

FINAL BILL REPORT

2SHB 1893

C 230 L 19
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Providing assistance for certain postsecondary students.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Entenman, Leavitt, Pollet, Paul, Stanford and Valdez).

House Committee on College & Workforce Development
House Committee on Appropriations
Senate Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Background:

Financial Assistance to Community and Technical College Students.

Each institution of higher education must deposit a minimum of 3.5 percent of revenues collected from tuition and services and activities fees in an institutional financial aid fund. Moneys in the fund must be used to make long-term and short-term loans to certain eligible students and to provide financial aid to needy students. A "needy student" means a student who demonstrates an inability to meet the total cost of room, board, books, tuition, and fees for any semester or quarter. Most community and technical colleges (CTCs) offer grants to needy students using moneys from their funds. Students are required to fill out an application and moneys are used on a first come, first serve basis.

Most CTCs also have food pantries, with each college having their own criteria for how students access food pantries. Other aid at CTCs include the Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET) program, which is funded by federal dollars and administered by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). The BFET program provides employability assessments and services to certain Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients. In addition to job training services, the BFET benefits can include emergency aid for child care, transportation, or other needs related to job seeking and employability.

Basic Food Program.

The SNAP program, which is called Basic Food in Washington and is administered by the DSHS, provides nutritional support benefits to low-income individuals and families.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Generally, a person must be at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level to be eligible for benefits. Congress authorizes funding and establishes SNAP requirements.

For a student of higher education to receive Basic Food, the student must meet certain conditions mandated by federal law. A student may be eligible to receive Basic Food if the student is in "an approved state or local employment and training program," which must meet federal criteria, or the student is working at least 20 hours, which can include work-study hours.

Recipients of SNAP access their benefits using the Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card, which operates like a debit card and may only be used at retail stores that have been approved by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). In general, a retail store may be eligible to accept SNAP benefits if it sells food for home preparation and meets other federal criteria, such as having more than 50 percent of the total dollar amount of all retail sales be from the sale of eligible staple foods (such as meat, poultry, fish, dairy products, vegetables, fruits, bread). In general, a person may not use SNAP benefits to purchase foods sold hot at the point-of-sale.

States may apply for a waiver of the federal SNAP rules.

Summary:

Grant Program for Community and Technical Colleges.

The Emergency Assistance Grant program, administered by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), is established for the CTCs to provide monetary assistance to students experiencing unforeseen emergencies or situations that affect the student's ability to attend classes.

A CTC applying for a grant must demonstrate need, which may include showing demographic data on student income levels, students experiencing homelessness or food insecurity, and other factors. The CTC applicants must also: (1) ensure that students' access to emergency aid funds will be as low barrier as possible; (2) allow flexibility in who may apply for funds and include students who may not necessarily meet the definition of "needy student" but who may be experiencing emergency situations; (3) and indicate how the CTC will prioritize the disbursement of emergency aid funds. The CTC may not require a student to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid in order to receive emergency aid, but the CTC must require that students seeking assistance must make their requests in writing.

The CTC must use grant moneys to provide monetary aid to students to assist them in, for example, purchasing food, and paying for transportation, child care, or other goods or services needed in order for the student to continue attending classes.

In selecting grant recipients, the SBCTC must consider a CTC's demonstration of need and the resources and programs already in existence at the college. The SBCTC must begin accepting applications for the grant by December 1, 2019, and must submit annual reports to the Legislature by December 1, 2020.

Request for Waivers for Basic Food.

The DSHS must request waivers from federal regulations on SNAP to allow institutions of higher education to accept SNAP benefits in the form of EBT cards at on-campus food retail establishments.

The DSHS, in consultation with the SBCTC, must also identify educational programs at the CTCs that would meet the requirements of state-approved employment and training programs, for purposes of CTC students being eligible for SNAP. The DSHS must maintain and regularly update a list of identified programs. The DSHS must also identify options that could confer categorical eligibility for students who receive state need grants that are funded through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families maintenance of effort dollars. The DSHS must provide a report, by January 1, 2020, to the appropriate committees of the Legislature that identifies federal assistance options for state need grant recipients.

For purposes of work requirements under SNAP, and to the extent allowed by federal law, a student is "anticipating participation" in a work-study program if the student can reasonably expect or foresee being assigned work-study employment, has received approval of work-study as part of financial aid, and has not yet received a notice that the student has been denied participation in work-study.

Each institution of higher education must provide written notice to every student eligible for the state need grant or state work-study program of possible eligibility for the SNAP program. Notification must include information on how to apply for SNAP.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	56	40	
Senate	27	21	(Senate amended)
House	57	41	(House concurred)

Effective: July 28, 2019