WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §18C-1-1

§18C-1-1. Legislative findings; purpose; administration generally; reporting.

(a) The Legislature makes the following findings:

(1) Although enrollments in institutions of higher education in this state and throughout the nation continue to increase at a rapid pace, West Virginia has not developed sufficiently the state's human talent and resources because many able, but needy, students are not able to finance a higher education program;

(2) The state can achieve its full economic and social potential only when the following elements are in place:

(A) Every individual has the opportunity to contribute to the full extent of his or her capability; and

(B) The state assists in removing financial barriers to the individual's education goals that remain after he or she has used all resources and work opportunities available;

(b) The ultimate state goal in providing student financial aid is to create a culture that values education, to improve the quality of the workforce, and to enhance the quality of life for the citizens of West Virginia.

(c) The vice chancellor for administration has a ministerial duty to administer, oversee, and monitor all state and federal student financial aid programs administered at the state level in accordance with established rules under the direction of the commission and council and in consultation with the Higher Education Student Financial Aid Advisory Board.

(d) These programs include, but are not limited to, the following programs:

(1) The Guaranteed Student Loan Program, which may be administered by a private nonprofit agency;

(2) The Medical Student Loan Program;

(3) The Underwood-Smith Teacher Scholarship Program;

(4) The Engineering, Science and Technology Scholarship Program;

(5) The West Virginia Higher Education Grant Program;

(6) The Higher Education Adult Part-Time Student Grant Program;

(7) The West Virginia Providing Real Opportunities for Maximizing In-State Student

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Excellence (PROMISE) Scholarship Program;

(8) The Higher Education Student Assistance Loan Program established pursuant to §18-22D-1 *et seq.* of this code;

(9) The West Virginia College Prepaid Tuition and Savings Program established pursuant to §18-30-1 *et seq.* of this code, which is administered by the State Treasurer;

(10) The state aid programs for students of optometry, pursuant to §18C-3-1 *et seq.* of this code;

(11) The state aid programs for students of veterinary medicine pursuant to §18-11-6a of this code;

(12) Any reciprocal program and contract program for student aid established pursuant to §18B-4-3 and §18B-4-4 of this code;

(13) Any other state-level student aid programs in this code; and

(14) Any federal grant or contract student assistance or support programs administered at the state level.

(e) Notwithstanding any provision of this code to the contrary, the qualifications for state financial aid are separate and apart from the requirements for federal financial aid, and the inability of a student to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) because of extenuating family circumstances, as determined by the vice chancellor for administration in consultation with the student's high school, shall not affect the student's eligibility for state financial aid. This provision in no way determines the student's compliance with federal rules or eligibility relating to federal student financial aid programs.

(f) The vice chancellor for administration shall publish comprehensive data to the official websites of the commission and council regarding the implementation of the financial aid programs identified in subsection (d) of this section which are administered under his or her supervision, including data regarding how many students had to avail themselves of the provisions of subsection (e) above. A concise summary report shall be provided to the commission and the council and shall be presented to the Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability no later than January 1 annually. The report shall address all financial aid issues for which reports are required in this code, as well as any findings and recommendations.

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