
HOUSE BILL 1468

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2021 Regular Session

By Representatives Slatter, Ortiz-Self, Ryu, Leavitt, Simmons, Senn, J. Johnson, Berry, Valdez, Santos, Boehnke, Berg, Peterson, Goodman, Fey, Ormsby, Ramel, Pollet, Davis, Thai, Bronoske, Chopp, Hackney, and Riccelli

Read first time 02/02/21. Referred to Committee on College & Workforce Development.

1 AN ACT Relating to increasing student access to mental health
2 counseling and services at community and technical colleges; adding a
3 new section to chapter 28B.50 RCW; creating a new section; and
4 providing an expiration date.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that there continues
7 to be a lack of access to behavioral health counseling and services
8 for students on college campuses. The task force on community and
9 technical college counselors found that there is variance throughout
10 the community and technical college system in counseling models
11 adopted, access to counselors, and general mental health resources
12 available. The legislature intends to increase access to mental
13 health counseling and services for students by establishing a pilot
14 program to issue grants to community and technical colleges to
15 implement strategies identified by the community and technical
16 college counselors task force report.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.50
18 RCW to read as follows:

1 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this
2 specific purpose, the college board shall administer a pilot program
3 to increase student access to mental health counseling and services.

4 (2) The college board, in collaboration with the selection
5 committee, shall select eight community or technical colleges to
6 participate in the pilot program, with half of the participating
7 colleges located outside of the Puget Sound area. Each participating
8 college must receive a grant to implement one or more strategies to
9 increase student access to mental health counseling and services,
10 including substance abuse disorder counseling and services.

11 (3)(a) A selection committee consisting of the following shall
12 assist with the application selection process:

13 (i) One community or technical college president;

14 (ii) One community or technical college vice president for
15 student services or student instruction;

16 (iii) Two faculty counselors employed at a community or technical
17 college; and

18 (iv) One community or technical college student.

19 (b) The selection committee may consult with representatives of
20 an entity within the University of Washington school of social work
21 that has expertise in suicide prevention and the department of health
22 in developing selection criteria.

23 (4) Community and technical colleges wishing to participate in
24 the pilot program shall apply to the college board. Applicants that
25 demonstrate a partnership with external community providers must be
26 prioritized, including those who provide crisis services and
27 substance use disorder treatment and counseling. In addition,
28 applications that demonstrate plans to include one or more of the
29 following strategies recommended by the community and technical
30 college counselors task force must be prioritized:

31 (a) Improve equity, diversity, and inclusion in counseling
32 services, such as by diversifying the counselor workforce by adopting
33 equity-centered recruiting, training, and retention practices or by
34 providing equity training and awareness for all counselors;

35 (b) Meet mental health needs of students through an all-campus
36 effort;

37 (c) Engage students to help increase mental health and counseling
38 awareness and promote help-seeking behavior through student groups
39 and other methods;

40 (d) Increase the visibility of counseling services on campus;

1 (e) Increase or expand external partnerships with community
2 service providers;

3 (f) Adopt the use of telebehavioral health, especially in under
4 resourced communities;

5 (g) Develop an assessment of counseling services to inform
6 improvements and ensure counseling services are meeting student
7 needs; or

8 (h) Implement counseling approaches grounded in theory that have
9 evidence of being effective.

10 (5) Colleges selected to participate in the pilot program shall
11 submit a joint report to the appropriate committees of the
12 legislature and in accordance with RCW 43.01.036 by November 1, 2023.
13 The report must include:

14 (a) Information on which colleges were selected for the pilot
15 program, how much grant funding was received per college, and what
16 strategies each implemented to increase student access to mental
17 health counseling and services;

18 (b) Demographic data of students accessing mental health
19 counseling and services, including those students who are considered
20 underrepresented or traditionally have limited access to mental
21 health counseling and services;

22 (c) Whether the mental health counseling and services provided
23 are meeting the demand of students in terms of type and availability,
24 and whether mental health needs are served by a community partnership
25 versus on-campus services;

26 (d) Information and data on the effectiveness of each strategy
27 used to increase student access to mental health counseling and
28 services, including substance abuse disorder counseling and services,
29 such as the number of additional students served, reduced wait times
30 for counseling appointments, or other data that reflects expanded
31 access; and

32 (e) Lessons learned and recommendations for improving student
33 access to mental health counseling and services at community and
34 technical colleges, including whether there were any strategies
35 implemented that proved more effective than others in increasing
36 access.

37 (6) The pilot program expires July 1, 2025.

38 (7) This section expires January 1, 2026.

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