
HOUSE BILL 1657

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By Representatives Bergquist, Barkis, Reed, Pollet, Doglio, and Simmons

Read first time 01/28/25. Referred to Committee on Postsecondary Education & Workforce.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing the Washington 13 free guarantee
2 to provide free access to technical college; amending RCW
3 28A.230.310, 28B.50.940, and 28A.230.212; adding a new section to
4 chapter 28A.230 RCW; adding a new chapter to Title 28B RCW; and
5 creating a new section.

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

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The definitions in this section apply
8 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires
9 otherwise.

10 (1) "Board" means the state board for community and technical
11 colleges.

12 (2) "Eligible degree or certificate program" means:

13 (a) Professional and technical programs that lead to a recognized
14 postsecondary credential; or

15 (b) Apprenticeship programs established pursuant to chapter 49.04
16 RCW and conducted in association with any community or technical
17 college.

18 (3) "Gift aid" means financial aid received from the federal Pell
19 grant, the state need grant program under chapter 28B.92 RCW, the
20 college bound scholarship program under chapter 28B.118 RCW, the
21 opportunity grant program under chapter 28B.50 RCW, the opportunity

1 scholarship program under chapter 28B.145 RCW, or any other state
2 grant or scholarship program that provides funds for educational
3 purposes with no obligation of repayment. "Gift aid" does not include
4 student loans and work-study programs.

5 (4) "Guarantee" means the Washington 13 free guarantee.

6 (5) "Office" means the office of student financial assistance.

7 (6) "Recipient" means an eligible student who has been awarded
8 the guarantee.

9 (7) "Resident student" means a student who is a resident student
10 as defined in RCW 28B.15.012.

11 (8) "Technical college" includes those public institutions of
12 higher education with the mission of conducting workforce education,
13 basic skills, literacy programs, and programs that meet specific
14 industry needs.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The Washington 13 free guarantee is
16 established to provide up to 45 credits of tuition-free technical
17 college for eligible students regardless of income beginning in the
18 2027-28 academic year. The office shall implement and administer the
19 guarantee and is authorized to establish rules necessary for
20 implementation of the guarantee.

21 (2) The value of the award is the difference between the
22 recipient's tuition fees as defined in RCW 28B.15.020 and services
23 and activities fees as defined in RCW 28B.15.041, less the value of
24 any state-funded grant, scholarship, gift aid, and waiver assistance
25 the recipient receives, for up to 45 credits to be earned within two
26 academic years.

27 (3) To be eligible for the guarantee, a resident student must:

28 (a) Have graduated high school from a public high school in the
29 state of Washington or earned a high school equivalency certificate,
30 as described in RCW 28B.50.536, in the same or immediately preceding
31 academic year in which the student enrolls in any technical college;

32 (b) Not have previously earned an associate's degree;

33 (c) Be enrolled at least part time in a technical college in an
34 eligible degree or certificate program; and

35 (d) Complete the free application for federal student aid or the
36 Washington application for state financial aid for the academic year
37 in which the student seeks eligibility for the guarantee.

38 (4) Qualifications for receipt and renewal of the guarantee
39 include maintaining satisfactory academic progress toward completion

1 of an eligible degree or certificate program as determined by the
2 office and established in rule.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** Beginning in the 2027-28 academic year,
4 each technical college must designate a staff member to provide
5 student support and coordinate wraparound services for recipients to
6 reduce or help to reduce barriers that threaten completion of
7 eligible degree or certificate programs. Support and wraparound
8 services under this section may be provided no longer than the
9 recipient receives benefits under the guarantee.

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** The office and the board may adopt, and
11 revise as necessary, rules to implement this chapter.

12 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.230
13 RCW to read as follows:

14 School districts are encouraged to facilitate one-on-one meetings
15 between counselors and students in the 12th grade whose income status
16 is at or below 70 percent of the state median family income for the
17 purposes of explaining their award options under the Washington
18 college grant created in RCW 28B.92.200 and the Washington 13 free
19 guarantee established under section 2 of this act. Income status may
20 be determined by the free application for federal student aid,
21 qualification to receive free or reduced-price lunch, eligibility for
22 the college bound scholarship program established in chapter 28B.118
23 RCW, or other criteria established in an institution's policy.

24 **Sec. 6.** RCW 28A.230.310 and 2023 c 271 s 7 are each amended to
25 read as follows:

26 (1)(a) Beginning with the 2020-21 school year, all school
27 districts with a high school must provide a financial aid advising
28 day, as defined in RCW 28A.300.815.

29 (b) Districts must provide both a financial aid advising day and
30 notification of financial aid opportunities at the beginning of each
31 school year to parents and guardians of any student entering the
32 twelfth grade. The notification must include information regarding:

33 (i) The eligibility requirements of the Washington college grant
34 and the Washington 13 free guarantee established under section 2 of
35 this act;

36 (ii) The requirements of the financial aid advising day;

1 (iii) The process for opting out of the financial aid advising
2 day; and

3 (iv) Any community-based resources available to assist parents
4 and guardians in understanding the requirements of and how to
5 complete the free application for federal student aid and the
6 Washington application for state financial aid.

7 (2) Districts may administer the financial aid advising day, as
8 defined in RCW 28A.300.815, in accordance with information-sharing
9 requirements set in the high school and beyond plan in RCW
10 28A.230.212 and 28A.230.215.

11 (3) The Washington state school directors' association, with
12 assistance from the office of the superintendent of public
13 instruction and the Washington student achievement council, shall
14 develop a model policy and procedure that school district board of
15 directors may adopt. The model policy and procedure must describe
16 minimum standards for a financial aid advising day as defined in RCW
17 28A.300.815.

18 (4) School districts are encouraged to engage in the Washington
19 student achievement council's financial aid advising training.

20 (5) The office of the superintendent of public instruction may
21 adopt rules for the implementation of this section.

22 **Sec. 7.** RCW 28B.50.940 and 2022 c 214 s 3 are each amended to
23 read as follows:

24 Subject to availability of amounts appropriated for this specific
25 purpose, the college board shall administer a free application for
26 federal student aid and Washington application for state financial
27 aid outreach and completion initiative pilot program.

28 (1) The college board shall select community or technical
29 colleges to participate in the pilot program. The colleges selected
30 to participate must each be located within educational service
31 districts that are in the bottom two for free application for federal
32 student aid completion rates when combining their respective school
33 districts' free application for federal student aid completion rates
34 over the past three completed academic years prior to June 9, 2022.
35 Colleges selected to participate shall employ outreach specialists to
36 work directly with the high schools located in the corresponding
37 educational service district. It is the legislature's intent that the
38 outreach specialists be employed at a ratio of one to 600 high school
39 seniors within the corresponding educational service district. The

1 outreach specialists shall make significant contact with high school
2 students and their families for the purpose of increasing free
3 application for federal student aid and Washington application for
4 state financial aid completion rates. The outreach specialists shall
5 use the free application for federal student aid and Washington
6 application for state financial aid data maintained by the student
7 achievement council to conduct targeted outreach and free application
8 for federal student aid and Washington application for state
9 financial aid completion assistance to high school seniors. The
10 outreach specialists shall also provide information on how to access
11 private scholarships and, for eligible seniors, award options under
12 the Washington 13 free guarantee. The outreach specialists shall
13 conduct other outreach as appropriate, including virtual or in-person
14 presentations with students and families, announcements on school
15 intercoms and social media channels, outreach to recent high school
16 graduates as peer messengers, and events at school college or career
17 fairs.

18 (2) The college board shall report annually to the appropriate
19 committees of the legislature in accordance with RCW 43.01.036
20 beginning December 1, 2023, on the free application for federal
21 student aid and Washington application for state financial aid
22 outreach and completion initiative pilot program. The report must
23 include details on how the colleges selected used the funding and how
24 the initiatives worked to increase free application for federal
25 student aid and Washington application for state financial aid
26 completion rates. The report must also include before and after free
27 application for federal student aid and Washington application for
28 state financial aid completion data and specific details about the
29 number of high school students assisted in completing the free
30 application for federal student aid and Washington application for
31 state financial aid.

32 **Sec. 8.** RCW 28A.230.212 and 2024 c 66 s 7 are each amended to
33 read as follows:

34 (1) Each student must have a high school and beyond plan to guide
35 the student's high school experience and inform course taking that is
36 aligned with the student's goals for education or training and career
37 after high school.

38 (2) (a) By grade seven, each student must be administered a career
39 interest and skills inventory which is intended to be used to inform

1 grade eight course taking and development of an initial high school
2 and beyond plan. No later than grade eight, each student must have
3 begun development of a high school and beyond plan that includes a
4 proposed plan for first-year high school courses aligned with
5 graduation requirements and secondary and postsecondary goals.

6 (b) For each student who has not earned a score of level 3 or 4
7 on the middle school mathematics assessment identified in RCW
8 28A.655.070 by grade nine, the high school and beyond plan must be
9 updated to ensure that the student takes a mathematics course in both
10 grades nine and 10. These courses may include career and technical
11 education equivalencies in mathematics adopted pursuant to RCW
12 28A.230.097.

13 (3) With staff support, students must update their high school
14 and beyond plan annually, at a minimum, to review academic progress
15 and inform future course taking.

16 (a) The high school and beyond plan must be updated in grade 10
17 to (~~reflect high school assessment results in RCW 28A.655.061,~~)
18 ensure student access to advanced course options per the district's
19 academic acceleration policy in RCW 28A.320.195, assess progress
20 toward identified goals, and revised as necessary for changing
21 interests, goals, and needs.

22 (b) Each school district shall provide students who have not met
23 the standard on state assessments or who are behind in completion of
24 credits or graduation pathway options with the opportunity to access
25 interventions and academic supports, courses, or both, designed to
26 enable students to meet all high school graduation requirements. The
27 parents or legal guardians shall be notified about these
28 opportunities as included in the student's high school and beyond
29 plan, preferably through a student-led conference, including the
30 parents or legal guardians, and at least annually until the student
31 is on track to graduate.

32 (c) For students with an individualized education program, the
33 high school and beyond plan must be developed and updated in
34 alignment with their school to postschool transition plan. The high
35 school and beyond plan must be developed and updated in a similar
36 manner and with similar school personnel as for all other students.

37 (4) School districts shall involve parents and legal guardians to
38 the greatest extent feasible in the process of developing and
39 updating the high school and beyond plan.

1 (a) High school and beyond plans must be provided to students and
2 their parents or legal guardians in a language the students and
3 parents or legal guardians understand and in accordance with the
4 school district's language access policy and procedures as required
5 under chapter 28A.183 RCW, which may require language assistance for
6 students and parents or legal guardians with limited English
7 proficiency.

8 (b) School districts must annually provide students in grades
9 eight through 12, and their parents or legal guardians, with
10 comprehensive information about the graduation pathway options
11 offered by the district and are strongly encouraged to begin
12 providing this information to students in grade six. School districts
13 must provide this information in a manner that conforms with the
14 school district's language access policy and procedures as required
15 under chapter 28A.183 RCW.

16 (5) School districts are strongly encouraged to partner with
17 student serving, community-based organizations that support career
18 and college exploration and preparation for postsecondary and career
19 pathways. Partnerships may include high school and beyond plan
20 coordination and planning, data-sharing agreements, and safe and
21 secure access to individual student's high school and beyond plans.

22 (6) All high school and beyond plans must, at a minimum, include
23 the following elements:

24 (a) Identification of career goals and interests, aided by a
25 skills and interest assessment;

26 (b) Identification of secondary and postsecondary education and
27 training goals;

28 (c) An academic plan for course taking that:

29 (i) Informs students about course options for satisfying state
30 and local graduation requirements;

31 (ii) Satisfies state and local graduation requirements;

32 (iii) Aligns with the student's secondary and postsecondary
33 goals, which can include education, training, and career preparation;

34 (iv) Identifies available advanced course sequences per the
35 school district's academic acceleration policy, as described in RCW
36 28A.320.195, that include dual credit courses or other programs and
37 are aligned with the student's postsecondary goals;

38 (v) Informs students about the potential impacts of their course
39 selections on postsecondary opportunities;

1 (vi) Identifies available career and technical education
2 equivalency courses that can satisfy core subject area graduation
3 requirements under RCW 28A.230.097;

4 (vii) If applicable, identifies career and technical education
5 and work-based learning opportunities that can lead to technical
6 college certifications and apprenticeships; and

7 (viii) If applicable, identifies opportunities for credit
8 recovery and acceleration, including partial and mastery-based credit
9 accrual to eliminate barriers for on-time grade level progression and
10 graduation per RCW 28A.320.192;

11 (d) Evidence that the student has received the following
12 information on federal and state financial aid programs that help pay
13 for the costs of a postsecondary program:

14 (i) ~~((The))~~ Beginning in grade nine and each academic year
15 thereafter, the college bound scholarship program established in
16 chapter 28B.118 RCW, the Washington college grant created in RCW
17 28B.92.200, the Washington 13 free guarantee established in section 2
18 of this act, and other scholarship opportunities;

19 (ii) The documentation necessary for completing state and federal
20 financial aid applications; application timeliness and submission
21 deadlines; and the importance of submitting applications early;

22 (iii) Information specific to students who are or have been the
23 subject of a dependency proceeding pursuant to chapter 13.34 RCW, who
24 are or are at risk of being homeless, and whose family member or
25 legal guardian will be required to provide financial and tax
26 information necessary to complete applications;

27 (iv) Opportunities to participate in advising days and seminars
28 that assist students and, when necessary, their parents or legal
29 guardians, with filling out financial aid applications in accordance
30 with RCW 28A.300.815; and

31 (v) A sample financial aid letter and a link to the financial aid
32 calculator created in RCW 28B.77.280; and

33 (e) By the end of grade 12, a current resume or activity log that
34 provides a written compilation of the student's education, any work
35 experience, extracurricular activities, and any community service
36 including how the school district has recognized the community
37 service pursuant to RCW 28A.320.193.

38 (7) Any decision on whether a student has met the state board of
39 education's requirements for a high school and beyond plan shall
40 remain at the local level, and a school district may establish

1 additional, local requirements for a high school and beyond plan to
2 serve the needs and interests of its students and the purposes of
3 this section.

4 (8) The state board of education shall adopt rules to implement
5 this section.

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 9.** Sections 1 through 4 of this act
7 constitute a new chapter in Title 28B RCW.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 10.** This act may be known and cited as the
9 Washington 13 free guarantee act.

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