



LEGISLATIVE BRIEF

Understanding Public Chapter 203: The Governor's Investment in Vocational Education Act

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Public Chapter 203 (2019) creates the Governor's Investment in Vocational Education Act, or the GIVE Act. Under this new law, state lottery funds will cover tuition costs for four dual enrollment courses in high-demand vocational and technical fields for eligible high school students. Grant funding for the courses will first become available in the 2020-21 school year.

The 2019 GIVE Act is one part of a broader GIVE initiative at the state level to expand dual enrollment opportunities in vocational and technical fields, and to bring about closer alignment between education offerings and the state's workforce needs.

How will the GIVE Act dual enrollment grants work?

The GIVE Act provides lottery-funded grants for four dual enrollment courses for eligible high school juniors and seniors so they can graduate from high school with credits toward a postsecondary credential in a high-demand technical field. To qualify for the grants, students must choose a course within a program of study that is aligned with the state's workforce needs. A program of study is a sequence of postsecondary courses that lead to a specific degree or certification in vocational education.

Certain industries require employees to have specific technical or applied trade skills to perform a job (e.g., welding, medical transcription, pipefitting). For some jobs, industries struggle to find local workers with the required skills. Such jobs are determined by the state to be in high demand, and postsecondary courses related to these high-demand jobs are eligible for GIVE Act dual enrollment grants.

The Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation (TSAC), which will administer these grants, is currently working on the timeline and process for producing the high-demand jobs information that will determine which postsecondary courses will be eligible for GIVE Act funding. For example, a new manufacturing plant in west Tennessee may have a need for welders, while a power company in east Tennessee may need electricians. TSAC plans to update the list of eligible courses annually to reflect any changes in workforce needs.

What is dual enrollment?

Dual enrollment allows a high school student to enroll at an eligible postsecondary institution and earn postsecondary credit after successfully completing a course.

The GIVE Act provides lottery-funded grants for dual enrollment courses in high-demand vocational fields for eligible high school juniors and seniors. GIVE Act dual enrollment grants allow participating students to graduate from high school with credits toward a postsecondary credential in a high-demand technical field.

Which students are eligible for GIVE Act dual enrollment grants?

High school juniors and seniors are eligible to receive GIVE Act dual enrollment grants if they:

- are and have been a Tennessee resident for the year immediately prior to first applying for the grant or renewing their grant;
- apply and are admitted to an eligible postsecondary institution as a dual enrollment student for each academic year a course is taken; and
- achieve a 2.75 cumulative grade point average beyond the first semester for all postsecondary courses attempted under the dual enrollment grant.

How are the GIVE Act dual enrollment grants funded? Does Tennessee already provide dual enrollment grants?

GIVE Act dual enrollment grants will be funded through state lottery funds. The projected annual cost for the grants is \$4 million, based on figures included in the 2019-20 state budget. The grants will cover tuition costs for four dual enrollment courses linked to the state's workforce needs. Costs for books, course-related equipment and technology, and any fees are not covered by the grants.

The GIVE Act dual enrollment grants are separate from Tennessee's existing dual enrollment grant program, which covers tuition costs for eligible students' first two dual enrollment courses and a portion (up to \$200) of tuition costs for a third course. Students may take courses in any field, including vocational courses, through the state's *existing* dual enrollment grant program.

In comparison, GIVE Act dual enrollment grants cover tuition costs for four dual enrollment courses, though these courses must be linked to the state's workforce needs. GIVE Act dual enrollment grant recipients must achieve a 2.75 cumulative GPA beyond the first semester for all postsecondary courses attempted using the grants.

What is the GIVE initiative?

The GIVE Act is part of a broader GIVE initiative to expand dual enrollment opportunities in vocational and technical fields. The GIVE initiative has two main prongs: providing grants to students for dual enrollment courses, which is the focus of this OREA legislative recap, and providing community grants to collaborative partnerships of postsecondary institutions, K-12 institutions, local workforce development boards, and employers to foster closer alignment between education offerings and the state's workforce needs. Community partnership grants will be awarded by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) through a competitive bidding process during the 2019-20 fiscal year.



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