
SENATE BILL 5785

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By Senator Robinson

1 AN ACT Relating to modifying students' share of the education
2 costs at institutions of higher education; amending RCW 28B.15.067;
3 reenacting and amending RCW 28B.92.200 and 43.88C.010; adding a new
4 section to chapter 28B.92 RCW; repealing RCW 28B.92.205; and
5 providing effective dates.

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

7 **Sec. 1.** RCW 28B.15.067 and 2023 c 9 s 1 are each amended to read
8 as follows:

9 (1) Tuition fees shall be established under the provisions of
10 this chapter.

11 (2) (a) The maximum increase in tuition operating fees for
12 resident undergraduates at institutions of higher education as
13 defined in RCW 28B.10.016(~~(, excluding applied baccalaureate degrees~~
14 ~~as defined in RCW 28B.50.030,)~~) shall be calculated by the office of
15 financial management and transmitted to the institutions of higher
16 education by October 1st of each year for the following academic
17 year. ~~((Tuition))~~ Except as provided in (b) and (c) of this
18 subsection, tuition operating fees for resident undergraduates at
19 institutions of higher education as defined in RCW 28B.10.016(~~(,~~
20 ~~excluding applied baccalaureate degrees as defined in RCW~~
21 ~~28B.50.030,)~~) may increase by no more than the average annual

1 percentage growth rate in the median hourly wage for Washington as
2 the wage is determined by the federal bureau of labor statistics and
3 calculated based on the previous 14 years prior to the transmittal
4 date by the office of financial management.

5 (b) In the 2026-27 academic year, the tuition operating fees for
6 resident undergraduates at the community and technical colleges may
7 increase by no more than five percent above the tuition growth factor
8 calculated by the office of financial management in (a) of this
9 subsection. Within the limitations of this subsection, tuition
10 operating fees may only increase to the extent necessary to operate
11 within the appropriations from the general fund and related funds, as
12 defined in RCW 43.88.055, for fiscal year 2027 in the 2025-2027
13 omnibus operating appropriations act.

14 (c) In the 2026-27 academic year, the tuition operating fees for
15 resident undergraduates at the state universities, regional
16 universities, and The Evergreen State College may increase by no more
17 than five percent above the tuition growth factor calculated by the
18 office of financial management in (a) of this subsection. Within the
19 limitations of this subsection, tuition operating fees may only
20 increase to the extent necessary to support employee compensation
21 costs and to operate within the appropriations from the general fund
22 and related funds, as defined in RCW 43.88.055, for fiscal year 2027
23 in the 2025-2027 omnibus operating appropriations act.

24 (3) ((The)) (a) Except as provided in (b) and (c) of this
25 subsection, the governing boards of the state universities, regional
26 universities, and The Evergreen State College; and the state board
27 for community and technical colleges may reduce or increase full-time
28 tuition fees for all students other than resident undergraduates,
29 including nonresident students, summer school students, and students
30 in other self-supporting degree programs. Percentage increases in
31 full-time tuition may exceed the fiscal growth factor. Except during
32 the 2013-2015 fiscal biennium, the state board for community and
33 technical colleges may pilot or institute differential tuition
34 models. The board may define scale, scope, and rationale for the
35 models.

36 (b) In the 2026-27 academic year, the tuition operating fees for
37 nonresident undergraduates at the community and technical colleges
38 may increase to the extent necessary to operate within the
39 appropriations from the general fund and related funds, as defined in

1 RCW 43.88.055, for fiscal year 2027 in the 2025-2027 omnibus
2 operating appropriations act.

3 (c) In the 2026-27 academic year, the tuition operating fees for
4 nonresident undergraduates at the state universities, regional
5 universities, and The Evergreen State College may increase to the
6 extent necessary to support employee compensation costs and to
7 operate within the appropriations from the general fund and related
8 funds, as defined in RCW 43.88.055, for fiscal year 2027 in the
9 2025-2027 omnibus operating appropriations act.

10 (4) The tuition fees established under this chapter shall not
11 apply to high school students enrolling in participating institutions
12 of higher education under RCW 28A.600.300 through 28A.600.400.

13 (5) (a) The tuition fees established under this chapter shall not
14 apply to eligible students enrolling in a dropout reengagement
15 program through an interlocal agreement between a school district and
16 a community or technical college under RCW 28A.175.100 through
17 28A.175.110.

18 (b) The tuition fees established under this chapter shall not
19 apply to students incarcerated with the department of corrections who
20 are participating in credit-eligible postsecondary education courses
21 and degree programs when the program expenses are funded by
22 nontuition resources such as, but not limited to, grants, contracts,
23 and donations.

24 (6) As a result of any changes in tuition under section 3,
25 chapter 36, Laws of 2015 3rd sp. sess., the governing boards of the
26 state universities, the regional universities, and The Evergreen
27 State College shall not reduce resident undergraduate enrollment
28 below the 2014-15 academic year levels.

29 NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. A new section is added to chapter 28B.92
30 RCW to read as follows:

31 (1) In addition to other eligibility requirements outlined in
32 this chapter, students whose annual household income is at or below
33 65 percent of the annual state median income are eligible to receive
34 the Washington college grant. The amount a student may receive of the
35 Washington college grant is dependent on the household's annual
36 income, adjusted for household size, and the difference in the
37 household's annual share of higher education costs provided in this
38 section and the maximum Washington college grant. Beginning with

1 academic year 2026-27, the office must calculate a household's annual
2 share of higher education costs as follows:

3 If the household's annual income, adjusted for 4 household size, is:	Then the household's annual share of higher education costs, based on a household of two, are:
5 Below 25 percent of the state median income	\$0
6 At or above 25 percent and below 35 percent of the 7 state median income	25 percent of the state median income for a household of two, multiplied by 5 percent
8 At or above 35 percent and below 45 percent of the 9 state median income	35 percent of the state median income for a household of two, multiplied by 5.5 percent
10 At or above 45 percent and below 55 percent of the 11 state median income	45 percent of the state median income for a household of two, multiplied by 6 percent
12 At or above 55 percent and at or below 65 percent 13 of the state median income	55 percent of the state median income for a household of two, multiplied by 6.5 percent

14 (2) If the household's calculated share exceeds the maximum
15 Washington college grant award, no award may be provided.

16 **Sec. 3.** RCW 28B.92.200 and 2024 c 323 s 1 and 2024 c 116 s 1 are
17 each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

18 (1) The Washington college grant program is created to provide a
19 statewide free college program for eligible participants and greater
20 access to postsecondary education for Washington residents. The
21 Washington college grant program is intended to increase the number
22 of high school graduates and adults that can attain a postsecondary
23 credential and provide them with the qualifications needed to compete
24 for job opportunities in Washington.

25 (2) The office shall implement and administer the Washington
26 college grant program and is authorized to establish rules necessary
27 for implementation of the program.

28 (3) The legislature shall appropriate funding for the Washington
29 college grant program. Allocations must be made on the basis of
30 estimated eligible participants enrolled in eligible institutions of
31 higher education or apprenticeship programs. All eligible students
32 are entitled to a Washington college grant beginning in academic year
33 2020-21.

34 (4) The office shall award Washington college grants to all
35 eligible students beginning in academic year 2020-21.

1 (5) To be eligible for the Washington college grant, students
2 must meet the following requirements:

3 (a) (i) Demonstrate financial need (~~(under RCW 28B.92.205)~~) by
4 establishing that their household income qualifies under section 2 of
5 this act;

6 (ii) Receive one or more of the following types of public
7 assistance:

8 (A) Aged, blind, or disabled assistance benefits under chapter
9 74.62 RCW;

10 (B) Essential needs and housing support program benefits under
11 RCW 43.185C.220; or

12 (C) Pregnant women assistance program financial grants under RCW
13 74.62.030; (~~(or)~~)

14 (iii) Be a Washington high school student in the 10th, 11th, or
15 12th grade whose parent or legal guardian is receiving one or more of
16 the types of public assistance listed in (a) (ii) of this subsection
17 and have received a certificate confirming eligibility from the
18 office in accordance with RCW 28B.92.225; or

19 (iv) Beginning in the 2025-26 academic year, be a Washington high
20 school student in the 10th, 11th, or 12th grade who is a member of an
21 assistance unit receiving benefits under the Washington basic food
22 program in chapter 74.04 RCW or the Washington food assistance
23 program established under RCW 74.08A.120;

24 (b) (i) Be enrolled or accepted for enrollment for at least three
25 quarter credits or the equivalent semester credits at an institution
26 of higher education in Washington as defined in RCW 28B.92.030; or

27 (ii) Be enrolled in a registered apprenticeship program approved
28 under chapter 49.04 RCW;

29 (c) Be a resident student as defined in RCW 28B.15.012(2) (a)
30 through (e);

31 (d) File an annual application for financial aid as approved by
32 the office; and

33 (e) Must not have earned a baccalaureate degree or higher from a
34 postsecondary institution.

35 (6) Washington college grant eligibility may not extend beyond
36 six years or 150 percent of the published length of the program in
37 which the student is enrolled or the credit or clock-hour equivalent.

38 (7) Institutional aid administrators shall determine whether a
39 student eligible for the Washington college grant in a given academic

1 year may remain eligible for the ensuing year if the student's family
2 income increases by no more than three percent.

3 (8) Qualifications for receipt and renewal include maintaining
4 satisfactory academic progress toward completion of an eligible
5 program as determined by the office and established in rule.

6 (9) Should a recipient terminate his or her enrollment for any
7 reason during the academic year, the unused portion of the grant
8 shall be returned to the state educational grant fund by the
9 institution of higher education according to the institution of
10 higher education's policy for issuing refunds, except as provided in
11 RCW 28B.92.070.

12 (10) An eligible student enrolled on a part-time basis shall
13 receive a prorated portion of the Washington college grant for any
14 academic period in which he or she is enrolled on a part-time basis.

15 (11) The Washington college grant is intended to be used to meet
16 the costs of postsecondary education for students with financial
17 need. The student shall be awarded all need-based financial aid for
18 which the student qualifies as determined by the institution.

19 (12) Students and participating institutions of higher education
20 shall comply with all the rules adopted by the council for the
21 administration of this chapter.

22 **Sec. 4.** RCW 43.88C.010 and 2023 c 420 s 4, 2023 c 345 s 1, and
23 2023 c 244 s 1 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

24 (1) The caseload forecast council is hereby created. The council
25 shall consist of two individuals appointed by the governor and four
26 individuals, one of whom is appointed by the chairperson of each of
27 the two largest political caucuses in the senate and house of
28 representatives. The chair of the council shall be selected from
29 among the four caucus appointees. The council may select such other
30 officers as the members deem necessary.

31 (2) The council shall employ a caseload forecast supervisor to
32 supervise the preparation of all caseload forecasts. As used in this
33 chapter, "supervisor" means the caseload forecast supervisor.

34 (3) Approval by an affirmative vote of at least five members of
35 the council is required for any decisions regarding employment of the
36 supervisor. Employment of the supervisor shall terminate after each
37 term of three years. At the end of the first year of each three-year
38 term the council shall consider extension of the supervisor's term by
39 one year. The council may fix the compensation of the supervisor. The

1 supervisor shall employ staff sufficient to accomplish the purposes
2 of this section.

3 (4) The caseload forecast council shall oversee the preparation
4 of and approve, by an affirmative vote of at least four members, the
5 official state caseload forecasts prepared under RCW 43.88C.020. If
6 the council is unable to approve a forecast before a date required in
7 RCW 43.88C.020, the supervisor shall submit the forecast without
8 approval and the forecast shall have the same effect as if approved
9 by the council.

10 (5) A councilmember who does not cast an affirmative vote for
11 approval of the official caseload forecast may request, and the
12 supervisor shall provide, an alternative forecast based on
13 assumptions specified by the member.

14 (6) Members of the caseload forecast council shall serve without
15 additional compensation but shall be reimbursed for travel expenses
16 in accordance with RCW 44.04.120 while attending sessions of the
17 council or on official business authorized by the council.
18 Nonlegislative members of the council shall be reimbursed for travel
19 expenses in accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

20 (7) "Caseload," as used in this chapter, means:

21 (a) The number of persons expected to meet entitlement
22 requirements and require the services of public assistance programs,
23 state correctional institutions, state correctional noninstitutional
24 supervision, state institutions for juvenile offenders, the common
25 school system, long-term care, medical assistance, foster care, and
26 adoption support;

27 (b) The number of students who are eligible for the Washington
28 college bound scholarship program and are expected to attend an
29 institution of higher education as defined in RCW 28B.92.030;

30 (c) The number of students who are eligible for the Washington
31 college grant program under RCW 28B.92.200 and (~~28B.92.205~~) section
32 2 of this act and are expected to attend an institution of higher
33 education as defined in RCW 28B.92.030;

34 (d) The number of children who are eligible, as defined in RCW
35 43.216.505, to participate in, and the number of children actually
36 served by, the early childhood education and assistance program; and

37 (e) Beginning with the first official forecast after July 23,
38 2023, the number of people eligible for the working families' tax
39 credit under RCW 82.08.0206. The total number of people eligible for
40 the working families' tax credit should include:

- 1 (i) The number of eligible people with no qualifying children;
2 (ii) The number of eligible people with one qualifying child;
3 (iii) The number of eligible people with two qualifying children;
4 and
5 (iv) The number of eligible people with three or more qualifying
6 children.

7 (8) The caseload forecast council shall forecast the temporary
8 assistance for needy families and the working connections child care
9 programs as a courtesy.

10 (9) By January 1, 2023, the caseload forecast council shall
11 present the number of individuals who are assessed as eligible for
12 and have requested a service through the individual and family
13 services waiver and the basic plus waiver administered by the
14 developmental disabilities administration as a courtesy. The caseload
15 forecast council shall be presented with the service request list as
16 defined in RCW 71A.10.020 to aid in development of this information.

17 (10) Beginning with the official forecast submitted in November
18 2022 and subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this
19 specific purpose, the caseload forecast council shall forecast the
20 number of individuals who are assessed as eligible for and have
21 requested supported living services, a service through the core
22 waiver, an individual and family services waiver, and the basic plus
23 waiver administered by the developmental disabilities administration
24 as a courtesy. The caseload forecast council shall be presented with
25 the service request list as defined in RCW 71A.10.020 to aid in
26 development of this information.

27 (11) As a courtesy, beginning with the official forecast
28 submitted in November 2022, the caseload forecast council shall
29 forecast the number of individuals who are expected to reside in
30 state-operated living alternatives administered by the developmental
31 disabilities administration.

32 (12) The caseload forecast council shall forecast youth
33 participating in the extended foster care program pursuant to RCW
34 74.13.031 separately from other children who are residing in foster
35 care and who are under eighteen years of age.

36 (13) The caseload forecast council shall forecast the number of
37 youth expected to receive behavioral rehabilitation services while
38 involved in the foster care system and the number of screened in
39 reports of child abuse or neglect.

1 (14) The caseload forecast council shall forecast the number of
2 individuals who are functionally and financially eligible for
3 medicaid waiver services administered by the developmental
4 disabilities administration who also meet the criteria outlined in
5 RCW 71A.12.370 and are expected to utilize a medicaid waiver service.

6 (15) The caseload forecast council shall forecast eligible
7 children participating in the transition to kindergarten program
8 under RCW 28A.300.072.

9 (16) Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the
10 definitions provided in RCW 43.88.020 apply to this chapter.

11 (17) During the 2021-2023 fiscal biennium, and beginning with the
12 November 2021 forecast, the caseload forecast council shall produce
13 an unofficial forecast of the long-term caseload for juvenile
14 rehabilitation as a courtesy.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** RCW 28B.92.205 (Washington college grant
16 program—Financial need) and 2023 c 475 s 923, 2022 c 297 s 949, &
17 2019 c 406 s 20, as now existing or hereafter amended, are each
18 repealed, effective September 1, 2026.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** Sections 2 through 4 of this act take
20 effect July 1, 2026.

--- END ---