

**RCW 28B.145.010 Definitions.** The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

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

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

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

(4) "Eligible county" has the same meaning as "rural county" as defined in RCW 82.14.370 and also includes any county that shares a common border with Canada and has a population of over 125,000.

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

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

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

(8) (a) "Eligible student" means a resident student who:

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

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

(C) Received his or her high school diploma or equivalent and has been accepted at an institution of higher education into a professional-technical certificate or degree program in an eligible education program; or

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

(ii) Declares an intention to obtain a professional-technical certificate, professional-technical degree, baccalaureate degree, or an advanced degree; and

(iii) Has a family income at or below 125 percent of the state median family income at the time the student applies for an opportunity scholarship. For the advanced degree program, family income may be greater than 125 percent if the eligible student can demonstrate financial need through other factors such as a history of prior household income, income loss caused by entering the advanced degree program, level of student debt at application and annually thereafter, or other factors determined by the program.

(b) To remain eligible for scholarship funds under the opportunity scholarship program the student must meet satisfactory academic progress toward completion of an eligible program as determined by the office of student financial assistance in the Washington college grant program under chapter 28B.92 RCW.

(9) "Gift aid" means financial aid received from the federal Pell grant, the Washington college grant program in chapter 28B.92 RCW, the college bound scholarship program in chapter 28B.118 RCW, the opportunity grant program in chapter 28B.50 RCW, or any other state

grant, scholarship, or worker retraining program that provides funds for educational purposes with no obligation of repayment. "Gift aid" does not include student loans, work-study programs, the basic food employment and training program administered by the department of social and health services, or other employment assistance programs that provide job readiness opportunities and support beyond the costs of tuition, books, and fees.

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

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

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

(13) "Professional-technical certificate" means a program as approved by the state board for community and technical colleges under RCW 28B.50.090(7)(c), that is offered by an institution of higher education or an eligible registered apprenticeship program under chapter 28B.92 RCW.

(14) "Professional-technical degree" means a program as approved by the state board for community and technical colleges under RCW 28B.50.090(7)(c), that is offered by an institution of higher education or an eligible registered apprenticeship program under chapter 28B.92 RCW.

(15) "Program administrator" means one or more private nonprofit corporations registered under Title 24 RCW and qualified as a tax-exempt entity under section 501(c)(3) of the federal internal revenue code.

(16) "Resident student" means a student meeting the requirements under RCW 28B.92.200(5)(c) as defined in the Washington college grant program.

(17) "Rural jobs program" means the rural county high employer demand jobs program created in this chapter. [2023 c 176 s 1; 2022 c 211 s 1; 2021 c 133 s 2; 2019 c 406 s 63. Prior: 2018 c 254 s 9; 2018 c 209 s 6; 2018 c 114 s 2; 2014 c 208 s 1; 2013 c 39 s 13; 2011 1st sp.s. c 13 s 2.]

**Effective date—2023 c 176:** "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [April 25, 2023]." [2023 c 176 s 7.]

**Findings—Intent—2021 c 133:** "The legislature finds that higher education is pivotal in delivering training to Washington citizens at all stages of their careers and ages. A skilled workforce increases productivity, boosts outputs, and propels growth in Washington's economy. The legislature further finds that a well-trained, highly skilled workforce provides Washington citizens with greater opportunities and skill sets to efficiently and confidently meet the changing demands of a transforming economy. Furthermore, a STEM-based education provides Washington's citizens with real-world applications to develop a variety of skill sets needed in today's global economy.

The legislature further finds that the Washington state opportunity scholarship is an innovative public-private partnership

that has been successful building a qualified workforce to fill Washington's high-demand STEM, health care, and trade industries. The Washington state opportunity scholarship has successfully created opportunities for communities historically left out of higher education and STEM, including women, students of color, and first-generation college students. In addition, the Washington state opportunity scholarship has been shown to change communities by breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty.

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

Therefore, it is the intent of the legislature to amend the existing Washington state opportunity scholarship program to eliminate false barriers for students eligible for the scholarship and provide additional educational opportunities for Washington's citizens. This legislative intent is particularly urgent during the global pandemic where additional skills and opportunities will be vital for Washington citizens as the state moves toward recovery from the current global pandemic." [2021 c 133 s 1.]

**Findings—Intent—2019 c 406:** See note following RCW 43.79.195.

**Findings—Short title—2019 c 406:** See notes following RCW 28B.92.200.

**Findings—2019 c 406:** See note following RCW 28B.94.020.

**Findings—Intent—2019 c 406:** See note following RCW 28C.30.050.

**Findings—Intent—2019 c 406:** See note following RCW 43.216.135.

**Findings—Intent—2018 c 254:** See note following RCW 28B.145.100.