

164.7870 Optometry Scholarship Program.

- (1) The General Assembly hereby establishes the Optometry Scholarship Program to provide eligible Kentucky students the opportunity to attend an accredited school of optometry to become certified practitioners rendering medical service in the Commonwealth.
- (2) For purposes of this section:
 - (a) "Authority" means the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority;
 - (b) "Eligible institution" means an accredited school of optometry that:
 1. Is the Kentucky College of Optometry; or
 2. a. Has a main campus outside the Commonwealth; and
b. Executes an agreement with the authority on terms the authority deems necessary or appropriate for administration of the program;
 - (c) "Eligible program of study" means a program accredited by the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education that leads to a Doctor of Optometry degree;
 - (d) "Eligible student" means any person who:
 1. Is a United States citizen;
 2. Is a Kentucky resident as determined by the institution in accordance with criteria established by the Council on Postsecondary Education for the purposes of admission and tuition assessment;
 3. Is enrolled or accepted for enrollment at an eligible institution in an eligible program of study on a full-time basis;
 4. Completes and submits an optometry scholarship application to the authority; and
 5. Is not in default on any program under Title IV of the federal act or any obligation to the authority under any program administered by the authority under KRS 164.740 to 164.785 or 164.7894, except that ineligibility for this reason may be waived by the authority for cause; and
 - (e) "Optometry Scholarship Committee" means a group of individuals selected in accordance with regulations promulgated by the authority whose membership shall be composed of:
 1. A representative from the Kentucky Optometric Association;
 2. A representative from the Kentucky College of Optometry;
 3. Two (2) at-large members with optometric education experience; and
 4. One (1) representative from an eligible institution located outside the Commonwealth.
- (3) The authority shall administer the Optometry Scholarship Program and shall promulgate administrative regulations in accordance with KRS Chapter 13A as may be needed for the administration of the program.
- (4) Beginning with the 2021-2022 academic year, the authority may award an optometry scholarship under this section, to the extent funds are available for that

purpose, to any eligible student who is selected by the Optometry Scholarship Committee to be a recipient.

- (5) A minimum of one-third (1/3) of the amount appropriated for scholarships under this section shall be awarded to eligible students attending an eligible institution located in the Commonwealth.
- (6) Should funds be insufficient to award all eligible students, those previously receiving tuition assistance through the optometry contract spaces program administered by the Council on Postsecondary Education shall receive priority until such time they complete or withdraw from an eligible program of study or have received assistance for four (4) years of study.
- (7) The authority shall provide an annual report on the Optometry Scholarship Program to the General Assembly that includes the:
 - (a) Number of students served by the scholarship, the total amount disbursed, and distribution by institution;
 - (b) Number of recipients completing an eligible program and the number practicing in Kentucky following program completion; and
 - (c) Geographic distribution and occupational demand of optometrists in the state.
- (8)
 - (a) The Optometry Scholarship Program fund is hereby created as a trust fund in the State Treasury to be administered by the authority for the purpose of providing scholarships described in this section.
 - (b) The trust fund shall consist of state general fund appropriations, gifts and grants from public and private sources, and federal funds. All moneys included in the fund shall be appropriated for the purposes set forth in this section.
 - (c) Any unallotted or unencumbered balances in the trust fund shall be invested as provided in KRS 42.500(9). Income earned from the investments shall be credited to the trust fund.
 - (d) Notwithstanding KRS 45.229, any fund balance at the close of the fiscal year shall not lapse but shall be carried forward to the next fiscal year and continuously appropriated only for the purposes specified in this section.

Effective: July 15, 2020

History: Created 2020 Ky. Acts ch. 58, sec. 1, effective July 15, 2020.