
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1425

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2021 Regular Session

By House College & Workforce Development (originally sponsored by Representatives Taylor, Leavitt, Valdez, Santos, J. Johnson, Ortiz-Self, Simmons, Rule, Ramel, Chopp, Pollet, Hackney, and Morgan)

READ FIRST TIME 02/15/21.

1 AN ACT Relating to amending the opportunity scholarship act to
2 expand scholarships for community and technical college students;
3 amending RCW 28B.145.010 and 28B.145.100; and creating a new section.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that higher
6 education is pivotal in delivering training to Washington citizens at
7 all stages of their careers and ages. A skilled workforce increases
8 productivity, boosts outputs, and propels growth in Washington's
9 economy. The legislature further finds that a well-trained, highly
10 skilled workforce provides Washington citizens with greater
11 opportunities and skill sets to efficiently and confidently meet the
12 changing demands of a transforming economy. Furthermore, a STEM-based
13 education provides Washington's citizens with real-world applications
14 to develop a variety of skill sets needed in today's global economy.

15 The legislature further finds that the Washington state
16 opportunity scholarship is an innovative public private partnership
17 that has been successful building a qualified workforce to fill
18 Washington's high-demand STEM, health care, and trade industries. The
19 Washington state opportunity scholarship has successfully created
20 opportunities for communities historically left out of higher
21 education and STEM, including women, students of color, and first-

1 generation college students. In addition, the Washington state
2 opportunity scholarship has been shown to change communities by
3 breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty.

4 The legislature also finds that higher education is a key driver
5 of individual growth and prosperity, and is an effective way to
6 bridge societal inequities that disproportionately afflict low-income
7 communities and communities of color. The legislature further finds
8 that these gaps will be further widened in the current global
9 pandemic, which will exacerbate long-term impacts on these
10 communities in intergenerational poverty, job attainment, job
11 stability, and wage growth.

12 Therefore, it is the intent of the legislature to amend the
13 existing Washington state opportunity scholarship program to
14 eliminate false barriers for students eligible for the scholarship
15 and provide additional educational opportunities for Washington's
16 citizens. This legislative intent is particularly urgent during the
17 global pandemic where additional skills and opportunities will be
18 vital for Washington citizens as the state moves toward recovery from
19 the current global pandemic.

20 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28B.145.010 and 2019 c 406 s 63 are each amended to
21 read as follows:

22 The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter
23 unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

24 (1) "Board" means the opportunity scholarship board.

25 (2) "Council" means the student achievement council.

26 (3) "Eligible advanced degree program" means a health
27 professional degree program beyond the baccalaureate level and
28 includes graduate and professional degree programs.

29 (4) "Eligible county" has the same meaning as "rural county" as
30 defined in RCW 82.14.370 and also includes any county that shares a
31 common border with Canada and has a population of over one hundred
32 twenty-five thousand.

33 (5) "Eligible education programs" means high employer demand and
34 other programs of study as determined by the board.

35 (6) "Eligible expenses" means reasonable expenses associated with
36 the costs of acquiring an education such as tuition, books,
37 equipment, fees, room and board, and other expenses as determined by
38 the program administrator in consultation with the council and the
39 state board for community and technical colleges.

1 (7) "Eligible school district" means a school district of the
2 second class as identified in RCW 28A.300.065(2).

3 (8) "Eligible student" means a resident student who (~~received~~
4 ~~his or her high school diploma or high school equivalency certificate~~
5 ~~as provided in RCW 28B.50.536 in Washington and who~~)):

6 (a) (i) (~~Has~~) Received his or her high school diploma or high
7 school equivalency certificate as provided in RCW 28B.50.536 in
8 Washington and has been accepted at a four-year institution of higher
9 education into an eligible education program leading to a
10 baccalaureate degree;

11 (ii) (~~Will~~) Received his or her high school diploma or high
12 school equivalency certificate as provided in RCW 28B.50.536 in
13 Washington and will attend a two-year institution of higher education
14 and intends to transfer to an eligible education program at a four-
15 year institution of higher education;

16 (iii) (~~Has~~) Received his or her high school diploma or
17 equivalent and has been accepted at an institution of higher
18 education into a professional-technical certificate or degree program
19 in an eligible education program; or

20 (iv) (~~Has been accepted at an institution of higher education~~
21 ~~into a professional-technical certificate program in an eligible~~
22 ~~education program; or~~

23 ~~(v))~~ Has been accepted at an institution of higher education
24 into an eligible advanced degree program that leads to credentials in
25 health professions;

26 (b) Declares an intention to obtain a professional-technical
27 certificate, professional-technical degree, baccalaureate degree, or
28 an advanced degree; and

29 (c) Has a family income at or below one hundred twenty-five
30 percent of the state median family income at the time the student
31 applies for an opportunity scholarship.

32 (9) "Gift aid" means financial aid received from the federal Pell
33 grant, the Washington college grant program in chapter 28B.92 RCW,
34 the college bound scholarship program in chapter 28B.118 RCW, the
35 opportunity grant program in chapter 28B.50 RCW, or any other state
36 grant, scholarship, or worker retraining program that provides funds
37 for educational purposes with no obligation of repayment. "Gift aid"
38 does not include student loans, work-study programs, the basic food
39 employment and training program administered by the department of
40 social and health services, or other employment assistance programs

1 that provide job readiness opportunities and support beyond the costs
2 of tuition, books, and fees.

3 (10) "High employer demand program of study" has the same meaning
4 as provided in RCW 28B.50.030.

5 (11) "Participant" means an eligible student who has received a
6 scholarship under the opportunity scholarship program.

7 (12) "Private sources," "private funds," "private contributions,"
8 or "private sector contributions" means donations from private
9 organizations, corporations, federally recognized Indian tribes,
10 municipalities, counties, and other sources, but excludes state
11 dollars.

12 (13) "Professional-technical certificate" means a program as
13 approved by the state board for community and technical colleges
14 under RCW 28B.50.090(7)(c), that is offered by an institution of
15 higher education.

16 (14) "Professional-technical degree" means a program as approved
17 by the state board for community and technical colleges under RCW
18 28B.50.090(7)(c), that is offered by an institution of higher
19 education.

20 (15) "Program administrator" means a private nonprofit
21 corporation registered under Title 24 RCW and qualified as a tax-
22 exempt entity under section 501(c)(3) of the federal internal revenue
23 code.

24 (16) "Resident student" has the same meaning as provided in RCW
25 28B.15.012.

26 (17) "Rural jobs program" means the rural county high employer
27 demand jobs program created in this chapter.

28 **Sec. 3.** RCW 28B.145.100 and 2018 c 254 s 4 are each amended to
29 read as follows:

30 (1)(a) The rural county high employer demand jobs program is
31 created to meet the workforce needs of business and industry in rural
32 counties by assisting students in earning certificates, associate
33 degrees, or other industry-recognized credentials necessary for
34 employment in high employer demand fields.

35 (b) Subject to the requirements of this section, the rural jobs
36 program provides selected students scholarship funds and support
37 services, as determined by the board, to help students meet their
38 eligible expenses when they enroll in a community or technical
39 college program that prepares them for high employer demand fields.

1 (c) The source of funds for the rural jobs program shall be a
2 combination of private donations, grants, and contributions and state
3 matching funds.

4 (2) The program administrator has the duties and responsibilities
5 provided under this section, including but not limited to:

6 (a) (~~Publicizing~~) Publicize the rural jobs program and
7 conducting outreach to eligible counties;

8 (b) In consultation with the state board for community and
9 technical colleges, any interested community or technical college
10 located in an eligible county, and the county's workforce development
11 council, identify high employer demand fields within the eligible
12 counties. When identifying high employer demand fields, the board
13 must consider:

14 (i) County-specific employer demand reports issued by the
15 employment security department or the list of statewide high-demand
16 programs for secondary career and technical education established
17 under RCW 28A.700.020; and

18 (ii) The ability and capacity of the community and technical
19 college to meet the needs of qualifying students and industry in the
20 eligible county;

21 (c) Develop and implement an application, selection, and
22 notification process for awarding rural jobs program scholarship
23 funds. In making determinations on scholarship recipients, the board
24 shall use county-specific employer high-demand data;

25 (d) Determine the annual scholarship fund amounts to be awarded
26 to selected students;

27 (e) Distribute funds to selected students;

28 (f) Notify institutions of higher education of the rural jobs
29 program recipients who will attend their institutions of higher
30 education and inform them of the scholarship fund amounts and terms
31 of the awards; and

32 (g) Establish and manage an account as provided under RCW
33 28B.145.110 to receive donations, grants, contributions from private
34 sources, and state matching funds, and from which to disburse
35 scholarship funds to selected students.

36 (3) To be eligible for scholarship funds under the rural jobs
37 program, a student must:

38 (a) Either:

1 (i) Be a resident of an eligible county and be enrolled in a
2 community or technical college established under chapter 28B.50 RCW;
3 or ~~((have))~~

4 (ii) Have attended and graduated from a school in an eligible
5 school district and be enrolled in a community or technical college
6 established under chapter 28B.50 RCW that is located in an eligible
7 county;

8 (b) Be a resident student as defined in RCW 28B.15.012;

9 ~~((Be enrolled in a community or technical college established~~
10 ~~under chapter 28B.50 RCW located in an eligible county;~~

11 ~~((d))~~ Be in a certificate, degree, or other industry-recognized
12 credential or training program that has been identified by the board
13 as a program that prepares students for a high employer demand field;

14 ~~((e))~~ (d) Have a family income that does not exceed seventy
15 percent of the state median family income adjusted for family size;
16 and

17 ~~((f))~~ (e) Demonstrate financial need according to the free
18 application for federal student aid or the Washington application for
19 state financial aid.

20 (4) To remain eligible for scholarship funds under the rural jobs
21 program, the student must maintain a cumulative grade point average
22 of 2.0.

23 (5) A scholarship award under the rural jobs program may not
24 result in a reduction of any gift aid. Nothing in this section
25 creates any right or entitlement.

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