



General Assembly

February Session, 2024

Raised Bill No. 204

LCO No. 611



Referred to Committee on HIGHER EDUCATION AND
EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT

Introduced by:
(HED)

***AN ACT EXPANDING THE DEBT-FREE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
PROGRAM AND NAMING THE AWARDS AFTER MARY ANN
HANDLEY.***

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

1 Section 1. Section 10a-174 of the 2024 supplement to the general
2 statutes, as amended by section 134 of public act 23-204, is repealed and
3 the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2024*):

4 (a) As used in this section:

5 (1) "Award" means the greater of: (A) The unpaid portion, if any, of a
6 qualifying student's eligible institutional costs after subtracting his or
7 her financial aid, or (B) a minimum award of two hundred fifty dollars
8 for a full-time student or one hundred fifty dollars for a part-time
9 student;

10 (2) "Eligible institutional costs" means the tuition and required fees
11 incurred each semester by an individual student that are established by
12 the Board of Regents for Higher Education for the regional community-

13 technical colleges;

14 (3) "Financial aid" means the sum of all scholarships, grants and
15 federal, state and institutional aid received by a qualifying student.
16 "Financial aid" does not include any federal, state or private student
17 loans received by a qualifying student;

18 (4) "Qualifying student" means any person who (A) [graduated from
19 a public or nonpublic high school in the state, (B)] enrolls as a full-time
20 or part-time student for the fall semester of 2020, or any semester
21 thereafter, at a regional community-technical college in a program
22 leading to a degree or certificate, [(C)] (B) is classified as an in-state
23 student pursuant to section 10a-29, [(D)] (C) is making satisfactory
24 academic progress while enrolled at a regional community-technical
25 college, [(E)] (D) has completed the Free Application for Federal Student
26 Aid, and [(F)] (E) has accepted all available financial aid;

27 (5) "Full-time student" means a student who is enrolled at a regional
28 community-technical college and (A) is carrying twelve or more credit
29 hours in a semester, or (B) has a learning disability documented with
30 the regional community-technical college in which he or she is enrolled
31 and is enrolled in the maximum number of credit hours that is feasible
32 for such student to attempt in a semester, as determined by such
33 student's academic advisor;

34 (6) "Semester" means the fall or spring semester of an academic year.
35 "Semester" does not include a summer semester or session; and

36 (7) "Part-time student" means a student who is enrolled at a regional
37 community-technical college and is carrying not less than six but fewer
38 than twelve credit hours in a semester.

39 (b) The Board of Regents for Higher Education shall (1) establish a
40 debt-free community college program to make awards to qualifying
41 students each semester, (2) adopt rules, procedures and forms necessary
42 to implement the debt-free community college program, and (3) submit
43 a report outlining such rules, procedures and forms, in accordance with

44 the provisions of section 11-4a, to the joint standing committee of the
45 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to higher
46 education. Awards made to eligible students pursuant to the debt-free
47 community college program shall be designated as the "Mary Ann
48 Handley Award".

49 (c) For the fall semester of 2020, and each semester thereafter, the
50 Board of Regents for Higher Education shall make awards to qualifying
51 students within available appropriations. An award shall be available
52 to a qualifying student for the first seventy-two credit hours earned by
53 the qualifying student at a regional community-technical college,
54 provided the qualifying student meets and continues to meet the
55 requirements of this section. The board shall not use an award to
56 supplant any financial aid, including, but not limited to, state or
57 institutional aid, otherwise available to a qualifying student.

58 (d) Not later than [March 1, 2021, and October 1, 2021] November 1,
59 2024, and March 1, 2025, and each semester thereafter, the Board of
60 Regents for Higher Education shall report, in accordance with the
61 provisions of section 11-4a, to the joint standing committees of the
62 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to higher
63 education and employment advancement and appropriations and the
64 budgets of the state agencies regarding the debt-free community college
65 program, including, but not limited to, (1) the number of qualifying
66 students enrolled at the regional community-technical colleges during
67 each semester, (2) the number of qualifying students receiving
68 minimum awards and the number of qualifying students receiving
69 awards for the unpaid portion of eligible institutional costs, (3) the
70 average number of credit hours the qualifying students enrolled in each
71 semester and the average number of credit hours the qualifying
72 students completed each semester, (4) the average amount of the award
73 made to qualifying students under this section for the unpaid portion of
74 eligible institutional costs, and (5) the completion rates of qualifying
75 students receiving awards under this section by degree or certificate
76 program.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2024</i>	10a-174

Statement of Purpose:

To expand the debt-free community college program to out-of-state high school graduates, name the awards granted under the program after Mary Ann Handley and change the reporting deadlines from March first and October first to November first and March first.

[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.]