

RCW 28B.77.300 Washington college grant program—Statewide marketing campaign. Subject to availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the student achievement council shall conduct a statewide marketing campaign to increase awareness of the Washington college grant program established in chapter 28B.92 RCW. The student achievement council shall issue a request for proposal for hiring a marketing firm that will produce high quality advertisements to promote the state's largest financial aid program. Advertisements should be marketed towards potential postsecondary students and their parents with the goal of increasing awareness of the Washington college grant program to further the state's educational attainment goals. The advertisements may include television commercials, billboards, advertisements on public transit, paid internet search advertisements, and social media marketing. [2022 c 214 s 2.]

Intent—2022 c 214: "The legislature recognizes that, in 2020, Washington ranked 49th nationally for completion of the free application for federal student aid among high school seniors. The free application for federal student aid is the form that prospective and current postsecondary education students use to receive federal and state financial aid, such as the federal Pell grant, the Washington college grant, the college bound scholarship, the opportunity scholarship, federal student loans, and many other financial resources for college. For students who cannot file a free application for federal student aid, the state has an alternative financial aid application called the Washington application for state financial aid. The free application for federal student aid is a strong indicator for college enrollment. Ninety-two percent of high school seniors who completed the free application for federal student aid enrolled in a postsecondary institution by the November following graduation versus 51 percent of students who did not complete a free application for federal student aid. In addition, the legislature recognizes that the pandemic has exacerbated equity gaps in college access as colleges and universities are experiencing decreases in enrollments among low-income students, despite having one of the largest and most generous need-based financial aid programs in the country. The legislature recognizes that the Washington college grant program established in chapter 28B.92 RCW, which education trust called "the most equity-focused free college program in the country" is a critical tool to address these equity gaps and help students enter college and apprenticeships. Therefore, it is the legislature's intent to establish an outreach initiative for the Washington college grant and an outreach and completion initiative for the free application for federal student aid and Washington application for state financial aid to help students succeed." [2022 c 214 s 1.]