Wisconsin Legislative Council
ACT MEMO

Prepared by: Dan Schmidt, Deputy Director   December 20, 2023

2023 Wisconsin Act 80 [2023 Senate Bill 380]	Modifications to State Financial Aid for Higher Education

CURRENT LAW

Under current law, the Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB) administers the Wisconsin Grant and Talent Incentive Grant programs. The Wisconsin Grant and Talent Incentive Grant programs award need-based monetary assistance to undergraduate students who are Wisconsin residents enrolled at least half time in degree or certificate programs at a University of Wisconsin (UW), Wisconsin technical college, Wisconsin tribal college, or Wisconsin private college or university.

The UW System and Technical College System also administer grants to certain students in order to meet emergency financial needs. Eligible students may currently receive up to $500 per academic year under the program, based on financial need.

2023 WISCONSIN ACT 80

2023 Act 80 makes the following changes to the Wisconsin Grant Program:

- The act eliminates the requirement that a student must be enrolled at least half time and specifies that a student must be enrolled in a degree, certificate, or other program that leads to a recognized educational credential and maintain satisfactory academic progress to be eligible for the program.

- The act specifies that when a student is receiving a grant and is enrolled less than full time, only the fraction of the student's enrollment, in proportion to full-time enrollment, is applied to the 10 semesters for which the student is eligible for the grant.

- The act eliminates the current statutory calculation used to determine the amounts granted to a student enrolled in a private college or university and substitutes the federal need analysis formula as utilized by the other Wisconsin grant-eligible institutions.

- The act repeals current minimum and maximum grant amounts and requires HEAB to annually establish grant amounts and integrate those amounts into its grant award formula.

- The act specifies that only students who are enrolled in accredited, private, non-profit institutions of higher education headquartered in this state are eligible for Wisconsin grants under the Private Non-Profit Program.

- The act repeals the provision of current law that requires HEAB to provide application forms and assistance at certain convenient physical locations for the purposes of the Private Non-Profit Program.

- The act requires HEAB to ensure that students of the UW System farm-and-industry short course program are included in the awarding of Wisconsin grants.

In the same fashion as the Wisconsin Grant Program, the act specifies that when a student is receiving a Talent Incentive Grant and is enrolled less than full time, only the fraction of the student's enrollment, in proportion to full-time enrollment, is applied to the 10 semesters for which the student is eligible for the grant.

2023 Wisconsin Act 80 makes the following changes to the program which provides grants to meet emergency financial need:

- The act modifies the definition of "eligible student" to a student whose financial need meets the eligibility criteria for a federal Pell Grant.

- The act permits the grants to be awarded to any student within the UW System, rather than the former requirement that the grants be awarded to students of the two-year campuses.

- The act increases the maximum amount of a grant that may be awarded to $1,000.

- The act changes the reporting deadline for the program from June 1 to September 1.

Finally, the act repeals the current requirement that prohibits HEAB and the UW System from providing financial assistance to a person who is not registered with the federal Selective Service System and who is required to be registered.

Effective date: December 8, 2023 [The grant and financial aid provisions of the act first apply to those awarded for the 2024-25 academic year. Report requirements first apply to reports submitted after 2023.]

For a full history of the bill, visit the Legislature's bill history page.

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