

Article 12. ALASKA MERIT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.

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Sec. 14.43.810. Alaska merit scholarship program established; regulations. (a) The Alaska merit scholarship program is established to provide scholarships for high school graduates who are Alaska residents to attend a qualified postsecondary institution in the state.

(b) The department shall, in consultation with the commission, adopt regulations necessary to implement the program. The commission shall administer the daily operations of the program and financing of the program, including the procedures for applying for the scholarships, establishing standards for and ensuring continuing compliance with programmatic standards, and requiring students to apply for other non loan financial aid, consistent with federal law. (sec 5 ch 14 SLA 2010)

Sec. 14.43.820. Alaska merit scholarship program; eligibility. (a) Subject to appropriation, the commission shall award an Alaska merit scholarship program scholarship to an applicant who

- (1) is a resident of the state as defined in AS 01.10.055;
- (2) graduated or will graduate within six months from a high school in the state;
- (3) has completed a core academic curriculum in high school that includes

(A) four years of mathematics, four years of language arts, four years of science, and four years of social studies, one year of which may include a foreign language, an Alaska Native language, fine arts, or cultural heritage; or

(B) three years of mathematics, four years of language arts, three years of science, four years of social studies, and two years of a foreign language or an Alaska Native language;

(4) has a minimum grade-point average in high school of 2.5 or higher; the department shall set by regulation minimum requirements based on a substantially similar standard for districts that do not assign grades;

(5) has achieved a minimum score on a

(A) college entrance examination; or

(B) standardized examination designed to measure a student's level of preparedness to make the transition to work, as selected by the department; and

(6) is enrolled in good standing in a course of study at a qualified postsecondary institution in this state that is intended to result in the award of a certificate or degree.

(b) The commission shall establish in regulation standards for continuing and regaining eligibility for a scholarship. (sec 5 ch 14 SLA 2010)

Sec. 14.43.825. Maximum annual awards. (a) The maximum annual awards for the Alaska merit scholarship program scholarships are as follows:

(1) the first award level is \$4,755 and requires a 3.5 grade-point average or above and a very high minimum score on a college entrance examination;

(2) the second award level is \$3,566 and requires a 3.0 grade-point average or above and a high minimum score on a college entrance examination;

(3) the third award level is \$2,378 and requires a 2.5 grade-point average or above and a

moderately high minimum score on a college entrance examination.

(b) A student's eligibility for a scholarship terminates six years after the date the student graduated from high school unless the student qualifies for an extension of time allowed by the department by regulation.

(c) Except as provided in (b) of this section, a student receiving a scholarship may remain eligible for up to eight semesters of enrollment in good standing at a qualified university or college, which may include graduate courses.

(d) Scholarships may be awarded to a full-time student or, if a student is enrolled part time, prorated based on the number of credits. In this subsection, "full time" means enrollment in a course of study that is not less than 12 credits and "part time" means enrollment in a course of student that is not less than six credits but less than 12 credits.

(e) The amount of a scholarship award may not exceed the amount of the student's costs of attendance as certified by the postsecondary institution for the purposes of federal financial aid, less any other scholarship or non-loan financial aid awarded to the student.

(f) Payment of a scholarship is subject to appropriation. If insufficient funds are appropriated to pay all eligible scholarships, the commission shall pay existing awards on a pro rata basis. (sec 5 ch 14 SLA 2010)

Sec. 14.43.830. Qualified postsecondary institutions. (a) The following institutions are qualified postsecondary institutions for purposes of awarding an Alaska merit scholarship program scholarship:

(1) a university or college physically located in the state that is

(A) authorized to operate in the state under AS 14.48.020, or is exempt from authorization under AS 14.48.030(b)(1); and

(B) accredited by a regional accreditation association;

(1) a career and technical school program physically located in the state that has been included on a list of certified career and technical school programs received from the Department of Labor and Workforce Development; the commission shall publish the list on or before June 30 of the year preceding enrollment.

(b) The Department of Labor and Workforce Development shall, in consultation with the Department of Education and Early Development, adopt regulations under AS 44.62 (Administrative Procedure Act) establishing criteria under which the Department of Labor and Workforce Development shall certify career and technical school programs in the state as eligible to participate in the Alaska merit scholarship program. (sec 5 ch 14 SLA 2010)

Sec. 14.43.840. Report to the legislature. (a) To the extent permitted under law, the department, the commission, the University of Alaska, and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development shall share data necessary to prepare public reports regarding the program.

(b) No more than 10 days after the convening of each regular legislative session, the department, the commission, the University of Alaska, and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development shall present an annual report to the public, the governor, and the legislature containing information of public interest regarding the program, including

(1) the number of applicants and number or types of scholarships awarded;

(2) the dollar amount of scholarships awarded in past years and the dollar amounts expected to be awarded for the next year; and

(3) data and trends in the data regarding high school and postsecondary student performance, programmatic changes, and retention and graduation rates over time. (sec 5 ch 14 SLA 2010)

Sec. 14.43.849. Definitions. In AS 14.43.810 – 14.43.849, unless the context requires otherwise,

(1) “department” means the Department of Education and Early Development;

(2) “grade-point average” means the average of all grades on a four-point scale, or five-point scale for advanced placement classes, obtained by the student in high school;

(3) “high school” means a public or accredited secondary school in the state and a home school program that is approved by the department;

(4) “program” means the Alaska merit scholarship program established under AS 14.43.810 – 14.43.849;

(5) “school district” means a borough school district, a city school district, a regional educational attendance area, and a state boarding school. (sec. 5 ch 14 SLA 2010)

Sec. 14.03.113. District determination of scholarship eligibility. A school district shall determine whether a student who graduates from a high school in the district is eligible for an award of an Alaska merit scholarship program scholarship under AS 14.43.810 – 14.43.850. If a student is eligible, the district shall state in the student’s permanent record the highest level of funding for which the student is eligible. A district shall provide a student with an opportunity to request that the district correct an error in the eligibility determination.