

Washington State Aid Extension Annual Report

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WASHINGTON STATE
Education Research and Data Center
Office of Financial Management
Forecasting and Research Division



Washington Student Achievement Council



About this Report

This report was a collaborative effort between the Education Research and Data Center and the Washington Student Achievement Council.

The **Education Research and Data Center (ERDC)**, located in the Washington State Office of Financial Management, provided the data used in this report. ERDC works with partner agencies to conduct powerful analyses of education data that can help inform the decision-making of Washington legislators, parents, and education providers. ERDC's data system is a statewide longitudinal data system that includes de-identified data about the preschool, educational and workforce experiences of Washingtonians. The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of OFM or other data contributors.

The **Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC)**, a cabinet-level agency that is committed to increasing educational opportunities and attainment in Washington, authored this report. WSAC has three main functions: (1) lead statewide strategic planning to increase educational attainment; (2) administer programs that help people access and pay for college; and (3) advocate for the economic, social, and civic benefits of higher education.

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Executive summary

Chapter 323, Laws of 2024 (Senate Bill 5904) extends and aligns the maximum timeframe allowed for students to receive three of Washington state’s need-based financial aid programs – Washington College Grant (WA Grant or WCG), College Bound Scholarship (College Bound or CBS), and Passport to Careers (Passport or PTC) – from a maximum of five years to six years. This means that students who have previously exhausted their academic quarters of eligibility remaining (QER) could regain eligibility for the WA Grant, College Bound, and/or Passport programs beginning in the 2024–2025 academic year. This extension will be vital to students who need an additional year of financial assistance to persist in and complete their postsecondary education.

The objective of this report is to provide the Legislature with information about the following impacts of the expansion: state aid utilization and degree completion outcomes. However, because of data limitations, the 2024 report cannot yet include information about the impacts of the expansion. Instead, this report includes the following:

- An overview of the expansion and the WA Grant, College Bound, and Passport programs.
- An *estimate* of the number of recipients in each program who may utilize the extension in the 2024-2025 academic year. Real data should be available for the 2025 or 2026 report.
- The most recent postsecondary completion rates of students who received aid in each program. Completion rates of the first cohort that will be affected by the expansion (entering cohort 2019–2020) should be available for the 2027 or 2028 report.

Key findings

The estimated number of students who may utilize the state aid extension is low in each of the three state aid programs, and these students represent only a small proportion of all state aid recipients.

State Aid Program	Estimated Impact of Expansion	Proportion of State Aid Program’s Recipients
Washington College Grant (aka WA Grant or WCG)	+368–691 students	< 1%
College Bound Scholarship (aka College Bound or CBS)	+568–672 students	3–4%
Passport to Careers (aka Passport or PTC)	+16–31 students	2–3%

The characteristics of students who may be eligible to utilize the state aid extension are notably different than other state aid recipients:

- A higher proportion of this population is lower income (i.e., eligible for a full WA Grant award rather than a partial award) than other state aid recipients.
- A higher proportion of this population is in their junior or senior years than other state aid recipients. These students have exhausted their QER, meaning that they have already used five years’ worth of their state aid eligibility.
- A higher proportion of this population is enrolled in the public four-year sector than other state aid recipients.

Caveat for the 2024 report

Legislation enacted in 2024 requires the Education Research and Data Center (ERDC) at the Office of Financial Management (OFM) to submit an annual report to the Legislature, beginning December 1, 2024, on the impacts of state financial aid expansion. The objective of this report is to provide the Legislature with information about the following impacts of the expansion: state aid utilization and degree completion outcomes. However, because of timing and data limitations (described in the appendix), the 2024 report cannot yet include data about the impacts of the expansion. Nevertheless, the report does provide some compelling background and context about the expansion and its potential effects, as well as information about the students who may be affected by it.

The 2024 report includes the following:

- An overview of the expansion and the WA Grant, College Bound, and Passport programs.
- An *estimate* of the number of recipients in each program who may utilize the extension in the 2024-2025 academic year. Real data should be available for the 2025 or 2026 report.
- The most recent postsecondary completion rates of students who received aid in each program (entering cohorts 2009-2010 to 2015-2016). Completion rates of the first cohort that will be affected by the expansion (entering cohort 2019-2020) should be available for the 2027 or 2028 report.

Background

What is the state financial aid extension?

Chapter 323, Laws of 2024 extends and aligns the maximum timeframe allowed for students to receive three of Washington’s state need-based financial aid programs: Washington College Grant (also referred to as WA Grant or WCG), College Bound Scholarship (also referred to as College Bound or CBS), and Passport to Careers (also referred to as Passport or PTC). The timeframe is extended from a maximum of five years to six years (150 percent of a baccalaureate degree, 18 full-time quarters/12 full-time semesters, or the equivalent clock hours of full-time eligibility of the published length of the program in which the student is enrolled) (Senate Bill 5904, 2024); see Table 1.

This means that students who have previously exhausted their quarters of eligibility remaining (QER)¹ could regain eligibility for the WA Grant, College Bound, and/or Passport programs beginning in the 2024-2025 academic year.

Table 1: Changes to state financial aid programs, 2024-2025 academic year

Program	Changes to Eligibility: 2024-2025	Prior, Related Eligibility Requirements: 2023-2024
Washington College Grant (WA Grant or WCG)	Eligibility may not extend beyond six years or 150 percent of the published length of the program in which the student is enrolled, or the credit/clock-hour equivalent.	Eligibility may not extend beyond five years or 125 percent of the published length of the program in which the student is enrolled, or the credit/clock-hour equivalent.

¹ Despite its name, the term “quarters of eligibility remaining” (QER) is inclusive of non-quarter schools. Before the expansion, WCG QER and PTC QER meant 15 quarters or 10 semesters while CBS QER meant 12 quarters or 8 semesters.

Program	Changes to Eligibility: 2024-2025	Prior, Related Eligibility Requirements: 2023-2024
College Bound Scholarship (College Bound or CBS)	Eligibility may not extend beyond six years or 150 percent of the published length of the program in which the student is enrolled, or the credit/clock-hour equivalent. Students are still required to enroll within one year after high school graduation.	Eligible students may receive no more than four full-time years' worth of scholarship awards within five years after high school graduation.
Passport to Careers (Passport or PTC)	Eligibility may not extend beyond six years or 150 percent of the published length of the program in which the student is enrolled, or the credit/clock-hour equivalent. Students are still required to enroll by age 22.	Eligible students may receive the scholarship for a maximum of five years after the student first enrolls with an institution or until the student turns age 26 , whichever occurs first.

Why was the timeframe extended to six years?

The timeframe for state financial aid was extended to provide consistent support and increase postsecondary completion. The significance of six years is that the Federal Pell Grant, which is the federal standard of need-based financial aid, has a six-year lifetime maximum (U.S. Department of Education, 2024). The timeframe for Washington’s WA Grant, College Bound, and Passport financial aid programs was extended to six years so there is alignment with the timeframe of the Federal Pell Grant and across state aid programs. This is expected to alleviate confusion about program eligibility requirements since it is known that complex eligibility requirements can prevent aid from effectively reaching students who need it (Dynarski, Page, & Scott-Clayton, 2023). Importantly, the eligibility timeframe was extended to six years to increase postsecondary persistence and completion for students nearing credential attainment who previously exhausted QERs for state aid.

Students who testified at the Senate Higher Education & Workforce Development Committee hearing in 2024 spoke about these issues (summarized by legislative staff):

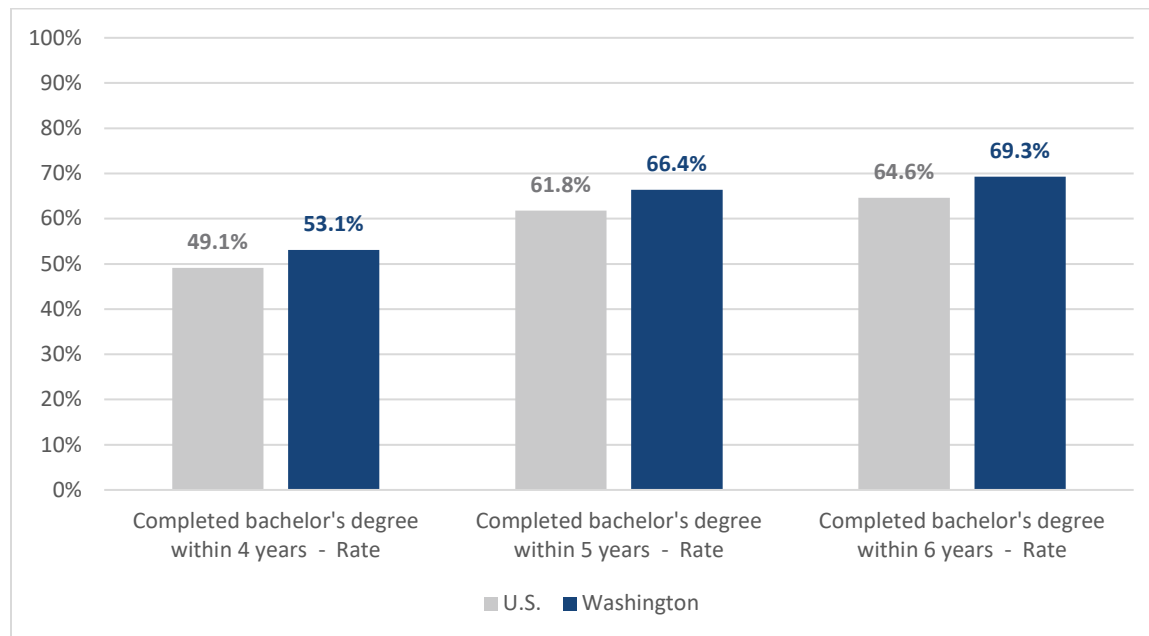
“...The maximum to receive state aid varies across programs and all are shorter than the federal standard...Inconsistencies like these make it difficult for low and middle-income students to finish. Consistency across programs will provide predictable support and increase access...Having extra time to complete will help students with barriers to completion. Extending eligibility supports equitable access. The shortened financial aid timeframes compared to federal aid presents a meaningful financial cliff for many students. Students should not have to be financial aid experts to be able to complete their programs. The varying time frames of financial aid programs adds unnecessary stress for students...” (Senate Bill Report SB 5904, 2024)

Before this extension, students who exhausted their QER may not have been able to persist or complete their credentials with federal aid (e.g., the Pell Grant) alone, or they may have had to increase their loan

burden to persist or complete. Marx and Turner find that “students just ineligible for Pell are much more likely to receive student loans” (as cited in Dynarski, Page, and Clayton-Scott, 2023, p. 242). This may also be the case for students who have exhausted five years of state aid.

The six-year timeframe of the expansion also aligns with a national metric for determining postsecondary success, which is graduation rate 150% of normal time (within six years of entering a postsecondary institution) (U.S. Department of Education, 2024),² and it aligns with current research on a student’s time-to-degree. Postsecondary completion rates increase about 16 percentage points from 100% of normal time (within four years of entering a postsecondary institution) to 150% of normal time. This is true in Washington as well as in the nation (see Figure 1). Few students finish their degree in “normal time.” On average, students take more than three years to earn an associate degree and more than five years to earn a bachelor’s degree (Shapiro, et al., 2016).

Figure 1: Graduation rates for bachelor’s degree-seeking undergraduates in U.S. and Washington, entering cohort 2016-2017, as of August 31, 2022



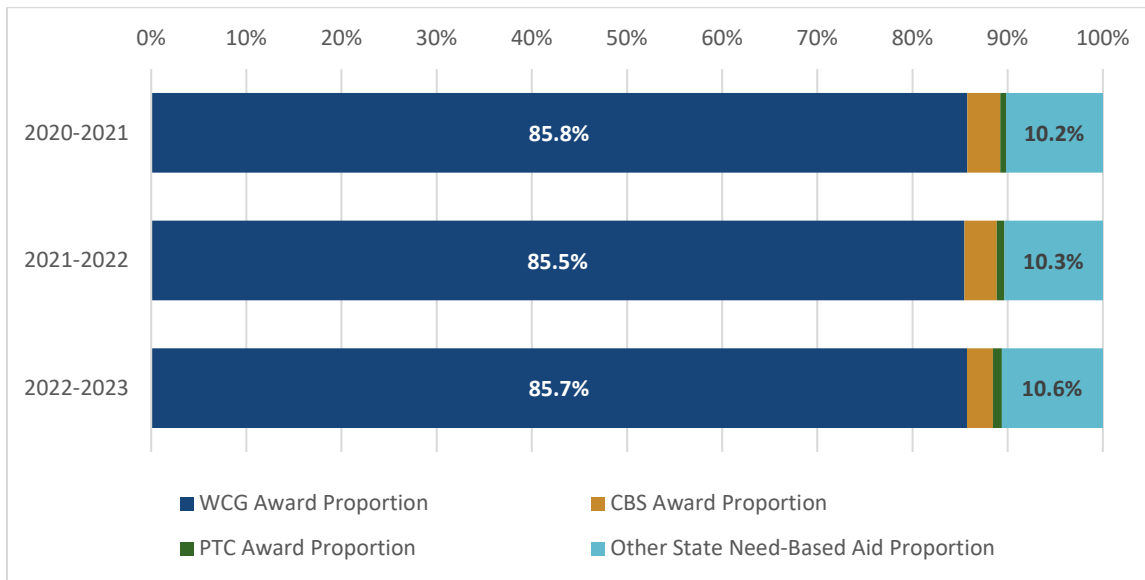
Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Graduation Rates component, IPEDS Summary Tables.

Overview of state financial aid programs

WA Grant, College Bound, and Passport are the state’s three flagship need-based financial aid programs that provide aid to under-resourced students. These programs comprise nearly 90% of all state need-based aid for undergraduates. WCG alone is 86% of the state need-based financial aid dollars while CBS is about 3% and PTC is about 1% (see Figure 2).

² The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) introduced the 100% of normal time and 150% of normal time graduation rates in 1997-1998 to meet the requirements of the Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act of 1990, which requires colleges to report the completion rates of their full-time, first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduates.

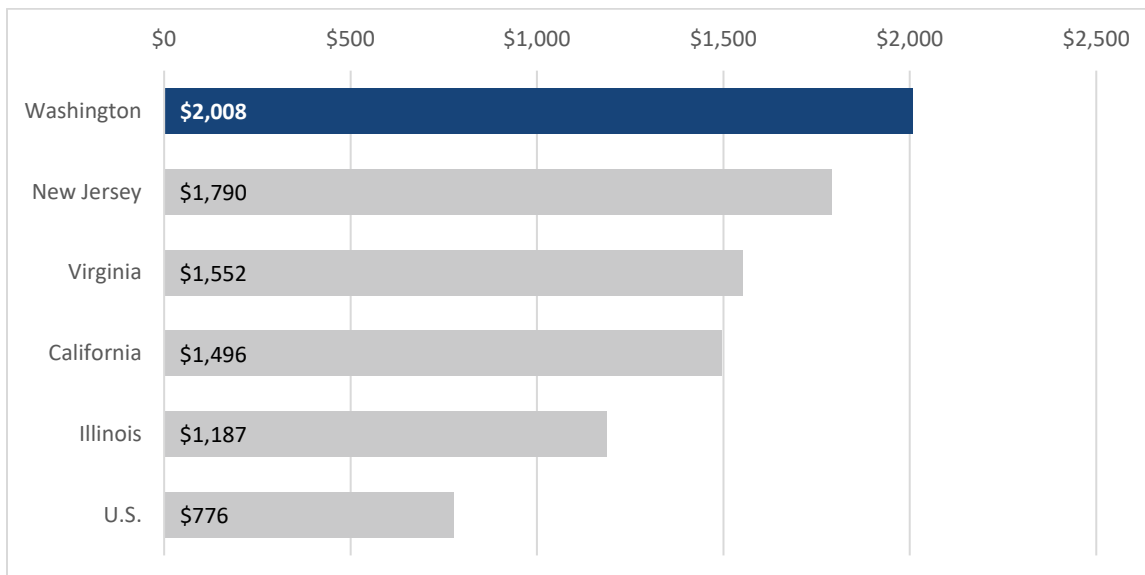
Figure 2: Proportion of state need-based financial aid dollars for undergraduates by academic year



Source: Washington Student Achievement Council staff analysis of WSAC Unit Record Report.

According to the National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs (NASSGAP), Washington has the highest average award of state need-based grant aid for undergraduates in the country. (This calculation includes WCG, CBS, Passport, and a handful of other programs.) This was true for the 2020-2021 academic year (National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs, 2022) and the 2021-2022 academic year (National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs, 2023); see Figure 3. The 2022-2023 national survey has not yet been published.

Figure 3: Estimated undergraduate need-based grant dollars per undergraduate enrollment, by state: 2021-2022, (U.S. and top five states)



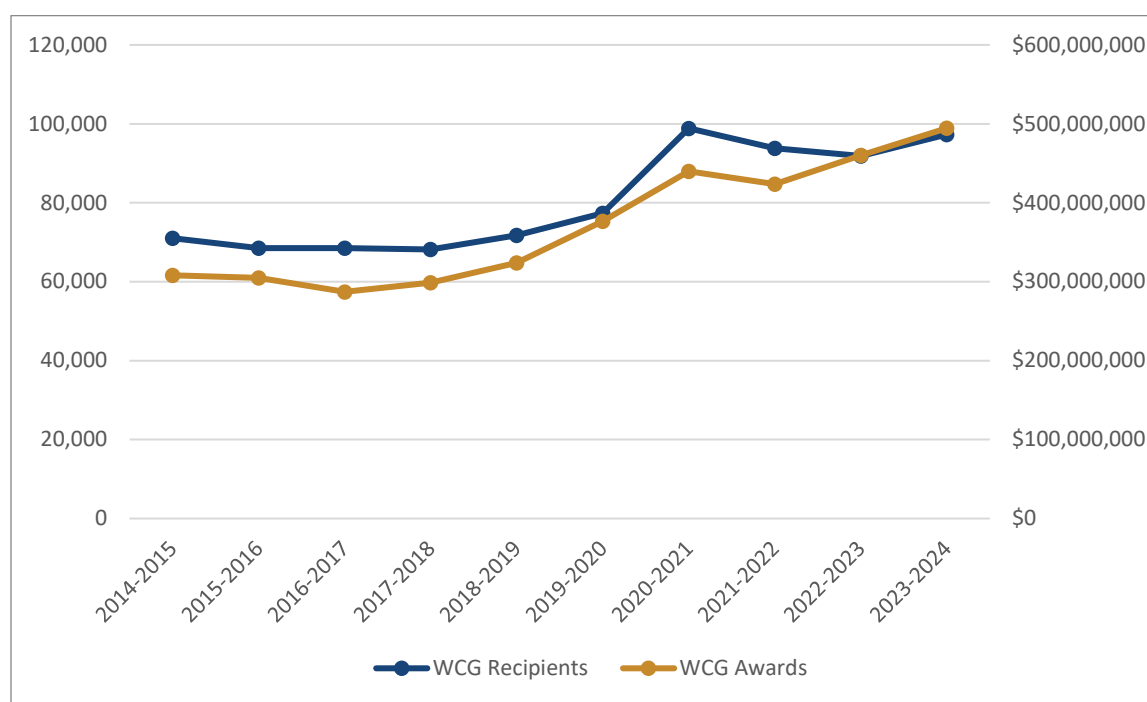
Source: National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs (NASSGAP) Annual Survey Reports 2021-2022-53rd, Table 12: Estimated Undergraduate Grant Dollars per Undergraduate Enrollment, by State: 2021-22.

WA Grant

WA Grant (WCG) is Washington’s largest state need-based financial aid program. It was established in 2019, replacing the State Need Grant (SNG), which had been the state’s flagship financial aid program since 1969. WCG provides financial aid to low-income and middle-income resident students pursuing education and training beyond high school that includes certificate programs, job training, apprenticeship, and part-time or full-time college. Award amounts vary based on income, family size, and the institution or program attended.

In the last decade, the number of WCG recipients and award totals have dramatically increased (see Figure 4). The biggest jump in recipients and awards happened in the 2020-2021 academic year when income eligibility expanded to include middle-income families. Also, the award totals have increased because of how WCG coordinates with CBS. WCG-eligible students who are also eligible for CBS receive a full WCG award. Therefore, while WCG awards have increased, CBS awards have decreased.

Figure 4: WCG number of recipients and award totals by academic year



Source: Washington Student Achievement Council staff analysis of WSAC Interim Report and WSAC Unit Record Report.

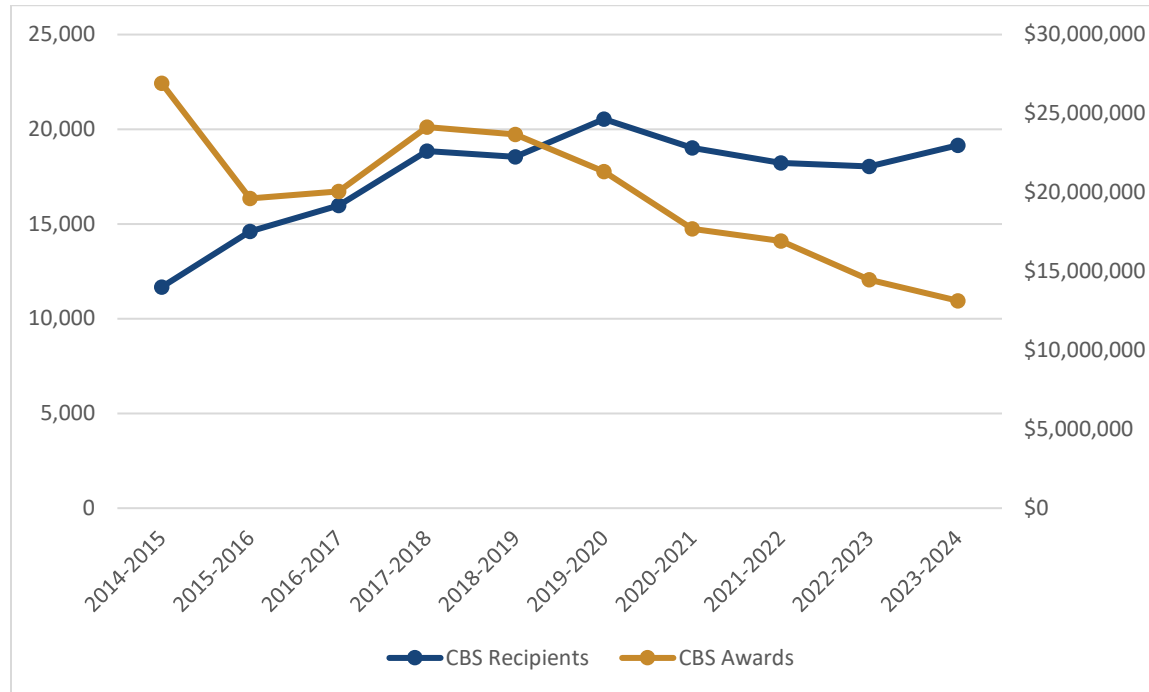
College Bound

The College Bound (CBS) program was established by the Legislature in 2007 and implemented in 2012. It is an early commitment of state financial aid intended to improve high school graduation, postsecondary enrollment, and completion rates for low-income students. Students are signed up for the College Bound program in middle school or high school if they attend a public school and are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch (FRPL) in middle school, or are foster youth or a dependent of the state between 7th grade and high school graduation. Private school and homeschool students can also sign up. Students who are signed up for the College Bound program may receive the CBS scholarship if they meet income and other eligibility requirements (Washington Student Achievement Council, 2023).

In the last decade, the number of CBS scholarship recipients has increased while the award totals have decreased (see Figure 5). The number of recipients has increased because of changes to program enrollment processes and eligibility requirements: students have been auto-enrolled in the College Bound program since 2021; sign-up for the program was initially limited to 7th and 8th graders and was then extended to 9th graders. Eligibility for the CBS scholarship was extended to include Washington students who are non-U.S. citizens, undocumented students, and students who plan to attend a community or technical college (CTC) who have a high school GPA of < 2.0.

The award totals have decreased because of how CBS coordinates with WCG and other aid. When a postsecondary institution assembles a financial aid award package for a CBS student, it begins with a full WCG award and then incorporates the Federal Pell Grant and any other applicable state aid programs. Only after taking all these other funding sources into account are CBS funds then used to make up the remainder of need-based aid. So, while WCG award dollars have increased, CBS award dollars have decreased.

Figure 5: CBS number of recipients and award totals by academic year



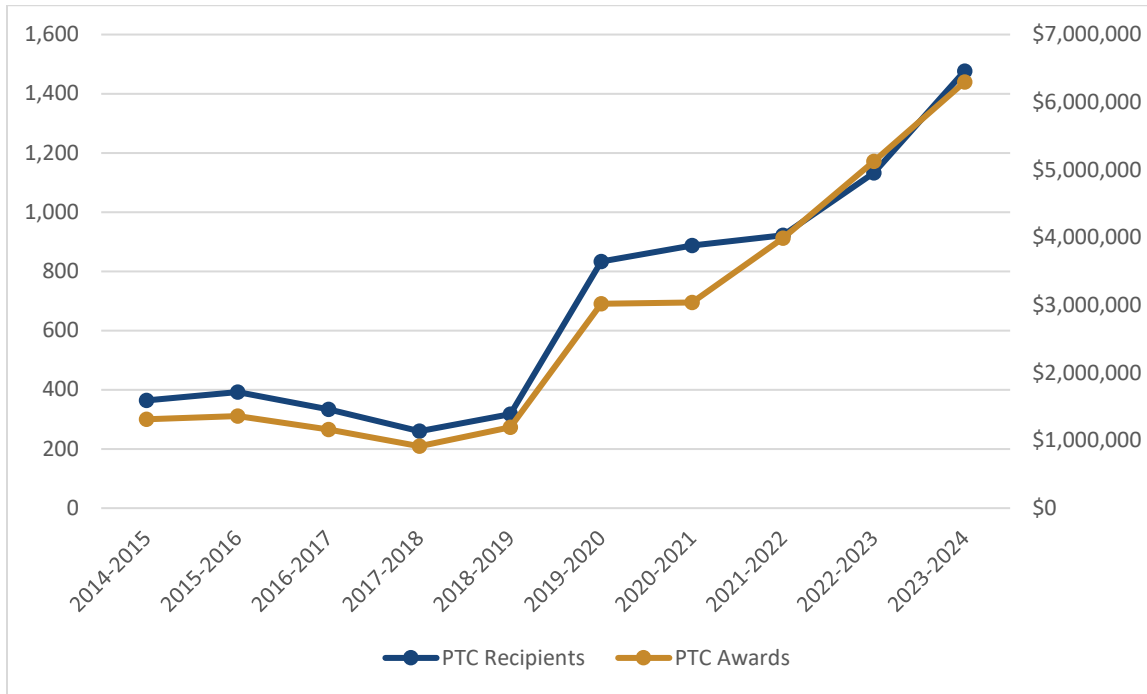
Source: Washington Student Achievement Council staff analysis of WSAC Interim Report and WSAC Unit Record Report.

Passport

Passport (PTC) helps students in foster care or who have experienced unaccompanied homelessness to prepare for careers. Assistance includes scholarship money to put toward the costs of earning a postsecondary credential and job training through a pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship program. The program began as a pilot for foster youth in 2007 and became permanent in the 2012 legislative session.

In the last decade, the number of PTC recipients and award totals have dramatically increased. The biggest jump in recipients and awards happened in the 2019-2020 academic year when eligibility was expanded to include unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: PTC number of recipients and award totals by academic year



Source: Washington Student Achievement Council staff analysis of WSAC Interim Report and WSAC Unit Record Report.

Expected impact on state aid utilization

How did previous expansions impact state aid utilization and how many students might be impacted by the new expansion?

One of the expected impacts of the eligibility expansion is that the number of students utilizing WCG, CBS, and Passport will increase in the 2024-2025 academic year. However, it is difficult to determine what the increase will be due to data limitations (see the appendix for more details).

WA Grant

WCG was expanded in the 2020-2021 academic year to include families that have 71-100% of median family income (MFI) (Washington Student Achievement Council, 2019). With that expansion, the number of WCG recipients increased dramatically from 77,373 students to 98,875 students, a difference of 21,502 students. Most of the increase was due to the expansion: 15,567 students (or 72% of the total increase) were from families with 71-100% MFI. The 2020-2021 expansion was of a different kind than the new expansion – it expanded eligible income while the new expansion changes the maximum years of eligibility from five years to six. So, even though the previous expansion greatly increased WCG utilization, the new expansion will likely have a much smaller impact (see Table 2).

Table 2: Impact of 2024 WCG extension compared to previous expansion

Expansion Year	Type of Expansion	Impact of Expansion
2020-2021	Eligible Income: Expanded eligible income from 0-70% of median family income (MFI) to 0-100% MFI	+15,567 students (with 71-100% of MFI)
2024-2025	Timeframe: Expands maximum years of eligibility from 5 years to 6 years	+368 to 691 students (estimated)

Source: Washington Student Achievement Council staff analysis of WSAC Interim Report, WSAC Unit Record Report, and FAFSA data from the U.S. Department of Education.

In the last five years, the share of WCG recipients who have zero quarters of eligibility remaining (QER) by the end of an academic year ranges from 1-2% (963 to 1,800 students) each year. Due to data limitations, we cannot determine how many of these students with zero QER have not yet completed a four-year degree and thus might still be eligible to receive WCG. However, as a proxy for non-completion of a degree, we have used the Pell eligibility flag from a student’s FAFSA that was filed in the year following zero QER. This proxy is a useful substitution since it could indicate that: 1) a student still needs financial aid for postsecondary education, and 2) the student might still be eligible for WCG since WCG now aligns with Pell’s six-year eligibility maximum. Using this proxy, the estimated share of students who might utilize the state aid expansion is less than 1% (368 to 691 students) of WCG recipients each year.

College Bound

CBS was expanded in the 2023-2024 academic year to include students with a high school GPA of less than 2.0 who plan to attend a community or technical college (House Bill 1232, 2023). With that expansion, the number of CBS recipients increased from 18,032 students to 19,158 students, a difference of 1,126 students. Most of the increase was due to the expansion: 684 students (or 61% of the total increase) were students with a high school GPA less than 2.0. The 2023-2024 expansion was of a different kind than the new expansion – it expanded academic requirements while the new expansion changes the maximum years of eligibility from five years to six. Even though the previous expansion was of a different type, the new expansion will likely have a similar or slightly smaller impact (see Table 3).

Table 3: Impact of 2024 CBS extension compared to previous expansion

Expansion Year	Type of Expansion	Impact of Expansion
2023-2024	Academic requirements: Expanded to students who plan to attend a community or technical college who have a high school grade point average (GPA) of < 2.0	+684 students (with high school GPA < 2.0)
2024-2025	Timeframe: Expands maximum years of eligibility from 5 years to 6	+568 to 672 students (estimated)

Source: Washington Student Achievement Council staff analysis of WSAC Interim Report, WSAC Unit Record Report, and FAFSA data from the U.S. Department of Education.

In the last five years, the share of CBS recipients who have zero QER (or who are past the former CBS five-year eligibility window) by the end of an academic year ranges from 7-9% (1,443 to 1,601 students) each year. Due to data limitations, we cannot determine how many of these students have not yet completed a four-year degree and thus might still be eligible to receive CBS. However, as a proxy for non-completion of a degree, we have used the Pell eligibility flag from a student’s FAFSA that was filed in the year following zero QER (or the year after they would have been past the five-year eligibility window). This proxy is a useful substitution since it could indicate that: 1) a student still needs financial aid for postsecondary education, and 2) the student might still be eligible for CBS since CBS now aligns with Pell’s six-year eligibility maximum. Using this proxy, the estimated share of students who might utilize the state aid expansion ranges from 3-4% (568 to 672 students) of CBS recipients each year.

Passport

Passport was expanded in the 2019-2020 academic year to include unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness (Second Substitute Senate Bill 6274, 2018). With that expansion, the number of Passport recipients increased from 318 students to 833 students, a difference of 515 students. Most of the increase was due to the expansion: 386 students (or 75% of the total increase) were unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness. The 2019-2020 expansion was of a different kind than the new expansion – it expanded eligibility to a specific student type while the new expansion changes the maximum years of eligibility from five years to six. The new expansion will likely have a smaller impact (see Table 4).

Table 4: Impact of 2024 PTC extension compared to previous expansion

Expansion Year	Type of Expansion	Impact of Expansion
2019-2020	Student type: Expanded the type of eligible student to unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness	+386 students (who are unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness)
2024-2025	Timeframe: Expands maximum years of eligibility from 5 years to 6	+16 to 31 students (estimated)

Source: Washington Student Achievement Council staff analysis of WSAC Interim Report, WSAC Unit Record Report, and FAFSA data from the U.S. Department of Education.

In the last five years, the share of Passport recipients who have zero QER (or who would have aged out) by the end of an academic year is 4-5% (32 to 58 students) each year. Due to data limitations, we cannot determine how many of these students have not yet completed a four-year degree and thus might still be eligible to receive Passport. However, as a proxy for non-completion of a degree, we have used the Pell eligibility flag from a student’s FAFSA that was filed in the year following zero QER (or the year in which they would have aged out). This proxy is a useful substitution since it could indicate that: 1) a student still needs financial aid for postsecondary education, and 2) the student might still be eligible for Passport since Passport now aligns with Pell’s six-year eligibility maximum. Using this proxy, the estimated share of students who might utilize the state aid expansion ranges from 2-3% (16 to 31 students) of Passport recipients each year.

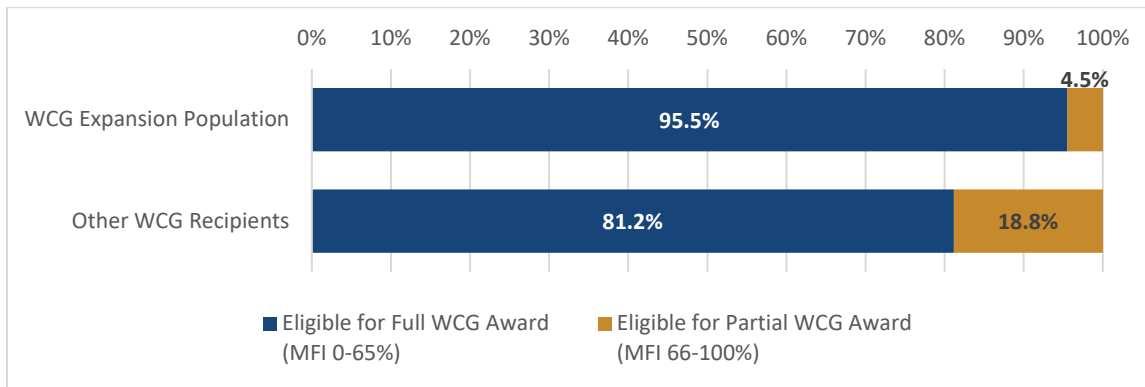
What are the characteristics of students who might utilize the expansion compared to other state aid recipients?

To understand more about state aid recipients who might utilize the state aid expansion (those who had zero QER in a particular academic year, filed a FAFSA for the following academic year, and were still eligible for the Federal Pell Grant according to the FAFSA; hereafter referred to as the “expansion population”), data were disaggregated by median family income (MFI), year in school, sector, gender, and race/ethnicity. Demographic data for recipients in the 2023-2024 academic year are not yet available. Therefore, the year in school, gender, and race/ethnicity information presented is from the 2022-2023 academic year while the MFI and sector information is from the 2023-2024 academic year.

WA Grant

Compared to other WCG recipients, a higher proportion of the WCG expansion population are from families with a lower income and eligible to receive a full WCG award (MFI 0-65%) (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: Income of WCG expansion population compared to other WCG recipients, 2023-2024

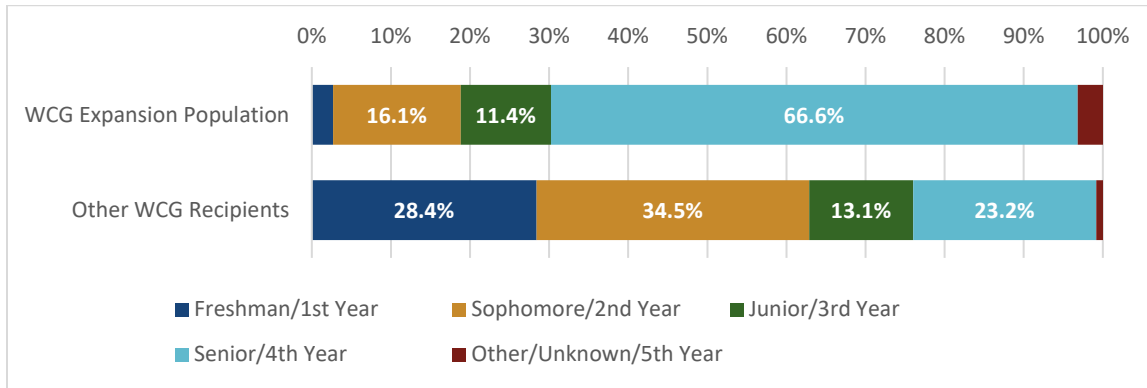


Source: Washington Student Achievement Council staff analysis of WSAC Interim Report, WSAC Unit Record Report, and FAFSA data from the U.S. Department of Education.

Note: The term “expansion population” refers to state aid recipients who might utilize the state aid expansion. These students have exhausted their quarters of eligibility remaining and filed a FAFSA for the following academic year, and their FAFSA indicated Federal Pell Grant eligibility.

Not surprisingly, a higher proportion of the WCG expansion population are in their junior or senior year of postsecondary education compared to other WCG recipients. These students have zero QER, meaning that they have used 15 quarters of their state financial aid eligibility, and they have been enrolled in postsecondary education for at least five years. The proportion of these students who are in their junior or senior year is 78% while the proportion of other WCG recipients who are in the same year of postsecondary education is 36.3% (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Year in school of WCG expansion population compared to other WCG recipients, 2022-2023

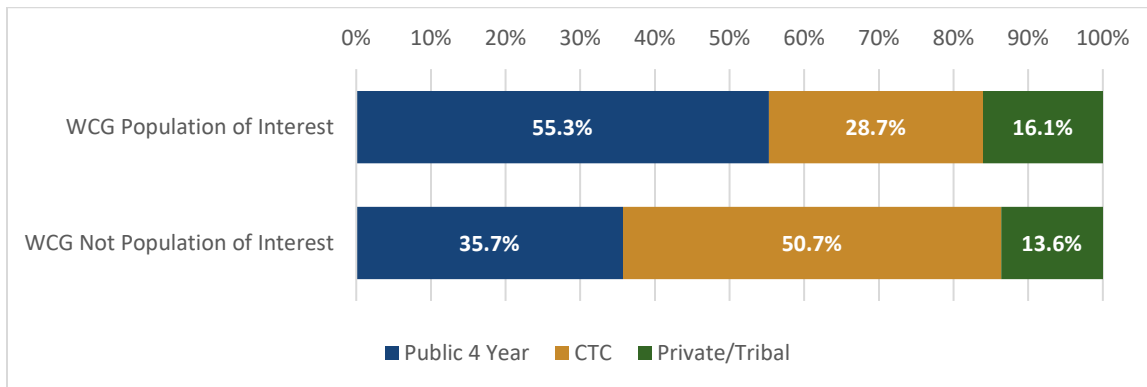


Source: Washington Student Achievement Council staff analysis of WSAC Interim Report, WSAC Unit Record Report, and FAFSA data from the U.S. Department of Education.

Note: The term “expansion population” refers to state aid recipients who might utilize the state aid expansion. These students have exhausted their quarters of eligibility remaining and filed a FAFSA for the following academic year, and their FAFSA indicated Federal Pell Grant eligibility.

A higher proportion of the WCG expansion population are enrolled at public four-year institutions compared to other WCG recipients. The proportion of these students who are enrolled at public four-year institutions is 55.3% while the proportion of other WCG recipients who are in the same sector is 35.7% (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Sector of WCG expansion population compared to other WCG recipients, 2023-2024

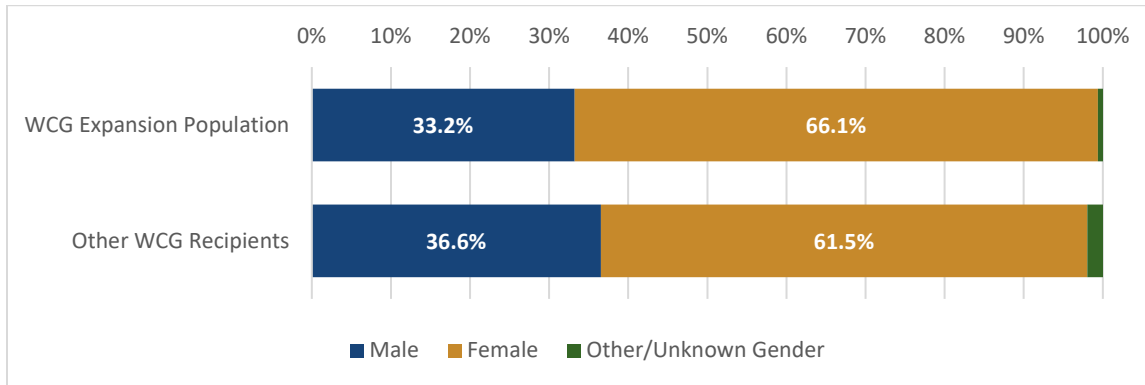


Source: Washington Student Achievement Council staff analysis of WSAC Interim Report, WSAC Unit Record Report, and FAFSA data from the U.S. Department of Education.

Note: The term “expansion population” refers to state aid recipients who might utilize the state aid expansion. These students have exhausted their quarters of eligibility remaining and filed a FAFSA for the following academic year, and their FAFSA indicated Federal Pell Grant eligibility.

A slightly higher proportion of the WCG expansion population are female compared to other WCG recipients (see Figure 10).

Figure 10: Gender of WCG expansion population compared to other WCG recipients, 2022-2023

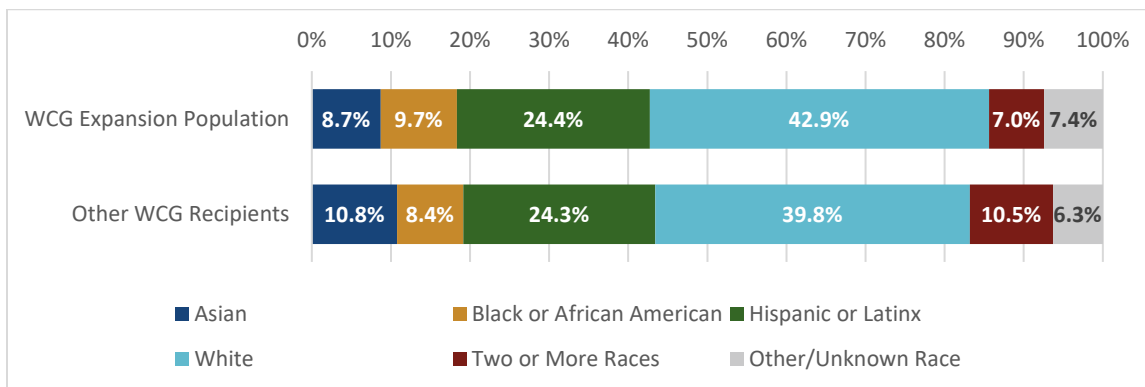


Source: Washington Student Achievement Council staff analysis of WSAC Interim Report, WSAC Unit Record Report, and FAFSA data from the U.S. Department of Education.

Note: The term “expansion population” refers to state aid recipients who might utilize the state aid expansion. These students have exhausted their quarters of eligibility remaining and filed a FAFSA for the following academic year, and their FAFSA indicated Federal Pell Grant eligibility.

The WCG expansion population has slightly higher proportions of Black/African American and White students compared to other WCG recipients, and slightly lower proportions of Asian and multiracial students. The proportion of Hispanic/Latinx students is nearly the same in the WCG expansion population compared to other WCG recipients (see Figure 11).

Figure 11: Race/Ethnicity of WCG expansion population compared to other WCG recipients, 2022-2023



Source: Washington Student Achievement Council staff analysis of WSAC Interim Report, WSAC Unit Record Report, and FAFSA data from the U.S. Department of Education.

Note: The term “expansion population” refers to state aid recipients who might utilize the state aid expansion. These students have exhausted their quarters of eligibility remaining and filed a FAFSA for the following academic year, and their FAFSA indicated Federal Pell Grant eligibility.

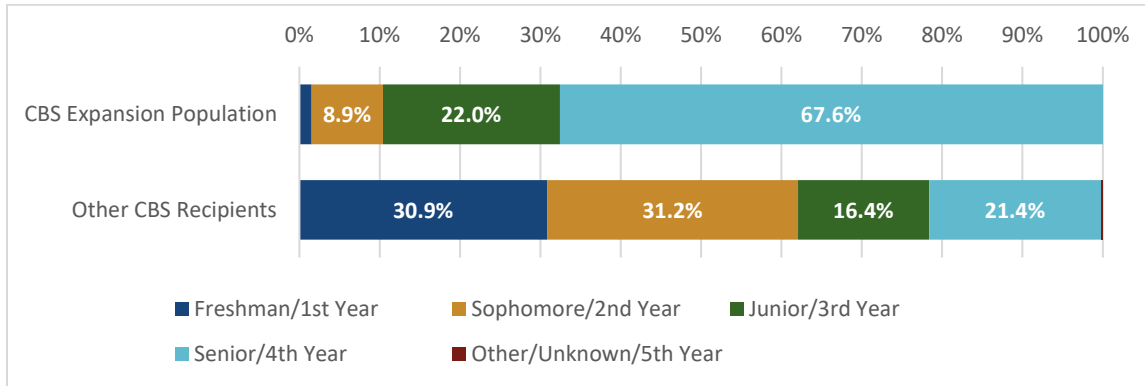
College Bound

All CBS recipients in the 2023-2024 academic year are from families with a lower income and eligible to receive a full WCG award (MFI 0-65%); therefore, the CBS data are not disaggregated by MFI.

Not surprisingly, a higher proportion of the CBS expansion population are in their junior or senior year of postsecondary education compared to other CBS recipients. These students have zero QER, meaning that they have used 12 quarters of their state financial aid eligibility, and they have been enrolled in postsecondary education for at least four years. The proportion of these students who are in their junior

or senior year is 89.6% while the proportion of other CBS recipients who are in the same year is 37.8% (see Figure 12).

Figure 12: Year in school of CBS expansion population compared to other CBS recipients, 2022-2023

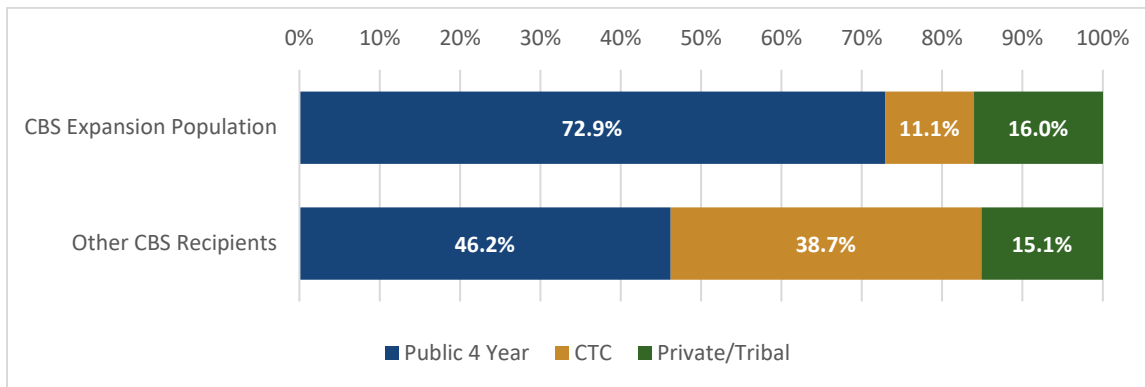


Source: Washington Student Achievement Council staff analysis of WSAC Interim Report, WSAC Unit Record Report, and FAFSA data from the U.S. Department of Education.

Note: The term “expansion population” refers to state aid recipients who might utilize the state aid expansion. These students have exhausted their quarters of eligibility remaining and filed a FAFSA for the following academic year, and their FAFSA indicated Federal Pell Grant eligibility.

A higher proportion of the CBS expansion population are enrolled at public four-year institutions compared to other CBS recipients. The proportion of these students who are enrolled at public four-year institutions is 72.9% while the proportion of other CBS recipients who are in the same sector is 46.2% (see Figure 13).

Figure 13: Sector of CBS expansion population compared to other CBS recipients, 2023-2024

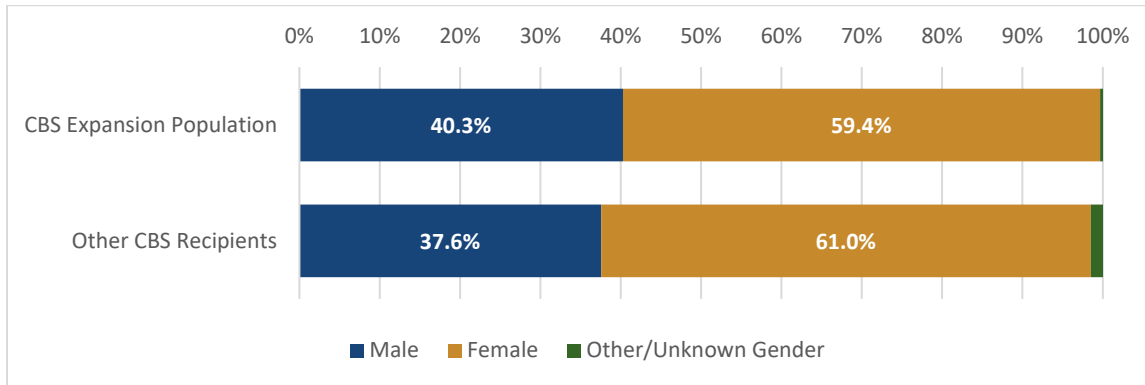


Source: Washington Student Achievement Council staff analysis of WSAC Interim Report, WSAC Unit Record Report, and FAFSA data from the U.S. Department of Education.

Note: The term “expansion population” refers to state aid recipients who might utilize the state aid expansion. These students have exhausted their quarters of eligibility remaining and filed a FAFSA for the following academic year, and their FAFSA indicated Federal Pell Grant eligibility.

A slightly higher proportion of the CBS expansion population are male compared to other CBS recipients. However, regardless of their QER status, CBS recipients are disproportionately female (see Figure 14).

Figure 14: Gender of CBS expansion population compared to other CBS recipients, 2022-2023

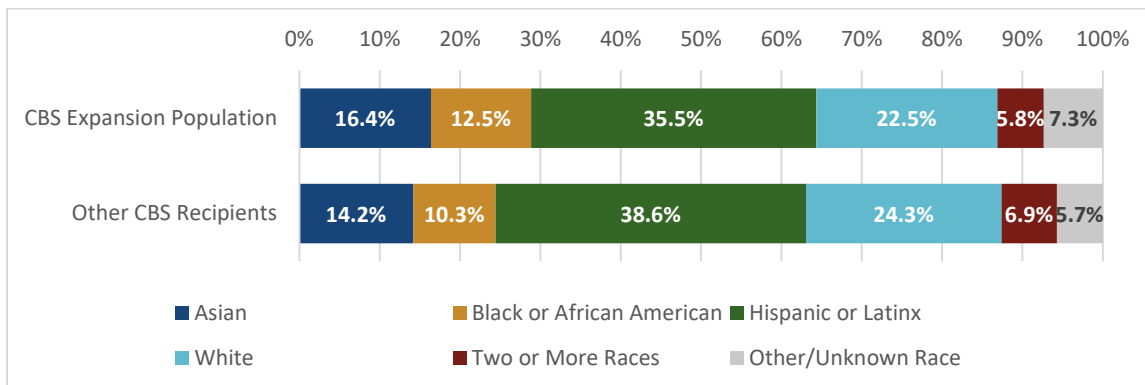


Source: Washington Student Achievement Council staff analysis of WSAC Interim Report, WSAC Unit Record Report, and FAFSA data from the U.S. Department of Education.

Note: The term “expansion population” refers to state aid recipients who might utilize the state aid expansion. These students have exhausted their quarters of eligibility remaining and filed a FAFSA for the following academic year, and their FAFSA indicated Federal Pell Grant eligibility.

The CBS expansion population has slightly higher proportions of Asian and Black/African American students compared to other CBS recipients, and slightly lower proportions of Hispanic/Latinx, White, and multiracial students (see Figure 15).

Figure 15: Race/Ethnicity of CBS expansion population compared to other CBS recipients, 2022-2023



Source: Washington Student Achievement Council staff analysis of WSAC Interim Report, WSAC Unit Record Report, and FAFSA data from the U.S. Department of Education.

Note: The term “expansion population” refers to state aid recipients who might utilize the state aid expansion. These students have exhausted their quarters of eligibility remaining and filed a FAFSA for the following academic year, and their FAFSA indicated Federal Pell Grant eligibility.

Passport

The count of the Passport expansion population is extremely low (N=22 in the 2022-2023 academic year and N=31 in the 2023-2024 academic year). Therefore, the data are not disaggregated by income, year in school, sector, gender, or race/ethnicity.

Expected impact on postsecondary completion

One of the expected impacts of the eligibility expansion is that the number of students who complete a postsecondary credential will increase. Due to data limitations, particularly timing, the impact on postsecondary completion cannot be determined yet (see the appendix for more details). However,

below are the completion rates for WCG, CBS, and PTC recipients who were first enrolled in postsecondary education between academic years 2009-2010 and 2015-2016. In subsequent reports, these rates can be used as a baseline for how the postsecondary completion of later cohorts may be affected by the state aid expansion.

WA Grant

WCG recipients who first enrolled anytime from academic years 2009-2010 to 2015-2016 have a six-year completion rate of 51.5%, which is 2.5 percentage points higher than their five-year rate. This means that 5,571 more students earned a postsecondary award because they were able to enroll for a sixth year (see Table 5).

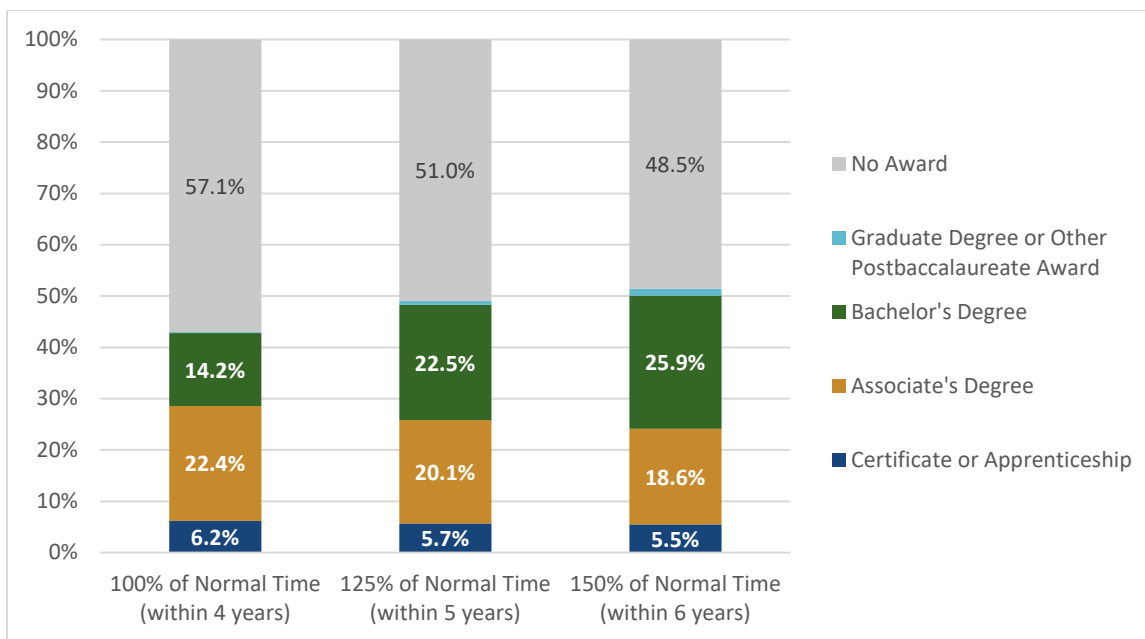
Table 5: WCG postsecondary completion rates, entering cohorts 2009-2010 to 2015-2016

Completion Rate	Number of WCG Recipients in Cohorts	Number with No Award	Percent with No Award	Number with Any Award	Percent with Any Award
100% of Normal Time (within 4 years)	98,322	56,168	57.1%	42,154	42.9%
125% of Normal Time (within 5 years)	109,849	56,001	51.0%	53,848	49.0%
150% of Normal Time (within 6 years)	115,353	55,934	48.5%	59,419	51.5%

Source: Washington Student Achievement Council staff analysis of data from Education Research and Data Center.

The proportion of bachelor’s degrees increases as well when students have the means and opportunity to enroll for a sixth year (see Figure 16).

Figure 16: Proportion of WCG recipients’ postsecondary awards, entering cohorts 2009-2010 to 2015-2016



Source: Washington Student Achievement Council staff analysis of data from Education Research and Data Center.

College Bound

CBS recipients who first enrolled anytime from 2009-2010 to 2015-2016 have a six-year completion rate of 45.8%, which is 2.1 percentage points higher than their five-year rate. This means that 987 more students earned a postsecondary award because they were able to enroll for a sixth year (see Table 6).

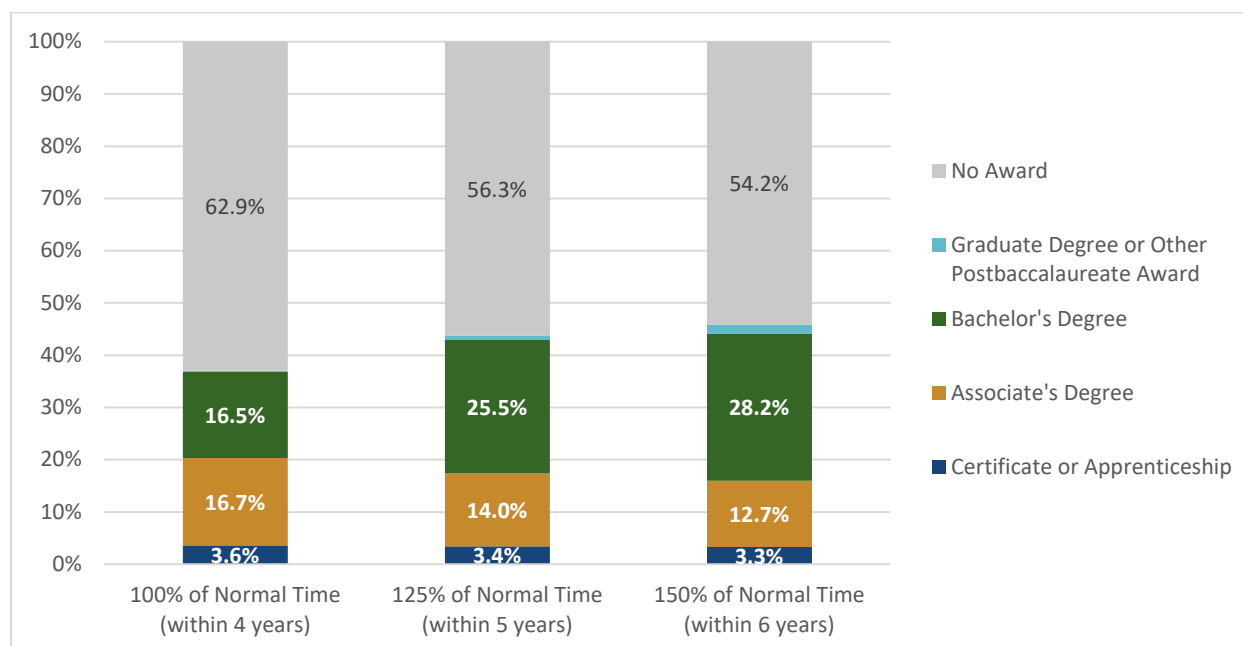
Table 6: CBS postsecondary completion rates, entering cohorts 2009-2010 to 2015-2016

Completion Rate	Number of CBS Recipients in Cohorts	Number with No Award	Percent with No Award	Number with Any Award	Percent with Any Award
100% of Normal Time (within 4 years)	22,915	14,407	62.9%	8,508	37.1%
125% of Normal Time (within 5 years)	25,515	14,360	56.3%	11,155	43.7%
150% of Normal Time (within 6 years)	26,487	14,345	54.2%	12,142	45.8%

Source: Washington Student Achievement Council staff analysis of data from Education Research and Data Center.

The proportion of bachelor's degrees increases as well when students have the means and opportunity to enroll for a sixth year (see Figure 17).

Figure 17: Proportion of CBS recipients' postsecondary awards, entering cohorts 2009-2010 to 2015-2016



Source: Washington Student Achievement Council staff analysis of data from Education Research and Data Center.

Passport

PTC recipients who first enrolled anytime from academic years 2009-2010 to 2015-2016 have a six-year completion rate of 26.6%, which is 2.3 percentage points higher than their five-year rate. This means that 34 more students earned a postsecondary award because they were able to enroll for a sixth year (see Table 7).

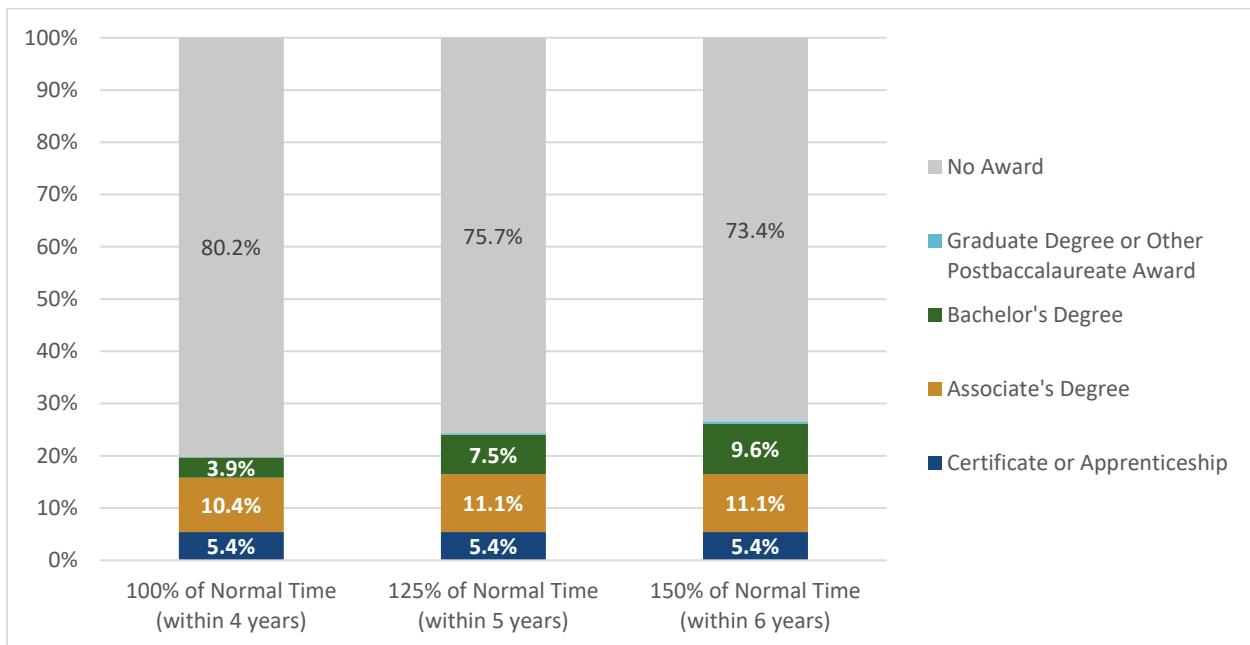
Table 7: PTC postsecondary completion rates, entering cohorts 2009-2010 to 2015-2016

Completion Rate	Number of PTC Recipients in Cohorts	Number with No Award	Percent with No Award	Number with Any Award	Percent with Any Award
100% of Normal Time (within 4 years)	1,002	804	80.2%	198	19.8%
125% of Normal Time (within 5 years)	1,062	804	75.7%	258	24.3%
150% of Normal Time (within 6 years)	1,096	804	73.4%	292	26.6%

Source: Washington Student Achievement Council staff analysis of data from Education Research and Data Center.

The proportion of bachelor’s degrees increases as well when students have the means and opportunity to enroll for a sixth year (see Figure 18).

Figure 18: Proportion of PTC recipients’ postsecondary awards, entering cohorts 2009-2010 to 2015-2016



Source: Washington Student Achievement Council staff analysis of data from Education Research and Data Center.

When postsecondary completion data are available for WCG, CBS, and Passport recipients who have been enrolled long enough to have benefitted from the 2024-2025 expansion, these current data will be used as a baseline for comparing to later cohorts. The hope is that, with the additional year of financial assistance, more students will be able to persist in and complete their postsecondary education to come that much closer to fulfilling their educational, career, and personal goals.

Conclusion

The state aid extension will be vital to students who need an additional year of financial assistance to persist in and complete their postsecondary education. As the data show, many of the students who might be eligible for the extension are in their junior or senior year of school, in pursuit of a four-year

degree, and have a higher need of financial assistance than other state aid recipients. Helping these students is an important piece of the state's strategy to ensure equitable postsecondary outcomes for all Washington residents and to reach the state's educational attainment goal: 70% of adults with a credential beyond high school.

Data on the impacts of the expansion will be available in future reports as follows:

- State aid utilization: To be included in the 2025 or 2026 report.
- Degree completion outcomes: To be included in the 2027 or 2028 report.

Acknowledgements

The research presented here uses confidential data from the Education Research and Data Center (ERDC) located at the Washington Office of Financial Management (OFM). ERDC's data system is a statewide longitudinal data system that includes de-identified data about people's preschool, educational, and workforce experiences. The views expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of OFM or other data contributors. Any errors are attributable to the authors.

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Appendix

Data limitations

The 2024 report provides compelling background and context about the expansion and its potential effects as well as information about the students who may be affected by it. However, it does not include real data on utilization of the expansion or the expansion's effects on postsecondary completion outcomes. The reasons why are described below.

Data collection

The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) is the agency that administers the state financial aid programs (including WCG, CBS, and PTC) and collects financial aid data from the postsecondary institutions that are eligible to participate in the WCG program. The data are collected on a quarterly basis via four interim reports and annually via the Unit Record Report (URR), which is the final, reconciled data. (The URR provides comprehensive information on federal, state, private, and institutional financial aid distributed to need-based financial aid recipients.) The URR data for a particular academic year are not finalized until the Spring following that academic year. For example, 2023-2024 academic year data are currently being collected and will not be finalized until Spring 2025. Also, it is important to note that WSAC does not collect students' postsecondary completion data.

The Office of Financial Management (OFM) is the agency (via the ERDC) that collects postsecondary completion data as part of its P20W data warehouse, a statewide longitudinal data system. This data system includes information on Washington students collected by data contributors and shared with ERDC. On an annual basis, WSAC shares a subset of the URR financial aid data with ERDC that is limited to need-based financial aid recipients at *public* postsecondary institutions. The URR data for a particular academic year is not shared with ERDC until the Fall following that academic year. For example, 2023-2024 academic year data is currently being collected and will not be shared with ERDC until Fall 2025.

ERDC matches the URR subset of financial aid recipients to the postsecondary completion data that it has collected from other sources. This also takes time since ERDC has its own data collection process for obtaining data from the public four-year and public two-year institutions. For example, in Spring 2024, ERDC provided WSAC with 2020-2021 postsecondary completion data.

Timing

The state aid eligibility expansion goes into effect beginning with the 2024-2025 academic year. However, the 2024 report is due on December 1, which is before the academic year has ended. Preliminary financial aid data collection for 2024-2025 (WSAC's Interim Report) will not be available until Summer 2025. The final reconciliation of that data (WSAC's URR) will not be available until Spring 2026. Therefore, the 2025 report can include the preliminary number of students who utilized the expansion while the 2026 report will include the final number.

Timing is also an issue for reporting on the expansion's impact on degree completion. As explained above, there is an inherent lag in data collection and sharing. Financial aid data for the 2024-2025 academic year will not be available until Spring 2026, and it will not be shared with ERDC until Fall 2026. Then, ERDC will need to match these URR data to its postsecondary completion data after it obtains data from the public four-year and public two-year institutions. At the earliest, data on the expansion's impact on degree completion might be available for the 2027 report, but it is more likely that it will not be available until the 2028 report.

Data coordination

Besides timing, data coordination poses a challenge for reporting on the impacts of the state aid expansion. As explained above, WSAC collects the state financial aid data for all students who receive WCG, CBS, and Passport. These data include students' quarters of eligibility remaining (QER) information. Therefore, WSAC can use its own data to report on the extension's impact on state aid utilization. However, WSAC does not collect students' postsecondary completion data, so WSAC cannot use its own data to report on the extension's impact on degree completion.

WSAC also cannot use ERDC's data to fully report on the extension's impact on degree completion. As explained above, WSAC shares a subset of the URR financial aid data with ERDC that is limited to need-based financial aid recipients at *public* postsecondary institutions. (For academic year 2022-2023 data, this subset accounted for 81% of the URR dataset (107,559 records) while private and tribal institutions accounted for 19% of the dataset (24,954 records).) WSAC is currently not authorized to send financial aid data from non-public institutions to ERDC for matching. Therefore, while WSAC could use ERDC's data to report on the extension's impact on degree completion, the data will be limited to students who attend *public* postsecondary institutions.