

RCW 28B.117.010 Program created—Purpose. The passport to careers program is created. The purpose of the program is:

(1) To encourage current and former foster care youth and unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness to prepare for, enroll in, and successfully complete higher education or a registered apprenticeship or preapprenticeship program;

(2) To improve the high school graduation outcomes of foster youth and unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness through coordinated P-20 and child welfare outreach, intervention, and planning; and

(3) To improve postsecondary outcomes by providing current and former foster care youth and unaccompanied youth who have experienced homelessness with the educational planning, information, institutional support, and direct financial resources necessary for them to succeed in either higher education or a registered apprenticeship or preapprenticeship program. [2018 c 232 § 2; 2012 c 163 § 2; 2007 c 314 § 3.]

Short title—2018 c 232: "This act shall be known and cited as the passport to careers act." [2018 c 232 § 11.]

Findings—2012 c 163: "In 2007, with the passport to college promise program, this state took a significant step toward providing higher education opportunities to youth in and alumni of foster care. The passport to college promise program not only provides financial aid to former foster youth but, just as important, it also recognizes the critical role of wraparound services and provides early outreach to foster care youth regarding postsecondary educational opportunities. The December 2011 report by the *higher education coordinating board on the first three years of the six-year program indicates that the passport to college promise program has increased the number of former foster youth enrolling in higher education and working toward college degrees and certificates.

This state recognizes that educational success in the early grades is key to increasing postsecondary opportunities for youth in and alumni of foster care. Recent efforts in this state to pave the way for educational success have included legislation: Providing for wraparound educational advocacy services; mandating the timely transmission of educational records; and recognizing the importance of maintaining a foster child in the school program he or she was in before entering the foster care system and minimizing the number of times a child has to change schools.

The federal fostering connections to success and increasing adoptions act of 2008, P.L. 110-351, similarly recognizes that schools are often the most important source of focus and stability for children in foster care and made several changes to improve educational outcomes for these children. As part of this nationwide effort, the United States departments of education and health and human services are encouraging state and local education agencies and child welfare agencies to collaborate on policies and procedures to provide educational stability and improve outcomes for foster children.

The legislature reiterates its earlier recognition of the critical role education plays in improving outcomes for youth in and alumni of foster care, as well as the key role played by wraparound services in providing continuity, seamless educational transitions,

and higher levels of educational attainment. With these changes to the passport to college promise program, the college bound scholarship program, the provision of more seamless wraparound services, and revisions to various reporting requirements, the legislature strives to make Washington the leader in the nation with respect to foster youth and alumni graduating from high school, enrolling in postsecondary education, and completing postsecondary education." [2012 c 163 § 1.]

***Reviser's note:** The higher education coordinating board was abolished by 2011 1st sp.s. c 11 § 301, effective July 1, 2012.

Effective date—2012 c 163: "This act takes effect July 1, 2012." [2012 c 163 § 15.]