
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5547

State of Washington

64th Legislature

2015 Regular Session

By Senate Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Bailey, Rivers, Angel, Becker, Warnick, Honeyford, and Padden)

READ FIRST TIME 02/27/15.

1 AN ACT Relating to requiring a minimum grade point average or
2 equivalent to distribute state need grant awards; and amending RCW
3 28B.92.060.

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

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 28B.92.060 and 2012 c 229 s 558 are each amended to
6 read as follows:

7 In awarding need grants, the office shall proceed substantially
8 as follows: PROVIDED, That nothing contained herein shall be
9 construed to prevent the office, in the exercise of its sound
10 discretion, from following another procedure when the best interest
11 of the program so dictates:

12 (1) The office shall annually select the financial aid award
13 recipients from among Washington residents applying for student
14 financial aid who have been ranked according to:

15 (a) Financial need as determined by the amount of the family
16 contribution; and

17 (b) Other considerations, such as whether the student is a former
18 foster youth, or is a placebound student who has completed an
19 associate of arts or associate of science degree or its equivalent.

20 (2) The financial need of the highest ranked students shall be
21 met by grants depending upon the evaluation of financial need until

1 the total allocation has been disbursed. Funds from grants which are
2 declined, forfeited or otherwise unused shall be reawarded until
3 disbursed, except that eligible former foster youth shall be assured
4 receipt of a grant. The office, in consultation with four-year
5 institutions of higher education, the council, and the state board
6 for community and technical colleges, shall develop award criteria
7 and methods of disbursement based on level of need, and not solely
8 rely on a first-come, first-served basis.

9 (3)(a) A student shall be eligible to receive a state need grant
10 for up to five years, or the credit or clock hour equivalent of five
11 years, or up to one hundred twenty-five percent of the published
12 length of time of the student's program. A student may not start a
13 new associate degree program as a state need grant recipient until at
14 least five years have elapsed since earning an associate degree as a
15 need grant recipient, except that a student may earn two associate
16 degrees concurrently.

17 (b)(i) Qualifications for renewal will include maintaining
18 satisfactory academic progress toward completion of an eligible
19 program as determined by the office and maintain the grade point
20 averages in this subsection, except for those students attending The
21 Evergreen State College. Students enrolled at The Evergreen State
22 College must meet the requirements of the college's satisfactory
23 academic progress policy for state financial aid to remain qualified.

24 (A) The minimum grade point average for a student's first renewal
25 must be at least a 2.25 grade point average.

26 (B) The minimum grade point average for all subsequent renewal
27 awards must be at least a 2.5 grade point average.

28 (ii) The lost award revenues from students not meeting the
29 minimum grade point averages in (b)(i) of this subsection shall be
30 provided and equally distributed to students who meet the standards
31 in (b)(i)(B) of this subsection. The redistribution of renewal awards
32 shall not result in any net increase or decrease in total
33 appropriations.

34 (iii) A student is exempt from the grade point average
35 requirement in (b)(i) of this subsection for one or more of the
36 following reasons:

37 (A) Because of the birth of a child of the student and in order
38 to care for the child;

39 (B) Because of the placement of a child with the student for
40 adoption or foster care;

1 (C) In order to care for a family member of the student if the
2 family member has a serious health condition as defined in RCW
3 49.78.020; or

4 (D) Because the student has a serious health condition as defined
5 in RCW 49.78.020.

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

11 (4) In computing financial need, the office shall determine a
12 maximum student expense budget allowance, not to exceed an amount
13 equal to the total maximum student expense budget at the public
14 institutions plus the current average state appropriation per student
15 for operating expense in the public institutions. Any child support
16 payments received by students who are parents attending less than
17 half-time shall not be used in computing financial need.

18 (5)(a) A student who is enrolled in three to six credit-bearing
19 quarter credits, or the equivalent semester credits, may receive a
20 grant for up to one academic year before beginning a program that
21 leads to a degree or certificate.

22 (b) An eligible student enrolled on a less-than-full-time basis
23 shall receive a prorated portion of his or her state need grant for
24 any academic period in which he or she is enrolled on a less-than-
25 full-time basis, as long as funds are available.

26 (c) An institution of higher education may award a state need
27 grant to an eligible student enrolled in three to six credit-bearing
28 quarter credits, or the semester equivalent, on a provisional basis
29 if:

30 (i) The student has not previously received a state need grant
31 from that institution;

32 (ii) The student completes the required free application for
33 federal student aid;

34 (iii) The institution has reviewed the student's financial
35 condition, and the financial condition of the student's family if the
36 student is a dependent student, and has determined that the student
37 is likely eligible for a state need grant; and

38 (iv) The student has signed a document attesting to the fact that
39 the financial information provided on the free application for
40 federal student aid and any additional financial information provided

1 directly to the institution is accurate and complete, and that the
2 student agrees to repay the institution for the grant amount if the
3 student submitted false or incomplete information.

4 (6) As used in this section, "former foster youth" means a person
5 who is at least eighteen years of age, but not more than twenty-four
6 years of age, who was a dependent of the department of social and
7 health services at the time he or she attained the age of eighteen.

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