

**First Regular Session  
Seventy-Seventh General Assembly  
STATE OF SAN ANDREAS**

**ENGROSSED**

LLS NO. 26-0711.02 Alexis Holmes x2352

**HOUSE BILL 26-006**

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**SENATE SPONSORSHIP**

**Kent**

**HOUSE SPONSORSHIP**

**Gomez, Haynes, Mendoza**

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**House Committees**

Higher Education & Workforce Development

**Senate Committees**

Not assigned

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**A BILL FOR AN ACT**

**CONCERNING COLLEGE OPPORTUNITY GRANTS FOR IN-STATE STUDENTS.**

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**Bill Summary**

*(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at <https://saleg.uscgov.com>)*

This bill establishes the College Opportunity Grant Fund, a state-administered financial aid program designed to expand access to higher education for in-state students attending public colleges and universities. The bill creates a dedicated fund within the State Treasury to provide need-based grants that do not require repayment.

The program is intended to reduce financial barriers for residents pursuing postsecondary education while strengthening workforce development and long-term economic growth.

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Underlining denotes SENATE amendment.

*Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing law.*

*Dashes through the words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law.*

Grants awarded under the program may be used for tuition, mandatory fees, required course materials, and other approved education-related expenses.

The Department of Higher Education is responsible for administering the program, determining eligibility, and establishing award amounts based on financial need and available funding. Priority is given to students from low- and moderate-income households. Grants may be renewed for multiple academic years if students maintain satisfactory academic progress.

The bill specifies that the College Opportunity Grant supplements existing federal, institutional, and state financial aid programs and does not replace other available assistance.

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1 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of San*  
2 *Andreas:*  
3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.** This Act shall be known and may  
4 be cited as the “College Opportunity Grant Act.” **SECTION 2.**  
5 **LEGISLATIVE DECLARATION.** The General Assembly finds  
6 and declares that: (a) Access to affordable higher education  
7 strengthens the economic vitality, workforce readiness, and civic  
8 participation of the state. (b) Rising tuition and educational costs  
9 have created financial barriers for many in-state students seeking  
10 postsecondary education. (c) Increasing access to higher  
11 education opportunities promotes long-term economic growth,  
12 reduces reliance on public assistance, and improves overall  
13 community outcomes. (d) It is the intent of the General Assembly  
14 to establish a stable and dedicated funding source to provide  
15 need-based financial assistance to eligible in-state students  
16 attending public institutions of higher education. (e) The College  
17 Opportunity Grant Fund is intended to supplement, not replace,  
18 existing federal, institutional, or state financial aid programs.  
19 **SECTION 3. DEFINITIONS.** For purposes of this Act, unless the  
20 context otherwise requires: (a) “Department” means the

1 Department of Higher Education. (b) “Eligible student” means an  
2 individual who: (I) Is classified as an in-state resident for tuition  
3 purposes under state law; (II) Is enrolled or accepted for  
4 enrollment in an eligible public institution of higher education  
5 within the state; (III) Demonstrates financial need as determined  
6 by **this act** through a standardized application process; and (IV)  
7 Meets satisfactory academic progress requirements established by  
8 **this act.** (c) “Eligible institution” means any public community  
9 college, state college, or public university, or **school of trade**  
10 located within the state. (d) “Grant” means financial assistance  
11 awarded from the College Opportunity Grant Fund that does not  
12 require repayment. **SECTION 4. CREATION OF THE**  
13 **COLLEGE OPPORTUNITY GRANT FUND.** (a) There is hereby  
14 created in the State Treasury the College Opportunity Grant Fund,  
15 referred to in this Act as the “Fund.” (b) The Fund shall consist  
16 of: (I) Appropriations made by the General Assembly; (II) Gifts,  
17 grants, or donations from public or private sources; (III) Interest  
18 earned on monies in the Fund; and (IV) Any other monies  
19 designated by law. (c) Monies in the Fund shall be continuously  
20 appropriated to the Department for the purposes set forth in this  
21 Act and shall not revert to the general fund at the end of any fiscal  
22 year. (d) **Monies within the College Opportunity Grant Fund shall**  
23 **be used exclusively for student grant awards and program**  
24 **administration and shall not be transferred or reverted for**  
25 **unrelated governmental purposes.** **SECTION 5.**  
26 **ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROGRAM.** (a) The Department  
27 of Higher Education shall administer the College Opportunity  
28 Grant Program. (b) The Department shall: (I) Establish  
29 application procedures and deadlines; (II) Determine eligibility  
30 and award amounts based on financial need and available  
31 appropriations; (III) Coordinate with existing financial aid  
32 programs to prevent duplication of benefits; (IV) Prioritize awards  
33 for students from low- and moderate-income households; and (V)

1 Ensure equitable access to students attending community colleges,  
2 state colleges, and universities. (c) Grant awards may be used for  
3 tuition, mandatory fees, required course materials, and other  
4 education-related expenses as defined by rule. (d) Institutions of  
5 higher education shall not reduce institutional financial aid solely  
6 because a student receives a College Opportunity Grant awarded  
7 pursuant to this Act. (e) The Department shall automatically  
8 determine eligibility using information submitted through federal  
9 or state financial aid applications and shall minimize additional  
10 documentation requirements for applicants. (f) The Department  
11 shall ensure equitable geographic distribution of awards and  
12 prioritize outreach to rural, first-generation, and  
13 workforce-training students. **SECTION 6. ELIGIBILITY AND**  
14 **AWARD LIMITATIONS.** (a) Grants shall be awarded only to  
15 eligible students enrolled at least half-time in an eligible  
16 institution. (b) Grant awards shall be determined according to  
17 household income levels based upon adjusted gross income  
18 reported through the standardized financial aid application  
19 approved by the Department. (c) An eligible student whose  
20 household income is fifty thousand dollars or less annually shall  
21 receive a grant equal to one hundred percent of in-state tuition and  
22 mandatory fees at the eligible institution attended, together with  
23 an annual educational support stipend of two thousand dollars for  
24 required course materials or education-related expenses. (d) An  
25 eligible student whose household income exceeds fifty thousand  
26 dollars but does not exceed ninety thousand dollars annually shall  
27 receive a grant equal to seventy-five percent of in-state tuition and  
28 mandatory fees. (e) An eligible student whose household income  
29 exceeds ninety thousand dollars but does not exceed one hundred  
30 forty thousand dollars annually shall receive a grant equal to fifty  
31 percent of in-state tuition and mandatory fees. (f) An eligible  
32 student whose household income exceeds one hundred forty  
33 thousand dollars but does not exceed two hundred thousand

1 dollars annually shall receive a flat annual grant of two thousand  
2 dollars applicable toward tuition or required institutional fees. (g)  
3 Grant awards established in this section constitute minimum  
4 statutory award amounts and shall not be reduced by rule except  
5 to prevent financial assistance exceeding the student's total cost of  
6 attendance. (h) Grants may be renewed annually for up to four  
7 academic years, or the equivalent for part-time enrollment,  
8 provided the student maintains satisfactory academic progress. (i)  
9 Nothing in this Act shall prohibit an eligible student from  
10 receiving federal, institutional, or other state financial aid in  
11 addition to a grant awarded under this section. (j) Students  
12 enrolled at public community colleges who successfully complete  
13 at least twenty-four credit hours within an academic year shall  
14 receive an additional completion incentive grant of seven hundred  
15 fifty dollars. (k) Beginning July 1, 2028, and every two years  
16 thereafter, income thresholds and stipend amounts established in  
17 this section shall be adjusted by the Department to reflect  
18 increases in the consumer price index for higher education costs.

19 **SECTION 7. REPORTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY.** (a) On  
20 or before January 15 of each year, the Department shall submit a  
21 report to the Governor and the General Assembly that includes:  
22 (I) The number of students receiving grants; (II) Average grant  
23 award amounts; (III) Distribution of awards by institution type;  
24 (IV) Student retention and completion data, where available; and  
25 (V) Recommendations for program improvement. (b) The report  
26 shall be made publicly available on the Department's website.

27 **SECTION 8. RULEMAKING AUTHORITY.** The Department of  
28 Higher Education may promulgate rules necessary to implement  
29 and administer this Act. **SECTION 9. EFFECTIVE DATE.** This  
30 Act shall take effect July 1, 2026.