
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5828

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2026 Regular Session

By Senate Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Nobles, Warnick, Chapman, Conway, Cortes, Holy, Krishnadasan, Riccelli, Trudeau, and C. Wilson)

READ FIRST TIME 02/09/26.

1 AN ACT Relating to the Washington college grant and college bound
2 scholarship program for students attending private four-year not-for-
3 profit institutions of higher education in Washington; amending RCW
4 28B.92.030; and reenacting and amending RCW 28B.118.010.

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

6 **Sec. 1.** RCW 28B.92.030 and 2025 c 395 s 2 are each amended to
7 read as follows:

8 The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter
9 unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

10 (1) "Council" means the student achievement council.

11 (2) "Financial aid" means either loans, grants, or both, to
12 students who demonstrate financial need enrolled or accepted for
13 enrollment as a student at institutions of higher education.

14 (3) "Financial need" means a demonstrated financial inability to
15 bear the total cost of education as directed in rule by the office.

16 (4) "Institution" or "institutions of higher education" means:

17 (a) Any public university, college, community college, or
18 technical college operated by the state of Washington or any
19 political subdivision thereof; or

20 (b) Any other university, college, school, or institute in the
21 state of Washington offering instruction beyond the high school level

1 that is a member institution of an accrediting association recognized
2 by rule of the council for the purposes of this section and that
3 agrees to and complies with program rules adopted pursuant to RCW
4 28B.92.150. However, any institution, branch, extension or facility
5 operating within the state of Washington that is affiliated with an
6 institution operating in another state must be:

7 (i) A separately accredited member institution of any such
8 accrediting association;

9 (ii) A branch of a member institution of an accrediting
10 association recognized by rule of the council for purposes of this
11 section, that is eligible for federal student financial aid
12 assistance and has operated as a nonprofit college or university
13 delivering on-site classroom instruction for a minimum of 20
14 consecutive years within the state of Washington, and has an annual
15 enrollment of at least 700 full-time equivalent students;

16 (iii) A nonprofit institution recognized by the state of
17 Washington as provided in RCW 28B.77.240; or

18 (iv) An approved apprenticeship program under chapter 49.04 RCW.

19 (5) "Maximum Washington college grant":

20 (a) For students attending two or four-year institutions of
21 higher education as defined in RCW 28B.10.016, is tuition and
22 estimated fees for 15 quarter credit hours or the equivalent, as
23 determined by the office, including operating fees, building fees,
24 and services and activities fees.

25 (b) For students attending private four-year not-for-profit
26 institutions of higher education in Washington:

27 (i) In the 2019-20 academic year, is \$9,739 and may increase each
28 year afterwards by no more than the tuition growth factor through the
29 end of the 2025-26 academic year; and

30 (ii) Beginning in the 2026-27 academic year, is ~~((50))~~ 90 percent
31 of the average of awards for the same academic year granted to
32 students at the public ~~((research—institutions))~~ regional
33 universities and the state college, as defined in RCW 28B.10.016, in
34 Washington.

35 (c) For students attending two-year private not-for-profit
36 institutions of higher education in Washington, in the 2019-20
37 academic year, is \$3,694 and may increase each year afterwards by no
38 more than the tuition growth factor.

39 (d) For students attending four-year private for-profit
40 institutions of higher education in Washington, in the 2019-20

1 academic year, is eight thousand five hundred seventeen dollars and
2 may increase each year afterwards by no more than the tuition growth
3 factor, until the end of the 2025-26 academic year.

4 (e) For students attending two-year private for-profit
5 institutions of higher education in Washington, in the 2019-20
6 academic year, is two thousand eight hundred twenty-three dollars and
7 may increase each year afterwards by no more than the tuition growth
8 factor, until the end of the 2025-26 academic year.

9 (f) For students attending Western Governors University-
10 Washington, as established in RCW 28B.77.240:

11 (i) In the 2019-20 academic year, is \$5,619 and may increase each
12 year afterwards by no more than the tuition growth factor through the
13 2025-26 academic year; and

14 (ii) Beginning in the 2026-27 academic year, is \$4,150 and may
15 increase each year afterwards by no more than the tuition growth
16 factor.

17 (~~(e)~~—~~(g)~~)) (g) For students attending approved apprenticeship
18 programs:

19 (i) In the 2022-23 academic year, is the same amount as the
20 maximum Washington college grant for students attending two-year
21 institutions of higher education as defined in (a) of this subsection
22 to be used for tuition and fees, program supplies and equipment, and
23 other costs that facilitate educational endeavors through the 2025-26
24 academic year; and

25 (ii) Beginning in the 2026-27 academic year, is 50 percent of the
26 maximum Washington college grant award for students attending two-
27 year institutions of higher education as defined in (a) of this
28 subsection to be used for tuition and fees, program supplies and
29 equipment, and other costs that facilitate educational endeavors.

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

31 (7) "Tuition growth factor" means an increase of no more than the
32 average annual percentage growth rate of the median hourly wage for
33 Washington for the previous 14 years as the wage is determined by the
34 federal bureau of labor statistics.

35 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28B.118.010 and 2025 c 395 s 4 and 2025 c 288 s 1
36 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

37 The office of student financial assistance shall design the
38 Washington college bound scholarship program in accordance with this
39 section and in alignment with the Washington college grant program in

1 chapter 28B.92 RCW unless otherwise provided in this section. The
2 right of an eligible student to receive a college bound scholarship
3 vest upon enrollment in the program that is earned by meeting the
4 requirements of this section as it exists at the time of the
5 student's enrollment under subsection (2) of this section.

6 (1) "Eligible students" are those students who:

7 (a) Qualify for free or reduced-price lunches.

8 (i) If a student qualifies in the seventh or eighth grade, the
9 student remains eligible even if the student does not receive free or
10 reduced-price lunches thereafter.

11 (ii) Beginning in the 2019-20 academic year, if a student
12 qualifies for free or reduced-price lunches in the ninth grade and
13 was previously ineligible during the seventh or eighth grade while he
14 or she was a student in Washington, the student is eligible for the
15 college bound scholarship program;

16 (b) Are dependent pursuant to chapter 13.34 RCW and:

17 (i) In grade seven through 12; or

18 (ii) Are between the ages of 18 and 21 and have not graduated
19 from high school; or

20 (c) Were dependent pursuant to chapter 13.34 RCW and were adopted
21 between the ages of 14 and 18 with a negotiated adoption agreement
22 that includes continued eligibility for the Washington state college
23 bound scholarship program pursuant to RCW 74.13A.025.

24 (2)(a) Every eligible student shall be automatically enrolled by
25 the office of student financial assistance, with no action necessary
26 by the student, student's family, or student's guardians.

27 (b) Eligible students and the students' parents or guardians
28 shall be notified of the student's enrollment in the Washington
29 college bound scholarship program and the requirements for award of
30 the scholarship by the office of student financial assistance. To the
31 maximum extent practicable, an eligible student must acknowledge
32 enrollment in the college bound scholarship program and receipt of
33 the requirements for award of the scholarship.

34 (c) The office of the superintendent of public instruction and
35 the department of children, youth, and families must provide the
36 office of student financial assistance with a list of eligible
37 students when requested. The office of student financial assistance
38 must determine the most effective methods, including timing and
39 frequency, to notify eligible students of enrollment in the
40 Washington college bound scholarship program. The office of student

1 financial assistance must take reasonable steps to ensure that
2 eligible students acknowledge enrollment in the college bound
3 scholarship program and receipt of the requirements for award of the
4 scholarship. The office of student financial assistance shall also
5 make available to every school district information, brochures, and
6 posters to increase awareness and to enable school districts to
7 notify eligible students directly or through school teachers,
8 counselors, or school activities.

9 (3) Except as provided in subsection (4) of this section, an
10 eligible student must:

11 (a)(i) Graduate from a public high school under RCW 28A.150.010
12 or an approved private high school under chapter 28A.195 RCW in
13 Washington, have received a high school equivalency certificate under
14 RCW 28B.50.536, or have received home-based instruction under chapter
15 28A.200 RCW; and

16 (ii) For eligible students enrolling in a postsecondary
17 educational institution for the first time beginning with the 2023-24
18 academic year, graduate with at least a "C" average for consideration
19 of direct admission to a public or private four-year institution of
20 higher education;

21 (b) Have no felony convictions;

22 (c) Be a resident student as defined in RCW 28B.15.012(2) (a)
23 through (e); and

24 (d) Have a family income that does not exceed 65 percent of the
25 state median family income at the time of high school graduation.

26 (4) An eligible student who is a resident student under RCW
27 28B.15.012(2)(e) must also provide the institution, as defined in RCW
28 28B.15.012, an affidavit indicating that the individual will file an
29 application to become a permanent resident at the earliest
30 opportunity the individual is eligible to do so and a willingness to
31 engage in any other activities necessary to acquire citizenship,
32 including but not limited to citizenship or civics review courses.

33 (5)(a) For students attending two or four-year institutions of
34 higher education as defined in RCW 28B.10.016, the value of the award
35 shall be (i) the difference between the student's tuition and
36 required fees, less the value of any state-funded grant, scholarship,
37 or waiver assistance the student receives; (ii) plus \$500 for books
38 and materials.

39 (b)(i) For students attending private four-year institutions of
40 higher education in Washington, the award amount shall be the average

1 of awards granted to students in public research universities in
2 Washington or the average of awards granted to students in public
3 research universities in Washington in the 2014-15 academic year,
4 whichever is greater, through the 2026-27 academic year.

5 (ii) Beginning in the 2027-28 academic year, for students
6 attending private four-year not-for-profit institutions of higher
7 education in Washington, the award amount shall be ~~((50))~~ 90 percent
8 of the average of awards for the same academic year granted to
9 students ~~((in public research universities))~~ at the public regional
10 universities and the state college, as defined in RCW 28B.10.016, in
11 Washington.

12 (c)(i) For students attending private vocational schools in
13 Washington, the award amount shall be the average of awards granted
14 to students in public community and technical colleges in Washington
15 or the average of awards granted to students in public community and
16 technical colleges in Washington in the 2014-15 academic year,
17 whichever is greater, through the 2026-27 academic year.

18 (ii) Beginning in the 2027-28 academic year, for students
19 attending two-year private not-for-profit schools in Washington, the
20 award amount shall be the average of awards granted in the same
21 academic year to students in public community and technical colleges
22 in Washington, or the average of awards granted to students in public
23 community and technical colleges in Washington in the 2014-15
24 academic year, whichever is greater.

25 (d) Beginning in the 2027-28 academic year, for students
26 attending Western Governors University-Washington, as established in
27 RCW 28B.77.240, the award shall be \$4,650.

28 (6) Eligible students must enroll no later than the fall term, as
29 defined by the institution of higher education, one academic year
30 following high school graduation. College bound scholarship
31 eligibility may not extend beyond six years or 150 percent of the
32 published length of the program in which the student is enrolled or
33 the credit or clock-hour equivalent.

34 (7) Institutions of higher education shall award the student all
35 need-based and merit-based financial aid for which the student would
36 otherwise qualify. The Washington college bound scholarship is
37 intended to replace unmet need, loans, and, at the student's option,
38 work-study award before any other grants or scholarships are reduced.

39 (8) The first scholarships shall be awarded to students
40 graduating in 2012.

1 (9) The eligible student has a property right in the award, but
2 the state of Washington retains legal ownership of tuition units
3 awarded as scholarships under this chapter until the tuition units
4 are redeemed. These tuition units shall remain separately held from
5 any tuition units owned under chapter 28B.95 RCW by a Washington
6 college bound scholarship recipient.

7 (10)(a) The scholarship award must be used within six years of
8 receipt. Any unused scholarship tuition units revert to the
9 Washington college bound scholarship account.

10 (b) Should the recipient terminate his or her enrollment for any
11 reason during the academic year, the unused portion of the
12 scholarship tuition units shall revert to the Washington college
13 bound scholarship account.

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