



# CREDENTIAL COMPLETION GRANT

## Model Policy

ExcelinEd Policy Toolkit - 2019

This document contains a model policy for a credential completion grant program. [Download this model policy as an editable Microsoft Word document.](#)

### SUMMARY

The Credit Completion Act provides a second chance for students who were close to completing their postsecondary certificate, associate degree or bachelor's degree but did not complete the postsecondary program. The act provides grant funding to the student to complete the postsecondary program, as the postsecondary credential may help the student to obtain a career, change careers or upskill their current career.

### MODEL POLICY - CREDENTIAL COMPLETION GRANT PROGRAM ACT

Be in enacted by the (State):

#### Section 1.

- (1) There is hereby established a Credential Completion Grant Program to provide grants for eligible students to enroll in an eligible postsecondary institution in the state and complete the credits required to earn a postsecondary credential.
- (2) As used in this section, the terms have the following meanings:
  - a. Eligible student means a student who:
    - i. Has completed and submitted a FAFSA for the academic year for which the grant is requested;
    - ii. Is a resident of the state as determined by (*entity that determines residency for admissions*);
    - iii. Is enrolled or plans to enroll at least half-time as a student in an eligible program of study at an eligible postsecondary institution in the state;
    - iv. Is 25 years of age or older at the time of enrollment or has not been enrolled in a postsecondary institution for the prior two academic years;
    - v. Has completed 90 credits towards a bachelor's degree, 45 credits towards an associate degree, or 75 percent of the instructional hours required for a postsecondary certificate program;
    - vi. Has not defaulted on a student loan;
    - vii. Has not completed a bachelor's degree.
  - b. Eligible program of study means:
    - i. A program of instruction resulting in an award of a certificate, degree, or other industry-recognized credential at the undergraduate level; and
    - ii. A program of instruction that has been designated by the (*State Workforce Development Board*) as preparing students for an occupation in critical shortage that leads to annual wages of at least 70 percent of the annual mean wages for occupations in the state.
  - c. Eligible postsecondary institution means:
    - i. A state university in the state; or
    - ii. A public community or technical college in the state.



- d. FAFSA means the Free Application for Federal Student Aid as maintained by the United States Department of Education.
- (3) Subject to appropriation and available funds, the (*State Financial Aid Office*) shall award grants for eligible students to eligible postsecondary institutions for an eligible program of study. The amount of the grant shall be equal to the actual tuition and fees charged to an eligible student to complete the eligible program of study, after all federal non-loan aid, state student aid, and scholarships are applied.
- (4) Eligibility for renewed grants are the same as the initial award of the grant, except that for renewal, the applicant must demonstrate progress toward the completion of the eligible program of study and a grade point average of 2.5 on a four-point scale or equivalent.
- (5) Eligibility for the awards expires upon the earliest of:
  - a. Receipt of the grant for four semesters or the equivalent;
  - b. Receipt of the certificate, associate degree, or industry-recognized credential; or
  - c. Student enrollment of 150 percent of the time typically required to complete the program of study as a half-time or full-time student, as applicable.
- (6) The (*State Workforce Development Board*) shall annually designate eligible programs of study by January 1 of each year. The (*Board*) shall annually review the list of eligible programs of study and make changes to the program list as it determines appropriate. A student who begins an eligible program of study that is subsequently determined by the (*Board*) to no longer be an eligible program of study shall remain eligible for the grant but subject to renewal requirements in subsection (4) and grant expiration requirements in subsection (5).
- (7) A student may transfer between eligible postsecondary institutions without losing eligibility under this section, as long as all other requirements of this section are met. The (*State Financial Aid Office*) shall make any necessary adjustments in the amount of the award following transfer.
- (8) If appropriated funds are insufficient to fund the program as described, grants per student may be pro-rated. However, renewal grants shall be funded before pro-rating funds for new grants.
- (9) The (*State Financial Aid Office*) shall report annually to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives the amount of grants distributed for initial grants, renewal grants, the number of students receiving the grants, the average grant per student, the number of students completing an eligible program of study by credential earned and by institution, the number of credits or hours and time to completion earned by students under the grant, , the participating postsecondary institutions by student and grant amount, and the disaggregated demographics of students receiving the grants and completing an eligible program of study.
- (10) The (*State Financial Aid Office*) shall adopt rules to implement this section.

## Section 2.

- (1) This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.