

TITLE 23: EDUCATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCES
SUBTITLE A: EDUCATION
CHAPTER XIX: ILLINOIS STUDENT ASSISTANCE COMMISSION

PART 2755
ROBERT C. BYRD HONORS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

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AUTHORITY: Implementing Section 65.60 of the Higher Education Student Assistance Act [110 ILCS 947/65.60] and Title IV, Part A, Subpart 6 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 USCA 1070d-31 et seq.) and authorized by Section 20(f) of the Higher Education Student Assistance Act [110 ILCS 947/20(f)].

SOURCE: Adopted at 19 Ill. Reg. 8386, effective July 1, 1995; amended at 20 Ill. Reg. 9244, effective July 1, 1996; old Part repealed and new Part adopted at 21 Ill. Reg. 11211, effective July 18, 1997; amended at 22 Ill. Reg. 11162, effective July 1, 1998; amended at 24 Ill. Reg. 9195, effective July 1, 2000; amended at 27 Ill. Reg. 10377, effective July 1, 2003; amended at 30 Ill. Reg. 11666, effective July 1, 2006; amended at 35 Ill. Reg. 3529, effective February 16, 2011.

Section 2755.10 Summary and Purpose

- a) The Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program promotes student excellence and outstanding academic achievement by providing scholarships to exceptional high school graduates who show promise of continued academic excellence.
- b) Federal regulations govern the responsibilities of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC), institutions and recipients. This Part implements ISAC's discretionary authority as the program administrator for the State of Illinois.
- c) Additional rules and definitions are contained in General Provisions, 23 Ill. Adm. Code 2700.

Section 2755.20 Applicant Eligibility

- a) Initially, a qualified applicant shall:
 - 1) be a United States citizen or eligible noncitizen;
 - 2) be a resident of Illinois;
 - 3) become a high school graduate in the same high school year in which s/he submits the scholarship application, or have passed a General Educational Development (GED) test in the same high school year in which s/he submits the scholarship application;
 - 4) demonstrate outstanding academic achievement as measured by test scores and high school records, or have received a GED test score recognized by the General Educational Development Testing Service as the equivalent to ranking in the top five percent of the United States high school graduates; and
 - 5) be enrolled or accepted for enrollment on a full-time basis as an undergraduate student in a postsecondary institution that is approved by the U.S. Department of Education to participate in federal student financial assistance programs. (See, e.g., 34 CFR 600.)

- b) A recipient will continue to be eligible for a scholarship if the postsecondary institution at which the student is enrolled certifies that the recipient is:
 - 1) maintaining enrollment as a full-time student, except as provided in Section 2755.30(e) of this Part;
 - 2) maintaining satisfactory academic progress as determined by the institution;
 - 3) not in default on any federal student loan nor owing repayment on any state or federal student financial assistance grant; and
 - 4) not receiving federal financial aid in excess of the student's cost of attendance, as determined by the institution.

(Source: Amended at 27 Ill. Reg. 10377, effective July 1, 2003)

Section 2755.30 Program Procedures

- a) Applicant data for a Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship must be received in ISAC's Deerfield office on or before March 1 preceding the academic year for which the scholarship is being requested.
- b) Information on applying for the Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship is available for distribution to students at approved high schools in Illinois, ISAC's web site and ISAC's Springfield, Deerfield and Chicago offices.
- c) If the applicant data are incomplete, notification shall be sent to the applicant. The applicant will then have an opportunity to furnish the missing information; however, the applicant will only be considered as of the date when the data are complete and received in ISAC's Deerfield office.
- d) Each year new and renewal Byrd applicants are to certify to ISAC that they meet eligibility requirements.
- e) Recipients must be enrolled on a full-time basis unless granted a postponement, waiver or interruption.
- f) A new recipient may postpone his or her initial enrollment for a maximum of 12 months.
- g) After the first year of full-time study, the recipient may request a waiver of the full-time enrollment requirement due to unusual circumstances for a maximum of 12 months.
 - 1) The request is to be submitted in writing to ISAC and any documentation must also be submitted.
 - 2) The circumstances under which an exception to the full-time enrollment requirement may be granted include:
 - A) the recipient's employment hours will not permit full-time enrollment;
 - B) the recipient has medical problems that will not permit full-time enrollment, as established by the sworn statement of a licensed physician;
 - C) the recipient is in his or her last semester of school and full-time

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enrollment is not required to complete the degree; or

- D) the care of an immediate family member due to illness or incapacitation will not permit full-time enrollment.
- 3) In order to receive a waiver of the full-time enrollment requirement, the recipient must be enrolled at least half-time.
- h) If the full-time enrollment requirement is waived, the Byrd award is prorated according to the number of hours the recipient is enrolled.
- i) After the first year of study, a recipient may interrupt his or her enrollment at an institution for a maximum of 12 continuous months.
- 1) The request is to be submitted in writing to ISAC and any documentation must also be submitted.
 - 2) The circumstances under which an interruption may be granted include:
 - A) the recipient's participation in a cooperative education or study abroad program;
 - B) the recipient is experiencing financial difficulties that will not permit continuous enrollment;
 - C) the recipient has medical problems that will not permit continuous enrollment; or
 - D) the recipient has family responsibilities that will not permit continuous enrollment.
- j) The scholar is not eligible to receive scholarship funds during the periods of postponement or interruption. The funds that would have been awarded to the scholar during that time period can be awarded to the scholar during a subsequent period of enrollment at an institution as an undergraduate student.
- k) A recipient who is subsequently determined to be ineligible shall repay ISAC the total amount of the funds received for the period during which he or she was ineligible.
- l) ISAC shall select new recipients from among the timely applicants by choosing the highest scoring qualified applicants on the basis of the following criteria:

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- 1) Academic Data. A qualified applicant's score shall be computed as follows:

$$[\text{number in class} \div (\text{rank})^2 \times .05]$$

$$+ [(\text{grade point average} \div \text{scale}) \times 100]$$

$$+ (\text{Illinois Standard Test Score} \times 10) = \text{score}$$

- A) Rank in class, class size and non-weighted grade point average (GPA) shall be reported as of the end of the third semester prior to graduation from high school or its equivalent. An institution shall use the same class size and non-weighted GPA scale in reporting all of its applicants.
- B) SAT I or ACT tests, which must be taken during the time frame identified for State Scholar eligibility (see 23 Ill. Adm. Code 2760.20(b)), shall be converted to the Illinois Standard Test Score as described in 23 Ill. Adm. Code 2760.30(b).
- C) If more than one composite score is submitted, the highest score is used.
- D) For applicants qualifying by virtue of their GED scores (see Section 2755.20(a)(4)), class rank shall be set at 5 out of 100 (top 5%) and average GED percentile rank shall be used in lieu of grade point average \div scale.
- E) For high schools that cannot provide class ranks, non-weighted grade point averages (GPA) as of the third semester prior to graduation must be provided. Class ranks are calculated the same as for the State Scholar Program (see 23 Ill. Adm. Code 2760.30(a)(1)).
- 2) Geographic District. New Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarships will be allocated within geographic districts in accordance with Appendix A. An applicant's county of residence shall be determined by his or her permanent home address.
- m) Scholarships will be awarded first to renewing applicants.
- n) Scholarship funds are applicable towards an academic year of study.

- o) New recipients are selected from each of the 15 geographic districts, and on an at-large basis, in accordance with the number of awards set forth in Appendix A. A student who has not been selected to be a scholar within his or her geographic district but who ranks first in his or her class and has a perfect GPA and standardized test score will be given first priority for a scholarship through the at-large category. Any remaining awards in the at-large category will then be made to qualified applicants chosen from among the highest scoring non-selected qualified applicants statewide, regardless of their geographic district. A lottery will be used to determine recipients if the number of students receiving first priority exceeds the number of scholarships in the at-large category.
- p) The total number of scholarships awarded in a given fiscal year is contingent upon available funding (see section 419D of the HEA (20 USC 1070d-34), Allocation Among States), notwithstanding the number of new scholarships outlined in Appendix A.
- q) Recipients will be informed of their selection by the May 1 preceding the academic year for which the scholarship was requested.
- r) High schools will be notified of the recipients attending their high school by May 1.
- s) If an individual does not accept the offer of a new scholarship award, the next highest scoring qualified applicant not yet selected from the same geographic district will be chosen to receive a scholarship.
- t) Each year recipients shall complete an "Eligibility Certification" that includes certification statements required by ED.
- u) Scholarship funds shall be sent to the institution on behalf of the recipients.

(Source: Amended at 35 Ill. Reg. 3529, effective February 16, 2011)

Section 2755.40 Institutional Procedures

- a) An institution shall certify the qualified applicant's eligibility with its request for payment within the time frame specified by ISAC.
- b) Upon receipt of scholarship funds, the institution(s) shall verify the recipient's enrollment status for the term for which the award was intended. If enrolled, the institution may credit scholarship funds to the recipient's account for expenses due and payable. If the recipient withdraws from enrollment prior to completing the

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academic year of study, the institution shall return the amount of the scholarship to ISAC for the semester(s) or quarter(s) not attended.

- c) Refunds not submitted to ISAC will be deducted from payments for the subsequent academic year.
- d) If a scholar does not meet the requirements for continuing eligibility within an award year, scholarship funds will be suspended until the scholar demonstrates that s/he meets the eligibility requirements. The scholar is not eligible to receive scholarship funds during the period of suspension. If the suspension period exceeds 12 months, the scholar's eligibility will be terminated. If eligibility is reestablished within the 12-month period, scholarship funds will be disbursed only for remaining periods of eligibility. The funds not awarded during a period of suspension cannot be awarded to the scholar during a subsequent period of enrollment at an institution as an undergraduate student.
- e) The total amount of the Byrd Scholarship awarded to a recipient in any given academic year, when added to the other federal or state financial aid available to the recipient for that year, cannot exceed the student's cost of attendance.
 - 1) The amount of any federally guaranteed student loans should be decreased prior to reducing the amount of the Byrd Scholarship.
 - 2) A Monetary Award Program (MAP) grant should be decreased prior to reducing the amount of a Byrd Scholarship.
 - 3) The Byrd Scholarship should be decreased prior to reducing the amount of a Federal Pell Grant.
- f) Except as provided in subsection (e) of this Section, a recipient may receive up to \$1500 for each academic year, up to a maximum of four years of study. Scholarship payment is subject to the limit of available federal funding.
- g) Out-of-state institutions that are eligible to participate in Title IV federal student financial aid programs need not execute a Program Participation Agreement with ISAC to receive funds on behalf of recipients.
- h) To provide sufficient time for processing and vouchering through the State Comptroller's Office in Springfield, all payment requests must be received no later than May 15.

(Source: Amended at 30 Ill. Reg. 11666, effective July 1, 2006)

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Section 2755.APPENDIX A Geographic Districts

District Number	Counties	Number of New Scholarships
1	Cook	112
2	DuPage	20
3	Lake	14
4	Winnebago, Boone, McHenry	13
5	Mercer, McDonough, Adams, Schuyler, Warren, Fulton, Sangamon, Cass, Menard, Hancock, Mason, Henderson	9
6	DeKalb, Kane, Lee	14
7	Kendall, Will, Grundy	17
8	Jo Daviess, Ogle, Carroll, Henry, Bureau, Rock Island Whiteside, Stephenson	9
9	LaSalle, Putnam, Livingston, Ford, McLean, Kankakee, Iroquois	10
10	Knox, Stark, Marshall, Peoria, Woodford, Tazewell	9
11	Champaign, Edgar, Vermilion, Coles, Clark, Douglas, Cumberland, Jasper, Crawford	9
12	Logan, DeWitt, Piatt, Macon, Christian, Moultrie, Shelby, Montgomery, Clay, Marion, Effingham, Bond, Fayette	9
13	Calhoun, Green, Scott, Brown, Pike, Jersey, Morgan, Madison, Macoupin	9
14	Richland, Wayne, Lawrence, Wabash, Edwards, White, Jefferson, Union, Franklin, Hardin, Hamilton, Saline, Gallatin, Johnson, Pope, Jackson, Massac, Alexander, Pulaski, Williamson	8
15	St. Clair, Perry, Clinton, Monroe, Washington, Randolph	9
-	At-Large	15

(Source: Amended at 35 Ill. Reg. 3529, effective February 16, 2011)