
SENATE BILL 6261

State of Washington

65th Legislature

2018 Regular Session

By Senators Ranker, Wellman, Keiser, McCoy, Kuderer, Hasegawa, Hunt, and Conway

Read first time 01/11/18. Referred to Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development.

1 AN ACT Relating to fully funding and expanding eligibility for
2 the state need grant; amending RCW 28B.92.060; creating a new
3 section; and making an appropriation.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the state need
6 grant is essential to helping the state's lowest-income undergraduate
7 students pursue degrees or retrain for new careers. Yet, paying for
8 college remains difficult for middle and lower income families. It is
9 the intent of the legislature to expand the number of students
10 eligible for the state need grant and fully fund the program so that
11 more families may access higher education opportunities in Washington
12 state.

13 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28B.92.060 and 2012 c 229 s 558 are each amended to
14 read as follows:

15 In awarding need grants, the office shall proceed substantially
16 as follows: PROVIDED, That nothing contained herein shall be
17 construed to prevent the office, in the exercise of its sound
18 discretion, from following another procedure when the best interest
19 of the program so dictates:

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

4 (a) Financial need as determined by the amount of the family
5 contribution. Families that earn up to one hundred percent of the
6 state's median family income are eligible; and

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

10 (2) The financial need of the highest ranked students shall be
11 met by grants depending upon the evaluation of financial need until
12 the total allocation has been disbursed. Funds from grants which are
13 declined, forfeited or otherwise unused shall be reawarded until
14 disbursed, except that eligible former foster youth shall be assured
15 receipt of a grant. The office, in consultation with four-year
16 institutions of higher education, the council, and the state board
17 for community and technical colleges, shall develop award criteria
18 and methods of disbursement based on level of need, and not solely
19 rely on a first-come, first-served basis.

20 (3) A student shall be eligible to receive a state need grant for
21 up to five years, or the credit or clock hour equivalent of five
22 years, or up to one hundred twenty-five percent of the published
23 length of time of the student's program. A student may not start a
24 new associate degree program as a state need grant recipient until at
25 least five years have elapsed since earning an associate degree as a
26 need grant recipient, except that a student may earn two associate
27 degrees concurrently. Qualifications for renewal will include
28 maintaining satisfactory academic progress toward completion of an
29 eligible program as determined by the office. Should the recipient
30 terminate his or her enrollment for any reason during the academic
31 year, the unused portion of the grant shall be returned to the state
32 educational grant fund by the institution according to the
33 institution's own policy for issuing refunds, except as provided in
34 RCW 28B.92.070.

35 (4) In computing financial need, the office shall determine a
36 maximum student expense budget allowance, not to exceed an amount
37 equal to the total maximum student expense budget at the public
38 institutions plus the current average state appropriation per student
39 for operating expense in the public institutions. Any child support

1 payments received by students who are parents attending less than
2 half-time shall not be used in computing financial need.

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

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

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

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

17 (ii) The student completes the required free application for
18 federal student aid;

19 (iii) The institution has reviewed the student's financial
20 condition, and the financial condition of the student's family if the
21 student is a dependent student, and has determined that the student
22 is likely eligible for a state need grant; and

23 (iv) The student has signed a document attesting to the fact that
24 the financial information provided on the free application for
25 federal student aid and any additional financial information provided
26 directly to the institution is accurate and complete, and that the
27 student agrees to repay the institution for the grant amount if the
28 student submitted false or incomplete information.

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

33 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** The sum of two hundred six million
34 dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for
35 the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019, from the general fund to the
36 office of student financial assistance for the purposes of this act.

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