

AN ACT concerning education.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 5. The Higher Education Student Assistance Act is amended by changing Section 65.110 as follows:

(110 ILCS 947/65.110)

Sec. 65.110. Post-Master of Social Work School Social Work Professional Educator License scholarship.

(a) Subject to appropriation, ~~beginning with awards for the 2022-2023 academic year,~~ the Commission shall award annually up to 250 Post-Master of Social Work School Social Work Professional Educator License scholarships, which may also be known as School Social Work scholarships. A qualified applicant ~~to a person who:~~

(1) holds a valid Illinois-licensed clinical social work license or social work license or is pursuing a clinical social work license or social work license;

(2) has obtained a master's degree in social work from an approved program or will obtain a master's degree in social work from an approved program before enrolling in the academic program that this scholarship would support;

(3) is a United States citizen or eligible noncitizen;
and

(4) submits an application to the Commission for such scholarship and agrees to take courses to obtain an Illinois Professional Educator License with an endorsement in School Social Work.

(b) If an appropriation for this Section for a given fiscal year is insufficient to provide scholarships to all qualified applicants, the Commission shall allocate the appropriation as follows:

(1) first, to students who received a scholarship under this Section in the prior academic year and who remain eligible for a scholarship under this Section;

(2) (blank); and

(3) then, to new, qualified applicants in accordance with this Section.

(c) Scholarships awarded under this Section shall be issued pursuant to rules adopted by the Commission.

(d) Each scholarship shall be applied to the payment of tuition and mandatory fees at a State public university or at a private, not-for-profit institution of higher learning in this State that prepares students to obtain an Illinois Professional Educator License with an endorsement in School Social Work ~~the University of Illinois, Southern Illinois University, Chicago State University, Eastern Illinois University, Governors State University, Illinois State University, Northeastern Illinois University, Northern Illinois University, and Western Illinois University.~~ Each

scholarship may be applied to pay tuition and mandatory fees required to obtain an Illinois Professional Educator License with an endorsement in School Social Work. A scholarship for a recipient attending a private, not-for-profit institution of higher learning shall not exceed the maximum grant payable to a student enrolled in the most expensive comparable program of study at a public university in this State.

(e) The Commission shall make tuition and fee payments directly to the qualified institution of higher learning that the applicant attends.

(f) Any person who has accepted a scholarship under this Section must, within one year after graduation or termination of enrollment in a Post-Master of Social Work Professional Education License with an endorsement in School Social Work program, begin working as a school social worker at a public or nonpublic not-for-profit preschool, elementary school, or secondary school located in this State for at least 2 of the 5 years immediately following that graduation or termination, excluding, however, from the computation of that 5-year period: (i) any time up to 3 years spent in the military service, whether such service occurs before or after the person graduates; (ii) the time that person is a person with a temporary total disability for a period of time not to exceed 3 years, as established by the sworn affidavit of a qualified physician; and (iii) the time that person is seeking and unable to find full-time employment as a school social worker

at a State public or nonpublic not-for-profit preschool, elementary school, or secondary school.

(g) If a recipient of a scholarship under this Section fails to fulfill the work obligation set forth in subsection (f), the Commission shall require the recipient to repay the amount of the scholarships received, prorated according to the fraction of the obligation not completed, at a rate of interest equal to 5%, and, if applicable, reasonable collection fees. The Commission is authorized to establish rules relating to its collection activities for repayment of scholarships under this Section. All repayments collected under this Section shall be forwarded to the State Comptroller for deposit into this State's General Revenue Fund.

A recipient of a scholarship under this Section is not considered to be in violation of the failure to fulfill the work obligation under subsection (f) if the recipient (i) enrolls on a full-time basis as a graduate student in a course of study related to the field of social work at a qualified Illinois institution of higher learning; (ii) is serving, not in excess of 3 years, as a member of the armed services of the United States; (iii) is a person with a temporary total disability for a period of time not to exceed 3 years, as established by the sworn affidavit of a qualified physician; (iv) is seeking and unable to find full-time employment as a school social worker at an Illinois public or nonpublic not-for-profit preschool, elementary school, or secondary

school that satisfies the criteria set forth in subsection (f) and is able to provide evidence of that fact; or (v) becomes a person with a permanent total disability, as established by the sworn affidavit of a qualified physician.

(Source: P.A. 104-437, eff. 11-21-25.)

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect July 1, 2026.