

# Florida

## Department of Education

**Bill Number:** House Bill 343

**Bill Title:** Public postsecondary need-based student financial assistance

**Bill Sponsor:** Schools and Learning Council; Representative Bean

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2007

**DOE Contact:** Theresa Antworth, Director, State Scholarships and Grants, (850) 410-5185

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### Executive Summary:

The act expands general eligibility requirements for state financial aid to include students enrolled in career certificate programs at public community colleges and district career centers.

This act creates the Florida Public Postsecondary Career Education Student Assistance Grant Program for eligible students enrolled in such programs who have demonstrated financial need. The act stipulates the following requirements for the program:

- Students must be certificate-seeking and enrolled at least half time (the clock hour equivalent of six semester credit hours per term in a public postsecondary career certificate program that consists of at least 450 clock hours).
- Students must meet the general requirement for student eligibility as specified in s. 1009.40, F. S., except as otherwise provided in this section.
- Students must apply for the Pell Grant; however, a Pell Grant entitlement is not required as a condition for receiving program funding.
- Participating institutions must submit a report to the Department of Education each academic term detailing the eligible students to whom funds were awarded.
- Funds for this program will be transmitted to the president of the community college or district school superintendent prior to the registration period, and institutions will notify students of their award.
- Student eligibility status shall be determined by the institution.
- Institutions shall certify the amount of funds disbursed to each student and return any undisbursed funds to the Department of Education by June 1 of each year.
- The State Board of Education is responsible for establishing rules necessary to implement the program.

The act also amends the Florida Work Experience Program (FWEP) to include students enrolled in career certificate programs at the community college or career technical center and Educator Preparation Institutes (EPI). The following changes are made to the FWEP statute:

- Modifies employer reimbursements to be up to 70% (current law is 70%) – this allows program flexibility to pay less when the employer is willing to pay more of the cost.
- Allows up to 100% of program funds to be used on campus to aid in student retention and completion (current law is 25%).
- Authorizes program to pay 100% of the salary for students employed by a postsecondary institution to encourage student retention (current law is 70%).
- Authorizes a new provision for the program to pay for pre-employment expenses when a student is placed into a public school for work experience (e.g., fingerprinting).

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- Authorizes one exception to the prohibition that students cannot have a baccalaureate degree by providing eligibility to students in Education Preparation Institutes established under s. 1004.85, F. S.

The General Appropriations Act allocates \$2.2 million to the Florida Public Postsecondary Career Education Student Assistance Grant Program and \$50,000 to expand the Florida Work Experience Program as proposed in the act (Specific Appropriation 80, Conference Report on Senate Bill 2800).

### **General Implementation Timeline:**

The act stipulates that all institutions participating in the Florida Public Postsecondary Career Education Student Assistance Grant Program must submit a report detailing to whom the funds were granted each academic term, and return any remaining funds to the Department of Education by June 1 of each year.

The act specifies that any institution receiving funds from FWEP must certify to the Department of Education the amount of funds disbursed to each student within 30 days of the end of each term.