



General Assembly

February Session, 2026

Raised Bill No. 380

LCO No. 1750



Referred to Committee on HIGHER EDUCATION AND
EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT

Introduced by:
(HED)

***AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK
FORCE TO SUPPORT PROMISE PROGRAMS IN THE STATE.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General
Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) (a) There is established an
2 Office of Postsecondary Success which shall be within the Department
3 of Education for administrative purposes only. The Office of
4 Postsecondary Success shall support and invest in the success of
5 students enrolled in postsecondary education programs in the state. The
6 Office of Postsecondary Success shall be under the direction of an
7 executive director who shall be appointed by the Governor, in
8 accordance with the provisions of sections 4-5 to 4-8, inclusive, of the
9 general statutes, with all the powers and duties therein prescribed, from
10 among individuals with expertise and experience in postsecondary
11 educational opportunities, scholarship programs and community
12 outreach.

13 (b) The Office of Postsecondary Success shall:

14 (1) Support promise programs, as defined in section 2 of this act,

15 throughout the state pursuant to section 2 of this act;

16 (2) Foster partnerships between employers, postsecondary education
17 providers, promise programs and any other community organizations
18 that support student success in postsecondary education programs with
19 the goals of improving postsecondary education program completion
20 rates and job placement rates;

21 (3) Inform residents of the state, through clear and uniform
22 messaging, about all scholarship and student support programs
23 available to them, including, but not limited to, the Roberta B. Willis
24 Scholarship program established pursuant to section 10a-173 of the
25 general statutes, the debt-free community college program established
26 pursuant to section 10a-174 of the general statutes, the finish line
27 scholars program established pursuant to section 10a-174d of the
28 general statutes, the Scholar Success Grant program established
29 pursuant to section 3 of this act, promise programs, supports offered at
30 each institution of higher education in the state and career pathway
31 programs developed by any state agency or institution of higher
32 education in the state;

33 (4) Collect and report data on the (A) number of students who are
34 residents of the state and enrolled in an institution of higher education
35 in the state, (B) average net cost of attendance paid by such students at
36 such institutions, and (C) academic outcomes of such students,
37 including, but not limited to, the number of such students who are
38 continuing enrollment in, graduating from, transferring from, taking a
39 leave of absence from or withdrawing from such institutions. The office
40 shall report such data, to the extent possible, in categories that
41 correspond to the relevant demographics of such students, including,
42 but not limited to, race, ethnicity, first-generation student status and the
43 following household annual income brackets: (i) Thirty thousand
44 dollars or less, (ii) greater than thirty thousand dollars, but not more
45 than forty-eight thousand dollars, (iii) greater than forty-eight thousand
46 dollars, but not more than seventy-five thousand dollars, (iv) greater

47 than seventy-five thousand dollars, but not more than one hundred ten
48 thousand dollars, (v) greater than one hundred ten thousand dollars,
49 but not more than one hundred fifty thousand dollars, (vi) greater than
50 one hundred fifty thousand dollars, but not more than two hundred
51 thousand dollars, and (vii) greater than two hundred thousand dollars.
52 As used in this subdivision, "average net cost of attendance" means the
53 total cost of attending an institution of higher education, including room
54 and board at such institution, minus the average amount of all
55 scholarships and grants awarded to students of such institution; and

56 (5) Take any other actions necessary to fulfill the duties of the Office
57 of Postsecondary Success and the executive director of said office as set
58 forth in this subsection.

59 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) (a) As used in this section,
60 "promise program" means a scholarship program that provides a
61 scholarship in conjunction with services and resources, including, but
62 not limited to, mentoring, peer support networks and internships, to
63 scholarship recipients to ensure the postsecondary academic success of
64 such recipients.

65 (b) (1) Not later than September 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, the
66 Office of Postsecondary Success shall provide a grant to each promise
67 program in the state that was established during or prior to the previous
68 fiscal year. Such grant shall be in an amount equal to three thousand
69 dollars per student enrolled in such promise program.

70 (2) Not later than July 1, 2027, and annually thereafter, each promise
71 program that receives a grant pursuant to subdivision (1) of this
72 subsection shall report to the Office of Postsecondary Success the rate of
73 graduation, postsecondary program enrollment and job placement
74 achieved by the students enrolled in such promise program during the
75 fiscal year in which such grant was received.

76 (c) The Office of Postsecondary Success shall establish a program to
77 support the establishment of new promise programs throughout the

78 state, with a goal of establishing eight new promise programs not later
79 than January 1, 2031, prioritizing the establishment of promise
80 programs that serve students in alliance districts, as defined in section
81 10-262u of the general statutes. The office shall coordinate with
82 municipalities and regional coalitions interested in establishing new
83 promise programs. The office shall support each new promise program
84 through the provision of (1) funding, in an amount designated by the
85 executive director of said office, for the start-up expenses of such
86 promise program, and (2) technical assistance to start such promise
87 program, including, but not limited to, (A) initial funding strategies, (B)
88 stakeholder engagement, including, but not limited to, each local or
89 regional board of education, legislative body and local nonprofit
90 organization and business, (C) program design based on the local
91 environment, (D) development of evaluation metrics, and (E)
92 sustainability planning.

93 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) (a) As used in this section:

94 (1) "Net cost of attendance" means the tuition and required fees
95 incurred each academic year by an individual student at an institution
96 of higher education, after subtracting such student's financial aid;

97 (2) "Financial aid" means the sum of all scholarships, grants and
98 federal, state and institutional aid received each academic year by a
99 qualifying student. "Financial aid" does not include any federal, state or
100 private student loans received by a qualifying student;

101 (3) "Qualifying student" means any person who (A) is a resident of
102 the state, (B) attended from grades nine to twelve, inclusive, and
103 graduated from a public or nonpublic high school in the state, with a
104 cumulative attendance rate of not less than ninety per cent, (C) enrolls,
105 not more than one year after graduating from such high school, as a full-
106 time student for the academic year commencing with the fall semester
107 of 2026, or any academic year thereafter, at an institution of higher
108 education in a program leading to a bachelor's degree, (D) is making

109 satisfactory academic progress while enrolled at such institution, (E)
110 maintains good academic standing, as determined by such institution,
111 while enrolled at such institution, (F) has completed the Free
112 Application for Federal Student Aid, and (G) has accepted all available
113 financial aid;

114 (4) "Institution of higher education" means each (A) constituent unit,
115 as defined in section 10a-1 of the general statutes, of the state system of
116 higher education, and (B) nonprofit institution established in the state
117 (i) that has degree-granting authority in the state; (ii) that has its main
118 campus located in the state; (iii) that is not included in the state system
119 of public higher education; and (iv) whose primary function is not the
120 preparation of students for religious vocation;

121 (5) "Full-time student" means a student who is enrolled at an
122 institution of higher education and is carrying twelve or more credit
123 hours in a semester; and

124 (6) "First-year experience program" means a program of support to
125 assist a student in the student's transition from high school to higher
126 education through the provision of specialized academic support, peer
127 mentorship, orientation and connection to campus resources
128 throughout the student's first academic year at an institution of higher
129 education.

130 (b) The Office of Postsecondary Success shall establish a grant
131 program known as the Scholar Success Grant Program. For the
132 academic year commencing with the fall semester of 2026, and each
133 academic year thereafter, the office shall award a Scholar Success Grant
134 to each qualifying student at the following percentage of the net cost of
135 attendance at (1) a public institution of higher education in the state: (A)
136 Forty per cent for a qualifying student with a household income of thirty
137 thousand dollars or less, (B) thirty-six per cent for a qualifying student
138 with a household income greater than thirty thousand dollars, but not
139 more than forty-eight thousand dollars, (C) thirty-two per cent for a

140 qualifying student with a household income greater than forty-eight
141 thousand dollars, but not more than seventy-five thousand dollars, (D)
142 twenty-eight per cent for a qualifying student with a household income
143 greater than seventy-five thousand dollars, but not more than one
144 hundred ten thousand dollars, and (E) twenty-four per cent for a
145 qualifying student with a household income greater than one hundred
146 ten thousand dollars, or (2) an independent institution of higher
147 education, as defined in section 10a-173 of the general statutes: (A)
148 Twenty per cent for a qualifying student with a household income of
149 thirty thousand dollars or less, (B) sixteen per cent for a qualifying
150 student with a household income greater than thirty thousand dollars,
151 but not more than forty-eight thousand dollars, (C) twelve per cent for
152 a qualifying student with a household income greater than forty-eight
153 thousand dollars, but not more than seventy-five thousand dollars, (D)
154 eight per cent for a qualifying student with a household income greater
155 than seventy-five thousand dollars, but not more than one hundred ten
156 thousand dollars, and (E) eight per cent for a qualifying student with a
157 household income greater than one hundred ten thousand dollars. Such
158 grant shall be available to such qualifying student for not more than six
159 consecutive academic years or until such qualifying student graduates,
160 whichever occurs sooner. The office shall provide each Scholar Success
161 Grant directly to the institution of higher education in which such
162 student enrolls, provided such institution complies with the
163 requirements set forth in subsection (c) of this section.

164 (c) To receive a Scholar Success Grant from the Office of
165 Postsecondary Success for any qualifying student who enrolls at an
166 institution of higher education, such institution shall: (1) Enroll each
167 qualifying student in a first-year experience program at such institution,
168 (2) enroll each qualifying student in a financial literacy program during
169 the spring or summer prior to such qualifying student's first academic
170 year at such institution, (3) provide to each qualifying student a
171 transparent multiyear financial aid award letter in an easily understood
172 format that includes, but is not limited to, the net cost of attendance,

173 designation of any one-time awards or costs and an explanation of
174 student loan expectations, and (4) assign to each qualifying student an
175 advisor who shall advise such qualifying student when making
176 financial, academic or career decisions from the time such qualifying
177 student accepts admission to such institution until such qualifying
178 student graduates.

179 (d) Not later than January 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, the Office
180 of Postsecondary Success shall submit a report, in accordance with the
181 provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing
182 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
183 relating to higher education and employment advancement. Such report
184 shall include, but need not be limited to, the (1) number of qualifying
185 students receiving Scholar Success Grants during the current academic
186 year, (2) household income brackets of such students, and (3) amount of
187 such grants received by each institution of higher education for the
188 academic year during which the office submits such report.

189 Sec. 4. (*Effective July 1, 2026*) The sum of four million eight hundred
190 thousand dollars is appropriated to the Office of Postsecondary Success,
191 established pursuant to section 1 of this act, from the General Fund, for
192 the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027, for grants to promise programs
193 pursuant to section 2 of this act.

194 Sec. 5. (*Effective July 1, 2026*) The sum of thirty million dollars is
195 appropriated to the Office of Postsecondary Success, established
196 pursuant to section 1 of this act, from the General Fund, for the fiscal
197 year ending June 30, 2027, for the Scholar Success Grant Program
198 established pursuant to section 3 of this act.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	New section

Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	New section
Sec. 5	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	New section

Statement of Purpose:

To implement the recommendations of the task force to support promise programs in the state.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]