

REFERENCE TITLE: **tuition waivers; ABOR; community colleges**

State of Arizona  
House of Representatives  
Fifty-seventh Legislature  
Second Regular Session  
2026

# **HB 2616**

Introduced by  
Representative Blackman

**AN ACT**

**AMENDING TITLE 15, CHAPTER 14, ARTICLE 1, ARIZONA REVISED STATUTES, BY  
ADDING SECTION 15-1809.03; RELATING TO CLASSIFICATION OF STUDENTS FOR  
TUITION PURPOSES.**

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

1 Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona:

2 Section 1. Title 15, chapter 14, article 1, Arizona Revised  
3 Statutes, is amended by adding section 15-1809.03, to read:

4 15-1809.03. Ernest McFarland Act tuition waiver scholarship;  
5 tuition scholarships; eligibility; policies;  
6 rules; definitions

7 A. THE ERNEST MCFARLAND ACT TUITION WAIVER SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM IS  
8 ESTABLISHED IN THE ARIZONA BOARD OF REGENTS. THE ARIZONA BOARD OF REGENTS  
9 SHALL ADMINISTER THE PROGRAM AND AWARD TUITION WAIVER SCHOLARSHIPS TO ANY  
10 PERSON WHO MEETS ALL OF THE FOLLOWING:

11 1. ENROLLS IN A UNIVERSITY OR COMMUNITY COLLEGE.

12 2. IS ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

13 (a) A VETERAN WHO MEETS BOTH OF THE FOLLOWING:

14 (i) RESIDES IN THIS STATE OR RESIDES OUTSIDE OF THIS STATE SOLELY  
15 DUE TO THE CURRENT MILITARY ORDERS OF THE VETERAN OR OF THE VETERAN'S  
16 SPOUSE.

17 (ii) WAS DISCHARGED UNDER HONORABLE CONDITIONS AFTER SERVING ON  
18 ACTIVE MILITARY DUTY, EXCLUDING INITIAL ENTRY TRAINING, FOR MORE THAN ONE  
19 HUNDRED EIGHTY DAYS.

20 (b) AN INDIVIDUAL WHO IS THE SPOUSE OR CHILD OF A MEMBER OF THE  
21 ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES WHO WAS KILLED IN ACTION, DIED WHILE IN  
22 SERVICE OR IS MISSING IN ACTION OR WHOSE DEATH, ACCORDING TO  
23 DOCUMENTATION, WAS DIRECTLY CAUSED BY AN ILLNESS OR INJURY RELATED TO  
24 SERVICE IN THE ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES.

25 (c) AN INDIVIDUAL WHO IS THE SPOUSE OR CHILD OF A MEMBER OF THE  
26 ARIZONA NATIONAL GUARD OR THE ARIZONA AIR NATIONAL GUARD WHO WAS KILLED  
27 AFTER JANUARY 1, 1946 WHILE ON ACTIVE DUTY IN THE SERVICE OF THIS STATE OR  
28 THE UNITED STATES.

29 (d) AN INDIVIDUAL WHO IS THE SPOUSE OR CHILD OF A MEMBER OF THE  
30 ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES, THE ARIZONA NATIONAL GUARD OR THE  
31 ARIZONA AIR NATIONAL GUARD WHO HAS A TOTAL AND PERMANENT DISABILITY OR  
32 MEETS THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR INDIVIDUAL UNEMPLOYABILITY  
33 ACCORDING TO THE DISABILITY RATINGS FOR THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF  
34 VETERANS AFFAIRS.

35 3. IS ENTITLED TO CLASSIFICATION AS AN IN-STATE STUDENT UNDER  
36 SECTION 15-1802.

37 4. COMPLIES WITH THE STANDARDS OF SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS AS  
38 ESTABLISHED BY THE UNIVERSITY OR COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN WHICH THE INDIVIDUAL  
39 ENROLLS, EXCEPT THAT THE INDIVIDUAL IS NOT REQUIRED TO ENROLL IN A MINIMUM  
40 COURSE LOAD.

41 5. HAS ATTEMPTED FEWER THAN ONE HUNDRED FIFTY CREDIT HOURS USING  
42 TUITION WAIVER SCHOLARSHIPS PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION.

43 B. THE ARIZONA BOARD OF REGENTS SHALL:

44 1. DEVELOP AN APPLICATION PROCESS AND POLICIES TO ADMINISTER THE  
45 PROGRAM AND TO VERIFY ELIGIBILITY FOR A TUITION WAIVER SCHOLARSHIP

1 PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION. POLICIES DEVELOPED PURSUANT TO THIS PARAGRAPH  
2 MUST DO ALL OF THE FOLLOWING:

3 (a) ALLOW AN INDIVIDUAL WHO IS ELIGIBLE PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION A OF  
4 THIS SECTION TO SUBMIT TO THE ARIZONA BOARD OF REGENTS A COMPLETED  
5 APPLICATION AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION FOR A TUITION WAIVER SCHOLARSHIP  
6 PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION ON OR BEFORE THE LAST DAY INSTRUCTION IS PROVIDED  
7 FOR EACH SEMESTER FOR WHICH THE INDIVIDUAL SEEKS A TUITION WAIVER  
8 SCHOLARSHIP.

9 (b) PRESCRIBE GUIDELINES FOR DETERMINING THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF  
10 CREDIT HOURS FOR WHICH AN INDIVIDUAL MAY BE AWARDED A TUITION WAIVER  
11 SCHOLARSHIP PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION BASED ON THE DEGREE OR CERTIFICATE  
12 PROGRAM IN WHICH THE INDIVIDUAL IS ENROLLED. DETERMINATIONS PURSUANT TO  
13 THIS SUBDIVISION SHALL BE CONSISTENT WITH THE LENGTH OF THE DEGREE OR  
14 CERTIFICATE PROGRAM ACCORDING TO THE UNIVERSITY'S OR COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S  
15 CATALOG OR THE REGIONAL ACCREDITATION COMMISSION, EXCEPT THAT AN  
16 INDIVIDUAL MAY NOT RECEIVE A TUITION WAIVER SCHOLARSHIP PURSUANT TO THIS  
17 SECTION FOR MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED FIFTY ATTEMPTED CREDIT HOURS.

18 (c) PROHIBIT AN INDIVIDUAL WHO IS DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION A,  
19 PARAGRAPH 2, SUBDIVISION (d) OF THIS SECTION FROM RECEIVING A TUITION  
20 WAIVER SCHOLARSHIP PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION FOR AN UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE  
21 PROGRAM IF, AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SEMESTER, THE INDIVIDUAL HAS COMPLETED  
22 AN EXCESSIVE NUMBER OF CREDIT HOURS, UNLESS THE INDIVIDUAL SHOWS GOOD  
23 CAUSE. WHEN DETERMINING WHETHER THE INDIVIDUAL HAS COMPLETED AN EXCESSIVE  
24 NUMBER OF CREDIT HOURS, THE ARIZONA BOARD OF REGENTS SHALL:

25 (i) CONSIDER THE NUMBER OF CREDIT HOURS COMPLETED BY THE INDIVIDUAL  
26 AND THE NUMBER OF CREDIT HOURS REQUIRED FOR THE INDIVIDUAL'S DEGREE OR  
27 CERTIFICATE PROGRAM.

28 (ii) NOT CONSIDER CREDIT HOURS EARNED BY EXAMINATION OR CREDIT  
29 HOURS THAT THE INDIVIDUAL EARNED WHILE ENROLLED IN HIGH SCHOOL.

30 (d) REQUIRE EACH UNIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE TO REPORT TO THE  
31 ARIZONA BOARD OF REGENTS THE NUMBER OF CREDIT HOURS FOR WHICH EACH  
32 INDIVIDUAL RECEIVED A TUITION WAIVER SCHOLARSHIP PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION  
33 FOR EACH SEMESTER. IF THE INDIVIDUAL USED THE TUITION WAIVER SCHOLARSHIP  
34 TO PAY FOR ONLY A PORTION OF THE CREDIT HOURS THAT THE INDIVIDUAL  
35 COMPLETED DURING THE SEMESTER, THE UNIVERSITY OR COMMUNITY COLLEGE SHALL  
36 REPORT ONLY THE PROPORTION THAT WAS FUNDED BY THE TUITION WAIVER  
37 SCHOLARSHIP. WHEN REPORTING PROPORTIONAL HOURS TO THE ARIZONA BOARD OF  
38 REGENTS PURSUANT TO THIS SUBDIVISION, EACH UNIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY  
39 COLLEGE SHALL ROUND ANY FRACTION OF A CREDIT HOUR UP TO THE NEAREST WHOLE  
40 NUMBER.

41 (e) IDENTIFY COURSES OR PROGRAMS THAT ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR A  
42 TUITION WAIVER SCHOLARSHIP PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION, INCLUDING:

43 (i) ANY COURSE FOR WHICH A UNIVERSITY OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE DOES NOT  
44 RECEIVE FUNDING FROM THIS STATE.

1           (ii) ANY COURSE OR PROGRAM THAT HAS EXTRAORDINARY COSTS, AS  
2 DETERMINED BY THE ARIZONA BOARD OF REGENTS OR COMMUNITY COLLEGE.  
3           (f) ALLOW AN INDIVIDUAL WHO FAILS TO COMPLY WITH THE STANDARDS OF  
4 SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS AS ESTABLISHED BY THE UNIVERSITY OR  
5 COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN WHICH THE INDIVIDUAL ENROLLS TO REMAIN ELIGIBLE FOR A  
6 TUITION WAIVER SCHOLARSHIP IF THE INDIVIDUAL IS EXPERIENCING HARDSHIP OR  
7 SHOWS GOOD CAUSE, INCLUDING:  
8           (i) THAT THE INDIVIDUAL IS SUFFERING FROM A SEVERE ILLNESS OR OTHER  
9 DEBILITATING CONDITION THAT COULD AFFECT THE INDIVIDUAL'S ACADEMIC  
10 PERFORMANCE.  
11           (ii) THAT THE INDIVIDUAL IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CARE OF A SICK,  
12 INJURED OR NEEDY PERSON AND THAT THE INDIVIDUAL'S PROVISION OF CARE COULD  
13 AFFECT THE INDIVIDUAL'S ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE.  
14           (iii) THE INDIVIDUAL'S ACTIVE DUTY OR OTHER SERVICE IN THE ARMED  
15 FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES OR THE INDIVIDUAL'S ACTIVE DUTY IN THE ARIZONA  
16 NATIONAL GUARD OR ARIZONA AIR NATIONAL GUARD.  
17           (iv) ANY OTHER CAUSE CONSIDERED ACCEPTABLE BY THE ARIZONA BOARD OF  
18 REGENTS.  
19           2. ADOPT RULES GOVERNING THE COORDINATION OF FEDERAL AND STATE  
20 BENEFITS FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR A TUITION WAIVER SCHOLARSHIP  
21 PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION.  
22           C. FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS SECTION:  
23           1. "COMMUNITY COLLEGE" MEANS A COMMUNITY COLLEGE AS DEFINED IN  
24 SECTION 15-1401.  
25           2. "PROGRAM" MEANS THE ERNEST MCFARLAND ACT TUITION WAIVER  
26 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM ESTABLISHED BY THIS SECTION.  
27           3. "UNIVERSITY" MEANS A UNIVERSITY UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE  
28 ARIZONA BOARD OF REGENTS.