

**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION**

**NO.:** BHE 24-42

**BOARD DATE:** March 19, 2024

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**APPROVAL OF GUIDELINES FOR THE MASSACHUSETTS IN-DEMAND SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

**MOVED:** The Board of Higher Education hereby adopts the attached Financial Aid Guidelines for the Massachusetts In-Demand Scholarship program as enacted in the FY2024 Budget.

**VOTED:** Motion adopted by the BHE on 3/19/2024.

**Authority:** M.G.L. c. 15A, Sec. 9 and 16; FY2024 Budget Language –  
Line Item 1596-2423

**Contact:** Clantha McCurdy, Senior Deputy Commissioner for Access and Student  
Financial Assistance

**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**  
**Approval of In-Demand Scholarship Program Guidelines**

**Background**

The In-Demand Scholarship is a financial aid program designed to address the economic and labor market employment needs across the Commonwealth. The program supports the educational costs of public college students enrolled in and pursuing degree programs defined as “In-Demand” professions, as determined by the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development. The overarching goal is to cultivate a skilled workforce to help support Massachusetts’ ability to maintain its competitive edge among states in fields that will continue to attract business and industry. The In-Demand Scholarship will provide the assurance of a pipeline of talented and educated workforce for current and emerging professions.

The In-Demand Scholarship program provides the much-needed financial resources to assist public undergraduate and graduate students with their educational expenses while pursuing an approved program in a designated in-demand field. The program is designed to positively impact student persistence, retention and completion, through the promise of available resources for degree completion. Ultimately, the In-Demand Scholarship program is intended to incentivize recipients to remain in Massachusetts upon completing their academic studies and become gainfully employed in targeted professions, thereby contributing to the workforce needs and economic stability of the Commonwealth. The objective is to further ensure that Massachusetts can continue its status as a global leader in many disciplines, to include education, healthcare, technology, sciences and finance.

**Program Guidelines**

Pursuant to the Board and the Department’s authority for administering State Financial Aid, (M.G.L. c.15A, section 16) the guidelines developed for this program define the following:

- Eligible Institution
- Eligible programs and professions as defined, per legislation (see below)
- Student eligibility criteria and award levels
- Funds allocation process for institutions
- Institutional reporting and accountability requirements

The program guidelines are aligned and consistent with other State Financial Aid programs to govern the awarding of funds by public institutions. Awards under this program made to eligible students will be retroactive for the 2023 fall and 2024 spring terms and may be used to support educational costs for a trailing summer session, based on availability.

## **In-Demand Disciplines**

Massachusetts is recognized as a global leader in many disciplines, including healthcare, biotechnology, sciences, engineering, higher education, technology, and finance. As required by the appropriation (Line item 1596-2423), the Department collaborated with the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) to identify "In-Demand" professions. Based on EOLWD's study on labor market conditions forty-three disciplines were identified under the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes that reflect the current and foreseeable future of "In-Demand" professions for the Commonwealth. These include:

1101	Computer And Information Sciences, General
1312	Teacher Education And Professional Development, Specific Levels And Methods
1313	Teacher Education And Professional Development, Specific Subject Areas
1435	Industrial Engineering
3008	Mathematics And Computer Science
3016	Accounting and Computer Science
4301	Criminal Justice and Corrections, General
4407	Social Work
4506	Economics
5115	Mental and Social Health Services and Allied Professions
5208	Finance and Financial Management Services

## **Allocation of Funds**

The Department of Higher Education has completed an analysis of high demand program data, based on the CIP Codes that will be supported by the In-Demand Scholarship. Institutional allocation of funds will be informed by a "base" and a "variable" allotment informed by the number of programs offered, and a three-year average of enrollment and completion data.

## **Recommendation**

Staff recommends approval of the guidelines (Attachment A) which will facilitate the completion of tasks required to implement the In-Demand Scholarship for the 2023-24 academic year.