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SECTION 59-150-360. Tuition assistance to attend state technical college or public two-year institution; eligibility; county funding for technical colleges.

(A) A person who qualifies for in-state tuition rates pursuant to Chapter 112, Title 59 may receive tuition assistance to attend a technical college of this State or a public two-year institution of higher learning. A person who qualifies for in-state tuition rates pursuant to this title may attend an independent two-year institution of higher learning and receive lottery tuition assistance each year limited to the highest amount of tuition assistance received by students at public two-year institutions. In order to qualify as a first time entering freshman and before attempting twenty-four academic credit hours, a student must:

- (1) Be a South Carolina resident for a minimum of one year;
- (2) Be enrolled and maintain six credit hours each semester in a certificate, degree, or diploma program;
- (3) Make reasonable progress toward completion of the requirements for the certificate, degree, or diploma program;
- (4) Complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) application. If a student feels that he will definitely not qualify to receive federal financial aid, the student may complete a simple form of minimum questions created by the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education and the Commission on Higher Education to determine if the student definitely will not qualify to receive federal financial aid. If it is determined that the student definitely will not qualify to receive federal financial aid, the student shall sign a form created by the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education and the Commission on Higher Education, and the student is exempted from completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. The State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education and the Commission on Higher Education shall promulgate regulations to set thresholds for determining if a student definitely will not qualify to receive federal financial aid; and
- (5) Not be the recipient of a LIFE Scholarship.

Regulations for implementation of this section are the responsibility of the South Carolina State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education, for the technical college system, and the Commission on Higher Education, for the two-year public and private institutions. These regulations must be developed in a coordinated effort, provide for the allocation of funds based on the tuition assistance granted at each institution, and be interchangeable between each of the institutions affected.

(B) For purposes of this chapter, a “public or independent institution” which a student may attend to receive a scholarship as provided in this chapter includes South Carolina two-year public institutions, as defined in Section 59-103-5, including branch campuses and two-year independent institutions, as defined in Section 59-113-50.

(C) Institutions whose sole purpose is religious or theological training or the granting of professional degrees do not meet the definition of “public or independent institution” for purposes of this chapter.

(D) “Tuition Assistance” for purposes of this section means, to the extent funds are appropriated, the amount charged for registering for credit hours of instruction and academic fees, less all federal grants and need-based grants, and does not include other fees, charges, or costs of textbooks.

(E) Each county must maintain its level of funding for technical colleges. If any county fails to maintain this level of funding for its technical college, the college may add, for students who reside in that county, an impact fee sufficient to offset the reduction in county funds.

(F) In order for a student to be eligible after attempting twenty-four academic credit hours the student must have earned a grade point average of 2.0 or better on a 4.0 grading scale.

(G) Students shall not be eligible to receive tuition assistance for more than one certificate, diploma, or degree within any five-year period unless the additional certificate, diploma, or degree constitutes progress in the same field of study.

SECTION 59-150-375. Scholarships for visual or hearing impaired or multi-handicapped students.

A visual or hearing impaired or multi-handicapped student who qualifies for state scholarship funds pursuant to Chapter 149 of Title 59, Section 59-104-20, Section 59-150-360, or Section 59-150-370 may receive state scholarship funds to attend an out-of-state institution that specializes in educating visual or hearing impaired or multi-handicapped students if the Commission on Higher Education certifies the student's impairment or multi-handicap and that no in-state institution exists to specifically meet the student's need.