

131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2023

Legislative Document

No. 1394

S.P. 561

In Senate, March 28, 2023

An Act to Expand and Strengthen the Competitive Skills Scholarship Program

Reference to the Committee on Labor and Housing suggested and ordered printed.

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DAREK M. GRANT Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator ROTUNDO of Androscoggin. Cosponsored by Senator TIPPING of Penobscot, Representative GERE of Kennebunkport, Representative ROEDER of Bangor and Senators: CURRY of Waldo, VITELLI of Sagadahoc, Representatives: CLOUTIER of Lewiston, GEIGER of Rockland, MALON of Biddeford, SKOLD of Portland.

1	Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:
2 3	Sec. 1. 26 MRSA §1166, sub-§1, ¶B, as amended by PL 2007, c. 506, §1, is further amended to read:
4 5 6	B. "Competitive Skills Scholarship Fund planned yield" means the percentage of wages, as defined in section 1043, subsection 19, equal to $\frac{.02\%}{.04\%}$ of the total wages for each contributing employer subject to this chapter.
7	Sec. 2. 26 MRSA §2033, sub-§1, ¶A-1 is enacted to read:
8 9 10	A-1. "Certified preapprenticeship training program" means a preapprenticeship training program certified by the Maine Apprenticeship Program pursuant to section 3213.
11	Sec. 3. 26 MRSA §2033, sub-§1, ¶D-1 is enacted to read:
12 13	D-1. "Preapprenticeship training program" has the same meaning as in section 3201, subsection 15-A.
14	Sec. 4. 26 MRSA §2033, sub-§4, ¶C is enacted to read:
15 16 17	C. A registered apprenticeship program approved pursuant to section 3202 or certified preapprenticeship training program established pursuant to this chapter is deemed to have met the requirements of this subsection.
18 19	Sec. 5. 26 MRSA §2033, sub-§6, ¶A, as enacted by PL 2007, c. 352, Pt. A, §3, is amended to read:
20 21 22	A. The program must provide to a participant, in accordance with rules adopted by the department, when education, training and support are not reasonably available from another recognized program and are necessary to carry out that participant's plan:
23	(1) Books, supplies, tools and equipment required by the participant's plan;
24 25	(2) Child care, transportation and other necessary support as determined by the department; and
26 27	(3) Assistance needed to obtain remedial or prerequisite education necessary for the participant to participate successfully in the program- <u>; and</u>
28 29	(4) Costs of licensing or certification necessary to practice in an occupation for which the individual is qualified.
30 31 32	Money for mandatory fees or tuition may not be provided unless the participant is not eligible for necessary funds from other public grants or scholarships reasonably available to the participant for this purpose.
33 34 35 36	Registered apprentices and individuals in a certified preapprenticeship training program approved for participation pursuant to subsection 4 are eligible for services under this subsection, including those necessary to participate in any on-the-job learning component of those programs.
37 38	Sec. 6. 26 MRSA §2033, sub-§7, as enacted by PL 2007, c. 352, Pt. A, §3, is amended to read:

1 7. Application; decision; appeal. An individual must be given the opportunity to 2 make a written application for education, training and support available from the program 3 and be given a prompt written decision from the department specifically indicating the type and amount of services approved or denied. The costs for an educational transcript, 4 5 credential evaluation or similar requirement needed to determine eligibility for the program 6 must be paid for by the program for any applicant who is otherwise eligible for 7 participation, as determined by the department, if funds are not reasonably available from 8 another source for this purpose. Any decision related to eligibility for, or the provision of, 9 services under this section must provide notice that the decision may be appealed by the 10 individual through a request for a hearing within 30 days of receipt of the decision in 11 accordance with rules adopted by the department and consistent with Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 4. The 30-day appeal period may be extended up to 15 additional days if the 12 claimant can show good cause for failing to appeal within the initial 30-day period. 13

SUMMARY

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15 This bill amends the laws related to the Competitive Skills Scholarship Program to increase opportunities for program enrollment by increasing revenue available to the 16 17 program and providing for coverage of additional services necessary for eligible 18 individuals to participate in the program. The bill also requires that registered apprentices 19 and individuals participating in certified preapprenticeship training programs are eligible 20 for the program, including for any educational or support services necessary to participate 21 throughout the period of their apprenticeship or preapprenticeship program. It also requires 22 payment by the program of costs required as part of the application process for applicants 23 who are determined otherwise eligible by the Department of Labor.