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OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

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Office

H.B. 793
136th General Assembly

Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

[Click here for H.B. 793's Bill Analysis](#)

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsor: Rep. J. Thomas

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

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Highlights

- The bill requires each institution of higher education to annually report to the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) the cost of attendance for an Ohio resident undergraduate student who enrolls at that institution for that academic year and requires ODHE to annually post each institution's reported cost of attendance on its website along with the federal definition of "cost of attendance." Public institutions and ODHE may incur minimal administrative costs in fulfilling these responsibilities, as both are already conducting similar practices under continuing law.
- The bill's changes to the Governor's Merit Scholarship program primarily formalize existing practices and are expected to have no more than minimal impact on how state institutions of higher education currently award institutional aid.

Detailed Analysis

Cost of attendance reporting

The bill requires each institution of higher education to annually report to the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) the cost of attendance for an Ohio resident undergraduate student who enrolls at that institution for that academic year. It also requires ODHE to annually post each institution's reported cost of attendance on its website along with the federal definition of "cost of attendance." Any costs associated with these requirements are expected to be minimal for both public institutions of higher education and ODHE. Each public institution must already submit to ODHE a report each year that contains a variety of information, including the estimated or actual average cost of attendance. Similarly, ODHE anticipates any additional costs to be minimal because it already collects similar data for institutions and posts that information on its website.

Governor's Merit Scholarship changes

The Governor's Merit Scholarship (GMS) program provides individual scholarships of \$5,000 per academic year to eligible students determined to be in the top 5% of each public or nonpublic high school's graduating class at the end of their junior year, as determined by their high school using criteria established by the Chancellor of Higher Education and the Director of Education and Workforce. Under continuing law, a qualifying institution is prohibited from making changes to scholarship or financial aid programs offered by that institution with the goal or net effect of shifting the cost burden of those programs to GMS. The bill prohibits a qualifying institution from reducing the amount of institutional financial aid it has offered to a GMS recipient, unless the student's total financial aid exceeds the institution's posted cost of attendance. In this case, the institution must reduce the student's institutional financial aid until the student's total financial aid is equal to the cost of attendance.

An institution that is reducing its institutional aid offered to a GMS student would no longer be able to do so under the bill, unless the student's total financial aid exceeds the institution's posted cost of attendance. However, according to responses received by the Inter-University Council of Ohio (IUC) and the Ohio Association of Community Colleges (OACC) from member institutions, institutions, generally, anticipate this change having little, if any, impact on current procedures for awarding institutional aid. For example, institutions report that federal Title IV rules already prohibit awarding aid that exceeds cost of attendance, and they already adjust institutional aid when a student receives additional external assistance. Some institutions, however, do report that the bill may limit flexibility to adjust scholarship program structures in the future.