

FINAL BILL REPORT

2SSB 6274

C 232 L 18
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Helping former foster youth and youth experiencing homelessness access and complete college and registered apprenticeships.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Ranker, Palumbo, Keiser, Wellman, Darneille, Lias, Kuderer, Hasegawa, Hunt and Saldaña).

Senate Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development
Senate Committee on Ways & Means
House Committee on Higher Education
House Committee on Appropriations

Background: Passport to College Promise. In 2007, the Legislature established a scholarship called the Passport to College Promise for students who have emancipated from the state foster care system after having spent at least one year in care after their 16th birthday. To qualify for the scholarship, a student must:

- be a Washington resident;
- be enrolled at least halftime in an institution of higher education by the age of 21;
- be making satisfactory academic progress towards a degree or certificate program;
- not have earned a bachelor's or professional degree; and
- not pursue a degree in theology.

The scholarship cannot exceed undergraduate resident tuition and fees at the highest priced public institution in the state and may not exceed the student's financial need when combined with other public and private grants, scholarships, and waiver assistance. An eligible student may receive the scholarship for a maximum of five years after the student first enrolls, or until age 26, whichever occurs first.

The Washington Student Achievement Council (Council) administers the Passport to College Promise scholarship program. In the 2016-17 academic year, the Council awarded 335 scholarships.

The Passport to College Promise scholarship is set expire on June 30, 2022.

Summary: Passport to Careers. The Passport to Careers program is established. Passport to Careers has two programmatic pathways; the Passport to College Promise scholarship program and the Passport to Apprenticeship Opportunities program. The Passport to Careers

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program must provide financial support and financial assistance to former foster and unaccompanied homeless youth in pursuing postsecondary options in higher education or a registered apprenticeship. Passport to careers must assist with the costs of a public undergraduate college education or with meeting registered apprenticeship program minimum qualifications and occupational-specific costs. Supportive services must help them apply, register for, and complete a registered apprenticeship. Homeless is defined as without a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence as set forth in the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Unaccompanied means a youth or young adult experiencing homelessness while not in the custody of a parent or guardian. The total amount awarded for any combination of participation in Passport to Careers' two programs must not be more than the amount to attend the public university with the highest annual tuition and state-mandated fees in this state for five years. The student may utilize the Passport to College Promise program or the Passport to Apprenticeship Opportunities at different times, but not concurrently.

Eligibility for Passport to Careers Programs. Students may be eligible for supplemental scholarship and student assistance if they:

1. were in state, tribal or federal foster care prior to age 21 and subsequent to the following:
 - a. age 15 as of July 1, 2018;
 - b. age 14 as of July 1, 2019; and
 - c. age 13 as of July 2020.
2. are a resident student, with additional verification process by the Council if unable to establish residency because of placement in out-of-state foster care or homelessness;
3. are enrolled at least half-time with an institution of higher education or with a registered apprenticeship or recognized pre-apprenticeship;
4. are making satisfactory academic progress toward completion of a degree, certificate program, or registered apprenticeship or recognized pre-apprenticeship;
5. have verified their homelessness status with the Council; and
6. have not earned a bachelor's or professional degree.

Beginning July 1, 2019, unaccompanied homeless youth are eligible for Passport to Careers if they are under the age of 21 and have verified their unaccompanied homelessness status with the Council on or after July 1 of the prior academic year.

Passport to Apprenticeship Opportunities. The Passport to Apprenticeship Opportunities program must be administered by the Council. Applicants are eligible for:

- financial support that does not exceed financial need defined by the Council and involved entities; and
- a maximum of six years of financial support after first enrolling with a registered apprenticeship, or until the applicant turns 26, whichever some first.

Passport to College Promise Eligibility Expansion. The Passport to College Promise is expanded to include youth who have experienced homelessness and individuals who have spent a day or more in state, federal, or tribal foster care. The expiration date of the Passport to College Promise program is repealed.

Agency Outreach and Collaboration in Passport to Careers. The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS); the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF); the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI); and the Department of Commerce's Office of Homeless Youth (OHY) must devise and implement ways to identify students and applicants who may eligible. Information must be shared among the other agencies and entities involved.

The Council must work with OSPI, DCYF, OHY, and DSHS to contract with a nongovernmental entity to develop, implement, and administer a program of supplemental education transition planning for youth in foster care and youth experiencing homelessness. The supplemental transition planning must include establishing post-secondary plan initiation in coordination with the Passports to Careers program.

The Council must also develop and maintain a website and outreach program to serve as a portal for Passport to Careers eligible youth. In addition to information that is currently available, the outreach and website must include how and when to apply for a registered apprenticeship, or pre-apprenticeship, and detailed sources of financial assistance available to homeless youth.

The Council, with approval from the Employment Security Department and the Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council, must contract with at least one nongovernmental entity to provide quality training, employment navigation, and supportive services to disadvantaged populations seeking to complete apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships through the Passport to Apprenticeship Opportunities program. The nongovernmental entity must disburse funds to eligible applicants to meet registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship entrance requirements and occupational-specific costs.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	35	12	
House	55	43	(House amended)
Senate	34	15	(Senate concurred)

Effective: June 7, 2018