

1 ENGROSSED HOUSE
2 BILL NO. 1727

By: Moore, McCane, Munson,
Provenzano, Hill, Harris,
Deck, Archer, West (Tammy)
and Gise of the House

4 and

5 Pugh of the Senate

6
7
8
9
10 [Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program -
11 eligibility requirements - children of teachers -
12 student agreements - financial qualification
13 determination - Oklahoma State Regents for Higher
14 Education - employment status - effective date -
15 emergency]

16
17
18
19 BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

20 SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2603, as
21 amended by Section 1, Chapter 274, O.S.L. 2024 (70 O.S. Supp. 2024,
22 Section 2603), is amended to read as follows:

23 Section 2603. A. Except as otherwise provided for in
24 subsection B of this section and elsewhere in this section, to be

1 eligible to participate in the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access
2 Program and to qualify for an award which includes payment of an
3 amount equivalent to resident tuition or other tuition pursuant to
4 Section 2604 of this title for the first semester or other academic
5 unit of postsecondary enrollment, a student shall:

6 1. Be a resident of this state or be enrolled in a school
7 district located in this state that serves students who reside in
8 both this state and an adjacent state pursuant to a contract as
9 authorized in Section 5-117.1 of this title;

10 2. Be a United States citizen or lawfully present in the United
11 States. A student who is not a United States citizen or lawfully
12 present in the United States shall not be eligible to participate in
13 the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program and to qualify for an
14 award notwithstanding the provisions of Section 3242 of this title.
15 The provisions of this paragraph shall not apply to any student who
16 was enrolled in the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program prior to
17 the end of the 2006-2007 school year;

18 3. Have a record of satisfactory compliance with agreements
19 executed pursuant to Section 2605 of this title;

20 4. a. have graduated within the previous three (3) years
21 from a high school accredited by the State Board of
22 Education or the Oklahoma School of Science and
23 Mathematics with a minimum 2.5 cumulative grade point
24

1 average on a 4.0 scale for all work attempted in
2 grades nine through twelve,

3 b. have graduated within the previous three (3) years
4 from a high school not accredited by the State Board
5 of Education with a minimum 2.5 cumulative grade point
6 average on a 4.0 scale for all work attempted in
7 grades nine through twelve and have achieved a
8 composite score of 22 or higher on the ACT test, or

9 c. have satisfactorily completed within the previous
10 three (3) years an educational program that was
11 provided through a means other than a public or
12 private school and have achieved a composite score of
13 22 or higher on the ACT test;

14 5. Have completed the curricular requirements for admission to
15 an institution within The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education.
16 Students shall also have attained a 2.5 grade point average in the
17 core curriculum courses. Students who attended a high school which
18 did not offer all the core curriculum courses or students who were
19 educated by other means and were not offered all the core curriculum
20 courses shall be allowed to satisfy this curriculum requirement by
21 participating in a program approved by the Oklahoma State Regents
22 for Higher Education for remediation of high school curricular
23 deficiencies;

1 6. Have satisfied admission standards as determined by the
2 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education for first-time-entering
3 students for the appropriate type of institution, or, if attending a
4 private institution, have satisfied admission standards as
5 determined by the private institution. No student participating in
6 the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program shall be admitted into
7 an institution of higher education by special admission standards;

8 7. Have secured admission to, and enrolled in, an institution
9 which is a member of The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education,
10 a postsecondary vocational-technical program offered by a technology
11 center school that meets the requirements to be eligible for federal
12 student financial aid, or a private institution of higher learning
13 located within this state and accredited pursuant to Section 4103 of
14 this title; and

15 8. a. have established financial need according to the
16 provisions of subsection D of Section 2605 of this
17 title and standards and provisions promulgated by the
18 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education,

19 b. if the student was adopted between birth and twelve
20 (12) years of age while in the permanent custody of
21 the Department of Human Services, in the court-ordered
22 custody of a licensed private nonprofit child-placing
23 agency, or federally recognized Indian tribe, as
24 defined by the federal Indian Child Welfare Act, have

1 established financial need according to the provisions
2 of paragraph 1 of subsection E of Section 2605 of this
3 title and standards and provisions promulgated by the
4 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education,

5 c. if the student was adopted between thirteen (13) and
6 seventeen (17) years of age while in the permanent
7 custody of the Department of Human Services, in the
8 court-ordered custody of a licensed private nonprofit
9 child-placing agency, or federally recognized Indian
10 tribe, as defined by the federal Indian Child Welfare
11 Act, have established financial need according to the
12 provisions of paragraph 2 of subsection E of Section
13 2605 of this title and standards and provisions
14 promulgated by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher
15 Education, ~~or~~

16 d. if the student was placed in the custody of the
17 Department of Human Services at any time during the
18 eighth, ninth, tenth, or eleventh grades and enrolls
19 in the program no later than his or her official date
20 of high school graduation, have established financial
21 need according to the provisions of paragraph 3 of
22 subsection E of Section 2605 of this title and
23 standards and provisions promulgated by the Oklahoma
24 State Regents for Higher Education, or

1 e. if the student is the child of a certified classroom
2 teacher, as provided for in paragraph 4 of subsection
3 E of Section 2605 of this title. For the purposes of
4 this paragraph, "certified classroom teacher" means
5 any certified, full-time classroom teacher who has
6 been employed as a teacher in a classroom by a public
7 school district in this state for a minimum of ten
8 (10) years. Certified classroom teacher does not mean
9 a certified teacher who has been employed as a
10 district superintendent, principal, or any other
11 position within the administration of a public school
12 district.

13 B. 1. A student shall be eligible to participate in the
14 Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program and to qualify for an award
15 which includes payment of an amount equivalent to resident tuition
16 or other tuition pursuant to Section 2604 of this title for the
17 first semester or other academic unit of postsecondary enrollment if
18 the student meets all of the following criteria:

19 a. is a child of any person killed after January 1, 2000,
20 in the line of duty in any branch of the United States
21 Armed Forces or who died after January 1, 2000, as a
22 result of an injury sustained while in the line of
23 duty in any branch of the United States Armed Forces
24 and the person who was killed or died filed an

1 individual or joint Oklahoma income tax return for the
2 tax year prior to the year during which the person was
3 killed or died,

4 b. is a resident of this state or is enrolled in a school
5 district located in this state that serves students
6 who reside in both this state and an adjacent state
7 pursuant to a contract as authorized in Section 5-
8 117.1 of this title,

9 c. enrolls in an institution within The Oklahoma State
10 System of Higher Education prior to reaching the age
11 of twenty-one (21),

12 d. has satisfied admission standards as determined by the
13 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education for first-
14 time-entering students for the appropriate type of
15 institution, or, if attending a private institution,
16 has satisfied admission standards as determined by the
17 private institution. No student participating in the
18 Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program shall be
19 admitted into an institution of higher education by
20 special admission standards,

21 e. has secured admission to, and enrolled in, an
22 institution which is a member of The Oklahoma State
23 System of Higher Education, a postsecondary
24 vocational-technical program offered by a technology

1 center school that meets the requirements to be
2 eligible for federal student financial aid, or a
3 private institution of higher learning located within
4 this state and accredited pursuant to Section 4103 of
5 this title, and

6 f. executes an agreement pursuant to subsection C of
7 Section 2605 of this title.

8 2. A student who is eligible to participate in the program
9 pursuant to this subsection shall not be required to meet the
10 eligibility requirements set forth in subsection A of this section.

11 C. To retain eligibility while pursuing the program of higher
12 learning in which enrolled, the student shall:

13 1. Meet the requirements for retention and degree completion as
14 established by the institution in which the student is enrolled;

15 2. Maintain good academic standing and satisfactory academic
16 progress according to standards of the Oklahoma State Regents for
17 Higher Education;

18 3. Maintain satisfactory academic progress as required for
19 eligibility for federal Title IV student financial aid programs.

20 The provisions of this paragraph shall become effective for the
21 2012-2013 school year;

22 4. Comply with the standards related to maintenance of
23 eligibility as promulgated by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher
24 Education; and

1 5. Refrain from conduct that leads to expulsion or suspension
2 of more than one semester from an institution of higher education.
3 A student who violates the provisions of this paragraph shall
4 permanently lose eligibility for program benefits. The provisions
5 of this paragraph shall become effective January 1, 2008.

6 D. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and the
7 State Board of Career and Technology Education shall promulgate
8 rules relating to maintenance of eligibility under the Oklahoma
9 Higher Learning Access Act by a student.

10 E. It is the intent of the Legislature that students in the
11 ninth grade for the 1992-93 school year who are determined to be
12 eligible Oklahoma Higher Learning Access students pursuant to the
13 Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Act shall be the first students
14 eligible for benefits from the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Trust
15 Fund.

16 F. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education are
17 authorized to study, develop, and propose criteria for determining
18 award eligibility based upon the completion of seven semesters of
19 high school coursework by a student.

20 SECTION 2. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2605, as
21 last amended by Section 2, Chapter 274, O.S.L. 2024 (70 O.S. Supp.
22 2024, Section 2605), is amended to read as follows:

23 Section 2605. A. Each school year, every fifth- through
24 eleventh-grade student in the public and private schools of this

1 state and students who are educated by other means and are in the
2 equivalent of the fifth through eleventh grade shall be apprised,
3 together with the parent, custodial parent, or guardian of the
4 student, of the opportunity for access to higher learning under the
5 Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program. The Oklahoma State Regents
6 for Higher Education and the State Board of Education shall develop,
7 promote, and coordinate a public awareness program to be utilized in
8 making students and parents aware of the Oklahoma Higher Learning
9 Access Program.

10 B. On a form provided by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher
11 Education, every public school district shall designate at least one
12 Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program contact person, who shall be
13 a counselor or teacher, at each public school site in this state in
14 which eighth-, ninth-, tenth-, or eleventh-grade classes are taught.
15 When requested by the State Regents, the State Board of Education
16 shall assist the State Regents to ensure the designation of contact
17 persons. Private schools shall also designate at least one school
18 official as a contact person. For students who are educated by
19 other means, a parent or guardian or other person approved by the
20 State Regents shall be designated the contact person.

21 C. 1. Students who qualify on the basis of financial need
22 according to subsection D or E of this section or who meet the
23 eligibility qualification set forth in subparagraph a of paragraph 1
24 of subsection B of Section 2603 of this title prior to entering the

1 eleventh grade or prior to reaching the age of sixteen (16) and the
2 standards and provisions promulgated by the Oklahoma State Regents
3 for Higher Education shall be given the opportunity throughout the
4 eighth-, ninth-, tenth-, and eleventh-grade years, for students
5 enrolled in a public or private school, or between the ages of
6 thirteen (13) and sixteen (16), for students who are educated by
7 other means, to enter into participation in the program by agreeing
8 to, throughout the remainder of their school years or educational
9 program:

- 10 a. attend school or an educational program regularly and
11 do homework regularly,
- 12 b. refrain from substance abuse,
- 13 c. refrain from commission of crimes or delinquent acts,
- 14 d. have school work and school records reviewed by
15 mentors designated pursuant to the program,
- 16 e. provide information requested by the Oklahoma State
17 Regents for Higher Education or the State Board of
18 Education, and
- 19 f. participate in program activities.

20 2. Students who meet the eligibility qualification set forth in
21 subparagraph a of paragraph 1 of subsection B of Section 2603 of
22 this title after completing the eleventh grade or after reaching the
23 age of seventeen (17) shall be given the opportunity prior to
24 reaching the age of twenty-one (21) to enter into participation in

1 the program and shall execute an agreement with provisions as
2 determined by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

3 3. The contact person shall maintain the agreements, which
4 shall be executed on forms provided by the Oklahoma State Regents
5 for Higher Education and managed according to regulations
6 promulgated by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, and
7 the contact person shall monitor compliance of the student with the
8 terms of the agreement. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher
9 Education are authorized to process student agreements and verify
10 compliance with the agreements. Students failing to comply with the
11 terms of the agreement shall not be eligible for the awards provided
12 in Section 2604 of this title.

13 D. Except as otherwise provided for in subsection E of this
14 section and except for students who qualify pursuant to subsection B
15 of Section 2603 of this title, a student shall not be found to be in
16 financial need for purposes of the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access
17 Program if:

18 1. Beginning with eighth-, ninth-, or tenth-grade students who
19 are enrolled in a public or private school or students between the
20 ages of thirteen (13) and fifteen (15) who are educated by other
21 means who apply for participation in the program in the 2017-2018
22 school year, the federal adjusted gross income of the student's
23 parent(s) exceeds Fifty-five Thousand Dollars (\$55,000.00) per year;

24

1 2. Beginning with eighth-, ninth-, tenth-, or eleventh-grade
2 students who are enrolled in a public or private school or students
3 between the ages of thirteen (13) and sixteen (16) who are educated
4 by other means who apply for participation in the program in the
5 2021-2022 school year, the federal adjusted gross income of the
6 student's parent(s) exceeds Sixty Thousand Dollars (\$60,000.00) per
7 year;

8 3. Beginning with eighth-, ninth-, tenth-, or eleventh-grade
9 students who are enrolled in a public or private school or students
10 between the ages of thirteen (13) and sixteen (16) who are educated
11 by other means who apply for participation in the program in the
12 2022-2023 school year:

13 a. the federal adjusted gross income of the student's
14 parent(s), who have two or fewer dependent children,
15 exceeds Sixty Thousand Dollars (\$60,000.00) per year,

16 b. the federal adjusted gross income of the student's
17 parent(s), who have three or four dependent children,
18 exceeds Seventy Thousand Dollars (\$70,000.00) per
19 year, or

20 c. the federal adjusted gross income of the student's
21 parent(s), who have five or more dependent children,
22 exceeds Eighty Thousand Dollars (\$80,000.00) per year;

23 4. Beginning with the 2018-2019 academic year, prior to
24 receiving any Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program benefit award

1 for any year during which the student is enrolled in an institution
2 which is a member of The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education,
3 a postsecondary vocational-technical program offered by a technology
4 center school that meets the requirements to be eligible for federal
5 student financial aid, or a private institution of higher learning
6 located within this state and accredited pursuant to Section 4103 of
7 this title, the federal adjusted gross income of the student's
8 parent(s) exceeds One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000.00) per
9 year.

10 The determination of financial qualification as set forth in
11 this paragraph shall be based on the income of the student, not the
12 income of the parent(s), if a student:

- 13 a. is determined to be independent of the student's
14 parents for federal financial aid purposes,
- 15 b. was in the permanent custody of the Department of
16 Human Services at the time the student enrolled in the
17 program, or
- 18 c. was in the court-ordered custody of a federally
19 recognized Indian tribe, as defined by the federal
20 Indian Child Welfare Act, at the time the student
21 enrolled in the program.

22 The provisions of this paragraph shall apply to any student who
23 has received an Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program benefit
24 award after the 2017-2018 school year; and

1 5. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall review
2 the determination of financial qualification as set forth in
3 paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 of this subsection if the income from taxable
4 and nontaxable sources of the student's parent(s) includes income
5 received from nontaxable military benefits or income received from
6 the federal Social Security Administration due to the death or
7 disability of the student's parent(s). If the income from taxable
8 and nontaxable sources of the student's parent(s), excluding income
9 received from nontaxable military benefits or income received from
10 the federal Social Security Administration due to the death or
11 disability of the student's parent(s), does not exceed the
12 limitations set forth by paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 of this subsection,
13 the student shall be determined to have met the financial
14 qualification set forth in paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 of this
15 subsection.

16 E. 1. A student who was adopted between birth and twelve (12)
17 years of age while in the permanent custody of the Department of
18 Human Services, in the court-ordered custody of a licensed private
19 nonprofit child-placing agency, or federally recognized Indian
20 tribe, as defined by the federal Indian Child Welfare Act, shall not
21 be found to be in financial need for purposes of the Oklahoma Higher
22 Learning Access Program if at the time the student begins
23 postsecondary education and prior to receiving any Oklahoma Higher
24 Learning Access Program benefit award, the federal adjusted gross

1 income of the student's parent(s) exceeds One Hundred Fifty Thousand
2 Dollars (\$150,000.00) per year. The provisions of this paragraph
3 shall not apply to any student who has received an Oklahoma Higher
4 Learning Access Program benefit award prior to the 2012-2013 school
5 year.

6 2. A student who was adopted between thirteen (13) and
7 seventeen (17) years of age while in the permanent custody of the
8 Department of Human Services, in the court-ordered custody of a
9 licensed private nonprofit child-placing agency, or federally
10 recognized Indian tribe, as defined by the federal Indian Child
11 Welfare Act, shall not be found to be in financial need for purposes
12 of the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program if at the time the
13 student begins postsecondary education and prior to receiving any
14 Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program benefit award, the federal
15 adjusted gross income of the student's parent(s) exceeds Two Hundred
16 Thousand Dollars (\$200,000.00) per year. The provisions of this
17 paragraph shall not apply to any student who has received an
18 Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program benefit award prior to the
19 2012-2013 school year.

20 3. A student who was placed in the custody of the Department of
21 Human Services at any time during the eighth, ninth, tenth, or
22 eleventh grades and enrolls in the program no later than his or her
23 official date of high school graduation shall not be found to be in
24 financial need for purposes of the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access

1 Program if the federal adjusted gross income of the student exceeds
2 Sixty Thousand Dollars (\$60,000.00) per year.

3 4. Except for students who qualify pursuant to subsection B of
4 Section 2603 of this title, the determination of financial
5 qualification as set forth in this subsection shall be based on the
6 income of the student, not the income of the parent(s), if the
7 student is determined to be independent of the student's parent(s)
8 for federal financial aid purposes. A determination of financial
9 qualification shall not be required for the student who meets the
10 criteria set forth in this subsection at the time the student
11 applies for participation in the program. The provisions of this
12 paragraph shall not apply to any student who has received an
13 Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program benefit award prior to the
14 2008-2009 school year.

15 5. a. A determination of financial qualification is not
16 required for a student who is the child of a certified
17 classroom teacher at the time the student applies for
18 participation in the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access
19 Program and prior to receiving any Oklahoma Higher
20 Learning Access Program benefit award for any year
21 during which the student is enrolled in an institution
22 which is a member of The Oklahoma State System of
23 Higher Education, a postsecondary vocational-technical
24 program offered by a technology center school that

1 meets the eligibility requirements for federal student
2 financial aid, or a private institution of higher
3 learning located within this state and accredited
4 pursuant to Section 4103 of this title. The Oklahoma
5 State Regents for Higher Education shall verify the
6 full-time employment status of the student's parent(s)
7 prior to the student receiving any Oklahoma Higher
8 Learning Access Program benefit award. The provisions
9 of this paragraph shall apply to eighth-, ninth-, or
10 tenth-grade students who are enrolled in a public or
11 private school or students between the ages of
12 thirteen (13) and fifteen (15) who are educated by
13 other means who apply for participation in the program
14 after the 2023-2024 school year, and

15 b. For the purposes of this paragraph, "certified
16 classroom teacher" means any certified, full-time
17 classroom teacher who has been employed as a teacher
18 in a classroom by a public school district in this
19 state for a minimum of ten (10) years. The teacher is
20 not required to have been employed by the same public
21 school district for ten (10) years, and the ten (10)
22 years of employment do not have to be consecutive.
23 Certified classroom teacher does not mean a certified
24 teacher who has been employed as a district

1 superintendent, principal, or any other position
2 within the administration of a public school district.

3 F. The financial qualification of a student as set forth in
4 subsections D and E of this section shall be certified by the
5 contact person or by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education
6 on the agreement form provided by the Oklahoma State Regents for
7 Higher Education. The form shall be retained in the permanent
8 record of the student and a copy forwarded to the Oklahoma State
9 Regents for Higher Education.

10 G. Agreements shall be witnessed by the parent, custodial
11 parent, or guardian of the student, who shall further agree to:

12 1. Assist the student in achieving compliance with the
13 agreements;

14 2. Confer, when requested to do so, with the school contact
15 person, other school personnel, and program mentors;

16 3. Provide information requested by the Oklahoma State Regents
17 for Higher Education or the State Board of Education; and

18 4. Assist the student in completing forms and reports required
19 for program participation, making applications to institutions and
20 schools of higher learning, and filing applications for student
21 grants and scholarships.

22 H. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall
23 promulgate rules for the determination of student compliance with
24 agreements made pursuant to this section.

1 I. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall
2 designate personnel to coordinate tracking of program records for
3 the years when students participating in the program are still in
4 the schools or are being educated by other means, provide staff
5 development for contact persons in the schools, and provide liaison
6 with the State Board of Education and local organizations and
7 individuals participating in the program.

8 J. The school district where an Oklahoma Higher Learning Access
9 Program student is enrolled when the student begins participation in
10 the program and any subsequent school district where the student
11 enrolls shall forward information regarding participation by the
12 student in the program to a school to which the student transfers
13 upon the request of the school for the records of the student.

14 K. Students participating in the Oklahoma Higher Learning
15 Access Program shall provide their Social Security number or their
16 student identification number used by their school to the Oklahoma
17 State Regents for Higher Education. The Regents shall keep the
18 numbers confidential and use them only for administrative purposes.

19 SECTION 3. This act shall become effective July 1, 2025.

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

24

1 Passed the House of Representatives the 6th day of March, 2025.

2
3 _____
4 Presiding Officer of the House
of Representatives

5 Passed the Senate the _____ day of _____, 2025.

6
7
8 _____
9 Presiding Officer of the Senate