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OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

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Office

H.B. 25
136th General Assembly

Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

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Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsors: Reps. Jarrells and Ray

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

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Highlights

- The bill appropriates \$7.5 million in each of FY 2026 and FY 2027 for the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) to award Foster-to-College scholarships to certain resident students placed in foster care or kinship care to attend public and participating private institutions of higher education. The bill supports the appropriations through a cash transfer of \$15.0 million from the GRF to the Foster-to-College Scholarship Fund (Fund 5AM1).
- The bill permits a portion of the appropriation in each fiscal year to be allocated to the Foster Care to Success Foundation to employ four full-time foster care student navigators to assist with the program's operation.

Detailed Analysis

Foster-to-College Scholarship Program

The bill creates the Foster-to-College Scholarship Program under which, beginning in the 2025-2026 academic year, each qualifying resident student, placed in foster or noncertified kinship care¹ at any time on or after turning 13, will be awarded a scholarship to any public or participating private institution of higher education in the state. Under the program, scholarships will be equal to the student's cost of attendance after deducting a number of other grants and scholarships the student receives. Generally, the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE)

¹ In order to qualify, a student placed in noncertified kinship care must have also been adjudicated an abused, neglected, or dependent child.

will award scholarships on a first-come, first-served basis and make payments directly to the institution at which the qualifying student is enrolled.

To support the program, the bill transfers, on July 1, 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter, \$15.0 million from the GRF to the newly created Foster-to-College Scholarship Fund (Fund 5AM1) and appropriates \$7.5 million in each of FY 2026 and FY 2027 from Fund 5AM1 line item 235689, Foster-to-College Scholarship, under ODHE's budget. It also reappropriates the available balance of line item 235689 at the end of FY 2026 to support the program in FY 2027. A portion of the funding from line item 235689 in each fiscal year may be allocated to the same organization engaged by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) to administer the Chafee ETV Program, a federal educational and training voucher grant program. This organization, the Foster Care to Success Foundation, must use the funds to employ four full-time foster care student navigators to assist prospective qualifying students in applying for and enrolling in institutions of higher education and the Foster-to-College Scholarship Program.

DEW school foster care liaison

The bill also requires the Department of Education and Workforce (DEW), if the DEW Director determines there are sufficient DEW GRF appropriations available, to hire a full-time school foster care liaison to work with public children services agencies (PCSAs), private child placing agencies (PCPAs), and ODJFS to facilitate services to foster children related to school placement. According to a spokesperson, DEW already employs someone who acts as a foster care liaison. Therefore, the bill is not expected to increase DEW's administrative costs for this purpose.