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**SENATE BILL 5115**

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**State of Washington 69th Legislature 2025 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Valdez, Trudeau, Hasegawa, Krishnadasan, Nobles, Saldaña, and C. Wilson

AN ACT Relating to creating the Washington dream act service incentive program; adding a new chapter to Title 28B RCW; and creating a new section.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Eligible student" means a student who meets the necessary program requirements under section 3 of this act.

(2) "Institution of higher education" has the same meaning as in RCW 28B.92.030.

(3) "Office" means the office of student financial assistance created in RCW 28B.76.090.

(4) "Approved institution or organization" means an institution of higher education, nonprofit organization, for-profit business entity, or a governmental entity approved for participation in the Washington dream act service incentive grant program by the office under section 4 of this act.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The Washington dream act service incentive grant program is established in accordance with this act for the purpose of awarding grants to eligible students for community or volunteer service. The office shall develop and administer the service incentive grant program and may create and enter into agreements with employers and institutions of higher education to implement this chapter.

(2) Beginning in the 2025-26 academic year, the office shall disperse grant awards to approved institutions for the awarding of grants to eligible students for the completion of hours of service for an approved institution or organization.

(3)(a) Grant awards shall be based on an eligible student's financial need as determined by the office through the Washington application for state financial aid. Student eligibility for the grant program shall be determined by the office of student financial aid of the institution of higher education in which the student is enrolled or in which they have indicated that they will attend.

(b)(i) In calculating the awarding of grants and final grant award amounts, the institution of higher education must take into consideration other grants or financial aid that an eligible student has been awarded.

(ii) Once a student is identified as eligible and an award is calculated, the institution of higher education shall submit anticipated awards and payment requests to the office using a process established by the office.

(iii) Grant awards per term shall be calculated by multiplying the number of hours of service to be performed per week by the number of weeks in the academic term by the adjusted minimum wage rate calculated by the department of labor and industries under RCW 49.46.020(2)(b), with consideration of other awarded financial aid under (b)(i) of this subsection.

(c) Grant awards shall be disbursed by the institution of higher education at the beginning of the academic term.

(4) The community or volunteer service performed by the participating student:

(a) May not exceed 19 hours per week; and

(b) May not be advocacy of a political or religious nature.

(5)(a) The office shall establish a standardized method of verification of completed service for participating students. Upon verification of performed service by the institution of higher education, the office of student financial aid of the institution of higher education shall approve the grant for the subsequent academic term unless the student is otherwise no longer eligible to participate in the program.

(b) If a participating student does not provide the documentation required under (a) of this subsection, the institution of higher education shall lease the estimated award in a nondisbursing status.

(6) Preference for participation in the program must be given to eligible students who are not eligible for participation in the state work-study program under chapter 28B.12 RCW.

(7) A grant awarded under the program shall not offset or replace any other source of grant aid including, but not limited to, institutional aid and scholarships.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) In order to be eligible to participate in the Washington dream act service incentive grant program, a student must meet the following requirements:

(a) The student must be a resident student as defined in RCW 28B.96.010;

(b) The student has completed the Washington application for state financial aid;

(c) The student has indicated that they will attend an institution of higher education or is enrolled for at least six quarter credits or the equivalent semester credits and is making satisfactory progress in a program, as defined in rule by the office, at an institution of higher education;

(d) The student has demonstrated financial need as defined in RCW 28B.92.030; and

(e) The student must not qualify for federally funded student financial aid because of their immigration status.

(2) Determination of a student's eligibility for the Washington dream act service incentive grant program under this chapter shall be made by the office of student financial aid of the institution of higher education in which the student is enrolled or in which they have indicated that they will attend.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) In order for community or volunteer service performed by a participating student to be eligible for this program, the organization or institution must:

(a) Register with the office; and

(b) Be one of the following:

(i) A federal, state, or local governmental entity;

(ii) An institution of higher education located in the state of Washington;

(iii) An organization exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the federal internal revenue code;

(iv) A private sector for-profit business entity producing a good or providing a service for sale or resale to others, which can and agrees to provide hours of service for eligible students of a demonstratable benefit related to the student's postsecondary educational pursuits and which conducts business within the state of Washington; or

(v) Any other entity approved by the office.

(2) The following types of institutions, organizations, or entities are not eligible to participate:

(a) Any institution, organization, or entity directing students to perform service in positions that directly involve religious worship, exercise, or instruction;

(b) Any institution, organization, or entity directing students to perform service in positions that directly involve political activity, including partisan and nonpartisan political activity;

(c) Any institution, organization, or entity which does not comply with appropriate federal, state, and civil rights laws; and

(d) Any institution, organization, or entity in which a participating student is an owner, part owner, board member, or executive.

(3) An approved institution, organization, or entity must report the service hours of the participating students according to the process established by the office.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The office may adopt rules necessary for the effective and efficient implementation of this act.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Sections 1 through 5 of this act constitute a new chapter in Title 28B RCW.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  If specific funding for the purposes of this act, referencing this act by bill or chapter number, is not provided by June 30, 2025, in the omnibus appropriations act, this act is null and void.

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