

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SHB 2807

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Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Creating the Washington promise scholarship.

**Sponsors:** By House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Kenney, Cox, Fromhold and Rockefeller; by request of Governor Locke).

**House Committee on Higher Education**  
**House Committee on Appropriations**  
**Senate Committee on Higher Education**  
**Senate Committee on Ways & Means**

**Background:**

The Washington Promise Scholarship was established in the 1997 budget. The Washington Promise Scholarship program provides college scholarships to the state's top high school seniors. Students must come from low- and middle-income families and either rank in the top 15 percent of their graduating classes or score 1200 or better on the Scholastic Aptitude Test. The Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) administers the program, with the assistance for the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). The award consists of two years tuition at the community college full-time tuition rate. The promise scholarship is not established in statute. However, the Legislature appropriated \$11.4 million during the 1999-2001 biennium as a provision in the state operating budget. The program is funded until June 2003.

Of this year's recipients:

- almost two-thirds are women;
- more than one-third also qualify for the State Need Grant, a financial aid program for students from low-income families; and
- a little more than half will attend a public four-year university.

**Summary:**

The Washington Promise Scholarship Program is created in statute. The Promise Scholarship Program is administered by the HECB. The scholarships are not intended to supplant any grant, scholarship, or tax program related to postsecondary education. Each qualifying student will receive two consecutive annual awards, the value of each not to exceed the full-time annual resident tuition rates charged by Washington's community colleges.

The scholarships may only be used for undergraduate course work at accredited institutions of higher education in Washington, or for undergraduate course work at Oregon institutions that are part of the border county opportunity program when the Oregon institutions offer programs not available at an accredited Washington institution. The scholarship may not be awarded to any student pursuing a degree in theology. The scholarships may be used for college-related expenses, including tuition, room and board, books, and materials.

Eligibility for a Promise Scholarship is based on: 1) academic merit, and 2) student family income.

### **Academic eligibility**

To be eligible, a student must graduate in the top 15 percent of his or her graduating class, must equal or exceed a cumulative Scholastic Aptitude Test score of 1200 on the first attempt, or must equal or exceed a composite American College Test score of 27 on the first attempt.

### **Financial eligibility**

To be eligible, a student's family income must not exceed 135 percent of the state median family income adjusted for family size, as determined by the HECB for each graduating class. Students not meeting the financial eligibility requirements for the first year of scholarship benefits may reapply for the second year of benefits, but must still meet the income standard set by the board for the student's graduating class.

### **Implementation**

The HECB will administer the scholarship, with the assistance of the OSPI. First scholarships are to be awarded in 2002-03. Public and approved private high schools will provide requested information for academic eligibility to OSPI, and OSPI, in turn, will provide this information to the HECB.

All money for the scholarship is deposited into an account in the custody of the State Treasurer. The HECB must award scholarships to as many students as possible from among those qualifying and will determine the award amount dependent upon availability of funds.

The HECB is directed to change the eligibility for the state need grant from 60 percent of the state median family income to 55 percent when administering it in conjunction with the promise scholarship.

### **Votes on Final Passage:**

House 97 1  
Senate 48 0 (Senate amended)  
House (House refused to concur)  
Senate (Senate receded)  
Senate 45 0 (Senate amended)  
House 97 1 (House concurred)

**Effective:** March 27, 2002