 or societies and fraternal organizations.

17 D. The State Regents shall promulgate rules establishing the
18 application requirements for the program and the system for
19 evaluating applications based on the preference factors. The
20 application form shall include a small outlined box graphic,
21 followed by the following language: "Mark the box if you are a
22 direct lineal descendant of a victim greatly impacted socially and
23 economically during the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre who resided in the
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1 Greenwood Area of Tulsa, Oklahoma, between April 30, 1921, and June
2 1, 1921."

3 E. Applicants shall also meet the eligibility criteria
4 established in Section 2624 of this title.

5 F. ~~The Oklahoma~~ In addition to the scholarships authorized
6 pursuant to Section 2621 of this title and this section, the State
7 Regents for Higher Education shall also be authorized to annually
8 award scholarships for the Tulsa Reconciliation Education and
9 Scholarship Program to two students at each of the high schools in
10 the Tulsa School District for the purpose of preserving awareness of
11 the history and meaning of the civil unrest that occurred in Tulsa
12 in 1921. The following provisions shall apply to the ~~scholarship~~
13 scholarships provided in this subsection:

14 1. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection B of this
15 section, eligibility for the scholarships awarded pursuant to this
16 subsection shall be:

- 17 a. enrollment in the appropriate high school,
18 b. family income of the applicant from taxable sources
19 not to exceed ~~Seventy Thousand Dollars (\$70,000.00)~~
20 One Hundred Twenty-five Thousand Dollars (\$125,000.00)
21 per year. There shall be no family income limit for
22 an applicant who is a direct lineal descendant as
23 defined in subsection C of this section,
24 c. made as provided for in subsection C of this section,

- 1 d. satisfaction of the criteria specified in Section 2624
2 of this title, and
3 ~~d.~~ e. any other relevant criteria determined by the
4 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education;

5 2. The State Regents shall involve the administration of the
6 Tulsa School District and a community advisory committee in the
7 selection process. The community advisory committee shall be
8 comprised of seven (7) members appointed by the Chancellor of Higher
9 Education. The community advisory committee shall be comprised of:

- 10 a. the President of Langston University or his or her
11 designee,
12 b. the Superintendent of Tulsa Public Schools or his or
13 her designee,
14 c. two members of the Legislature representing the
15 Greenwood area in the City of Tulsa, Oklahoma, or
16 their designees,
17 d. two descendants of socially and economically adversely
18 impacted persons who resided in the Greenwood Area in
19 the City of Tulsa, Oklahoma, between April 30, 1921
20 and June 1, 1921, and
21 e. a citizen with ties to the historic Greenwood
22 community who may be engaged in faith-based,
23 education, or social, business, or advocacy work.
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1 The President of Langston University, or his or her designee,
2 shall be responsible for coordinating with the community advisory
3 committee and shall submit to the Chancellor of Higher Education a
4 list of proposed committee members for review and approval. The
5 community advisory committee shall review scholarship applications
6 and make recommendations for scholarship recipients and scholarship
7 award amounts. The State Regents shall select scholarship
8 recipients from the list of recommendations provided pursuant to
9 this paragraph;

10 3. The award shall be limited to a one-year full-time-
11 equivalent period. Following successful completion of such award,
12 recipients who meet the criteria provided in subsection B of this
13 section shall be eligible to apply and be considered for continued
14 participation in the full Tulsa Reconciliation Education and
15 Scholarship Program. Any student subsequently awarded such
16 scholarship shall have the duration of the scholarship provided
17 pursuant to this subsection deducted from the limits set in
18 subsection D of Section 2625 of this title;

19 4. The award may only be funded with state funds appropriated
20 to the Tulsa Reconciliation Education and Scholarship Trust Fund and
21 income therefrom, and shall be made subject to the availability of
22 such funds; and
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1 5. The awards made pursuant to this subsection shall be
2 included within the maximum number of scholarships specified in
3 subsection A of this section.

4 SECTION 3. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2625, is
5 amended to read as follows:

6 Section 2625. A. Subject to the availability of funds, an
7 amount of not more than the equivalent of the average amount of
8 resident tuition for which an eligible Tulsa Reconciliation
9 Education and Scholarship Program participant enrolled in an
10 institution in The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education, or
11 enrolled in a postsecondary career and technology education program,
12 whichever is applicable, is obligated to pay shall be awarded by
13 allocation from the Tulsa Reconciliation Education and Scholarship
14 Trust Fund.

15 B. Subject to the availability of funds, for each eligible
16 Tulsa Reconciliation Education and Scholarship Program participant
17 enrolled at a private institution of higher education, the Oklahoma
18 State Regents for Higher Education shall award from the Tulsa
19 Reconciliation Education and Scholarship Trust Fund an amount of not
20 more than the equivalent of the average amount of resident tuition
21 for which the participant would be eligible if the participant were
22 enrolled in a program at an institution of The Oklahoma State System
23 of Higher Education.

1 C. Subject to the availability of funds, an amount of not more
2 than the equivalent of the average amount of tuition for which an
3 eligible Tulsa Reconciliation Education and Scholarship Program
4 participant enrolled in a postsecondary career and technology
5 education program is obligated to pay shall be awarded by allocation
6 from the Tulsa Reconciliation Education and Scholarship Trust Fund.
7 The allocation shall not exceed the amount a participant would have
8 received for enrollment at a two-year institution within The
9 Oklahoma State System of Higher Education.

10 D. Benefits awarded under the Tulsa Reconciliation Education
11 and Scholarship Program shall not be allowed for courses or other
12 postsecondary units taken in excess of the requirements for
13 completion of a baccalaureate program or taken more than five (5)
14 years after the student's first semester of participation in the
15 program. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education may award
16 the Tulsa Reconciliation Education and Scholarship Program benefits
17 for courses of postsecondary units taken more than five (5) years
18 after the student's first semester of participation in the program
19 only in hardship circumstances. No Tulsa Reconciliation Education
20 and Scholarship Program participant may receive benefits beyond a
21 cumulative time period of five (5) years. The Oklahoma State
22 Regents for Higher Education may establish a maximum limit on the
23 number of courses or other postsecondary units to which Tulsa
24 Reconciliation Education and Scholarship Program benefits will

1 apply. An award to an eligible Tulsa Reconciliation Education and
2 Scholarship Program participant who is enrolled in a postsecondary
3 career and technology education program may be used to pay for both
4 career and technology education and college work if both are
5 required by the program.

6 E. Benefits awarded under the Tulsa Reconciliation Education
7 and Scholarship Program shall be awarded to not more than ~~300~~ three
8 hundred (300) eligible participants annually, subject to the amount
9 of funds available for the program and the number of eligible
10 participants. Subject to the provisions of subsection F of this
11 section, if funds are not sufficient to provide awards for the
12 maximum number of eligible participants each year, the Oklahoma
13 State Regents for Higher Education shall make awards on the basis of
14 need. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall take
15 into consideration other grants and scholarships received by an
16 eligible student when making awards. If ~~an eligible student~~
17 ~~receives other grants and scholarships~~ scholarship award funds
18 remain after payment of resident tuition, the benefits awarded under
19 the Tulsa Reconciliation Education and Scholarship Program may cover
20 any additional educational costs not covered by the other grants and
21 scholarships including, but not limited to, fees, required textbooks
22 or materials, and room and board. If the family of an eligible
23 Tulsa Reconciliation Education and Scholarship Program participant
24 may qualify for the federal Hope Scholarship or Lifetime Learning

1 tax credit as provided for in the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997, P.L.
2 No. 105-34, the participant may elect to use the award allowed by
3 this section to pay for fees, required textbooks or materials and,
4 if any funds remain, to pay for room and board instead of resident
5 tuition.

6 F. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education may, at the
7 time an award is made on behalf of a Tulsa Reconciliation Education
8 and Scholarship Program participant, set aside in the Tulsa
9 Reconciliation Education and Scholarship Trust Fund funds for the
10 full commitment made to such Tulsa Reconciliation Education and
11 Scholarship Program participant. For all academic years,
12 participants who have previously received awards under the
13 provisions of the Tulsa Reconciliation Education and Scholarship Act
14 and who have continued at all times to fulfill the requirements for
15 eligibility to receive awards provided pursuant to this program
16 shall be given ~~an absolute~~ priority for continued financial support
17 by the Tulsa Reconciliation Education and Scholarship Program
18 superior to any ~~residents~~ students who are applying for such
19 benefits for the first time; provided, however, that scholarship
20 applicants who are direct lineal descendants as defined in
21 subsection C of Section 2623 of this title shall always be given
22 first priority status.

23 SECTION 4. It being immediately necessary for the preservation
24 of the public peace, health, or safety, an emergency is hereby
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1 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and
2 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.
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