

**2SHB 1559 - S AMD 455**  
By Senator Randall

**PULLED 04/19/2023**

1 Strike everything after the enacting clause and insert the  
2 following:

3 "NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** In 2022, students at 39 colleges and  
4 universities across Washington state participated in a survey about  
5 basic needs insecurities, including access to food, housing, child  
6 care, and more. The survey found that nearly half of all students in  
7 all regions of the state experienced some type of basic needs  
8 insecurity. One in every three students experienced either food  
9 insecurity or housing insecurity. One in every 10 students had also  
10 experienced homelessness in the previous 12 months. Some students  
11 experienced these insecurities at higher rates than others, and  
12 former foster youth had the highest rates of basic needs insecurities  
13 with 75 percent experiencing either food or housing insecurity.  
14 Addressing basic needs challenges for students contributes to their  
15 ability to remain enrolled and pursue their educational goals as  
16 evidenced by data from the two student support programs the  
17 legislature previously enacted, the student emergency assistance  
18 grant program and the supporting students experiencing homelessness  
19 pilot program. When students received this assistance, an average of  
20 88 percent of them were able to persist in their programs.

21 Therefore, the legislature intends to continue to support  
22 students and help students meet their basic needs by increasing  
23 access to resources and support services.

24 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.10  
25 RCW to read as follows:

26 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this  
27 specific purpose, each institution of higher education, the  
28 university campuses created under chapter 28B.45 RCW, and the tribal  
29 college must have a minimum of one benefits navigator employed at a  
30 minimum .75 full-time equivalent rate, not to be divided between two  
31 or more staff, to assist students in accessing public benefits,

1 existing emergency assistance programs such as those funded by RCW  
2 28B.50.295, and other community resources. Each benefits navigator  
3 must be stationed at a single location on campus where students are  
4 directed to receive assistance. The institutions of higher education  
5 and the tribal college, in coordination with the respective benefits  
6 navigators, must each develop a hunger-free and basic needs campus  
7 strategic plan by April 1, 2024. Each strategic plan must:

8 (a) Identify campus food pantry policies that, in practice,  
9 create barriers to access and reduce or remove those barriers in the  
10 implementation of this subsection;

11 (b) Review and update methods to identify likely low-income and  
12 food-insecure students and conduct communications and outreach  
13 methods by the institution to promote opportunities for benefits  
14 assistance (such as basic food enrollment, working connections child  
15 care enrollment, referrals to the special supplemental nutrition  
16 program for women, infants, and children, affordable housing  
17 assistance) and emergency financial resources;

18 (c) Assess the needs and advantages of the benefits navigators;

19 (d) Identify opportunities for the institution and partnerships  
20 with community-based organizations to holistically support students'  
21 basic needs, access to benefits and community resources;

22 (e) Facilitate discussions and generate recommendations amongst  
23 community stakeholders on the basic needs of the institution's  
24 geographic postsecondary student population; and

25 (f) Assess the distribution of state funds for basic needs  
26 support provided to institutions of higher education and the tribal  
27 college.

28 (2) By the beginning of the 2024-25 academic year, the Washington  
29 student achievement council must collect and disseminate results of a  
30 student survey developed by the student achievement council, in  
31 collaboration with the state board for community and technical  
32 colleges and an organization representing the presidents of the  
33 public four-year institutions of higher education, to assess food  
34 security, housing security, and access to basic economic supports.  
35 Results from the survey may be used by the institutions of higher  
36 education and the tribal college. Existing survey tools may be used  
37 for this purpose.

38 (3) Public four-year institutions of higher education and their  
39 respective university campuses shall coordinate with an organization  
40 representing the presidents of the public four-year institutions to

1 submit a report that must include outcomes from implementation of  
2 benefits navigators and findings and activities from their respective  
3 hunger-free and basic needs campus strategic plans. The community and  
4 technical colleges shall coordinate with the state board for  
5 community and technical colleges to submit a report that must include  
6 outcomes from implementation of benefits navigators and findings and  
7 activities from their respective hunger-free and basic needs campus  
8 strategic plans. The organizations representing the presidents of the  
9 public four-year institutions and the state board for community and  
10 technical colleges must submit the reports by December 1, 2025, and  
11 every other year thereafter, to the appropriate committees of the  
12 legislature in accordance with RCW 43.01.036.

13 (4) The tribal college shall submit a report that must include  
14 the findings and activities from implementation of the benefits  
15 navigator and findings and activities from the hunger-free and basic  
16 needs campus strategic plan. The tribal college must submit the  
17 report by December 1, 2025, and every other year thereafter, to the  
18 appropriate committees of the legislature in accordance with RCW  
19 43.01.036.

20 (5) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this  
21 section unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

22 (a) "Benefits navigator" means an individual who is employed by  
23 an institution of higher education for the purpose of helping  
24 students seek, apply for, and receive assistance from benefits  
25 programs, emergency resources, and community resources.

26 (b) "Institutions of higher education" has the same meaning as in  
27 RCW 28B.10.016.

28 (c) "Student basic needs" means food, water, shelter, clothing,  
29 physical health, mental health, child care, or similar needs that  
30 students enrolled at an institution of higher education or tribal  
31 college may face difficulty with and that hinders their ability to  
32 begin or continue their enrollment.

33 (d) "Tribal colleges" means institutions of higher education  
34 operated by an Indian tribe as defined in RCW 43.376.010.

35 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) Subject to the availability of amounts  
36 appropriated for this specific purpose, a pilot program to provide  
37 free and low-cost meal plans or food vouchers to eligible low-income  
38 students is established at:

1 (a) Four college districts, two on each side of the crest of the  
2 Cascade mountains, selected by the state board for community and  
3 technical colleges; and

4 (b) Two public four-year institutions of higher education, one on  
5 each side of the crest of the Cascade mountains, selected by an  
6 organization representing the presidents of public four-year  
7 institutions.

8 (2) The pilot program expires July 1, 2026.

9 (3) This section expires January 1, 2027.

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** If specific funding for the purposes of  
11 this act, referencing this act by bill or chapter number, is not  
12 provided by June 30, 2023, in the omnibus appropriations act, this  
13 act is null and void."

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14 On page 1, line 2 of the title, after "act;" strike the remainder  
15 of the title and insert "adding a new section to chapter 28B.10 RCW;  
16 creating new sections; and providing an expiration date."

EFFECT: (1) Eliminates the establishment of basic needs task forces at the public four-year institutions, university campuses, and state board.

(2) Specifies that each benefits navigator must be at least .075 FTE and requires that position be filled by a single individual.

(3) Requires basic needs strategic plans at each institution and specifies activities that the institutions of higher education and the tribal college, in coordination with benefits navigators, may engage in.

(4) Requires the public four-year institutions and the university campuses to collaborate on a report to the legislature regarding outcomes from the implementation of benefits navigators and activities from basic needs strategic plans. Requires the college board to submit a report to the legislature on the outcomes from benefits navigators and activities from basic needs strategic plans on behalf of the CTCs.

(5) Eliminates the requirement that benefits hubs be established.

(6) Directs WSAC to administer and disseminate results from a basic needs survey.

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