

**ARKANSAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD
SPECIAL MEETING**

Zoom

Wednesday, May 27, 2026

9:00 a.m.

Coordinating Board Members

Dr. Jim Carr, Chair

Lucas Pointer, Vice Chair

Dr. Katherine Dudley, Secretary

Graycen Bigger

Dr. Jerry Cash

Carolyn Rhinehart

AGENDA

- *1. Policy Regarding the Arkansas Workforce Challenge Scholarship Program
(Dr. Tina Moore)
- *2. Rules Governing the Governor's Higher Education Transition Scholarship
Program (Mr. Nick Fuller)

**AHECB POLICY – ARKANSAS WORKFORCE CHALLENGE
SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM POLICY**

The Arkansas Workforce Challenge Scholarship Program was amended by the Arkansas ACCESS Act of 2025 (Act 341 Sections 84-87). The Arkansas Division of Higher Education (ADHE) Rules Governing the Arkansas Workforce Challenge Scholarship Program were presented to the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) for final approval on April 24, 2026. Per authority provided in the Arkansas ACCESS Act of 2025, ADHE in collaboration with the Office of Skills Development has determined additional policy to support implementation of the program, in adherence to the rules. The amended AHECB policy for the Arkansas Workforce Challenge Scholarship Program shall include the approved rules along with supporting details.

AHECB Resolutions

RESOLVED, That the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) approves the policy amendment for the Arkansas Workforce Challenge Scholarship Program effective August 1, 2026. The Arkansas Workforce Challenge Scholarship Program policy outlines the guidelines for program implementation. While rules may not change without legislative action, policy may be amended by the AHECB in response to evolving state workforce needs.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That any Arkansas approved institution of higher education, as defined in the Arkansas ACCESS Act of 2025, that chooses to participate in the Arkansas Workforce Challenge Scholarship Program, shall implement and administer the scholarship program in accordance with the policies of the AHECB and the promulgated rules.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the AHECB instructs the Commissioner of the Arkansas Division of Higher Education to provide a copy of the amended policy to presidents and chancellors, chief academic affairs officers, students affairs officers, financial aid officers, and institutional research officers at Arkansas state-supported colleges and universities as well as representatives from other approved institutions of higher education, as defined in the Arkansas ACCESS Act of 2025, participating in the Arkansas Workforce Challenge Scholarship Program.

Arkansas Workforce Challenge Scholarship Program Policy

(Final approved Arkansas Division of Higher Education Rules Governing the Arkansas Workforce Challenge Scholarship Program to be inserted here.)

Definitions

Professional Skills Training: non-credit postsecondary courses that develop or enhance occupational, technical, and/or durable skills of individuals – whether employed, underemployed, or unemployed – to meet the needs of employers and/or increase individual opportunity in the labor market. Courses may include methods such as lecture, workshop, customized training, apprenticeship, etc. While these courses carry no institutional credit applicable toward a degree, diploma, or certificate, the competencies and skills attained through Professional Skills Training could apply toward a prior learning credit.

- I. Per *(Pending)* Rules: 6 CAR § 403-201. Eligibility requirements. (c)(1) The program eligibility of institutions of higher education under § 403-103(2) of this part shall be determined by the division in collaboration with the Office of Skills Development.

Program Minimum Requirements

- Professional Skills Training: 80 clock hours
- Credit: Certificate of Proficiency (6 credit hours)

Funding Award Amounts:

- Tiered Funding:
 - Up to \$1500 for professional skills training programs 80-179 clock hours
 - Up to \$3000 for professional skills training programs 180+ clock hours or credit programs CP (6 credit hours) and above (not to exceed the standard tuition rate and fee structure of the IHE providing the

instruction)

- Stackable programs with a combined duration of 179 clock hours or fewer will qualify for funding not to exceed \$1,500, unless otherwise authorized by the Division of Higher Education, subject to the application of exceptional qualifying criteria.

CIPs in High-Demand Fields:

- ADHE will approve Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) codes aligned with Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes in the high-demand fields of:
 - Advanced Manufacturing
 - Health Care
 - Information Technology
 - Construction Trades
 - Logistics, Distribution, and Transportation

II. Per (*Pending*) Rules 6 CAR § 403-203. Institutional responsibilities — Institutions of Higher Education responsibilities. (g) Reporting requirements.

Individual Student Completer Information Required to Report

- Student First Name
- Student Last Name
- Student SSN
- Student DOB
- Student Race
- Student Ethnicity
- Student Sex
- # Contact or Credit Hours Completed
- Academic Year
- Program or Degree Name

- Credential Completion Type(s) or Degree Level
- Program CIP Code
- Program SOC Code
- Program Start Date
- Program Completion Date
- # of Instructional Weeks

Failure to report student completer information may result in loss of program eligibility. The ADHE financial aid office reserves the right to require additional information, if required for the Arkansas Scholarship Lottery.

- III. Per *(Pending)* Rules 6 CAR § 403-203. Institutional responsibilities — Institutions of Higher Education responsibilities. (c) Institutional verification. (5) The electronic verification rosters shall be returned to the division by November 1 for the fall semester, by March 15 for the spring semester, and at the date specified by the division for the summer semester.

Electronic Verification Roster Due Dates

- Credit: November 1 for the fall semester, March 15 for the spring semester, and July 15 for the summer semester
- Professional Skills Training: March 31, June 30, Sept. 30 and Dec. 31.
- ADHE will pause adding new students to roster 30 days before deadline.

- IV. Per *(Pending)* Rules 6 CAR § 403-203. Institutional responsibilities — Institutions of Higher Education responsibilities. (c) Institutional verification. (6) The division shall also provide electronic continuing eligibility rosters to the financial aid administrator before the end of the fall, spring, and summer semesters.

Continuing Eligibility Rosters Provided to Financial Aid Administrators

Credit: The division shall also provide electronic continuing eligibility rosters to the financial aid administrator before the end of the fall, spring, and summer

semesters.

Professional Skills Training: The division shall provide electronic continuing eligibility rosters to the financial aid administrator 30 days prior to the Continuing Eligibility Roster Due Dates.

- V. Per (*Pending*) Rules 6 CAR § 403-203. Institutional responsibilities — Institutions of Higher Education responsibilities. (c) Institutional verification. (7) The continuing eligibility rosters shall be returned to the division no later than January 15 based on the fall semester, June 1 based on the spring semester, and at the date specified by the division for summer semesters to ensure that adequate time is provided to notify students of their status in the program.

Continuing Eligibility Roster Due Dates

- Credit: January 15 based on the fall semester, June 1 based on the spring semester, and August 15 for summer semesters.
- Professional Skills Training: March 31, June 30, Sept. 30 and Dec. 31.

**RULES GOVERNING THE GOVERNOR'S HIGHER EDUCATION
TRANSITION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

In compliance with the Arkansas ACCESS Act of 2025 (Act 341 Section 79), the Arkansas Division of Higher Education Rules Governing the Governor's Higher Education Transition Scholarship Program are presented to the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) for final approval.

The following resolution is offered for the Board's consideration:

RESOLVED, That the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board reviews the rules presented in this agenda item for the Governor's Higher Education Transition Scholarship Program to be administered by the Arkansas Division of Higher Education.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commissioner of the Arkansas Division of Higher Education or his designee is authorized to make technical changes and corrections, when necessary, in the program rules for the Governor's Higher Education Transition Scholarship Program.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Governor's Higher Education Transition Scholarship Program rules be approved for final approval.

**DIVISION OF HIGHER EDUCATION RULES GOVERNING THE GOVERNOR'S
HIGHER EDUCATION TRANSITION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Commenter Name and Organization (if applicable):

Comments: No public comments received.

Division Response: No substantive or non-substantive changes made.

Proposed Rulemaking

Title

Promulgated by:
Division of Higher Education

Title 6. Education

Chapter IV. Division of Higher Education, Department of Education

Subchapter B. Scholarships and Grants

Part 405. Rules Governing the Governor's Higher Education Transition

Scholarship Program

Subpart 1. Generally

6 CAR § 405-101. Purpose.

The purpose of this part is to establish the requirements and processes governing the Governor's Higher Education Transition Scholarship Program.

6 CAR § 405-102. ~~Governor's Higher Education Transition~~

Scholarship Definitions.

~~(a) The Division of Higher Education shall oversee the establishment of the Governor's Higher Education Transition Scholarship Program.~~

~~—(b) Continuation of the Governor's Higher Education Transition Scholarship Program shall be contingent upon available funding.~~

As used in this part:

(1) "Eligible student" means an Arkansas student with a disability admitted to a qualifying program at a state-supported institution of higher education;

(2) "Inclusive Higher Education Accreditation Council" means the independent, nonprofit accreditation agency for postsecondary programs for students with an intellectual disability;

(3) "State-supported institution of higher education" means a public postsecondary institution or a department in a public postsecondary institution that:

(A) Provides:

(i) An eligible program of training to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation; or

(ii) A program leading to a baccalaureate degree or a graduate degree;
and

(B) Is accredited by a recognized accrediting agency or association and has continuously held the accreditation for the number of years required by the Division of Higher Education; and

(4) "Qualifying program" means a postsecondary education program for a student with an intellectual disability that is accredited by the Inclusive Higher Education Accreditation Council.

6 CAR § 405-103. Organization and structure.

(a) The Division of Higher Education shall administer the Governor's Higher Education Transition Scholarship Program.

(b) The division shall establish application periods and deadlines.

6 CAR § 405-104. Eligibility criteria.

(a)(1) The Governor's Higher Education Transition Program Scholarship may only be awarded to those students who are admitted into transition programs that are accredited by the Institute for Community Inclusion as comprehensive training programs.

(2) In order to be considered a qualifying institution, an institution must offer a transition program as described in this subsection.

(b) Students, or representatives acting on behalf of students, must complete the

online scholarship application provided by the Division of Higher Education.

(c)

6 CAR § 405-105. Continued eligibility.

Recipients of the Governor’s Higher Education Transition Scholarship will maintain award eligibility for a maximum of four (4) up to eight (8) continuous semesters, or until credentialing is obtained, whichever ever comes first, as long as the recipients are continuously enrolled in a transition program.

6 CAR § 405-106. Scholarship amounts.

(a) Scholarship awards are contingent upon availability of funds.

(b)(1) Awards may not exceed the institutional cost of attendance.

(2) The maximum award amount is two thousand five hundred (\$2,500) per semester that the student qualifies for the scholarship.

(c) Awards may be applied to:

- (1) Tuition;
- (2) Mandatory fees;
- (3) Programmatic fees;
- (4) Room and board;
- (5) Supplies; or
- (6) Extended support services.

6 CAR § 405-107. Payment of scholarships.

(a) The Division of Higher Education shall disburse scholarship funds to the qualifying institution of the recipient’s choice via electronic funds transfer or state warrant.

(b) After verification of enrollment, the institution will disburse the scholarship funds to the student according to the institution's disbursement procedures.

(c)(1) The scholarship payment will correspond to academic terms, semesters, quarters, or equivalent time periods at the institution.

(2) For purposes of scholarship payments, academic terms at the institution may include summer terms, semesters, quarters, or their equivalent.

(d) In no instance may the entire amount of the scholarship disbursement for an educational year be paid in advance to or on behalf of such student.

(e) If the recipient of a scholarship withdraws, drops out, or is expelled on or after the first day of class of a payment period, the institution will determine whether the student received an overpayment of financial aid funds for noninstitutional expenses.

(f)(1) Overpayment is the difference between the amount received as cash disbursements and the amount incurred for noninstitutional costs during the portion of the payment period that the student was actually enrolled.

(2) It is the institution's responsibility to contact students and recover overpayment or overpayments.

(3) The institution shall refund the overpayment or overpayments to the division.

(g) If the award of a Governor's Higher Education Transition Program Scholarship results in an overpayment to the student per Arkansas Code § 6-80-105, the institution shall follow the division scholarship stacking policy in reducing the student's financial package so that the student does not receive funds above the federally recognized cost of attendance.

6 CAR § 405-108. Responsibilities of qualifying institutions.

(a)(1) The chief executive officer of the qualifying institution is responsible for appointing one (1) representative from the financial aid office to act as administrator of the Governor's Higher Education Transition Scholarship Program and to receive all communications, forms, and other correspondence related to the program.

(2) This representative will be responsible for:

(A) Verification;

(B) Data; and

(C) Compliance with all program rules.

(b) The institution shall maintain information regarding disbursement of scholarship

funds.

(c) The deadline for disbursement of funds is no later than ten (10) days after receipt of funds.

(d)(1) Any outstanding funds not disbursed by these dates must be returned to the Division of Higher Education.

(2) If the division receives an application beyond the deadline referenced in this subsection, disbursement will be made within ten (10) business days of receipt of the verification roster and electronic transfer of funds.

(e) In exercising its due diligence requirements as a steward of state funds, the division shall periodically review the qualifying institution's records concerning this program.

(f) Upon request, the qualifying institution shall exercise due diligence in providing the division with complete, accurate, and timely information regarding current and former Governor's Higher Education Transition Scholarship Program recipients.

(g) Institutions with accredited transition programs will certify students' admittance and enrollment prior to scholarship award.

(h) The institution shall comply with all applicable law and rules in order to maintain its status as a qualified institution.

6 CAR § 405-109. Responsibilities of recipients.

(a) It is the recipient's responsibility to notify the Division of Higher Education of any change in status within twenty-one (21) days, including the recipient's:

- (1) Name;
- (2) Address; and
- (3) Institution.

(b) Failure to notify the division of a change in status may affect future eligibility.

1 State of Arkansas *As Engrossed: H3/6/25 H3/12/25*

2 95th General Assembly

A Bill

3 Regular Session, 2025

HOUSE BILL 1512

4

5 By: Representatives M. Shepherd, *Evans, Beaty Jr., Brooks, Eubanks, Wardlaw, Barker, K. Brown, M.*
6 *Brown, John Carr, Cavenaugh, Crawford, Gramlich, Hawk, McAlindon, McClure, S. Meeks, Nazarenko,*
7 *Rose, Torres, Wing, Achor, Beck, Eaves, Unger, Andrews*

8 By: Senator J. Dismang

9

For An Act To Be Entitled

11 AN ACT TO CREATE THE ARKANSAS ACCESS ACT; TO AMEND
12 VARIOUS PROVISIONS OF THE ARKANSAS CODE AS THEY
13 RELATE TO EDUCATION IN THE STATE OF ARKANSAS; AND FOR
14 OTHER PURPOSES.

15

16

17

Subtitle

18

TO CREATE THE ARKANSAS ACCESS ACT; AND
19 TO AMEND VARIOUS PROVISIONS OF THE
20 ARKANSAS CODE AS THEY RELATE TO
21 EDUCATION IN THE STATE OF ARKANSAS.

22

23 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

24

25 SECTION 1. DO NOT CODIFY. Title.

26 This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Arkansas ACCESS Act".

27

28 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 6-1-404(a), concerning the membership of
29 the School Leadership Coordinating Council, is amended to read as follows:

30 (a) The School Leadership Coordinating Council consists of ~~seventeen~~
31 ~~(17)~~ the following members ~~as follows~~:

32 (1) ~~The Chair of the Arkansas Association of Colleges for~~
33 ~~Teacher Education Council of Deans;~~

34 ~~(2)~~ The Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education;

35 ~~(3)~~ ~~The Director of the Arkansas Leadership Academy;~~

36 ~~(4)~~ (2) The Commissioner of the Division of Higher Education;



1 (1) Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship, § 6-85-201 et seq.;
2 and

3 (2) Arkansas Workforce Challenge Scholarship, § 6-85-301 et seq.
4
5 6-82-2508. Scholarship funding and continued eligibility.

6 (a) The state assistance under this subchapter is limited to the
7 tuition, fees, and other expenses required for the first bachelor's degree
8 earned by the dependent.

9 (b)(1) An eligible dependent shall be entitled to a total of eight (8)
10 semesters, or the equivalent thereof, of scholarship awards without cost,
11 exclusive of books, food, school supplies, materials, and dues or fees for
12 extracurricular activities, at any state-supported institution of higher
13 education or technical institute of his or her choice within this state.

14 (2) The eligible dependent may take up to four (4) semesters, or
15 the equivalent thereof, at a technical institute.

16 (c) To retain eligibility for a scholarship benefit under this
17 subchapter, a recipient shall:

18 (1) Maintain a minimum of a 2.0 grade point average on a 4.0
19 scholastic grading scale; and

20 (2) Meet any other continuing eligibility criteria established
21 by the Division of Higher Education.

22 (d) If a recipient fails to meet eligibility criteria, he or she may
23 apply for state assistance under this subchapter a maximum of one (1)
24 additional time once eligibility is reestablished.

25
26 *Subchapter 26 – Governor's Higher Education Transition Scholarship Program*

27
28 *6-82-2601. Title.*

29 *This subchapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Governor's*
30 *Higher Education Transition Scholarship Program".*

31
32 *6-82-2602. Definitions.*

33 *As used in this subchapter:*

34 *(1) "Eligible student" means an Arkansas student with a*
35 *disability admitted to a qualifying program at a state-supported institution*
36 *of higher education;*

1 (2) "Inclusive Higher Education Accreditation Council" means the
2 independent, nonprofit accreditation agency for postsecondary programs for
3 students with an intellectual disability; and

4 (3) "Qualifying program" means a postsecondary education program
5 for a student with an intellectual disability that is accredited by the
6 Inclusive Higher Education Accreditation Council.

7
8 6-82-2603. Creation – Eligibility.

9 (a) There is established the Governor's Higher Education Transition
10 Scholarship Program within the Division of Higher Education.

11 (b) An eligible student who receives a Governor's Higher Education
12 Transition Scholarship shall maintain eligibility for up to eight (8)
13 continuous semesters or until credentialing is obtained, whichever occurs
14 first.

15
16 6-82-2604. Scholarship awards.

17 (a) Scholarship awards under this subchapter are contingent upon
18 availability of funds.

19 (b)(1) Scholarship awards shall not exceed the institutional cost of
20 attendance.

21 (2) The maximum award amount per qualifying semester that a
22 student may receive is two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500).

23 (3) A scholarship award may be applied to tuition, mandatory
24 fees, programmatic fees, room and board, supplies, and extended support
25 services.

26
27 6-82-2605. Rules.

28 The Division of Higher Education may promulgate rules to govern
29 administration of the Governor's Higher Education Transition Scholarship
30 Program, including without limitation application forms and deadlines.

31
32 SECTION 80. Arkansas Code § 6-85-207 is amended to read as follows:

33 6-85-207. Additional eligibility requirements for traditional students.

34 In addition to the basic eligibility requirements of § 6-85-206, an
35 applicant is eligible as a traditional student if the applicant either:

36 (1)(A) Graduated from an Arkansas public high school and has a