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**HOUSE BILL 1835**

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**State of Washington**

**67th Legislature**

**2022 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Hansen, Leavitt, Santos, Simmons, Chopp, Slatter, Bergquist, Valdez, Pollet, and Ormsby

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1 AN ACT Relating to outreach and completion initiatives to  
2 increase postsecondary enrollment; amending RCW 28B.92.200; adding a  
3 new section to chapter 28B.77 RCW; adding a new section to chapter  
4 28B.10 RCW; adding new sections to chapter 28B.92 RCW; and creating  
5 new sections.

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

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature recognizes that, in 2020,  
8 Washington ranked 49th nationally for completion of the free  
9 application for federal student aid among high school seniors. The  
10 free application for federal student aid is the form that prospective  
11 and current postsecondary education students use to receive federal  
12 and state financial aid, such as the federal Pell grant, the  
13 Washington college grant, the college bound scholarship, the  
14 opportunity scholarship, federal student loans, and many other  
15 financial resources for college. For students who cannot file a free  
16 application for federal student aid, the state has an alternative  
17 financial aid application called the Washington state application for  
18 financial aid. The free application for federal student aid is a  
19 strong indicator for college enrollment. Ninety-two percent of high  
20 school seniors who completed the free application for federal student  
21 aid enrolled in a postsecondary institution by the November following

1 graduation versus 51 percent of students who did not complete a free  
2 application for federal student aid. In addition, the legislature  
3 recognizes that the pandemic has exacerbated equity gaps in college  
4 access as colleges and universities are experiencing decreases in  
5 enrollments among low-income students, despite having one of the  
6 largest and most generous need-based financial aid programs in the  
7 country. The legislature recognizes that the Washington college grant  
8 program established in chapter 28B.92 RCW, which education trust  
9 called "the most equity-focused free college program in the country"  
10 is a critical tool to address these equity gaps and help students  
11 enter college and apprenticeships. Therefore, it is the legislature's  
12 intent to establish an outreach initiative for the Washington college  
13 grant and an outreach and completion initiative for the free  
14 application for federal student aid and Washington state application  
15 for financial aid to help students succeed.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.77  
17 RCW to read as follows:

18 (1) Subject to availability of amounts appropriated for this  
19 specific purpose, the student achievement council shall conduct a  
20 statewide marketing campaign to increase awareness of the Washington  
21 college grant program established in chapter 28B.92 RCW. The student  
22 achievement council shall issue a request for proposal for hiring a  
23 marketing firm that will produce high quality advertisements to  
24 promote the state's largest financial aid program. Advertisements  
25 should be marketed towards potential postsecondary students and their  
26 parents with the goal of increasing awareness of the Washington  
27 college grant program to further the state's educational attainment  
28 goals. The advertisements may include television commercials,  
29 billboards, advertisements on public transit, paid internet search  
30 advertisements, and social media marketing.

31 (2) Subject to availability of amounts appropriated for this  
32 specific purpose, the student achievement council shall send letters  
33 to families who may be eligible for the Washington college grant to  
34 inform them of their potential eligibility.

35 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.10  
36 RCW to read as follows:

37 Subject to availability of amounts appropriated for this specific  
38 purpose, the institutions of higher education shall develop and

1 administer a free application for federal student aid and Washington  
2 state application for financial aid outreach and completion  
3 initiative.

4 (1) The institutions of higher education shall employ outreach  
5 specialists to work directly with high schools. The outreach  
6 specialists shall make significant contact with high school students  
7 and their families for the purpose of increasing high school student  
8 free application for federal student aid and Washington state  
9 application for financial aid completion rates. It is the  
10 legislature's intent that the outreach specialists be employed at a  
11 ratio of one to 600 high school students, with 60 percent of the  
12 outreach specialists employed by community and technical colleges and  
13 40 percent employed by the public four-year institutions of higher  
14 education. The outreach specialists shall use the free application  
15 for federal student aid and Washington state application for  
16 financial aid data maintained by the student achievement council to  
17 conduct targeted outreach and free application for federal student  
18 aid and Washington state application for financial aid completion  
19 assistance to high school seniors. The outreach specialists shall  
20 conduct other outreach as appropriate, including virtual or in-person  
21 presentations with students and families, announcements on school  
22 intercoms and social media channels, outreach to recent high school  
23 graduates as peer messengers, and events at school college or career  
24 fairs.

25 (2) The institutions of higher education shall report to the  
26 appropriate committees of the legislature in accordance with RCW  
27 43.01.036 by December 1, 2023, on the free application for federal  
28 student aid and Washington state application for financial aid  
29 outreach and completion initiative. The report must include details  
30 on how the institutions of higher education used the funding and how  
31 the initiatives worked to increase free application for federal  
32 student aid and Washington state application for financial aid  
33 completion rates. The report must also include before and after free  
34 application for federal student aid and Washington state application  
35 for financial aid completion data and specific details about the  
36 number of high school students assisted in completing the free  
37 application for federal student aid and Washington state application  
38 for financial aid.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 4.**    (1) Subject to availability of amounts  
2 appropriated for this specific purpose, the student achievement  
3 council shall select an organization or organizations with a proven  
4 track record of working with historically underrepresented  
5 populations to implement a community grant program to increase free  
6 application for federal student aid and Washington state application  
7 for financial aid completion. The organization or organizations  
8 selected shall:

9        (a) Be embedded in their respective community and have a strong  
10 foundation of trust among members of the community; and

11        (b) Be committed to working directly with individual members of  
12 their community to assist with one-on-one free application for  
13 federal student aid and Washington state application for financial  
14 aid completion.

15        (2) The organization or organizations selected for the grant  
16 program shall report back to the student achievement council on the  
17 progress of their work, complete with data on the number of  
18 individuals assisted and how the organization boosted free  
19 application for federal student aid and Washington state application  
20 for financial aid completion rates. The student achievement council  
21 shall compile this information and report back to the appropriate  
22 committees of the legislature in accordance with RCW 43.01.036 by  
23 December 1, 2022.

24        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 5.**    (1) Subject to availability of amounts  
25 appropriated for this specific purpose, the state library shall  
26 administer a grant program and distribute grants to local public  
27 libraries to conduct outreach to their communities with the purpose  
28 of increasing free application for federal student aid and Washington  
29 state application for financial aid completion rates.

30        (2) The state library shall, as a condition of the grant program,  
31 require local public libraries to partner with community-based  
32 organizations including, where appropriate, organizations with proven  
33 track records of working with historically underrepresented  
34 populations, to implement a community grant program to increase free  
35 application for federal student aid and Washington state application  
36 for financial aid completion. The organization or organizations  
37 selected shall:

38        (a) Be embedded in their respective community and have a strong  
39 foundation of trust among members of the community; and

1 (b) Be committed to working directly with individual members of  
2 their community to assist with one-on-one free application for  
3 federal student aid and Washington state application for financial  
4 aid completion.

5 (3) The state library shall report back to the appropriate  
6 committees of the legislature in accordance with RCW 43.01.036 by  
7 December 1, 2022, on the progress of the library outreach project to  
8 boost free application for federal student aid and Washington state  
9 application for financial aid completion rates.

10 **Sec. 6.** RCW 28B.92.200 and 2019 c 406 s 19 are each amended to  
11 read as follows:

12 (1) The Washington college grant program is created to provide a  
13 statewide free college program for eligible participants and greater  
14 access to postsecondary education for Washington residents. The  
15 Washington college grant program is intended to increase the number  
16 of high school graduates and adults that can attain a postsecondary  
17 credential and provide them with the qualifications needed to compete  
18 for job opportunities in Washington.

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

22 (3) The legislature shall appropriate funding for the Washington  
23 college grant program. Allocations must be made on the basis of  
24 estimated eligible participants enrolled in eligible institutions of  
25 higher education or apprenticeship programs. All eligible students  
26 are entitled to a Washington college grant beginning in academic year  
27 2020-21.

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

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

32 (a) Demonstrate financial need under RCW 28B.92.205 or be  
33 receiving one of the following types of public assistance:

34 (i) Temporary assistance for needy families under chapter 74.08  
35 RCW;

36 (ii) Aged, blind, or disabled assistance benefits under chapter  
37 74.62 RCW; or

38 (iii) Refugee cash assistance;

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

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

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

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

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

12 (6) Washington college grant eligibility may not extend beyond  
13 five years or one hundred twenty-five percent of the published length  
14 of the program in which the student is enrolled or the credit or  
15 clock-hour equivalent.

16 (7) Institutional aid administrators shall determine whether a  
17 student eligible for the Washington college grant in a given academic  
18 year may remain eligible for the ensuing year if the student's family  
19 income increases by no more than three percent.

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

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

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

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

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

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 7.**    A new section is added to chapter 28B.92  
2    RCW to read as follows:

3        (1) The office shall enter into a data-sharing agreement with the  
4    department of social and health services to facilitate the sharing of  
5    individual-level data. The department of social and health services  
6    shall send the office a list of all individuals receiving benefits  
7    under the public assistance programs listed under RCW 28B.92.200(5)  
8    on at least an annual basis. The office shall use the list to confirm  
9    students' eligibility for the Washington college grant program,  
10   without requiring the student to fill out a separate financial aid  
11   form.

12       (2) For high school students in 10th, 11th, and 12th grades whose  
13   families are receiving benefits under one of the public assistance  
14   programs listed under RCW 28B.92.200(5), the office shall issue a  
15   certificate to the student that validates the student's financial  
16   need eligibility for the Washington college grant program. The  
17   certificate is good for one year after high school graduation and may  
18   be used upon enrollment in an eligible institution of higher  
19   education, provided the student meets the other Washington college  
20   grant eligibility requirements.

21       NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 8.**    A new section is added to chapter 28B.92  
22    RCW to read as follows:

23       Institutions of higher education authorized to participate in the  
24   Washington college grant program shall enter into data-sharing  
25   agreements with the office to facilitate the sharing of contact  
26   information of individuals who qualify for the Washington college  
27   grant through a public assistance program. The institutions of higher  
28   education shall use this information to conduct outreach directly to  
29   Washington college grant eligible individuals, such as through  
30   mailings that promote attending their specific institution for free  
31   with the Washington college grant.

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