

## 129th MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2019

**Legislative Document** 

No. 860

H.P. 634

House of Representatives, February 14, 2019

An Act To Establish the Maine Community College System No-cost Tuition Program

Reference to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative BRENNAN of Portland.
Cosponsored by Senator LIBBY of Androscoggin and
Representatives: CRAVEN of Lewiston, EVANGELOS of Friendship, FARNSWORTH of
Portland, GRAMLICH of Old Orchard Beach, INGWERSEN of Arundel, McCREA of Fort
Fairfield, MOONEN of Portland, MORALES of South Portland.

1	Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:
2 3	<b>Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §12706, sub-§4,</b> as enacted by PL 1985, c. 695, §11, is amended to read:
4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	<b>4. Budget development.</b> To prepare and adopt a biennial, line-category, operating budget for presentation to the Governor and the Legislature, incorporating all projected expenditures, including estimated full funding for the Maine Community College System No-cost Tuition Program, as established in section 12723, and all resources expected or proposed to be made available to fund the operations of the system. The budget is to be used in support of any requests to the Legislature for General Fund appropriations that the board of trustees may deem determines appropriate and necessary to supplement other resources available to the system and shall also serve as the foundation for an annual fiscal management plan for the system;
13	Sec. 2. 20-A MRSA §12723 is enacted to read:
14	§12723. Maine Community College System No-cost Tuition Program
15 16 17	The Maine Community College System No-cost Tuition Program is established within the Maine Community College System to fully fund community college for eligible students.
18 19	1. <b>Definitions.</b> As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.
20 21 22	A. "Eligible program of study" means a curriculum leading to an associate or baccalaureate degree for which federal funds under the federal Higher Education Act of 1965, 20 United States Code, Chapter 282, Subchapter IV are available.
23	B. "Eligible student" means a person who meets the requirements of subsection 2.
24 25	C. "Fund" means the Maine Community College System No-cost Tuition Fund established in subsection 4.
26 27	D. "Program" means the Maine Community College System No-cost Tuition Program.
28 29	<b>2.</b> Eligibility. A person is eligible to receive a grant for tuition and fees under subsection 3 if the person meets the requirements of paragraph A or B.
30	A. A person is eligible to receive a grant under subsection 3 if the person:
31	(1) Is a resident of the State;
32 33	(2) Is admitted to a college and enrolled in courses leading to completion of an eligible program of study at that college;
34 35 36	(3) Has not previously earned an associate or baccalaureate degree or has earned an associate degree in an eligible program of study that directly leads to a baccalaureate degree in an eligible program of study;

(4) Has completed an application for federal student financial aid programs for 1 2 which the person may be eligible for the academic year in which the person 3 applies through the programs; and (5) Has not previously enrolled in a college at no cost under this section. 4 5 B. A person who previously enrolled in a college at no cost under this section is eligible to receive a grant if the person: 6 (1) Meets the requirements of paragraph A, subparagraphs (1) to (4); 7 8 (2) Maintains a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0 on a scale of 4.0 as determined by the college the person attends: 9 10 (3) Maintains continuous enrollment at a college as at least a part-time student, unless the person is approved by the college for a medical or personal leave of 11 absence and the person enrolls in a college within 2 semesters of the end of the 12 approved medical or personal leave of absence; and 13 (4) First received a grant under the program within the previous 5 years. 14 3. Grant awards. Beginning in fiscal year 2020-21, the system may award an 15 eligible student a grant under this section. The award is limited to the amount of the cost 16 of tuition and mandatory fees charged to all students enrolled in courses leading to 17 completion of an eligible program of study on at least a part-time basis at the college in 18 which the student is enrolled, less all other financial aid received from the Federal Pell 19 Grant or any other merit-based or needs-based grant or scholarship, not including a grant 20 awarded under this section, that the recipient is not required to repay. The availability of 21 the grant and the amount of the grant are subject to the amount available in the fund. 22 23 4. Maine Community College System No-cost Tuition Fund. The Maine Community College System No-cost Tuition Fund is established as a nonlapsing fund 24 administered by the system. Grants may be distributed from this fund only to eligible 25 26 students in accordance with this section. 27 5. Rulemaking. The system may adopt rules to implement this section. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, 28 chapter 375, subchapter 2-A. 29 30 **SUMMARY** This bill establishes the Maine Community College System No-cost Tuition Program. 31 Under the program, Maine residents who are determined to be eligible students and who 32 33 are enrolled in an eligible course of study at a college within the Maine Community College System are eligible for a grant to cover the cost of tuition and mandatory fees, 34 less any federal financial aid or other financial assistance that the student receives that is 35 36 not required to be repaid. The Maine Community College System must include in its biennial budget for presentation to the Governor and the Legislature the estimated full 37

funding for the Maine Community College System No-cost Tuition Program.

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