

1 AN ACT concerning education.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. This Act may be referred to as the Illinois
5 Graduate and Retain Our Workforce (iGROW) Tech Law.

6 Section 5. The State Finance Act is amended by adding
7 Section 5.990 as follows:

8 (30 ILCS 105/5.990 new)

9 Sec. 5.990. The Illinois Graduate and Retain Our Workforce
10 (iGROW) Tech Scholarship Fund.

11 Section 10. The Higher Education Student Assistance Act is
12 amended by adding Section 65.120 as follows:

13 (110 ILCS 947/65.120 new)

14 Sec. 65.120. IGROW Tech Scholarship Program.

15 (a) As used in this Section:

16 "Eligible applicant" means a student who has graduated
17 from high school or has received a State of Illinois High
18 School Diploma, who has maintained a cumulative grade point
19 average of no less than 2.5 on a 4.0 scale, who is pursuing or
20 intends to pursue a qualifying degree in a qualified

1 institution, and who is entitled to apply for assistance under
2 this Section.

3 "Full-time" means the number of credit hours the
4 Commission determines is full-time enrollment for a student
5 for purposes of the program created under this Section.

6 "Minority student" has the same meaning as the term is
7 defined under Section 50 of the Higher Education Student
8 Assistance Act (110 ILCS 947).

9 "Program" means the iGROW Tech Scholarship Program created
10 under this Section.

11 "Qualifying degree" means an associate or a bachelor's
12 degree granted by a qualified institution in the field of
13 computer information sciences; information technology;
14 information science; computer science; computer systems
15 networking and telecommunications; computer and information
16 systems security or information assurance, including
17 cybersecurity; or management information systems.

18 "Qualifying job" means a job with an employer in this
19 State performing work that is directly related to the field of
20 study that qualified the candidate for assistance under this
21 Section.

22 "Qualified student" means a person (i) who is a resident
23 of this State; (ii) who, as an eligible applicant, has made a
24 timely application for an iGROW tech scholarship under this
25 Section; (iii) who is enrolled on at least a half-time basis at
26 a qualified institution; (iv) who is enrolled in a course of

1 study in the field of computer and information sciences;
2 information technology; information science; computer science;
3 computer systems networking and telecommunications; computer
4 and information systems security or information assurance,
5 including cybersecurity; or management information systems;
6 (v) who maintains a grade point average of no less than a 2.5
7 on a 4.0 scale; and (vi) who continues to advance
8 satisfactorily toward the attainment of a degree.

9 "Recipient" means an Illinois resident enrolled in a
10 qualified institution who receives an award under this
11 Section.

12 (b) Subject to appropriation, and no sooner than the
13 2024-2025 academic year, there is established the Illinois
14 Graduate and Retain Our Workforce (iGROW) Tech Scholarship
15 Program to recruit and train individuals to work in technology
16 jobs that have a high demand for new employees and offer high
17 wages by awarding scholarships.

18 (c) Each iGROW tech scholarship awarded under this Section
19 shall be determined by the Commission in an amount up to and
20 including the full costs of tuition and fees and room and board
21 of the qualified institution at which the recipient is
22 enrolled if the institution is public, or an equivalent rate
23 established by the Commission for private institutions. The
24 total amount of iGROW tech scholarship assistance awarded by
25 the Commission under this Section to an eligible applicant in
26 any given fiscal year, when added to other financial

1 assistance awarded to that individual for that year, shall not
2 exceed the cost of attendance at the institution at which the
3 student is enrolled. If the amount of financial assistance to
4 be awarded to a qualified student exceeds the cost of
5 attendance at the institution at which the student is
6 enrolled, the iGROW tech scholarship shall be reduced by an
7 amount equal to the amount by which the combined financial
8 assistance available to the student exceeds the cost of
9 attendance.

10 (d) The maximum number of academic terms for which a
11 qualified student can receive iGROW tech scholarship
12 assistance shall be 8 semesters or 12 quarters.

13 (e) All applications for scholarships awarded under this
14 Section shall be made to the Commission on forms which the
15 Commission shall provide for eligible applicants. The form of
16 applications and the information required to be set forth
17 therein shall be determined by the Commission, and the
18 Commission shall require eligible applicants to submit with
19 their applications such supporting documents or
20 recommendations as the Commission deems necessary.

21 (f) Subject to appropriation for such purposes, payment of
22 any iGROW tech scholarship awarded under this Section shall be
23 determined by the Commission. All scholarship funds
24 distributed in accordance with this subsection shall be paid
25 to the qualified institution and used only for payment of the
26 tuition and fees assessed by the institution and the standard

1 housing and food allowance used for all undergraduate students
2 by the qualified student in connection with his or her
3 attendance at a qualified institution.

4 Any iGROW tech scholarship awarded under this Section
5 shall be applicable to 2 semesters or 3 quarters of enrollment
6 annually. The qualified institution can only request payment
7 for tuition and fees up to the amount of actual tuition and fee
8 expenses incurred.

9 If a student withdraws after the expiration of the tuition
10 refund or withdrawal adjustment period, the student may
11 receive payment for tuition and fees incurred up to the term
12 award. The housing and food allowance shall be prorated based
13 on the qualified institution's return of funds policy.

14 (g) Prior to receiving scholarship assistance for any
15 academic year, each recipient of an iGROW tech scholarship
16 awarded under this Section shall be required by the Commission
17 to sign an agreement under which the recipient pledges that
18 the recipient (i) shall work in the State in a qualified job
19 for a period of not less than one year for each year of
20 scholarship assistance he or she was awarded under this
21 Section; however, in no event shall he or she agree to work in
22 the State in a qualified job for a period of less than 2 years;
23 and (ii) shall, upon request by the Commission, provide the
24 Commission with evidence that he or she is fulfilling or has
25 fulfilled the terms of the agreement provided for in this
26 subsection.

1 If a recipient of an iGROW tech scholarship awarded under
2 this Section fails to fulfill the obligations set forth in
3 this subsection, the Commission shall require the recipient to
4 repay the amount of the scholarships received, prorated
5 according to the fraction of the employment obligation not
6 completed, at a rate of interest equal to 5%, and, if
7 applicable, reasonable collection fees. The Commission is
8 authorized to establish rules relating to its collection
9 activities for repayment of scholarships under this Section.
10 All repayments collected under this Section shall be forwarded
11 to the State Comptroller for deposit into the State's General
12 Revenue Fund.

13 A recipient of an iGROW tech scholarship shall not be
14 considered in violation of the agreement entered into pursuant
15 to this subsection if the recipient (I) enrolls on a full-time
16 basis as a graduate student in a course of study related to the
17 technology degree for which he or she qualified for the iGROW
18 tech scholarship at a qualified institution; (II) is serving,
19 not in excess of 3 years, as a member of the armed services of
20 the United States; (III) is a person with a temporary total
21 disability for a period of time not to exceed 3 years as
22 established by sworn affidavit of a qualified physician; (IV)
23 is seeking and unable to find full-time employment with a
24 State employer that satisfies the criteria set forth in this
25 subsection and is able to provide evidence of that fact; (V)
26 becomes a person with a permanent total disability as

1 established by sworn affidavit of a qualified physician; or
2 (VI) meets any other criteria that the Commission may deem
3 necessary.

4 (h) Scholarship recipients under this Section who withdraw
5 from a program of computer science or other related major area
6 of study provided under this Section but remain enrolled in
7 school to continue their postsecondary studies in another
8 academic discipline shall not be required to commence
9 repayment of their iGROW tech scholarship so long as they
10 remain enrolled in school on a full-time basis or if they can
11 document for the Commission special circumstances that warrant
12 extension of repayment.

13 (i) If the Program does not expend at least 90% of the
14 amount appropriated for the Program in a given fiscal year for
15 3 consecutive fiscal years on or before January 1 in each of
16 those fiscal years, then up to 3% of amount appropriated for
17 the Program for each of next 3 fiscal years shall be allocated
18 to increasing awareness of the program.

19 (j) The Commission shall administer the Program and shall
20 make all necessary and proper rules not inconsistent with this
21 Section for its effective implementation.

22 (k) The Commission shall establish a methodology for
23 prioritizing applications from applicants who demonstrate a
24 financial need or hardship, applications from minority
25 students, and applications from applicants demonstrating
26 academic excellence. After the first academic year that the

1 Program operates, the Commission shall prioritize the
2 applications of those applicants who received a scholarship
3 under this Section during the prior academic year and who
4 remain eligible for a scholarship under this Section.

5 (l) Each fiscal year, the Commission may use up to 5% of
6 money appropriated for the Program for administration.

7 (m) Scholarships may be made under this Section through
8 the 2029-30 academic year.

9 (n) The Illinois Graduate and Retain Our Workforce (iGROW)
10 Tech Scholarship Fund is created as a special fund in the State
11 treasury. Moneys in the fund may come from both public
12 entities and institutional, organizational, or other private
13 entities. All money in the Fund shall be used, subject to
14 appropriation, by the Commission to implement and administer
15 the Program pursuant to this Section.

16 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect January
17 1, 2024.