
Postsecondary Education & Workforce Committee

HB 1568

Brief Description: Modifying financial aid eligibility.

Sponsors: Representatives Paul, Leavitt, Macri, Shavers, Cortes, Parshley, Timmons, Doglio, Pollet, Salahuddin, Reed and Nance.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Increases eligibility for the maximum Washington College Grant (WCG) award to include students with a family income up to 70 percent of the state median family income.
- Modifies WCG award amounts for students with a family income between 71 and 100 percent of the state median family income.
- Entitles students receiving maximum WCG award amounts and who are not recipients of the College Bound Scholarship to a Bridge Grant.

Hearing Date: 2/5/25

Staff: Elizabeth Allison (786-7129).

Background:

Washington College Grant.

The Washington College Grant (WCG) is the state's largest financial aid program and provides grants to low-income students to pursue postsecondary education. The WCG is an entitlement program administered by the Washington Student Achievement Council with guaranteed grants for students who qualify. An eligible student may receive a WCG for five years or up to 125 percent of the published length of the student's program. Part-time students receive prorated

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awards.

Funding under the WCG is allocated for students with family incomes up to 100 percent of the state median family income (MFI). Students with a family income up to 55 percent of the MFI are eligible for a maximum WCG award. Students with a family income over 55 percent of the MFI receive prorated award amounts indicated in the chart below. Changes in the state operating omnibus budget have increased the MFI percentage for a maximum award to include students with family incomes up to 65 percent of the MFI through fiscal year 2025.

Median Family Income	Percent of Award
0-55 percent	100 percent
56-60 percent	70 percent
61-65 percent	60 percent
66-70 percent	50 percent
71-75 percent	24.5 percent
76-100 percent	10 percent

Bridge Grants.

In the 2022 supplemental operating budget and the 2023-25 biennial budget state funding was provided for a Bridge Grant of \$500 for WCG recipients receiving the maximum award. A student is eligible for the Bridge Grant if the student receives the maximum WCG award and does not receive the College Bound Scholarship. The Bridge Grant is an annual stipend awarded in addition to the WCG to provide supplementary financial support to low-income students to cover higher education expenses beyond tuition and fees, such as books, lab fees, supplies, technology, transportation, housing, and childcare.

Summary of Bill:

Students with a family income at or below 70 percent of the MFI are eligible to receive the maximum WCG award. Other award amounts are modified as follows:

Median Family Income	Percent of Award
0-70 percent	100 percent
71-80 percent	50 percent
81-90 percent	25 percent
91-100 percent	10 percent

Beginning with the 2025-26 academic year, all WCG recipients who qualify for the maximum WCG award and who are not recipients of the College Bound Scholarship are entitled to a Bridge Grant of \$500. The student must be enrolled in an institution of higher education on at

least a half-time basis. Students enrolled for less than half-time must receive a prorated Bridge Grant.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 30, 2025.

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