
Postsecondary Education & Workforce Committee

HB 1399

Brief Description: Establishing a Native American scholarship program.

Sponsors: Representatives Lekanoff, Slatter, Taylor, Simmons, Berry, Ramel, Fosse, Macri, Pollet, Reed, Doglio, Davis and Santos.

<p>Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishes the Native American Scholarship Program.
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Hearing Date: 1/27/23

Staff: Elizabeth Allison (786-7129).

Background:

Office of Student Financial Assistance.

The Office of Student Financial Assistance (Office) is created within the Washington Student Achievement Council. The Office administers state and federal financial aid and other education services programs.

Financial Aid Applications.

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is a federal financial aid application used to determine a student's eligibility for federal financial aid.

The Washington Application for State Financial Aid (WASFA) is used by students who do not fill out a FAFSA, which includes undocumented students or those who do not qualify due to immigration status. The WASFA is used to qualify such students for state financial aid.

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.

Summary of Bill:

Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the Native American Scholarship Program (Program) is established and must be administered by the Office of Student Financial Assistance (Office). The Office must publicize the Program, award scholarships to eligible students, and adopt any necessary rules and guidelines for the Program in consultation with the tribes, institutions of higher education, and registered apprenticeship programs.

To be eligible, a student must:

- be a member of a federally recognized Indian tribe located within the United States;
- file a financial aid application; and
- enroll in an undergraduate degree program at an institution of higher education or registered apprenticeship program.

The Office must determine scholarship awarding priorities and award amounts for eligible students in consultation with the tribes, institutions of higher education, and registered apprenticeship programs. Funding must be prioritized at a level equivalent to in-state tuition and fee rates for eligible students. Eligible students who have in-state tuition and fees covered by other gift aid may receive an award to help cover the cost of attendance expenses, such as room and board, books and supplies, transportation, and other living expenses.

For registered apprenticeship programs, the Office must prioritize funding to cover any tuition costs for related supplemental instruction. Additional funding may be used to provide a scholarship to cover required supplies, tools, materials, work clothing, and living expenses.

Students may receive the scholarship for a maximum of 125 percent of their time to degree or five years, whichever occurs first. Eligible students must maintain satisfactory academic progress to remain eligible.

The Native American Scholarship Account (Account) is created in the custody of the state treasurer. All receipts for the Program must be deposited in the Account, and expenditures from the Account must be used only for the Program. Only the Director of the Office may authorize expenditures from the Account.

Beginning with the 2023-24 academic year, institutions of higher education must add a place for students to indicate that they are a member of a federally recognized Indian tribe on their applications.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 23, 2023.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.