



TO: **Presidents, Chancellors, and Directors
A+ Eligible Postsecondary Education Institutions**

FROM: **David R. Russell
Commissioner of Higher Education**

DATE: **July 23, 2015**

SUBJECT: **Citizenship Requirements for the A+ Scholarship**

Governor Nixon vetoed Senate Bill 224 on July 11, 2015. SB 224 would have established new citizenship eligibility criteria for the A+ Scholarship. That legislation required individuals to be U.S. citizens or permanent residents to be eligible to receive tuition reimbursement through the program.

With the Governor's veto of SB 224 eligibility for program benefits continues to be determined by Section 173.1110, RSMo. This statute requires individuals to be legally present in the United States in order to receive a postsecondary education public benefit, including state student assistance. Several categories of non-citizens, including students with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals status, remain eligible for A+ reimbursement, if they have met all other eligibility criteria. The General Assembly will consider the Governor's action on SB 224 during the veto session that begins on September 16. The Missouri Department of Higher Education will keep you informed in the event there are statutory changes to the program resulting from the veto session.

In addition to SB 224, the General Assembly also passed House Bill 3, which the Governor signed. The title, or preamble, to HB 3 states that "no scholarship funds shall be expended on behalf of students with an unlawful immigration status in the United States." Careful review of the bill has determined that the statement contained in the title of HB 3 does not appear as legally binding language in the body of HB 3 or elsewhere in statute. Because the title of a bill does not have the effect of law, the department has no legal authority to withhold scholarship awards from otherwise eligible students. As a consequence, all A+ eligible students, including those with DACA status, will be eligible for awards under the A+ scholarship beginning with the 2015 summer term. MDHE financial assistance staff will provide additional information regarding the eligibility of these students directly to your respective student financial assistance offices.

Please contact us if you need additional information.