

State of Arkansas
92nd General Assembly
Regular Session, 2019

A Bill

SENATE BILL 181

By: Senator J. English

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO REPEAL THE TECHNICAL CAREERS STUDENT LOAN
FORGIVENESS PROGRAM; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO REPEAL THE TECHNICAL CAREERS STUDENT
LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 50, Subchapter 2, is repealed.

~~Subchapter 2—Technical Careers Student Loan Forgiveness Program~~

~~6-50-201.—Creation.~~

~~(a) There is hereby established a program to be known as the Arkansas Technical Careers Student Loan Forgiveness Program, to be administered by the State Board of Career Education through the Department of Career Education.~~

~~(b) Establishment of the program and implementation of the provisions of this subchapter shall be contingent on the appropriation and funding necessary to allow the board to carry out the duties assigned to it in this subchapter.~~

~~6-50-202.—Purpose.~~

~~Arkansas is experiencing an increasing demand for a work force qualified in various technical occupations. The purpose of this subchapter is to establish a loan forgiveness program to assist and encourage people in entering and completing programs which qualify them to fill the demand for~~



~~employees in various technical fields. The program will provide repayment for students admitted to high demand technical training programs. Their loans shall be forgiven if the recipients work in a high demand technical occupation in Arkansas and satisfy other requirements as set out in this subchapter.~~

~~6-50-203. Administration.~~

~~The State Board of Career Education through the Department of Career Education shall administer the Arkansas Technical Careers Student Loan Forgiveness Program and shall have the following authority with respect to the program:~~

~~(1) To adopt rules and regulations for the administration of the program consistent with the provisions of this subchapter;~~

~~(2) To establish and consult with an advisory panel that is representative of agencies and entities involved in the economic development of Arkansas, including business and industry;~~

~~(3) To contract with an experienced third party, the Arkansas Student Loan Authority, or another qualified agency for the administration of this loan forgiveness program; and~~

~~(4) To prepare application forms or such other forms as the board shall deem necessary to properly administer and carry out the purpose of this subchapter.~~

~~6-50-204. Institutional eligibility.~~

~~The institution to be attended under the loan forgiveness program must be approved by the Career Education and Workforce Development Board, the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board, or the Department of Higher Education to offer training in the technical field chosen by the applicant.~~

~~6-50-205. Educational program approval and priorities.~~

~~(a) The State Board of Career Education shall consider comments and suggestions from the Department of Higher Education, the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the Arkansas Economic Development Council, the Department of Workforce Services, the Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce, and other appropriate entities annually to develop and publish a list of technical education programs that are approved for this program.~~

~~(b)(1)(A) The board may consider the state, regional, and local area priorities when determining the technical programs that are approved.~~

~~(B) However, for the 1999-2000 fiscal year only state priorities shall be considered.~~

~~(2) Beginning in the 2000-2001 fiscal year, the board may solicit proposals or requests from the state's postsecondary institutions, chambers of commerce, business and industry, and other appropriate local entities for regional and local priorities when determining the approved technical programs for this program.~~

~~6-50-206. Student eligibility—Initial certification of eligibility.~~

~~(a) The State Board of Career Education shall certify eligibility for persons who meet the following conditions:~~

~~(1) Are citizens of the United States or permanent resident aliens;~~

~~(2) Are admitted to an approved program resulting in a diploma, certificate, or degree in a high-demand technical field;~~

~~(3) Have a grade point average as required in the rules and regulations for administration of this loan forgiveness program for the specified technical field; and~~

~~(4) Indicate an intention to work in Arkansas in the high-demand technical field for which they receive the training.~~

~~(b) Students must apply for the loan forgiveness program and be selected by a process administered by the board.~~

~~6-50-207. Amount of loan forgiveness.~~

~~(a) The yearly amount for each student's loan forgiveness shall not exceed the maximum yearly amount allowed under the Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship Program.~~

~~(b) Eligible students may participate in the loan forgiveness program for a maximum of:~~

~~(1) Four (4) years for a bachelor's degree or its equivalent as determined by rules and regulations;~~

~~(2) Two (2) years for a master's degree;~~

~~(3) Four (4) years for a Ph.D. degree;~~

~~(4) Six (6) years for a bachelor's degree and a master's degree~~

~~or a master's degree and a Ph.D. degree; or~~

~~(5) Nine (9) years for a bachelor's degree, master's degree, and a Ph.D. degree.~~

~~(c) With input from the Department of Higher Education and other appropriate entities, the State Board of Career Education shall establish through rules and regulations loan forgiveness amounts for approved technical education programs for students enrolled on a less than full-time basis.~~

~~6-50-208. Repayment of loans — Failure to repay.~~

~~(a)(1) After graduation from the approved technical program, loan recipients who work for one (1) year on a full-time basis in Arkansas in the high-demand technical field for which the educational program prepared them shall upon annual certification by their employer be forgiven one (1) year of the eligible loan amount, or its equivalent for persons who enrolled in an educational program on a less than regular full-time basis.~~

~~(2) Each succeeding year of loan forgiveness is contingent upon one (1) additional year of certified full-time employment in Arkansas in the technical field.~~

~~(b) Loan recipients who do not graduate from the program or who do not work full time in the high-demand technical field in the State of Arkansas for which they received training shall repay the loan in accordance with the loan recipient's agreement with the lending authority.~~

SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 15-3-503(b)(2)(F), concerning advice and recommendations by the Board of Directors of the Division of Science and Technology of the Arkansas Economic Development Commission under the Arkansas Acceleration Fund Act, is repealed.

~~(F) Arkansas Technical Careers Student Loan Forgiveness Program, § 6-50-201;~~

APPROVED: 2/28/19