

1 | ENGROSSED HOUSE  
| BILL NO. 1727

By: Moore, McCane, Munson,  
Provenzano, Hill, Harris,  
Deck, Archer, West (Tammy)  
and Gise of the House

and

## Pugh of the Senate

[ Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program -  
eligibility requirements - children of teachers -  
student agreements - financial qualification  
determination - Oklahoma State Regents for Higher  
Education - employment status - effective date -  
emergency ]

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

20 SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2603, as  
21 amended by Section 1, Chapter 274, O.S.L. 2024 (70 O.S. Supp. 2024,  
22 Section 2603), is amended to read as follows:

23 Section 2603. A. Except as otherwise provided for in  
24 subsection B of this section and elsewhere in this section, to be

1 eligible to participate in the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access  
2 Program and to qualify for an award which includes payment of an  
3 amount equivalent to resident tuition or other tuition pursuant to  
4 Section 2604 of this title for the first semester or other academic  
5 unit of postsecondary enrollment, a student shall:

6       1. Be a resident of this state or be enrolled in a school  
7 district located in this state that serves students who reside in  
8 both this state and an adjacent state pursuant to a contract as  
9 authorized in Section 5-117.1 of this title;

10      2. Be a United States citizen or lawfully present in the United  
11 States. A student who is not a United States citizen or lawfully  
12 present in the United States shall not be eligible to participate in  
13 the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program and to qualify for an  
14 award notwithstanding the provisions of Section 3242 of this title.

15 The provisions of this paragraph shall not apply to any student who  
16 was enrolled in the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program prior to  
17 the end of the 2006-2007 school year;

18      3. Have a record of satisfactory compliance with agreements  
19 executed pursuant to Section 2605 of this title;

20      4. a. have graduated within the previous three (3) years  
21                  from a high school accredited by the State Board of  
22                  Education or the Oklahoma School of Science and  
23                  Mathematics with a minimum 2.5 cumulative grade point

1                   average on a 4.0 scale for all work attempted in  
2                   grades nine through twelve,  
3                   b. have graduated within the previous three (3) years  
4                   from a high school not accredited by the State Board  
5                   of Education with a minimum 2.5 cumulative grade point  
6                   average on a 4.0 scale for all work attempted in  
7                   grades nine through twelve and have achieved a  
8                   composite score of 22 or higher on the ACT test, or  
9                   c. have satisfactorily completed within the previous  
10                  three (3) years an educational program that was  
11                  provided through a means other than a public or  
12                  private school and have achieved a composite score of  
13                  22 or higher on the ACT test;

14                 5. Have completed the curricular requirements for admission to

15                 an institution within The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education.

16                 Students shall also have attained a 2.5 grade point average in the

17                 core curriculum courses. Students who attended a high school which

18                 did not offer all the core curriculum courses or students who were

19                 educated by other means and were not offered all the core curriculum

20                 courses shall be allowed to satisfy this curriculum requirement by

21                 participating in a program approved by the Oklahoma State Regents

22                 for Higher Education for remediation of high school curricular

23                 deficiencies;

1       6. Have satisfied admission standards as determined by the  
2 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education for first-time-entering  
3 students for the appropriate type of institution, or, if attending a  
4 private institution, have satisfied admission standards as  
5 determined by the private institution. No student participating in  
6 the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program shall be admitted into  
7 an institution of higher education by special admission standards;

8       7. Have secured admission to, and enrolled in, an institution  
9 which is a member of The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education,  
10 a postsecondary vocational-technical program offered by a technology  
11 center school that meets the requirements to be eligible for federal  
12 student financial aid, or a private institution of higher learning  
13 located within this state and accredited pursuant to Section 4103 of  
14 this title; and

15       8. a. have established financial need according to the  
16           provisions of subsection D of Section 2605 of this  
17           title and standards and provisions promulgated by the  
18           Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education,

19       b. if the student was adopted between birth and twelve  
20           (12) years of age while in the permanent custody of  
21           the Department of Human Services, in the court-ordered  
22           custody of a licensed private nonprofit child-placing  
23           agency, or federally recognized Indian tribe, as  
24           defined by the federal Indian Child Welfare Act, have

established financial need according to the provisions of paragraph 1 of subsection E of Section 2605 of this title and standards and provisions promulgated by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education,

- c. if the student was adopted between thirteen (13) and seventeen (17) years of age while in the permanent custody of the Department of Human Services, in the court-ordered custody of a licensed private nonprofit child-placing agency, or federally recognized Indian tribe, as defined by the federal Indian Child Welfare Act, have established financial need according to the provisions of paragraph 2 of subsection E of Section 2605 of this title and standards and provisions promulgated by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, or

- d. if the student was placed in the custody of the Department of Human Services at any time during the eighth, ninth, tenth, or eleventh grades and enrolls in the program no later than his or her official date of high school graduation, have established financial need according to the provisions of paragraph 3 of subsection E of Section 2605 of this title and standards and provisions promulgated by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, or

1           e. if the student is the child of a certified classroom  
2           teacher, as provided for in paragraph 4 of subsection  
3           E of Section 2605 of this title. For the purposes of  
4           this paragraph, "certified classroom teacher" means  
5           any certified, full-time classroom teacher who has  
6           been employed as a teacher in a classroom by a public  
7           school district in this state for a minimum of ten  
8           (10) years. Certified classroom teacher does not mean  
9           a certified teacher who has been employed as a  
10          district superintendent, principal, or any other  
11          position within the administration of a public school  
12          district.

13         B. 1. A student shall be eligible to participate in the  
14         Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program and to qualify for an award  
15         which includes payment of an amount equivalent to resident tuition  
16         or other tuition pursuant to Section 2604 of this title for the  
17         first semester or other academic unit of postsecondary enrollment if  
18         the student meets all of the following criteria:

19         a. is a child of any person killed after January 1, 2000,  
20           in the line of duty in any branch of the United States  
21           Armed Forces or who died after January 1, 2000, as a  
22           result of an injury sustained while in the line of  
23           duty in any branch of the United States Armed Forces  
24           and the person who was killed or died filed an

1                   individual or joint Oklahoma income tax return for the  
2                   tax year prior to the year during which the person was  
3                   killed or died,

4                   b. is a resident of this state or is enrolled in a school  
5                   district located in this state that serves students  
6                   who reside in both this state and an adjacent state  
7                   pursuant to a contract as authorized in Section 5-  
8                   117.1 of this title,

9                   c. enrolls in an institution within The Oklahoma State  
10                  System of Higher Education prior to reaching the age  
11                  of twenty-one (21),

12                  d. has satisfied admission standards as determined by the  
13                  Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education for first-  
14                  time-entering students for the appropriate type of  
15                  institution, or, if attending a private institution,  
16                  has satisfied admission standards as determined by the  
17                  private institution. No student participating in the  
18                  Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program shall be  
19                  admitted into an institution of higher education by  
20                  special admission standards,

21                  e. has secured admission to, and enrolled in, an  
22                  institution which is a member of The Oklahoma State  
23                  System of Higher Education, a postsecondary  
24                  vocational-technical program offered by a technology

1                   center school that meets the requirements to be  
2                   eligible for federal student financial aid, or a  
3                   private institution of higher learning located within  
4                   this state and accredited pursuant to Section 4103 of  
5                   this title, and

6                 f.    executes an agreement pursuant to subsection C of  
7                   Section 2605 of this title.

8                 2. A student who is eligible to participate in the program  
9                   pursuant to this subsection shall not be required to meet the  
10                  eligibility requirements set forth in subsection A of this section.

11                C. To retain eligibility while pursuing the program of higher  
12                  learning in which enrolled, the student shall:

13                1. Meet the requirements for retention and degree completion as  
14                  established by the institution in which the student is enrolled;

15                2. Maintain good academic standing and satisfactory academic  
16                  progress according to standards of the Oklahoma State Regents for  
17                  Higher Education;

18                3. Maintain satisfactory academic progress as required for  
19                  eligibility for federal Title IV student financial aid programs.

20               The provisions of this paragraph shall become effective for the  
21                  2012-2013 school year;

22               4. Comply with the standards related to maintenance of  
23                  eligibility as promulgated by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher  
24                  Education; and

1       5. Refrain from conduct that leads to expulsion or suspension  
2 of more than one semester from an institution of higher education.  
3 A student who violates the provisions of this paragraph shall  
4 permanently lose eligibility for program benefits. The provisions  
5 of this paragraph shall become effective January 1, 2008.

6       D. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and the  
7 State Board of Career and Technology Education shall promulgate  
8 rules relating to maintenance of eligibility under the Oklahoma  
9 Higher Learning Access Act by a student.

10      E. It is the intent of the Legislature that students in the  
11 ninth grade for the 1992-93 school year who are determined to be  
12 eligible Oklahoma Higher Learning Access students pursuant to the  
13 Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Act shall be the first students  
14 eligible for benefits from the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Trust  
15 Fund.

16      F. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education are  
17 authorized to study, develop, and propose criteria for determining  
18 award eligibility based upon the completion of seven semesters of  
19 high school coursework by a student.

20       SECTION 2. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2605, as  
21 last amended by Section 2, Chapter 274, O.S.L. 2024 (70 O.S. Supp.  
22 2024, Section 2605), is amended to read as follows:

23       Section 2605. A. Each school year, every fifth- through  
24 eleventh-grade student in the public and private schools of this

1 state and students who are educated by other means and are in the  
2 equivalent of the fifth through eleventh grade shall be apprised,  
3 together with the parent, custodial parent, or guardian of the  
4 student, of the opportunity for access to higher learning under the  
5 Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program. The Oklahoma State Regents  
6 for Higher Education and the State Board of Education shall develop,  
7 promote, and coordinate a public awareness program to be utilized in  
8 making students and parents aware of the Oklahoma Higher Learning  
9 Access Program.

10       B. On a form provided by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher  
11 Education, every public school district shall designate at least one  
12 Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program contact person, who shall be  
13 a counselor or teacher, at each public school site in this state in  
14 which eighth-, ninth-, tenth-, or eleventh-grade classes are taught.  
15 When requested by the State Regents, the State Board of Education  
16 shall assist the State Regents to ensure the designation of contact  
17 persons. Private schools shall also designate at least one school  
18 official as a contact person. For students who are educated by  
19 other means, a parent or guardian or other person approved by the  
20 State Regents shall be designated the contact person.

21       C. 1. Students who qualify on the basis of financial need  
22 according to subsection D or E of this section or who meet the  
23 eligibility qualification set forth in subparagraph a of paragraph 1  
24 of subsection B of Section 2603 of this title prior to entering the

1       eleventh grade or prior to reaching the age of sixteen (16) and the  
2       standards and provisions promulgated by the Oklahoma State Regents  
3       for Higher Education shall be given the opportunity throughout the  
4       eighth-, ninth-, tenth-, and eleventh-grade years, for students  
5       enrolled in a public or private school, or between the ages of  
6       thirteen (13) and sixteen (16), for students who are educated by  
7       other means, to enter into participation in the program by agreeing  
8       to, throughout the remainder of their school years or educational  
9       program:

- 10           a.       attend school or an educational program regularly and  
11                   do homework regularly,
- 12           b.       refrain from substance abuse,
- 13           c.       refrain from commission of crimes or delinquent acts,
- 14           d.       have school work and school records reviewed by  
15                   mentors designated pursuant to the program,
- 16           e.       provide information requested by the Oklahoma State  
17                   Regents for Higher Education or the State Board of  
18                   Education, and
- 19           f.       participate in program activities.

20       2. Students who meet the eligibility qualification set forth in  
21       subparagraph a of paragraph 1 of subsection B of Section 2603 of  
22       this title after completing the eleventh grade or after reaching the  
23       age of seventeen (17) shall be given the opportunity prior to  
24       reaching the age of twenty-one (21) to enter into participation in

1     the program and shall execute an agreement with provisions as  
2     determined by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

3         3. The contact person shall maintain the agreements, which  
4     shall be executed on forms provided by the Oklahoma State Regents  
5     for Higher Education and managed according to regulations  
6     promulgated by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, and  
7     the contact person shall monitor compliance of the student with the  
8     terms of the agreement. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher  
9     Education are authorized to process student agreements and verify  
10    compliance with the agreements. Students failing to comply with the  
11    terms of the agreement shall not be eligible for the awards provided  
12    in Section 2604 of this title.

13             D. Except as otherwise provided for in subsection E of this  
14    section and except for students who qualify pursuant to subsection B  
15    of Section 2603 of this title, a student shall not be found to be in  
16    financial need for purposes of the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access  
17    Program if:

18                 1. Beginning with eighth-, ninth-, or tenth-grade students who  
19    are enrolled in a public or private school or students between the  
20    ages of thirteen (13) and fifteen (15) who are educated by other  
21    means who apply for participation in the program in the 2017-2018  
22    school year, the federal adjusted gross income of the student's  
23    parent(s) exceeds Fifty-five Thousand Dollars (\$55,000.00) per year;

1       2. Beginning with eighth-, ninth-, tenth-, or eleventh-grade  
2 students who are enrolled in a public or private school or students  
3 between the ages of thirteen (13) and sixteen (16) who are educated  
4 by other means who apply for participation in the program in the  
5 2021-2022 school year, the federal adjusted gross income of the  
6 student's parent(s) exceeds Sixty Thousand Dollars (\$60,000.00) per  
7 year;

8       3. Beginning with eighth-, ninth-, tenth-, or eleventh-grade  
9 students who are enrolled in a public or private school or students  
10 between the ages of thirteen (13) and sixteen (16) who are educated  
11 by other means who apply for participation in the program in the  
12 2022-2023 school year:

13           a. the federal adjusted gross income of the student's  
14 parent(s), who have two or fewer dependent children,  
15 exceeds Sixty Thousand Dollars (\$60,000.00) per year,

16           b. the federal adjusted gross income of the student's  
17 parent(s), who have three or four dependent children,  
18 exceeds Seventy Thousand Dollars (\$70,000.00) per  
19 year, or

20           c. the federal adjusted gross income of the student's  
21 parent(s), who have five or more dependent children,  
22 exceeds Eighty Thousand Dollars (\$80,000.00) per year;

23       4. Beginning with the 2018-2019 academic year, prior to  
24 receiving any Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program benefit award

1 for any year during which the student is enrolled in an institution  
2 which is a member of The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education,  
3 a postsecondary vocational-technical program offered by a technology  
4 center school that meets the requirements to be eligible for federal  
5 student financial aid, or a private institution of higher learning  
6 located within this state and accredited pursuant to Section 4103 of  
7 this title, the federal adjusted gross income of the student's  
8 parent(s) exceeds One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000.00) per  
9 year.

10       The determination of financial qualification as set forth in  
11 this paragraph shall be based on the income of the student, not the  
12 income of the parent(s), if a student:

- 13           a. is determined to be independent of the student's  
14              parents for federal financial aid purposes,
- 15           b. was in the permanent custody of the Department of  
16              Human Services at the time the student enrolled in the  
17              program, or
- 18           c. was in the court-ordered custody of a federally  
19              recognized Indian tribe, as defined by the federal  
20              Indian Child Welfare Act, at the time the student  
21              enrolled in the program.

22       The provisions of this paragraph shall apply to any student who  
23 has received an Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program benefit  
24 award after the 2017-2018 school year; and

1       5. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall review  
2 the determination of financial qualification as set forth in  
3 paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 of this subsection if the income from taxable  
4 and nontaxable sources of the student's parent(s) includes income  
5 received from nontaxable military benefits or income received from  
6 the federal Social Security Administration due to the death or  
7 disability of the student's parent(s). If the income from taxable  
8 and nontaxable sources of the student's parent(s), excluding income  
9 received from nontaxable military benefits or income received from  
10 the federal Social Security Administration due to the death or  
11 disability of the student's parent(s), does not exceed the  
12 limitations set forth by paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 of this subsection,  
13 the student shall be determined to have met the financial  
14 qualification set forth in paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 of this  
15 subsection.

16       E. 1. A student who was adopted between birth and twelve (12)  
17 years of age while in the permanent custody of the Department of  
18 Human Services, in the court-ordered custody of a licensed private  
19 nonprofit child-placing agency, or federally recognized Indian  
20 tribe, as defined by the federal Indian Child Welfare Act, shall not  
21 be found to be in financial need for purposes of the Oklahoma Higher  
22 Learning Access Program if at the time the student begins  
23 postsecondary education and prior to receiving any Oklahoma Higher  
24 Learning Access Program benefit award, the federal adjusted gross

1 income of the student's parent(s) exceeds One Hundred Fifty Thousand  
2 Dollars (\$150,000.00) per year. The provisions of this paragraph  
3 shall not apply to any student who has received an Oklahoma Higher  
4 Learning Access Program benefit award prior to the 2012-2013 school  
5 year.

6       2. A student who was adopted between thirteen (13) and  
7 seventeen (17) years of age while in the permanent custody of the  
8 Department of Human Services, in the court-ordered custody of a  
9 licensed private nonprofit child-placing agency, or federally  
10 recognized Indian tribe, as defined by the federal Indian Child  
11 Welfare Act, shall not be found to be in financial need for purposes  
12 of the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program if at the time the  
13 student begins postsecondary education and prior to receiving any  
14 Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program benefit award, the federal  
15 adjusted gross income of the student's parent(s) exceeds Two Hundred  
16 Thousand Dollars (\$200,000.00) per year. The provisions of this  
17 paragraph shall not apply to any student who has received an  
18 Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program benefit award prior to the  
19 2012-2013 school year.

20       3. A student who was placed in the custody of the Department of  
21 Human Services at any time during the eighth, ninth, tenth, or  
22 eleventh grades and enrolls in the program no later than his or her  
23 official date of high school graduation shall not be found to be in  
24 financial need for purposes of the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access

1 Program if the federal adjusted gross income of the student exceeds  
2 Sixty Thousand Dollars (\$60,000.00) per year.

3       4. Except for students who qualify pursuant to subsection B of  
4 Section 2603 of this title, the determination of financial  
5 qualification as set forth in this subsection shall be based on the  
6 income of the student, not the income of the parent(s), if the  
7 student is determined to be independent of the student's parent(s)  
8 for federal financial aid purposes. A determination of financial  
9 qualification shall not be required for the student who meets the  
10 criteria set forth in this subsection at the time the student  
11 applies for participation in the program. The provisions of this  
12 paragraph shall not apply to any student who has received an  
13 Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program benefit award prior to the  
14 2008-2009 school year.

15       5. a. A determination of financial qualification is not  
16                   required for a student who is the child of a certified  
17                   classroom teacher at the time the student applies for  
18                   participation in the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access  
19                   Program and prior to receiving any Oklahoma Higher  
20                   Learning Access Program benefit award for any year  
21                   during which the student is enrolled in an institution  
22                   which is a member of The Oklahoma State System of  
23                   Higher Education, a postsecondary vocational-technical  
24                   program offered by a technology center school that

1                   meets the eligibility requirements for federal student  
2                   financial aid, or a private institution of higher  
3                   learning located within this state and accredited  
4                   pursuant to Section 4103 of this title. The Oklahoma  
5                   State Regents for Higher Education shall verify the  
6                   full-time employment status of the student's parent(s)  
7                   prior to the student receiving any Oklahoma Higher  
8                   Learning Access Program benefit award. The provisions  
9                   of this paragraph shall apply to eighth-, ninth-, or  
10                  tenth-grade students who are enrolled in a public or  
11                  private school or students between the ages of  
12                  thirteen (13) and fifteen (15) who are educated by  
13                  other means who apply for participation in the program  
14                  after the 2023-2024 school year, and

- 15                  b.        For the purposes of this paragraph, "certified  
16                  classroom teacher" means any certified, full-time  
17                  classroom teacher who has been employed as a teacher  
18                  in a classroom by a public school district in this  
19                  state for a minimum of ten (10) years. The teacher is  
20                  not required to have been employed by the same public  
21                  school district for ten (10) years, and the ten (10)  
22                  years of employment do not have to be consecutive.  
23                  Certified classroom teacher does not mean a certified  
24                  teacher who has been employed as a district

1                   superintendent, principal, or any other position  
2                   within the administration of a public school district.

3                 F. The financial qualification of a student as set forth in  
4 subsections D and E of this section shall be certified by the  
5 contact person or by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education  
6 on the agreement form provided by the Oklahoma State Regents for  
7 Higher Education. The form shall be retained in the permanent  
8 record of the student and a copy forwarded to the Oklahoma State  
9 Regents for Higher Education.

10               G. Agreements shall be witnessed by the parent, custodial  
11 parent, or guardian of the student, who shall further agree to:

- 12               1. Assist the student in achieving compliance with the  
13 agreements;
- 14               2. Confer, when requested to do so, with the school contact  
15 person, other school personnel, and program mentors;
- 16               3. Provide information requested by the Oklahoma State Regents  
17 for Higher Education or the State Board of Education; and
- 18               4. Assist the student in completing forms and reports required  
19 for program participation, making applications to institutions and  
20 schools of higher learning, and filing applications for student  
21 grants and scholarships.

22               H. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall  
23 promulgate rules for the determination of student compliance with  
24 agreements made pursuant to this section.

1       I. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall  
2 designate personnel to coordinate tracking of program records for  
3 the years when students participating in the program are still in  
4 the schools or are being educated by other means, provide staff  
5 development for contact persons in the schools, and provide liaison  
6 with the State Board of Education and local organizations and  
7 individuals participating in the program.

8       J. The school district where an Oklahoma Higher Learning Access  
9 Program student is enrolled when the student begins participation in  
10 the program and any subsequent school district where the student  
11 enrolls shall forward information regarding participation by the  
12 student in the program to a school to which the student transfers  
13 upon the request of the school for the records of the student.

14       K. Students participating in the Oklahoma Higher Learning  
15 Access Program shall provide their Social Security number or their  
16 student identification number used by their school to the Oklahoma  
17 State Regents for Higher Education. The Regents shall keep the  
18 numbers confidential and use them only for administrative purposes.

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

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

1           Passed the House of Representatives the 6th day of March, 2025.  
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Presiding Officer of the House  
of Representatives

5           Passed the Senate the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025.  
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Presiding Officer of the Senate

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