



OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT & BUDGET

State Budget Office

One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908-5890

Office: (401) 222-6300
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State Fiscal Note for Bill Number:

2025-S 0030

Date of State Budget Office Approval: Tuesday, March 18, 2025

Date Requested: Thursday, January 23, 2025

Date Due: Saturday, February 15, 2025

Impact on Expenditures		Impact on Revenues	
FY 2025	N/A	FY 2025	\$0
FY 2026	Indeterminate up to \$12.7 million	FY 2026	\$0
FY 2027	Indeterminate	FY 2027	\$0

Explanation by State Budget Office:

This bill would create the Shortage Teaching Fields Tuition Assistance Fund within the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner (OPC), which would support a portion of the tuition and other costs of attending an institution of higher education for individuals who agree to remain in Rhode Island to teach in a shortage teaching field after graduation.

Recipients would be required to enroll at a Rhode Island postsecondary institution, either public or private, in a program to become a teacher in a shortage field but would not need to be a Rhode Island resident. Program awards would cover tuition, mandatory fees, room, board, and other costs of attending the institution, to be defined by OPC and potentially including transportation, childcare, and course-related books and materials. The full cost would be covered for students attending the University of Rhode Island (URI) or Rhode Island College (RIC), but the funding students attending a private institution would receive for tuition, room, board, and mandatory fees would be limited to the amount RIC charges for the same expenses. All funds distributed from the Fund, a restricted receipt account that would be established in OPC, would be required to be allocated toward student awards.

Recipients would be required to complete at least three years of full-time teaching in a shortage field at any elementary or secondary school in the state. Shortage teaching fields would be statutorily defined to include any sciences for grades 7 through 12 and any mathematics for grades 7 through 12. OPC would be required to identify other shortage teaching fields and update the definition at least once every two years. If a recipient does not graduate with a degree in a program to become a teacher in a shortage field or does not fulfill the service requirement, the assistance provided to date would become a loan to be repaid by the recipient.

OPC would be required to provide a guide in multiple languages on how to apply for the program and to define the other costs of attending a postsecondary institution. OPC would be required to submit an annual report to the Speaker of the House, the Senate President, and the Governor on August 1 of each year, beginning in 2026, on the number of recipients of assistance, the funding issued, and the shortage teaching field and name of the postsecondary institution for each recipient.



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Summary of Facts and Assumptions:

The bill would take effect upon passage. This fiscal note assumes that OPC will be able to promulgate rules and regulations and set up an application process in time to issue tuition assistance in FY 2026, although it likely would not be possible to disburse funding in FY 2026 before the academic year begins.

Six higher education institutions in Rhode Island offer bachelor's degrees in education. Two, RIC and URI, are public institutions while Brown University, Providence College (PC), Roger Williams University (RWU), and Salve Regina University are private. OPC provided data from the Fall 2024 semester on education majors at each institution. RIC has 658 undergraduates majoring in education, including a total of 39 in the fields of Secondary Education and Teaching, Mathematics Teacher Education, Science Teacher Education, Biology Teacher Education, and Physics Teacher Education. URI has 596 undergraduates majoring in education, including 155 in Secondary Education and Teaching. Brown has 57 undergraduates concentrating in Education Studies, with no subcategories; the data includes a note that many Brown students do not declare a concentration until the end of their sophomore year. PC has 190 undergraduates majoring in education, including a total of 30 in the fields of Secondary Education and Teaching, Mathematics Teacher Education, Biology Teacher Education, Chemistry Teacher Education, and Physics Teacher Education. RWU has 196 undergraduates majoring in education, including a total of 21 in the fields of Secondary Education and Teaching and Mathematics, General. Salve has 161 undergraduates majoring in education, including a total of 5 in the fields of Secondary Education and Math, Secondary Education and Biology, and Secondary Education and Chemistry.

This fiscal note assumes that only the students in the specific fields (but all Education Studies students at Brown) would be eligible. Therefore, a total of 307 students would have been eligible in the fall of 2024, including 39 at RIC, 155 at URI, 57 at Brown, 30 at PC, 21 at RWU, and 5 at Salve.

(For context, as of March 12, there are 243 Rhode Island-based job openings for full-time classroom teachers at the middle and secondary levels posted on the statewide educator recruitment platform developed as part of Race to the Top and hosted by SchoolSpring.)

At RIC, adopted tuition and mandatory fees for FY 2025 total \$11,300 for in-state students, \$16,183 for the Northeast Neighbors Program, and \$27,299 for out-of-state students. Average room and board for FY 2025 is \$14,271. Adding \$2,000 for other costs of attendance would yield total costs for FY 2026 of \$27,571 for in-state students, \$32,454 for the Northeast Neighbors Program, and \$43,570 for out-of-state students. For FY 2025, 87.7% of FTE enrollment at RIC consisted of in-state students, 10.5% for the Northeast Neighbors Program, and 1.7% for out-of-state students. As FY 2026 data will not be available until the fall, this fiscal note assumes the same distribution to estimate potential out-year costs.



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At URI, adopted tuition and mandatory fees for FY 2026 total \$16,858 for in-state students and \$36,846 for out-of-state students. Typical room and board for FY 2025 is \$14,636. Adding \$2,000 for other costs of attendance would yield total costs of \$33,494 for in-state students and \$53,482 for out-of-state students. For FY 2025, 50.7% of FTE enrollment at URI consisted of in-state students, and 49.3% of enrollment consisted of out-of-state students. As FY 2026 data will not be available until the fall, this fiscal note assumes the same distribution to estimate potential out-year costs.

The bill does not specify which of RIC's tuition rates will apply to students attending private institutions, so this fiscal note assumes that the out-of-state rate will be used. According to data provided by OPC, all of the private institutions will have tuition and mandatory fees that exceed the total cost of attendance of \$43,570 for RIC out-of-state students.

A ceiling estimate can be developed by assuming that all students in the relevant fields at the six institutions would receive the full amount of tuition assistance, and that at RIC and URI the students receiving tuition assistance would match the residency proportions of the institutions as a whole. It is obviously unlikely that every student will apply for tuition assistance, as presumably some of them would not want to remain in Rhode Island or teach in a shortage field, and that every student would require the full amount of tuition assistance without receiving other forms of financial aid, such as Pell Grants (but note that accepting tuition assistance through this program would mean that students at RIC would not receive the Hope Scholarship because that is a last-dollar scholarship and all need would be met through this program). However, any estimate of how many students would seek to participate in this program would merely be a guess. Furthermore, attempting to determine what portion of the costs of attendance this program would need to cover due to recipients receiving other forms of financial aid would require substantial analysis by the institutional research offices at each of the six institutions and would be impractical for this fiscal note.

The Budget Office estimates that, as a ceiling, expenditures for this program in FY 2025 could be as high as \$12,734,868 (this would increase as tuition and other costs of attendance increase in future years). This breaks down by institution as follows:

Rhode Island College: \$1,110,800

University of Rhode Island: \$6,710,658

Brown University: \$2,483,490

Providence College: \$1,307,100

Roger Williams University: \$914,970

Salve Regina University: \$217,850

The bill does not specify a funding source for the restricted receipt account. Presumably funding would need to be appropriated from the General Fund.



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The bill does not discuss terms of loan repayment, such as whether interest would be charged, that would be required if a recipient leaves the degree program or does not fulfill the service requirement. The bill is also silent on what would happen to any funds that were repaid, although it is logical to assume that they would be deposited in the restricted receipt account. Any revenue from loan repayments is likely to be minimal in FY 2025 and FY 2026, as all recipients except those receiving tuition assistance as seniors in FY 2025 would still be in college, so this fiscal note assumes no revenue in those years.

The account would be subject to the provision in R.I.G.L. § 35-4-27 that requires indirect cost recoveries of 10% of cash receipts to be transferred from restricted receipt accounts and recorded as general revenues.

Comments on Sources of Funds:

Tuition assistance would be financed through the establishment of a restricted receipt account. Appropriations to the account would presumably be made from the General Fund.

Summary of Fiscal Impact:

The Budget Office cannot accurately calculate expenditures for this program due to reasons stated above, but expenditures are unlikely to exceed \$12.7 million in FY 2026, with costs rising in the outyears. Revenue from repayments is possible but unlikely in the first two years.

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