

256.229 Future ready Iowa skilled workforce grant program.

1. *Definitions.* As used in [this section](#), unless the context otherwise requires:

a. “*Approved virtual institution*” means a nonprofit institution of higher learning that satisfies all of the following requirements:

(1) Is accredited by a national accrediting agency recognized by the United States department of education.

(2) Provides instruction using exclusively a competency-based educational model.

(3) Adopts a policy to require that the nonprofit institution of higher learning shall, by December 15 of each year, file a report with the governor and the general assembly providing information and statistics for the previous five academic years on the number of Iowa resident students per year who are veterans who received education credit for military education, training, and service, that number as a percentage of veterans known to be enrolled at the nonprofit institution of higher learning, the average number of credits received by students, and the average number of credits applied towards the award or completion of a course of instruction, postsecondary diploma, degree, or other evidences of distinction. For purposes of this subparagraph, “*veteran*” means a veteran as defined in [section 35.1](#) or a member of the reserve forces of the United States or the national guard as defined in [section 29A.1](#) who has served at least one year of the member’s commitment and is eligible for or has exhausted federal veterans education benefits under 38 U.S.C. ch. 30, 32, 33, or 36, or 10 U.S.C. ch. 1606 or 1607, respectively.

b. “*Commission*” means the college student aid commission.

c. “*Eligible institution*” means an institution of higher learning governed by the state board of regents, an accredited private institution as defined in [section 256.183](#), or an approved virtual institution, that meets all of the following criteria:

(1) Applies to and is approved by the commission to participate in the future ready Iowa skilled workforce grant program.

(2) Requires eligible students to complete and file application forms required by the commission, apply for all available state and federal financial aid, apply to the eligible institution to participate in the program, attend orientation in person or virtually, register for classes with the assistance of an academic advisor, and participate in academic and career advising sessions required under the program.

(3) Facilitates the assignment of a volunteer mentor or a mentor who is a member of the faculty of the eligible institution to each eligible student based on the eligible student’s interest. A volunteer mentor shall have successfully passed a background investigation and a check of the national sex offender registry as required under [section 15H.10, subsection 2](#), and both the eligible student and the volunteer mentor shall have entered into a written agreement as provided in [section 15H.10, subsection 3](#).

(4) Facilitates connections through campus career centers and services to internships and similar local, state, and federal programs.

(5) Markets the eligible institution’s eligible program and optional incentives, which may include but not be limited to credit for military experience, on the eligible institution’s internet site and to other relevant agencies and organizations as recommended by the college student aid commission, the commission on volunteer service, or the department of workforce development.

(6) Submits annually information and data regarding the eligible program operated by the eligible institution, the students and volunteer mentors participating in the eligible program, and statistics on employment outcomes for eligible program participants by industry, to the commission in the manner required by the commission.

d. “*Eligible program*” means a program of study or an academic major jointly approved by the commission and the department of workforce development, in consultation with the eligible institution, that leads to a bachelor’s degree aligned with a high-demand job designated by the workforce development board pursuant to [section 84A.1B, subsection 14](#). If the department of workforce development removes a high-demand job from the list created under [section 84A.1B, subsection 14](#), an eligible student who received a grant for a

program based on that high-demand job shall continue to receive the grant until achieving a bachelor's degree as long as the student continues to meet all other eligibility requirements.

e. "Eligible student" means an Iowa resident who meets all of the following requirements:

(1) Completes and submits application forms required by the commission, including the free application for federal student aid; applies for all available state and federal financial aid; attends orientation in person or virtually; registers for classes with the assistance of an academic advisor; and participates in academic and career advising sessions required under the eligible program. To receive a renewal of a grant awarded under [this section](#), an eligible student must annually submit a new application to the commission for reevaluation of eligibility.

(2) Is at least twenty-five years of age at the time the individual enrolls in an eligible program.

(3) Enrolls in at least six semester hours, or the equivalent, in an eligible program. However, an eligible student may enroll in fewer than six semester hours, or the equivalent, if the eligible student needs fewer than six semester hours of credit, or the equivalent, to achieve a bachelor's degree under the eligible program.

(4) Is making satisfactory academic progress as defined by the eligible institution.

(5) Remains continuously enrolled unless granted a leave of absence by the eligible institution based on criteria adopted by rule by the commission.

f. "Full-time" means enrollment in at least twelve semester hours or the equivalent.

g. "Part-time" means enrollment in at least six but less than twelve semester hours or the equivalent.

2. *Allowable activities.* An eligible student may work with an assigned volunteer mentor, or a mentor who is a member of the faculty of the eligible institution, to help the student meet the requirements of [this section](#) or the requirements of an eligible program, identify and participate in work-based learning opportunities with the approval of the eligible institution, and make other career-related connections.

3. *Grant limitations — requirements.*

a. A full-time eligible student may receive a future ready Iowa skilled workforce grant annually for not more than four semesters, or the equivalent, or until the eligible student earns a bachelor's degree under the program, whichever occurs first. A part-time eligible student may receive the grant for not more than eight semesters, or the equivalent, on a prorated basis, or until the eligible student earns a bachelor's degree under the eligible program, whichever occurs first.

b. The amount of a future ready Iowa skilled workforce grant to a full-time eligible student shall be at least one thousand dollars annually. The amount of a future ready Iowa skilled workforce grant to a part-time eligible student shall be equal to the amount that would be awarded to a full-time student except that the commission shall prorate the amount based on the recipient student's semester hour or equivalent enrollment.

c. A future ready Iowa skilled workforce grant shall be awarded on an annual basis, requiring reapplication by an eligible student each year. Payments under the grant shall be allocated equally among the semesters, or the equivalent, and paid upon certification by the eligible institution that the student meets the requirements of [subsection 1](#), paragraph "e".

d. If a grant recipient discontinues attendance before the end of any semester, or the equivalent, after receiving grant payments, the entire amount of any refund due that recipient, up to the full amount of grant payments made during that semester, or the equivalent, shall be paid by the eligible institution to the commission.

4. *Commission's duties and responsibilities.* Subject to an appropriation of funds by the general assembly for purposes of [this section](#), the commission shall administer the future ready Iowa skilled workforce grant program and shall do all of the following:

a. Provide application forms for distribution to students by eligible institutions.

b. Adopt rules under [chapter 17A](#), in collaboration with the department of workforce development, for administration of [this section](#), including but not limited to establishing the duties and responsibilities of eligible institutions under the program; defining residence and satisfactory academic progress for purposes of the program; and establishing procedures for grant application, processing, and approval. The rules shall provide for determining the

priority awarding of grants if funds available for purposes of [this section](#) are insufficient to pay all eligible students. Priority shall be given to fully awarding eligible students approved for grants based on the date of application, rather than prorating grant awards among all eligible students.

c. Approve and award grants on an annual basis.

d. Transmit to the department of workforce development the compilation of information, data, and statistics submitted in accordance with [subsection 1](#), paragraph “c”, subparagraph (6), for the annual report required under [section 84A.1B](#).

5. *Fund created.* A future ready Iowa skilled workforce grant fund is created in the state treasury as a separate fund under the control of the commission. All moneys deposited or paid into the fund are appropriated and made available to the commission to be used for grants awarded as provided under [this section](#). Notwithstanding [section 8.33](#), any balance in the fund on June 30 of each fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund of the state, but shall be available for purposes of [this section](#) in subsequent fiscal years.

[2018 Acts, ch 1067, §13, 15](#)

[C2020, §261.132](#)

[2021 Acts, ch 170, §20; 2023 Acts, ch 19, §2637, 2641; 2023 Acts, ch 111, §15 – 18](#)

[C2024, §256.229](#)

Referred to in [§15H.10, 84A.1B, 84A.13](#)

See Code editor's note on simple harmonization at the beginning of this Code volume

Section transferred from §261.132 in Code 2024 pursuant to directive in 2023 Acts, ch 19, §2641

Subsections 1 and 2 amended

Subsection 3, paragraph c amended

Subsection 4, paragraph d amended

Subsection 6 stricken