

AN ACT concerning education.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,  
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 1. This Act may be referred to as the Illinois Graduate and Retain Our Workforce (iGROW) Tech Law.

Section 5. The State Finance Act is amended by adding Section 5.990 as follows:

(30 ILCS 105/5.990 new)

Sec. 5.990. The Illinois Graduate and Retain Our Workforce (iGROW) Tech Scholarship Fund.

Section 10. The Higher Education Student Assistance Act is amended by adding Section 65.120 as follows:

(110 ILCS 947/65.120 new)

Sec. 65.120. IGROW Tech Scholarship Program.

(a) As used in this Section:

"Eligible applicant" means a student who has graduated from high school or has received a State of Illinois High School Diploma, who has maintained a cumulative grade point average of no less than 2.5 on a 4.0 scale, who is pursuing or intends to pursue a qualifying degree in a qualified

institution, and who is entitled to apply for assistance under this Section.

"Full-time" means the number of credit hours the Commission determines is full-time enrollment for a student for purposes of the program created under this Section.

"Minority student" has the same meaning as the term is defined under Section 50 of the Higher Education Student Assistance Act (110 ILCS 947).

"Program" means the iGROW Tech Scholarship Program created under this Section.

"Qualifying degree" means an associate or a bachelor's degree granted by a qualified institution in the field of computer information sciences; information technology; information science; computer science; computer systems networking and telecommunications; computer and information systems security or information assurance, including cybersecurity; or management information systems.

"Qualifying job" means a job with an employer in this State performing work that is directly related to the field of study that qualified the candidate for assistance under this Section.

"Qualified student" means a person (i) who is a resident of this State; (ii) who, as an eligible applicant, has made a timely application for an iGROW tech scholarship under this Section; (iii) who is enrolled on at least a half-time basis at a qualified institution; (iv) who is enrolled in a course of

study in the field of computer and information sciences; information technology; information science; computer science; computer systems networking and telecommunications; computer and information systems security or information assurance, including cybersecurity; or management information systems; (v) who maintains a grade point average of no less than a 2.5 on a 4.0 scale; and (vi) who continues to advance satisfactorily toward the attainment of a degree.

"Recipient" means an Illinois resident enrolled in a qualified institution who receives an award under this Section.

(b) Subject to appropriation, and no sooner than the 2024-2025 academic year, there is established the Illinois Graduate and Retain Our Workforce (iGROW) Tech Scholarship Program to recruit and train individuals to work in technology jobs that have a high demand for new employees and offer high wages by awarding scholarships.

(c) Each iGROW tech scholarship awarded under this Section shall be determined by the Commission in an amount up to and including the full costs of tuition and fees and room and board of the qualified institution at which the recipient is enrolled if the institution is public, or an equivalent rate established by the Commission for private institutions. The total amount of iGROW tech scholarship assistance awarded by the Commission under this Section to an eligible applicant in any given fiscal year, when added to other financial

assistance awarded to that individual for that year, shall not exceed the cost of attendance at the institution at which the student is enrolled. If the amount of financial assistance to be awarded to a qualified student exceeds the cost of attendance at the institution at which the student is enrolled, the iGROW tech scholarship shall be reduced by an amount equal to the amount by which the combined financial assistance available to the student exceeds the cost of attendance.

(d) The maximum number of academic terms for which a qualified student can receive iGROW tech scholarship assistance shall be 8 semesters or 12 quarters.

(e) All applications for scholarships awarded under this Section shall be made to the Commission on forms which the Commission shall provide for eligible applicants. The form of applications and the information required to be set forth therein shall be determined by the Commission, and the Commission shall require eligible applicants to submit with their applications such supporting documents or recommendations as the Commission deems necessary.

(f) Subject to appropriation for such purposes, payment of any iGROW tech scholarship awarded under this Section shall be determined by the Commission. All scholarship funds distributed in accordance with this subsection shall be paid to the qualified institution and used only for payment of the tuition and fees assessed by the institution and the standard

housing and food allowance used for all undergraduate students by the qualified student in connection with his or her attendance at a qualified institution.

Any iGROW tech scholarship awarded under this Section shall be applicable to 2 semesters or 3 quarters of enrollment annually. The qualified institution can only request payment for tuition and fees up to the amount of actual tuition and fee expenses incurred.

If a student withdraws after the expiration of the tuition refund or withdrawal adjustment period, the student may receive payment for tuition and fees incurred up to the term award. The housing and food allowance shall be prorated based on the qualified institution's return of funds policy.

(g) Prior to receiving scholarship assistance for any academic year, each recipient of an iGROW tech scholarship awarded under this Section shall be required by the Commission to sign an agreement under which the recipient pledges that the recipient (i) shall work in the State in a qualified job for a period of not less than one year for each year of scholarship assistance he or she was awarded under this Section; however, in no event shall he or she agree to work in the State in a qualified job for a period of less than 2 years; and (ii) shall, upon request by the Commission, provide the Commission with evidence that he or she is fulfilling or has fulfilled the terms of the agreement provided for in this subsection.

If a recipient of an iGROW tech scholarship awarded under this Section fails to fulfill the obligations set forth in this subsection, the Commission shall require the recipient to repay the amount of the scholarships received, prorated according to the fraction of the employment obligation not completed, at a rate of interest equal to 5%, and, if applicable, reasonable collection fees. The Commission is authorized to establish rules relating to its collection activities for repayment of scholarships under this Section. All repayments collected under this Section shall be forwarded to the State Comptroller for deposit into the State's General Revenue Fund.

A recipient of an iGROW tech scholarship shall not be considered in violation of the agreement entered into pursuant to this subsection if the recipient (I) enrolls on a full-time basis as a graduate student in a course of study related to the technology degree for which he or she qualified for the iGROW tech scholarship at a qualified institution; (II) is serving, not in excess of 3 years, as a member of the armed services of the United States; (III) is a person with a temporary total disability for a period of time not to exceed 3 years as established by sworn affidavit of a qualified physician; (IV) is seeking and unable to find full-time employment with a State employer that satisfies the criteria set forth in this subsection and is able to provide evidence of that fact; (V) becomes a person with a permanent total disability as

established by sworn affidavit of a qualified physician; or (VI) meets any other criteria that the Commission may deem necessary.

(h) Scholarship recipients under this Section who withdraw from a program of computer science or other related major area of study provided under this Section but remain enrolled in school to continue their postsecondary studies in another academic discipline shall not be required to commence repayment of their iGROW tech scholarship so long as they remain enrolled in school on a full-time basis or if they can document for the Commission special circumstances that warrant extension of repayment.

(i) If the Program does not expend at least 90% of the amount appropriated for the Program in a given fiscal year for 3 consecutive fiscal years on or before January 1 in each of those fiscal years, then up to 3% of amount appropriated for the Program for each of next 3 fiscal years shall be allocated to increasing awareness of the program.

(j) The Commission shall administer the Program and shall make all necessary and proper rules not inconsistent with this Section for its effective implementation.

(k) The Commission shall establish a methodology for prioritizing applications from applicants who demonstrate a financial need or hardship, applications from minority students, and applications from applicants demonstrating academic excellence. After the first academic year that the

Program operates, the Commission shall prioritize the applications of those applicants who received a scholarship under this Section during the prior academic year and who remain eligible for a scholarship under this Section.

(l) Each fiscal year, the Commission may use up to 5% of money appropriated for the Program for administration.

(m) Scholarships may be made under this Section through the 2029-30 academic year.

(n) The Illinois Graduate and Retain Our Workforce (iGROW) Tech Scholarship Fund is created as a special fund in the State treasury. Moneys in the fund may come from both public entities and institutional, organizational, or other private entities. All money in the Fund shall be used, subject to appropriation, by the Commission to implement and administer the Program pursuant to this Section.

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect January 1, 2024.