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HOUSE BILL 281

**56TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2024**

INTRODUCED BY

James G. Townsend

AN ACT

RELATING TO HIGHER EDUCATION; EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY FOR THE  
LOTTERY TUITION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

SECTION 1. Section 21-21N-2 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 2014,  
Chapter 80, Section 2, as amended) is amended to read:

"21-21N-2. DEFINITIONS.--As used in the Legislative  
Lottery Tuition Scholarship Act:

A. "community college" means a branch community  
college of a four-year state educational institution, a two-  
year state educational institution or a community college or  
technical and vocational institute established pursuant to  
Chapter 21, Article 13 or 16 NMSA 1978, respectively;

B. "comprehensive institution" means eastern New  
Mexico university, western New Mexico university, New Mexico

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1 highlands university or northern New Mexico college;

2 C. "department" means the higher education  
3 department;

4 D. "full time" means fifteen or more credit hours  
5 each semester of the regular academic year in state educational  
6 institutions and twelve or more credit hours each semester of  
7 the regular academic year in community colleges [~~or for legacy~~  
8 ~~students in any program semester~~];

9 E. "fund" means the lottery tuition fund;

10 [~~F. "legacy student" means a full-time resident~~  
11 ~~student who has received for three or more program semesters by~~  
12 ~~the end of fiscal year 2014 the legislative lottery scholarship~~  
13 ~~awarded pursuant to the former provisions of Sections 21-1-4.3,~~  
14 ~~21-13-10 and 21-16-10.1 NMSA 1978 prior to the enactment of the~~  
15 ~~Legislative Lottery Tuition Scholarship Act;~~

16 ~~G.]~~ F. "program semesters" means those semesters  
17 for which a [~~legacy or~~] qualified student may receive a tuition  
18 scholarship and excludes the first semester of attendance at a  
19 public post-secondary educational institution;

20 [~~H.]~~ G. "public post-secondary educational  
21 institution" means a four-year state educational institution or  
22 a community college;

23 [~~I.]~~ H. "qualified student" means a full-time  
24 student who graduated from a [~~public or accredited private~~] New  
25 Mexico high school in the state or completed the requirements

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1 of a home-based or non-public-school [~~primary~~] educational  
2 program in [~~the state~~] New Mexico or received a high school  
3 equivalency credential while maintaining residency in New  
4 Mexico and who:

5 (1) either:

6 (a) within sixteen months of graduation  
7 from a public school in this state or completion of the  
8 requirements of a home-based or non-public-school primary  
9 educational program or receipt of a high school equivalency  
10 credential, was accepted for entrance to and attended a public  
11 post-secondary educational institution; or

12 (b) within four months of graduation  
13 from a public school in this state or completion of the  
14 requirements of a home-based or non-public-school primary  
15 educational program or receipt of a high school equivalency  
16 credential, began service in the United States armed forces and  
17 within sixteen months of completion of honorable service or  
18 medical discharge from the service, attended a public post-  
19 secondary educational institution; and

20 (2) successfully completed the first semester  
21 at a public post-secondary educational institution with a grade  
22 point average of 2.5 or higher on a 4.0 scale during the first  
23 semester of full-time enrollment;

24 [~~J.~~] I. "research institution" means the university  
25 of New Mexico, New Mexico state university or New Mexico

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1 institute of mining and technology;

2 [K~~-~~] J. "state educational institution" means an  
3 institution of higher education enumerated in Article 12,  
4 Section 11 of the constitution of New Mexico;

5 [H~~-~~] K. "tribal college" means a tribally,  
6 federally or congressionally chartered post-secondary  
7 educational institution located in New Mexico that is  
8 accredited by the higher learning commission; and

9 [M~~-~~] L. "tuition scholarship" means the scholarship  
10 that provides tuition assistance per program semester for a  
11 qualified student [~~or legacy student~~] attending a public post-  
12 secondary educational institution or tribal college."