
SENATE BILL 5904

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2024 Regular Session

By Senators Nobles and Hansen; by request of Student Achievement Council

Prefiled 12/22/23.

1 AN ACT Relating to extending the terms of eligibility for the
2 Washington college grant program, Washington college bound
3 scholarship program, passport to college promise program, and
4 passport to apprenticeship opportunities program; and amending RCW
5 28B.92.200, 28B.118.010, 28B.118.005, and 28B.117.030.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

7 **Sec. 1.** RCW 28B.92.200 and 2022 c 214 s 5 are each amended to
8 read as follows:

9 (1) The Washington college grant program is created to provide a
10 statewide free college program for eligible participants and greater
11 access to postsecondary education for Washington residents. The
12 Washington college grant program is intended to increase the number
13 of high school graduates and adults that can attain a postsecondary
14 credential and provide them with the qualifications needed to compete
15 for job opportunities in Washington.

16 (2) The office shall implement and administer the Washington
17 college grant program and is authorized to establish rules necessary
18 for implementation of the program.

19 (3) The legislature shall appropriate funding for the Washington
20 college grant program. Allocations must be made on the basis of
21 estimated eligible participants enrolled in eligible institutions of

1 higher education or apprenticeship programs. All eligible students
2 are entitled to a Washington college grant beginning in academic year
3 2020-21.

4 (4) The office shall award Washington college grants to all
5 eligible students beginning in academic year 2020-21.

6 (5) To be eligible for the Washington college grant, students
7 must meet the following requirements:

8 (a) (i) Demonstrate financial need under RCW 28B.92.205;

9 (ii) Receive one of the following types of public assistance:

10 (A) Aged, blind, or disabled assistance benefits under chapter
11 74.62 RCW;

12 (B) Essential needs and housing support program benefits under
13 RCW 43.185C.220; or

14 (C) Pregnant women assistance program financial grants under RCW
15 74.62.030; or

16 (iii) Be a Washington high school student in the 10th, 11th, or
17 12th grade whose parent or legal guardian is receiving one of the
18 types of public assistance listed in (a) (ii) of this subsection and
19 have received a certificate confirming eligibility from the office in
20 accordance with RCW 28B.92.225;

21 (b) (i) Be enrolled or accepted for enrollment for at least three
22 quarter credits or the equivalent semester credits at an institution
23 of higher education in Washington as defined in RCW 28B.92.030; or

24 (ii) Be enrolled in a registered apprenticeship program approved
25 under chapter 49.04 RCW;

26 (c) Be a resident student as defined in RCW 28B.15.012(2) (a)
27 through (e);

28 (d) File an annual application for financial aid as approved by
29 the office; and

30 (e) Must not have earned a baccalaureate degree or higher from a
31 postsecondary institution.

32 (6) Washington college grant eligibility may not extend beyond
33 ((~~five~~)) six years or ((~~one hundred twenty-five~~)) 150 percent of the
34 published length of the program in which the student is enrolled or
35 the credit or clock-hour equivalent.

36 (7) Institutional aid administrators shall determine whether a
37 student eligible for the Washington college grant in a given academic
38 year may remain eligible for the ensuing year if the student's family
39 income increases by no more than three percent.

1 (8) Qualifications for receipt and renewal include maintaining
2 satisfactory academic progress toward completion of an eligible
3 program as determined by the office and established in rule.

4 (9) Should a recipient terminate his or her enrollment for any
5 reason during the academic year, the unused portion of the grant
6 shall be returned to the state educational grant fund by the
7 institution of higher education according to the institution of
8 higher education's policy for issuing refunds, except as provided in
9 RCW 28B.92.070.

10 (10) An eligible student enrolled on a part-time basis shall
11 receive a prorated portion of the Washington college grant for any
12 academic period in which he or she is enrolled on a part-time basis.

13 (11) The Washington college grant is intended to be used to meet
14 the costs of postsecondary education for students with financial
15 need. The student shall be awarded all need-based financial aid for
16 which the student qualifies as determined by the institution.

17 (12) Students and participating institutions of higher education
18 shall comply with all the rules adopted by the council for the
19 administration of this chapter.

20 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28B.118.010 and 2023 c 174 s 2 are each amended to
21 read as follows:

22 The office of student financial assistance shall design the
23 Washington college bound scholarship program in accordance with this
24 section and in alignment with the Washington college grant program in
25 chapter 28B.92 RCW unless otherwise provided in this section. The
26 right of an eligible student to receive a college bound scholarship
27 vest upon enrollment in the program that is earned by meeting the
28 requirements of this section as it exists at the time of the
29 student's enrollment under subsection (2) of this section.

30 (1) "Eligible students" are those students who:

31 (a) Qualify for free or reduced-price lunches.

32 (i) If a student qualifies in the seventh or eighth grade, the
33 student remains eligible even if the student does not receive free or
34 reduced-price lunches thereafter.

35 (ii) Beginning in the 2019-20 academic year, if a student
36 qualifies for free or reduced-price lunches in the ninth grade and
37 was previously ineligible during the seventh or eighth grade while he
38 or she was a student in Washington, the student is eligible for the
39 college bound scholarship program;

1 (b) Are dependent pursuant to chapter 13.34 RCW and:

2 (i) In grade seven through 12; or

3 (ii) Are between the ages of 18 and 21 and have not graduated
4 from high school; or

5 (c) Were dependent pursuant to chapter 13.34 RCW and were adopted
6 between the ages of 14 and 18 with a negotiated adoption agreement
7 that includes continued eligibility for the Washington state college
8 bound scholarship program pursuant to RCW 74.13A.025.

9 (2)(a) Every eligible student shall be automatically enrolled by
10 the office of student financial assistance, with no action necessary
11 by the student, student's family, or student's guardians.

12 (b) Eligible students and the students' parents or guardians
13 shall be notified of the student's enrollment in the Washington
14 college bound scholarship program and the requirements for award of
15 the scholarship by the office of student financial assistance. To the
16 maximum extent practicable, an eligible student must acknowledge
17 enrollment in the college bound scholarship program and receipt of
18 the requirements for award of the scholarship.

19 (c) The office of the superintendent of public instruction and
20 the department of children, youth, and families must provide the
21 office of student financial assistance with a list of eligible
22 students when requested. The office of student financial assistance
23 must determine the most effective methods, including timing and
24 frequency, to notify eligible students of enrollment in the
25 Washington college bound scholarship program. The office of student
26 financial assistance must take reasonable steps to ensure that
27 eligible students acknowledge enrollment in the college bound
28 scholarship program and receipt of the requirements for award of the
29 scholarship. The office of student financial assistance shall also
30 make available to every school district information, brochures, and
31 posters to increase awareness and to enable school districts to
32 notify eligible students directly or through school teachers,
33 counselors, or school activities.

34 (3) Except as provided in subsection (4) of this section, an
35 eligible student must:

36 (a)(i) Graduate from a public high school under RCW 28A.150.010,
37 an approved private high school under chapter 28A.195 RCW in
38 Washington, or have received home-based instruction under chapter
39 28A.200 RCW; and

1 (ii) For eligible students enrolling in a postsecondary
2 educational institution for the first time beginning with the 2023-24
3 academic year, graduate with at least a "C" average for consideration
4 of direct admission to a public or private four-year institution of
5 higher education;

6 (b) Have no felony convictions;

7 (c) Be a resident student as defined in RCW 28B.15.012(2) (a)
8 through (e); and

9 (d) Have a family income that does not exceed 65 percent of the
10 state median family income at the time of high school graduation.

11 (4)(a) An eligible student who is a resident student under RCW
12 28B.15.012(2)(e) must also provide the institution, as defined in RCW
13 28B.15.012, an affidavit indicating that the individual will file an
14 application to become a permanent resident at the earliest
15 opportunity the individual is eligible to do so and a willingness to
16 engage in any other activities necessary to acquire citizenship,
17 including but not limited to citizenship or civics review courses.

18 (b) For eligible students as defined in subsection (1)(b) and (c)
19 of this section, a student may also meet the requirement in
20 subsection (3)(a) of this section by receiving a high school
21 equivalency certificate as provided in RCW 28B.50.536.

22 (5)(a) For students attending two or four-year institutions of
23 higher education as defined in RCW 28B.10.016, the value of the award
24 shall be (i) the difference between the student's tuition and
25 required fees, less the value of any state-funded grant, scholarship,
26 or waiver assistance the student receives; (ii) plus five hundred
27 dollars for books and materials.

28 (b) For students attending private four-year institutions of
29 higher education in Washington, the award amount shall be the
30 representative average of awards granted to students in public
31 research universities in Washington or the representative average of
32 awards granted to students in public research universities in
33 Washington in the 2014-15 academic year, whichever is greater.

34 (c) For students attending private vocational schools in
35 Washington, the award amount shall be the representative average of
36 awards granted to students in public community and technical colleges
37 in Washington or the representative average of awards granted to
38 students in public community and technical colleges in Washington in
39 the 2014-15 academic year, whichever is greater.

1 (6) Eligible students must enroll no later than the fall term, as
2 defined by the institution of higher education, one academic year
3 following high school graduation. (~~Eligible students may receive no~~
4 ~~more than four full-time years' worth of scholarship awards within a~~
5 ~~five-year period~~) College bound scholarship eligibility may not
6 extend beyond six years or 150 percent of the published length of the
7 program in which the student is enrolled or the credit or clock-hour
8 equivalent.

9 (7) Institutions of higher education shall award the student all
10 need-based and merit-based financial aid for which the student would
11 otherwise qualify. The Washington college bound scholarship is
12 intended to replace unmet need, loans, and, at the student's option,
13 work-study award before any other grants or scholarships are reduced.

14 (8) The first scholarships shall be awarded to students
15 graduating in 2012.

16 (9) The eligible student has a property right in the award, but
17 the state of Washington retains legal ownership of tuition units
18 awarded as scholarships under this chapter until the tuition units
19 are redeemed. These tuition units shall remain separately held from
20 any tuition units owned under chapter 28B.95 RCW by a Washington
21 college bound scholarship recipient.

22 (~~(10) (The scholarship award must be used within five years of~~
23 ~~receipt. Any unused scholarship tuition units revert to the~~
24 ~~Washington college bound scholarship account.~~

25 ~~(11))~~) Should the recipient terminate his or her enrollment for
26 any reason during the academic year, the unused portion of the
27 scholarship tuition units shall revert to the Washington college
28 bound scholarship account.

29 **Sec. 3.** RCW 28B.118.005 and 2007 c 405 s 1 are each amended to
30 read as follows:

31 The legislature intends to inspire and encourage all Washington
32 students to dream big by creating a guaranteed (~~four-year~~) tuition
33 scholarship program for students from low-income families who enroll
34 within one year of high school graduation. The legislature finds
35 that, too often, financial barriers prevent many of the brightest
36 students from considering college as a future possibility. Often the
37 cost of tuition coupled with the complexity of finding and applying
38 for financial aid is enough to prevent a student from even applying
39 to college. Many students become disconnected from the education

1 system early on and may give up or drop out before graduation. It is
2 the intent of the legislature to alert students early in their
3 educational career to the options and opportunities available beyond
4 high school.

5 **Sec. 4.** RCW 28B.117.030 and 2019 c 470 s 23 are each amended to
6 read as follows:

7 (1) The office shall design and, to the extent funds are
8 appropriated for this purpose, implement, passport to careers with
9 two programmatic pathways: The passport to college promise program
10 and the passport to apprenticeship opportunities program. Both
11 programs offer supplemental scholarship and student assistance for
12 students who were under the care of the state foster care system,
13 tribal foster care system, or federal foster care system, and
14 verified unaccompanied youth or young adults who have experienced
15 homelessness.

16 (2) The office shall convene and consult with an advisory
17 committee to assist with program design and implementation. The
18 committee shall include but not be limited to former foster care and
19 unaccompanied homeless youth and their advocates; representatives
20 from the state board for community and technical colleges, public and
21 private agencies that assist current and former foster care
22 recipients and unaccompanied youth or young adults experiencing
23 homelessness in their transition to adulthood; student support
24 specialists from public and private colleges and universities; the
25 state workforce training and education coordinating board; the
26 employment security department; and the state apprenticeship council.

27 (3) To the extent that sufficient funds have been appropriated
28 for this purpose, a student is eligible for assistance under this
29 section if he or she:

30 (a)(i) Was in the care of the state foster care system, tribal
31 foster care system, or federal foster care system in Washington state
32 at any time before age twenty-one subsequent to the following:

33 (A) Age fifteen as of July 1, 2018;

34 (B) Age fourteen as of July 1, 2019; and

35 (C) Age thirteen as of July 1, 2020; or

36 (ii) Beginning July 1, 2019, was verified on or after July 1st of
37 the prior academic year as an unaccompanied youth experiencing
38 homelessness, before age twenty-one;

1 (b) Is a resident student, as defined in RCW 28B.15.012(2), or if
2 unable to establish residency because of homelessness or placement in
3 out-of-state foster care under the interstate compact for the
4 placement of children, has residency determined through verification
5 by the office;

6 (c) Is enrolled with or will enroll on at least a half-time basis
7 with an institution of higher education or a registered
8 apprenticeship or recognized preapprenticeship in Washington state by
9 the age of twenty-one;

10 (d) Is making satisfactory academic progress toward the
11 completion of a degree, certificate program, or registered
12 apprenticeship or recognized preapprenticeship, if receiving
13 supplemental scholarship assistance;

14 (e) Has not earned a bachelor's or professional degree; and

15 (f) Is not pursuing a degree in theology.

16 (4) The office shall define a process for verifying unaccompanied
17 homeless status for determining eligibility under subsection
18 (3)(a)(ii) of this section. The office may use a letter from the
19 following persons or entities to provide verification: A high school
20 or school district McKinney-Vento liaison; the director or designated
21 staff member of an emergency shelter, transitional housing program,
22 or homeless youth drop-in center; or other similar professional case
23 manager or school employee. Students who have no formal connection
24 with such a professional may also submit to the office an essay that
25 describes their experience with homelessness and the barriers it
26 created to their academic progress. The office may consider this
27 essay in lieu of a letter of homelessness determination and may
28 interview the student if further information is needed to verify
29 eligibility.

30 (5) A passport to college promise program is created.

31 (a) A passport to college promise scholarship under this section:

32 (i) Shall not exceed resident undergraduate tuition and fees at
33 the highest-priced public institution of higher education in the
34 state; and

35 (ii) Shall not exceed the student's financial need, when combined
36 with all other public and private grant, scholarship, and waiver
37 assistance the student receives.

38 (b) (~~An eligible student may receive a passport~~) Passport to
39 college promise scholarship (~~under this section for a maximum of~~
40 ~~five years after the student first enrolls with an institution of~~

1 ~~higher education or until the student turns age twenty-six, whichever~~
2 ~~occurs first. If a student turns age twenty-six during an academic~~
3 ~~year, and would otherwise be eligible for a scholarship under this~~
4 ~~section, the student shall continue to be eligible for a scholarship~~
5 ~~for the remainder of the academic year)) eligibility may not extend~~
6 ~~beyond six years or 150 percent of the published length of the~~
7 ~~program in which the student is enrolled or the credit or clock-hour~~
8 ~~equivalent.~~

9 (c) The office, in consultation with and with assistance from the
10 state board for community and technical colleges, shall perform an
11 annual analysis to verify that those institutions of higher education
12 at which students have received a scholarship under this section have
13 awarded the student all available need-based and merit-based grant
14 and scholarship aid for which the student qualifies.

15 (d) In designing and implementing the passport to college promise
16 student support program under this section, the office, in
17 consultation with and with assistance from the state board for
18 community and technical colleges, shall ensure that a participating
19 college or university:

20 (i) Has a viable plan for identifying students eligible for
21 assistance under this section, for tracking and enhancing their
22 academic progress, for addressing their unique needs for assistance
23 during school vacations and academic interims, and for linking them
24 to appropriate sources of assistance in their transition to
25 adulthood;

26 (ii) Receives financial and other incentives for achieving
27 measurable progress in the recruitment, retention, and graduation of
28 eligible students.

29 (e) To the extent funds are appropriated for this specific
30 purpose, the office shall contract with at least one nongovernmental
31 entity to provide services to support effective program
32 implementation, resulting in increased postsecondary completion rates
33 for passport scholars.

34 (6) The passport to apprenticeship opportunities program is
35 created. The office shall:

36 (a) Identify students and applicants who are eligible for
37 services under RCW 28B.117.030 through coordination of certain
38 agencies as detailed in RCW 28B.117.040;

39 (b) Provide financial assistance through the nongovernmental
40 entity or entities in RCW 28B.117.055 for registered apprenticeship

1 and recognized preapprenticeship entrance requirements and
2 occupational-specific costs that does not exceed the individual's
3 financial need; and

4 (c) Extend financial assistance to any eligible applicant for ((a
5 maximum of)) six years ((after first enrolling with a registered
6 apprenticeship or recognized preapprenticeship, or until the
7 applicant turns twenty-six, whichever occurs first)) or 150 percent
8 of the published length of the program in which the student is
9 enrolled or the credit or clock-hour equivalent.

10 (7) Recipients may utilize passport to college promise or
11 passport to apprenticeship opportunities at different times, but not
12 concurrently. The total award an individual may receive in any
13 combination of the programs shall not exceed the equivalent amount
14 that would have been awarded for the individual to attend a public
15 university for ((five)) six years with the highest annual tuition and
16 state-mandated fees in the state.

17 (8) Personally identifiable information shared pursuant to this
18 section retains its confidentiality and may not be further disclosed
19 except as allowed under state and federal law.

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