
Postsecondary Education & Workforce Committee

HB 1943

Brief Description: Modifying the Washington national guard postsecondary education grant program.

Sponsors: Representatives Leavitt, Jacobsen, Ryu, Rule, Christian, Couture, Bronoske, Slatter, Chambers, Reeves, Reed, Graham, Timmons, Orwall, Paul, Riccelli and Shavers.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Expands eligibility for the Washington National Guard Postsecondary Education Grant to the spouse or dependent of a Washington National Guard member.
- Extends eligibility for the Washington National Guard Postsecondary Education Grant from five years or 125 percent of the published length of the student's program to six years or 150 percent of the published length of the student's program.

Hearing Date: 1/10/24

Staff: Saranda Ross (786-7068).

Background:

The Washington National Guard Postsecondary Education Grant Program (Program), formerly the National Guard Conditional Scholarship Program, is administered by the Office of Student Financial Assistance (Office). The Office selects participants with the assistance of the Washington Military Department. To be eligible for the Program, an active drilling member of the Washington National Guard who is in good standing must:

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- attend an institution of higher education located in the state and accredited by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges or an institution in the state that provides approved training under the Montgomery GI Bill;
- be enrolled in courses or a program that lead to a postsecondary degree or certificate;
- submit an application for student aid approved by the Office;
- be a resident student; and
- meet any additional selection criteria adopted by the Office.

Participants receive grants to help pay for postsecondary education program costs for up to five years or 125% of the published length of the program, or the credit or clock-hour equivalent.

Participants incur an obligation to repay the grant, with interest, unless they serve in the Washington National Guard for one year for each year they received the grant. Grants may not result in a reduction of federal or other state financial aid and may not exceed:

- the cost of attendance when combined with all other public and private grants, scholarships, and waiver assistance;
- the maximum Washington College Grant, plus \$500 for books and supplies; or
- the annual cost of undergraduate tuition fees and services and activities fees at the University of Washington, plus an allowance for books and supplies.

Summary of Bill:

Eligible participants are expanded to the spouse or dependent of a Guard member. The Guard member must designate their spouse or dependent and agree to fulfill his or her service obligation. A dependent is defined as a person enrolled as a dependent in the Defense Enrolment Eligibility Reporting System. To be eligible for the Program, a designated spouse or dependent must:

- attend an institution of higher education located in the state and accredited by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges or an institution in the state that provides approved training under the Montgomery GI Bill;
- be enrolled in courses or a program that lead to a postsecondary degree or certificate;
- submit an application for student aid approved by the Office;
- be a resident student; and
- meet any additional selection criteria adopted by the Office.

Guard members incur an obligation to repay the grant, with interest, unless they serve in the Washington National Guard for one year for each year they or their spouse or dependent received the grant. Grant eligibility is extended to six years or 150% of the published length of the program in which the participant is enrolled or the credit or clock-hour equivalent. The Office must adopt rules for an appeals process for Guard members who do not render service necessary to satisfy his or her service obligation under the Program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 2, 2024.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.