

Chapter 250-83 WAC
PASSPORT TO COLLEGE PROMISE PROGRAM

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WAC

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WAC 250-83-010 Purpose. Recognizing the low college going rates of foster youth emancipating from care in Washington state, the legislature has created the passport to college promise program. The program's purpose is:

- (1) To encourage current and former foster care youth to prepare for, attend, and successfully complete higher education; and
- (2) To provide current and former foster care youth with the educational planning, information, institutional support and direct financial resources necessary for them to succeed in higher education.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 28B.76.500. WSR 08-15-160, § 250-83-010, filed 7/23/08, effective 8/23/08.]

WAC 250-83-020 Institutional eligibility. An eligible institution is one that:

- (1) Meets the requirements for state need grant eligibility defined in RCW 28B.92.030 and WAC 250-20-013 and 250-20-021;
- (2) Agrees to abide by all program rules adopted by the board;
- (3) Completes an agreement to participate in state aid programs;
- (4) Provides the eligible student all available need-based and merit-based grant and scholarship aid for which the student qualifies; and
- (5) If participating in the incentive grant authorized in WAC 250-83-060, completes a separate board approved passport to college promise program addendum to the agreement to participate.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 28B.76.500. WSR 08-15-160, § 250-83-020, filed 7/23/08, effective 8/23/08.]

WAC 250-83-030 Identification of eligible foster youth. The program requires early and accurate identification of current and former foster care youth so they can be linked to the financial assistance and other services that will help them succeed in college. The sharing of information to identify eligible foster youth is facilitated by chapter 28B.117 RCW.

(1) The board will seek verification from the department of social and health services that applicants meet the passport student eligibility definition when:

(a) The board has a signed passport to college promise program consent form from the student. The consent is a form that has been developed and approved by the department of social and health services; or

(b) The student has completed the free application for federal student aid giving the board and the institutions permission to verify information supplied on that application; and

(c) The board, acting on behalf of the department of social and health services, will contract with DSHS to receive information for the purpose of conducting outreach to foster youth.

(2) The board will confirm the eligibility of foster youth to eligible institutions of higher education.

(3) The board, DSHS and the institutions of higher education will protect personally identifiable information in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (34 C.F.R. Part 99) and other applicable privacy standards.

(4) The board will maintain the consent and verification information for the period of the youth's passport eligibility. Thereafter, records will be maintained according to the record retention schedule in RCW 40.14.060.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 28B.76.500. WSR 08-15-160, § 250-83-030, filed 7/23/08, effective 8/23/08.]

WAC 250-83-040 Student eligibility for passport scholarship. To the extent that sufficient funds have been appropriated for this purpose, a student is eligible for the passport scholarship, which functions similar to a grant program, if he or she:

(1) Has, or is expected to have, emancipated from foster care in Washington state on or after January 1, 2007, after having spent at least one year in foster care subsequent to his or her sixteenth birthday;

(2) Is a Washington state resident student as defined in RCW 28B.15.012(2);

(3) Is admitted to, or enrolled in, an eligible degree or certificate program.

To recognize cases where a lack of college preparation exists, the aid administrator may, for up to one academic year, consider the otherwise eligible student for the passport scholarship based upon an institutionally documented educational pathway that leads to an eligible degree or certificate.

For example, a documented pathway can include prerequisites that must be met before admission to a degree or certificate program, or a short term course that connects to a degree or longer certificate program.

(4) Is enrolled or will enroll with an eligible institution before age twenty-two;

(5) Enrolls each term on at least a half-time basis;

(6) Demonstrates financial need according to federal methodology;

(7) Has not earned a bachelor's or professional degree;

(8) Is not pursuing a degree in theology;

(9) Is making satisfactory progress;

(10) Has not received a passport scholarship for more than ten semesters, or fifteen full-time quarters, or an equivalent combination of the two;

(11) Is not twenty-seven years of age or older.

(12) Does not owe a refund or repayment on other state or federal aid programs and is not in default on a loan made, insured, or guaranteed under the Federal Family Education Loan Program, the Federal Perkins Loan Program, or the Federal Direct Student Loan Program.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 28B.76.500. WSR 08-15-160, § 250-83-040, filed 7/23/08, effective 8/23/08.]

WAC 250-83-050 Determining the amount of the passport student scholarship. (1) Eligible students may receive the passport scholarship.

(2) The scholarship shall not exceed the student's financial need, less a reasonable self-help amount. A reasonable self-help amount is equivalent to what a student can earn by working ten hours per week at minimum wage per term of enrollment.

The scholarship amount cannot be more than an amount equivalent to resident undergraduate tuition and fees at the highest-priced public institution of higher education in the state.

(3) In calculating need, initially based on an established cost of attendance, the institution is encouraged to further examine the student's costs on a case-by-case basis to identify any extenuating circumstances, so actual costs borne by the individual former foster care youth are recognized.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 28B.76.500. WSR 08-15-160, § 250-83-050, filed 7/23/08, effective 8/23/08.]

WAC 250-83-060 Institutional incentive grant to provide student support services. Institutional incentive grants are grant payments to institutions based on satisfactory student performance. The payment is available only to institutions agreeing to provide specified student support services.

Institutional participation in the passport incentive grant is voluntary. An otherwise eligible student can receive a passport scholarship to attend an eligible college even if the institution does not participate in the incentive grant option.

For the 2008-09 academic year, and to the extent that funds are allotted for this purpose, the amount of each incentive grant payment will be equal to five hundred dollars per successful student per quarter or seven hundred fifty dollars per semester. The payment amounts in succeeding years will be determined annually.

Participating institutions will meet the following criteria:

(1) Include on their applications for admission or on their registration materials a question asking whether the applicant has been in foster care in Washington state for at least one year since his or her sixteenth birthday. All other institutions of higher education, whether participating in the incentive grant or not, are strongly encouraged to include this question on their admission application.

(2) Have a viable plan. The scope of a viable plan is one that generally:

(a) Identifies those students eligible for assistance under this program;

(b) Tracks and enhances academic progress of eligible students;

(c) Addresses their unique needs for assistance during school vacation and academic interims; and

(d) Links eligible students to appropriate sources of assistance in their transition to adulthood.

At a minimum, each institution's viable plan will:

(i) Designate campus support staff;

(ii) Provide a comprehensive financial aid package taking into account available federal, state, institutional and private funding that, to the extent possible, meets the student's financial need;

(iii) Build a lasting institutional commitment to serve current and former foster youth; and

(iv) As appropriate, communicate with social services and independent living providers.

(3) Institutions choosing to participate will sign an addendum. The addendum to the state student financial aid participation agreement specifies the services that are to be provided through the institution's viable plan.

(4) Institutions may receive incentive grants for the:

(a) Student's initial enrollment at the institution.

(b) Student's enrollment in subsequent terms providing satisfactory progress was maintained for the previous term.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 28B.76.500. WSR 08-15-160, § 250-83-060, filed 7/23/08, effective 8/23/08.]

WAC 250-83-070 Reserve of funds and payment of student scholarship and institutional incentive grant. (1) Reserve of funds. The board will establish a reserve of funds for student scholarships to be used at each institution. The reserve is intended to provide an equitable opportunity for eligible students across the state and provide an efficient allocation method for institutions packaging aid. This method will be reviewed periodically.

(2) Payment of scholarship funds. All passport student scholarships will be paid by the institution. After the institution pays the passport scholarship amount, it will request reimbursement from the board from its reserve. The board will reimburse the institution in a timely manner.

(3) Payment of institutional incentive grant funds.

(a) The institution may claim a one-time incentive grant payment for each student that coincides with the student's first term of enrollment.

(b) The institution may claim subsequent incentive grant payments after it can determine the student maintained satisfactory progress for the prior term.

(c) Incentive grant payments may be claimed at the same time as reimbursements for student scholarship payments.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 28B.76.500. WSR 08-15-160, § 250-83-070, filed 7/23/08, effective 8/23/08.]

WAC 250-83-080 Board's responsibilities. (1) Administering agency. The higher education coordinating board shall administer the passport to college promise program.

(2) The board will ensure colleges are packaging all available need-based and merit-based grant and scholarship aid for which the student qualifies. The board may request or collect additional information from the institution to verify students received such aid.

(3) Reports. The board will obtain reports from institutions necessary to the administration and evaluation of the passport to college promise program.

(4) Oversight. If an institution fails to maintain its eligibility for the program, or if the board determines that an institution has failed to comply with program rules and regulations or guidelines, the board may suspend, terminate, or place conditions upon the institution's participation in the program.

(5) Appeals. Any appeal will first be heard by the board's executive director or his or her designee.

Applicants may request in writing a review of decisions affecting their scholarship eligibility.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 28B.76.500. WSR 08-15-160, § 250-83-080, filed 7/23/08, effective 8/23/08.]

WAC 250-83-090 Definitions. (1) "Academic year" means a nine-month period consisting of two semesters or three quarters of academic work. Summer term is additional to the academic year.

(2) "Board" means the Washington state higher education coordinating board. When a duty or responsibility of the board is referenced in these regulations, the authority needed to discharge that responsibility lies with the executive director or his or her designee.

(3) "Emancipated from foster care" for the purpose of creating timely offers of financial aid, means the student has spent at least one year in foster care subsequent to his or her sixteenth birthday and who either has emancipated from care or who is, at the time of verification, expected to emancipate from care by their eighteenth birthday.

(4) "Financial need" means the difference between a student's cost of attendance and the student's total family contribution as determined by federal methodology.

(5) "Program" means the passport to college promise program created in this chapter.

(6) "Satisfactory progress" means a student making progress according to the institutionally determined student financial aid satisfactory policy.

(7) "Verification" means that a student's eligibility for passport has been documented by the department of social and health services.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 28B.76.500. WSR 08-15-160, § 250-83-090, filed 7/23/08, effective 8/23/08.]