



Launch the College Promise Scholarship

Increase student success and reduce student debt

Recommendation

Ensure all eligible students receive State Need Grant (\$103 million/biennium)

Make State Need Grant a guarantee, which would make the message to potential students more powerful. Under the re-branded College Promise Scholarship, all eligible students would receive a grant, and the caseload forecast council would prepare a forecast for the program. This would ensure predictability for students and families.

The Imperative

The College Promise Scholarship will help address persistent opportunity gaps

Grant assistance provides students from low-income families with access to postsecondary education. As Washington's K-12 graduates become more diverse and less affluent, SNG is a key component of any strategy to increase educational attainment. Yet 18,000 SNG-eligible students are without funding. This undermines the message of the program: that cost should not be a barrier to enrollment and attainment for any student. SNG is most effective when fully funded—students are more likely to enroll and persist if funding is consistent and predictable. A fully funded and forecasted SNG program would provide stability for students and families; help close opportunity gaps in attainment, enrollment, and completion; and spur progress toward reaching the state's educational attainment goals.

Context

Predictable SNG funding for the College Promise Scholarship will reflect Washington's commitment to affordability

Washington is nationally recognized for its commitment to affordability for low-income students through strong need-based financial aid. The state's largest financial aid program is SNG, serving over 70,000 low-income students. It has been a critical affordability tool for the state for many years, but lack of funding limits its ability to reach all eligible students. SNG helps recent high school graduates and older non-traditional students plot a course to a credential. SNG also has the flexibility to support part-time students who are working. SNG is vital to reaching the state's attainment goals, but its effectiveness is muted when tens of thousands of eligible students do not receive it due to lack of funding. The program should be forecasted to plan for predicted eligible students in the budget process.

Outcomes and Measures

More students will experience the positive educational outcomes associated with need-based aid

- Increased re-enrollment and completion rates among students with the lowest family incomes.
- Increased attendance, retention, and campus engagement.
- Lower annual borrowing and decreased debt loads at graduation.

Quick Facts:

Over the last decade, an average of 20,000 students per year were eligible but unserved.

Average unmet need is virtually the same for students from 0-70 percent MFI as it is for those from 71-125 percent MFI.

In addition to bachelor's and associate degrees, SNG can be used for vocational certificates and registered apprenticeships.