

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1805

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Higher Education & Workforce Development, February 17, 2022

Title: An act relating to the opportunity scholarship program.

Brief Description: Concerning the opportunity scholarship program.

Sponsors: Representatives Paul, Boehnke and Shewmake.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/10/22, 89-4.

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 2/17/22 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Amended Bill

- Aligns certain definitions for eligibility for the Washington State Opportunity Scholarship (WSOS) program to the Washington College Grant (WCG).
- Increases the state median income for advanced degree WSOS students if the student demonstrates need through other factors.
- Expands the professional-technical degree WSOS program to registered apprentices eligible for the WCG.
- Establishes that the state match for the rural jobs WSOS program must be based off funds received as of the caseload forecast.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Randall, Chair; Nobles, Vice Chair; Holy, Ranking Member; Liias and Sefzik.

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

Staff: Kellee Gunn (786-7429)

Background: Washington State Opportunity Scholarship Program. The Washington State Opportunity Scholarship (WSOS) program was established in 2011 to provide scholarships to low and middle-income resident students pursuing eligible high-demand baccalaureate degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, and health care, and to encourage scholarship recipients to work in the state upon completion of their degrees.

The program was expanded in 2018 to provide awards to students in high-demand community and technical college programs, advanced degree programs, and studying for high-demand jobs in rural counties.

For the rural jobs program, an eligible county has the same meaning as a rural county and also includes any county that shares a common border with Canada and has a population of over 125,000. An eligible school district means a school district that has a student enrollment in its public schools of less than 2000 pupils.

Summary of Amended Bill: Several changes are made to the WSOS program, with specific changes made to the advanced degree program, rural jobs program, and high-demand community and technical college program.

All Washington State Opportunity Scholarship Programs. The definition of "satisfactory academic progress" and "resident student" for a student to be eligible for the WSOS program are aligned with the Washington College Grant (WCG). The date in which a WSOS scholarship ends, or is no longer automatically renewed, is amended to include five years—in addition to 125 percent of the program length or credit or clock hour equivalent—as defined for the WCG.

Advanced Degree Program. If a WSOS advanced degree student demonstrates financial need through factors such as prior household income, income loss caused by entering the advanced degree program, or level of student debt, then the median income for qualifying may be exceeded. The level of student debt must be provided at application and annually thereafter.

Professional-Technical Degree Program. Registered apprenticeships are included as eligible programs under the professional-technical degree WSOS program.

Rural Jobs Program. Students in a certificate, degree, or other industry-recognized credential or training program in a high-demand field may qualify for the rural jobs program if they have attended and graduated from a school in an eligible school district, are enrolled in a CTC or an apprenticeship in an eligible county, or are a resident of an eligible county in addition to other requirements. To ensure predictable treatment of the program in the budget process, the state match for the rural jobs program must be based on donations and pledges received as of the date of the caseload forecast.

**EFFECT OF HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE AMENDMENT(S):**

- Clarifies that to be eligible for the rural jobs program, an applicant must either: be a resident of an eligible county; have attended and graduated from a school in an eligible school district; or be enrolled in a CTC located in an eligible county or participating in an eligible apprenticeship in an eligible county.
- Makes a technical change in reference to family income for the purpose of the advanced degree program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: No public hearing was held.

Persons Testifying: No one.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.