
Higher Education Committee

HB 1731

Brief Description: Changing provisions in the educational opportunity grant program.

Sponsors: Representatives Kenney, Cox and Chase; by request of Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Permits the Educational Opportunity Grant (EOG) to be used at a branch campus or by students from any county.
- Changes award amounts from a maximum of \$2,500 to a minimum of \$2,500.
- Makes additional changes to update EOG statutes.

Hearing Date: 2/18/03

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

History: The Legislature established the EOG in 1990 as one of three strategies designed to address the need for greater access to upper division baccalaureate education. The other strategies included lifting enrollment lids at the four-year institutions and creating branch campuses of the University of Washington and Washington State University to serve students living in the state's urban areas.

The EOG was created as a demonstration project to provide an option other than attendance at a branch campus for "placebound" students. It was based on the assumption that the size and cost of branch campuses might be reduced if students could be encouraged through a grant to attend another institution with enrollment capacity. The EOG was also intended to allay the concerns of independent colleges and universities that branch campuses would reduce their enrollments.

Eligibility: As with most financial aid programs, EOG recipients must demonstrate financial need. They must also meet several other criteria:

Have received an Associate of Arts degree or its equivalent.

Intend to complete a baccalaureate degree.

Be a placebound student (unable to relocate to complete a college program because of family or employment commitments, health concerns, monetary inability, or similar factors).

Reside in one of 13 counties served by a branch campus.

Attend a Washington public or private college or university, other than a branch campus, that has enrollment capacity within existing programs and facilities.

The EOG award is capped in statute at \$2,500 per year. The Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) administers the EOG program.

HECB Review: In 2000, the HECB completed a review of the EOG program. Several changes were recommended to the program statutes to reflect the current educational climate. For example, the HECB recommended removing the association between the EOG and branch campuses by permitting a placebound student living anywhere in the state to qualify for an award and be able to use it at any accredited institution, including a branch campus.

Summary of Bill:

Various changes are made to the EOG program statutes that affect student eligibility for the grant, where the grant may be used, and other issues.

Student Eligibility: Eligible students may live in any county in Washington, rather than only a county served by a branch campus. The same residency standards used for the State Need Grant apply to the EOG. In addition to completing an Associate of Arts degree, students may have completed an Associate of Science degree to be eligible for an award.

Use of Grant: EOG awards may be used at any accredited higher education institution approved for participation by the HECB, including branch campuses and in-state programs affiliated with higher education institutions accredited in other states. The restriction that grants are for attendance at institutions with unused enrollment capacity is removed.

Other Issues. Instead of being capped at \$2,500 per year, the amount of the EOG award is set by the HECB with a minimum of \$2,500. The EOG is no longer considered a demonstration project.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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