

GRANT PROGRAM FOR EXONEREES

TITLE 23: EDUCATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCES
SUBTITLE A: EDUCATION
CHAPTER XIX: ILLINOIS STUDENT ASSISTANCE COMMISSIONPART 2743
GRANT PROGRAM FOR EXONEREES

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AUTHORITY: Implementing and authorized by Section 62 of the Higher Education Student Assistance Act [110 ILCS 947/62].

SOURCE: Adopted at 40 Ill. Reg. 1968, effective January 7, 2016.

Section 2743.10 Summary and Purpose

- a) The Grant Program for Exonerees (Program) provides direct grant assistance to an individual who has received a pardon from the Governor of the State of Illinois stating that the pardon is issued on the grounds of innocence of the crime for which the individual was imprisoned or an individual who has received a certificate of innocence from a circuit court pursuant to Section 2-702 of the Code of Civil Procedure [735 ILCS 5]. Grants are limited based on funding levels appropriated by the Illinois General Assembly.
- b) This Part establishes rules that govern the Program. Additional rules and definitions are contained in 23 Ill. Adm. Code 2700 (General Provisions).

Section 2743.15 Definitions

"Exonerated Person" – An individual who has received a pardon from the Governor of the State of Illinois stating that the pardon is issued on the grounds of innocence of the crime for which the individual was imprisoned, or an individual who has received a certificate of innocence from a circuit court.

"Grant Funds" –

Full or part-time tuition and mandatory fees at a public university or community college for undergraduate or graduate study.

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The costs associated with obtaining a high school equivalency certificate from an Illinois Community College Board-approved provider. These costs shall include payment of the cost of the high school equivalency test and up to one retest on each test module; and

Any administrative fees that may be required in order to obtain an Illinois high school equivalency certificate or an official transcript of test scores after successful completion of the high school equivalency test.

Section 2743.20 Applicant Eligibility

- a) A qualified applicant shall:
 - 1) be a resident of Illinois;
 - 2) have received:
 - A) a pardon issued on the grounds of innocence; or
 - B) a certificate of innocence from a circuit court;
 - 3) be an exonerated person who:
 - A) has not yet received a high school diploma or a high school equivalency certificate and is completing a high school equivalency preparation course through an Illinois Community Board-approved provider and/or is seeking an Illinois high school equivalency certificate; or
 - B) is enrolled at an ISAC-approved public university or community college in an eligible degree or certificate program (see 34 CFR 668.8) for either a semester or quarter term, throughout the institution's tuition refund/withdrawal adjustment period;
 - 4) maintain satisfactory academic progress as determined by the institution; and
 - 5) not have to demonstrate financial need to receive this grant.
- b) In any regular school year in which the qualified applicant accepts or receives financial assistance through the Monetary Award Program (23 Ill. Adm. Code 2735), the qualified applicant shall not be eligible for assistance under this Part.

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Section 2743.30 Program Procedures

- a) All applicants must complete annually an ISAC application for the Grant Program for Exonerees.
 - 1) Applications are available at ISAC's website and ISAC's Springfield, Deerfield and Chicago offices.
 - 2) If the application is incomplete, ISAC will notify the applicant, who will have an opportunity to furnish the missing information. The application will only be considered for processing as of the date the application is complete and received at ISAC's Deerfield office.
 - 3) A qualified applicant must also submit any forms required for the receipt of the Program.
- b) Benefits are limited to the full-time enrollment equivalent of 8 semesters or 12 quarters of payment for undergraduate or graduate study. Recipients may accumulate up to 48 eligibility units.
- c) The Grant Program for Exonerees funds shall be applicable only to tuition and mandatory fees and only for two semesters or three quarters in a regular school year.
- d) ISAC shall select the recipients from among those who have submitted complete applications, including qualified new applicants and those who filed timely renewal applications and have supplied information required.
- e) The total number of grants awarded in a given fiscal year is contingent upon available funding. If funding is insufficient to pay all eligible applicants of the grant, awarding will be based on the date the completed application is received in ISAC's Deerfield office. Preference may be given to renewal applicants, provided that the recipient continues to meet the eligibility requirements.
- f) Each qualified applicant who is selected to receive a grant shall be notified by ISAC. Applicants not receiving the grant will be notified as well.
- g) The grant may be used to pay costs associated with obtaining a high school equivalency certificate and up to one retest on each test module.
- h) The grant may be used to pay costs associated with obtaining an official transcript of test scores after successful completion of the high school equivalency test.

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- i) The total amount of Grant Program for Exonerees funds awarded pursuant to Section 2743.30(b) to a qualified recipient in a given academic year, when added to other financial aid available to the qualified recipient for that year, shall not exceed the cost of attendance.
- j) ISAC pays grant funds directly to the institution of record in the name of the recipient; however, ISAC reserves the right to reimburse costs associated with obtaining a high school equivalency certificate or in obtaining transcripts and test scores (as described in subsection (h)) directly to the qualified applicant.

Section 2743.40 Institutional Procedures

- a) Institutions shall submit payment requests to ISAC.
- b) Except as otherwise allowed by Section 2743.30(h), funds shall be remitted by ISAC to participating institutions on behalf of the applicant.
- c) Upon receipt of grant funds, the institution shall verify the recipient's enrollment status for the term for which the award was intended.
- d) Upon receipt of the grant funds, if the recipient has withdrawn from enrollment for the terms for which the award was intended or if the grant exceeds the cost of attendance after other available financial aid has been applied, the institution shall return the appropriate amount of the grant payment to ISAC.
- e) To provide sufficient time for processing and vouchering through the State Comptroller's Office in Springfield, all payment requests must be received by ISAC no later than July 1.