

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 1st Session of the 60th Legislature (2025)

3 SENATE BILL 185

By: Haste

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7 AS INTRODUCED

8 An Act relating to higher education; creating the
9 Oklahoma Department of Transportation Educational
10 Assistance Act; providing short title; defining
11 terms; creating the Oklahoma Department of
12 Transportation Educational Assistance Program to
13 provide tuition and fee assistance to certain
14 eligible students; providing for amount of
15 assistance, subject to availability of funding;
16 providing limitation on amount of assistance;
17 directing assistance to be provided based on certain
18 factors; prohibiting assistance for courses taken in
19 excess of certain requirements; prohibiting
20 assistance for certain courses; providing for
21 eligibility retention; requiring submission of
22 application prescribed by certain agency; allowing
23 continued assistance to be denied under certain
24 circumstances; providing for promulgation of rules;
25 establishing requirements for assistance repayment;
26 requiring deposit of repayments in certain fund;
27 directing the Transportation Commission to establish
28 certain schedule; allowing repayment waiver under
29 certain circumstances; providing for submission of
30 waiver request; allowing the Department of
31 Transportation to accept certain gifts and grants;
32 directing funds to be transferred to certain fund;
33 providing for promulgation of rules; creating the
34 Oklahoma Department of Transportation Educational
35 Assistance Revolving Fund; specifying sources of
36 fund; providing for expenditures; providing purpose
37 of fund; providing for codification; providing an
38 effective date; and declaring an emergency.

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BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 3234 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Oklahoma Department of Transportation Educational Assistance Act".

B. As used in this act:

- 1. "Commission" means the Transportation Commission;
- 2. "Department" means the Department of Transportation;
- 3. "Eligible degree" means a baccalaureate degree from an Oklahoma educational institution in a field of study that satisfies the Department's minimum education requirements for an eligible profession;
- 4. "Eligible profession" means an engineer, a land surveyor, or an accountant;
- 5. "Eligible student" means a student who has a high school diploma or who has completed General Educational Development (GED) requirements and who:

- a. has completed and filed with the Department, on forms prescribed by the Department, an application and a

1 declaration of intent to become a member of an
2 eligible profession and work for the Department for
3 five (5) years immediately following the date of the
4 student's receipt of an eligible degree,

- 5 b. has enrolled in an Oklahoma educational institution,
- 6 c. is an Oklahoma resident, and
- 7 d. is age eighteen (18) or older;

8 6. "Graduate program" means a program offered by an Oklahoma
9 educational institution that leads to the award of a master's degree
10 or higher;

11 7. "Oklahoma educational institution" means an institution of
12 higher education within The Oklahoma State System of Higher
13 Education;

14 8. "Program" means the Oklahoma Department of Transportation
15 Educational Assistance Program; and

16 9. "Undergraduate program" means a program offered by an
17 Oklahoma educational institution that leads to the award of a
18 baccalaureate degree.

19 C. There is hereby created the Oklahoma Department of
20 Transportation Educational Assistance Program to provide assistance
21 to eligible students who enroll in an Oklahoma educational
22 institution and who agree to work for the Department in an eligible
23 profession for the five (5) years immediately following the date of
24 the student's receipt of an eligible degree. The Commission shall

1 promulgate rules prescribing the criteria for the selection of
2 applicants pursuant to this act. Subject to the availability of
3 funding, the amount of assistance shall be equivalent to the amount
4 of resident tuition, mandatory fees, and academic service fees for
5 courses in which the eligible student is enrolled, not to exceed a
6 maximum of eighteen (18) credit hours each semester.

7 1. The amount of assistance provided to an eligible student
8 enrolled in an undergraduate program shall not exceed the number of
9 hours required for completion of an undergraduate program in pursuit
10 of a baccalaureate degree.

11 2. Subject to the assistance for eligible students enrolled in
12 undergraduate programs being fully funded, assistance shall be
13 provided to an eligible student with a baccalaureate degree enrolled
14 in a graduate program. The amount of assistance provided to an
15 eligible student enrolled in a graduate program shall not exceed the
16 number of hours required for completion of a master's degree.

17 3. Assistance provided pursuant to this act shall be granted
18 without any limitation other than the amount of funds available for
19 the program and the number of eligible students who apply.

20 4. Assistance allowed by this act shall not be allowed for
21 courses taken in excess of the requirements for completion of an
22 undergraduate program or a graduate program, whichever is applicable
23 for the eligible student.

1 5. Assistance allowed by this act shall not be allowed for
2 courses in which the eligible student earns a failing grade.

3 D. 1. To retain eligibility for the program, an eligible
4 student shall:

5 a. maintain good academic standing and satisfactory
6 academic progress according to standards of the
7 Oklahoma educational institution in which the eligible
8 student is enrolled,

9 b. maintain the requirements for retention and degree
10 completion as established by the Oklahoma educational
11 institution in which the eligible student is enrolled,
12 and

13 c. maintain a minimum grade point average of 2.0 on a 4.0
14 scale.

15 2. An eligible student seeking assistance pursuant to the
16 provisions of this act shall submit an application on a form
17 prescribed by the Department prior to the semester for which
18 assistance is sought.

19 3. An eligible student may be denied continued assistance if he
20 or she fails to comply with the provisions of this act.

21 E. 1. The Commission shall promulgate rules establishing
22 conditions under which an eligible student who has received
23 assistance pursuant to this act may be required to repay all or part
24 of the assistance because the eligible student has withdrawn from
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1 the Oklahoma educational institution or has failed to meet the
2 requirements of paragraph 1 of subsection D of this section.

3 2. An eligible student who does not become a member of an
4 eligible profession and work for the Department for the five (5)
5 years immediately following the date of the student's receipt of an
6 eligible degree shall repay all assistance received by the eligible
7 student.

8 3. Repayments shall be deposited into the Oklahoma Department
9 of Transportation Educational Assistance Revolving Fund created
10 pursuant to Section 2 of this act.

11 4. The Commission shall establish a schedule for installment
12 repayments under this act.

13 5. An eligible student who has received program assistance
14 pursuant to the provisions of this act and who fails to comply with
15 the provisions of this act due to hardship circumstances may request
16 a waiver from repayment. A waiver request shall be submitted in
17 writing to the Director of the Department of Transportation.

18 F. The Department may accept gifts and grants from any public
19 or private source for the program and may also use any state funds
20 that have been specifically appropriated or apportioned for the
21 program created pursuant to this act. All funding received by the
22 Department for this purpose shall be transferred to the Oklahoma
23 Department of Transportation Educational Assistance Revolving Fund
24 created pursuant to Section 2 of this act.

1 G. The Commission shall promulgate rules to implement the
2 provisions of this act.

3 SECTION 2. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
4 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 3235 of Title 70, unless there
5 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

6 There is hereby created in the State Treasury a revolving fund
7 to be designated the "Oklahoma Department of Transportation
8 Educational Assistance Revolving Fund". The fund shall be a
9 continuing fund, not subject to fiscal year limitations, and shall
10 consist of monies received by the Department of Transportation
11 pursuant to paragraph 3 of subsection E of Section 1 of this act and
12 subsection F of Section 1 of this act provided for the purpose of
13 funding the Oklahoma Department of Transportation Educational
14 Assistance Program. All monies accruing to the credit of the fund
15 are hereby appropriated and may be budgeted and expended by the
16 Department of Transportation for the purpose provided for in this
17 section. Expenditures from the fund shall be made upon warrants
18 issued by the State Treasurer against claims filed as prescribed by
19 law with the Director of the Office of Management and Enterprise
20 Services for approval and payment.

21 SECTION 3. This act shall become effective July 1, 2025.

22 SECTION 4. It being immediately necessary for the preservation
23 of the public peace, health, or safety, an emergency is hereby
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1 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and
2 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

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