



OPPORTUNITY GRANT

PROGRAM Guidelines **2011-2012**

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2011-2012 OPPORTUNITY GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

UPDATES FOR 2011-2012 OPPORTUNITY GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES.....	1
CHAPTER 1 BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW	2
CHAPTER 2 COLLEGE ALLOCATIONS, FUNDING, AND PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS	3
PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS	5
CHAPTER 3 STUDENT ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION	6
STUDENT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	6
FINANCIAL AID AND CODING	7
CHAPTER 4 DE-OBLIGATIONS, RE-ALLOCATIONS, AND PENALTIES.....	8
DE-OBLIGATIONS.....	8
RE-ALLOCATIONS	8
PENALTIES	8
CHAPTER 5 PROGRAM REPORTING	9
ANNUAL REPORTS.....	9
STUDENT PROGRAM COMPLETIONS	9
EMPLOYMENT AND WAGE REPORT.....	9
CHAPTER 6 PROGRAM AUDITS AND RECORDS RETENTION	10
SBCTC OPERATIONS REVIEWS.....	10
RECORDS RETENTION	10
CHAPTER 7 STATUTES	11
RCW 28B.50.271 Opportunity grant program.	11
RCW 28B.50.272 Opportunity grant program — Student eligibility — Funding — Performance measures — Documentation — Annual summary.	11
RCW 28B.50.273 Identification of job training programs — Designation as opportunity grant-eligible programs of study — Marketing.	12
RCW 28B.50.274 Opportunity partnership program.....	13
CHAPTER 8 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS.....	14

UPDATES FOR 2011-2012 OPPORTUNITY GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Revised Tuition and Fees Amounts: The updated tuition and fees award amounts reflect a 12% tuition increases for academic year 2011-12. The total tuition and fees allocation per FTES is \$3,800 effective July 1, 2011.

2011-12 FTES Award Allocation: The total FTES award allocation is \$6,300 (\$3,800 tuition/fees, \$1000 books/supplies, and \$1500 wrap-around), effective July 1, 2011.

2011 HHS Poverty Level: Determination of family income at or below the 200 percent of the federal level must use the 2011 Health and Human Services Poverty Level chart through 2011.

Opportunity Express: A one-time \$1 million allocation to the Opportunity Grant program was added to the funding for FY11 only. This funding was removed from the 2011-12 allocation.

State General Fund Budget Cuts: The state budget signed by the Governor included an 8.7% net cut. However, the Board continued to 'earmark' the Opportunity Grant program and protect student aid. The total allocation will continue at the same level as in past years.

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

In 2006, the Washington State Legislature appropriated \$4 million to the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to create the Opportunity Grant pilot program. The 10 pilot programs showed excellent results with 73 percent retention and approximately 843 low-income students participating in training for high-wage, high-demand career pathways.

In 2007, the Legislature expanded the Opportunity Grant program by \$7.5 million for a total of \$11.5 million per year for all 34 community and technical colleges. In 2007-08 the Opportunity Grant program served over 2,000 full-time equivalent students (FTES) or approximately 3,000 full-time and part-time students. Again, student persistence exceeded expectations with an 81% fall to spring retention rate.

By 2008, the program had grown to serve almost 5,000 full- and part-time students equivalent to 3,305 full-time equivalent students (FTES).

In 2009, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges merged \$1 million from the Work-based Learning Program into the Opportunity Grant Program. These monies were divided evenly between the 34 colleges and will follow all Opportunity Grant policies, rules, and regulations for disbursement.

For the 2010 program year, the Opportunity Express program added a one-time \$1 million (FY11) allocation divided by the college's FTES target. The additional funds ranged from \$0 to \$36,900 to cover increased tuition costs.

The program remains funded for the 2011. The state budget signed by the Governor included an 8.7% net cut to the community and technical college system. The Board, however, continued to ' earmark' the Opportunity Grant program and protect student aid. The total allocation will continue at the same level as in past years.

The goal of the Opportunity Grant is to help low-income adults reach the educational tipping point — and beyond — in high-wage, high-demand careers. Reaching the tipping point allows the least prepared individuals to complete 45 credits, receive a credential, and increase job skills and knowledge through career pathways. The approved high-wage, high-demand career pathways provide a minimum beginning wage of \$13.00 per hour in Washington State, except a minimum \$15.00 per hour in King County.

Eligible students pursuing approved pathways may receive funds to cover tuition and mandatory fees up to 45 credits and up to \$1,000 per academic year for books and supplies. Individual student support services are an important part of the program and may include: a single point of contact, one-on-one tutoring, career advising, college success classes, emergency child care, and emergency transportation. Legislation allows \$1,500 for these "wrap-around" services.

The retention target for the program is 70 percent for a full year -- students who start in summer/fall and finish spring quarter. For students who are in a program that is less than 45 credits, the retention would be 70 percent from beginning to the end of their program.

CHAPTER 2

COLLEGE ALLOCATIONS, FUNDING, AND PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Each college's Opportunity Grant (OG) allocation for 2011-12 will revert to their original allocation plus the \$29,412 added to each program from the former Work-based Learning Program in 2009. A one-time \$1 million allocation from the Opportunity Express legislation for FY11 was not funded for FY12. The 2011-12 allocation recommendation assumes the following distribution of funds:

1. The Opportunity Grant covers full-time tuition and mandatory fees for eligible students up to 45 credits. The individual college shall determine the cost of full-time attendance and mandatory fees based on the rate of the institution's tuition and mandatory fees.

Example: 45 credits of tuition for 2011-12 is \$3,542. The college may also assess additional fees, such as a lab or technology fee, bringing 45 credits of tuition and fees to \$3,800; therefore, the Opportunity Grant program will cover the \$3,800 for 45 credits.

2. To determine the number of full-time equivalent students (FTES) the college expects to serve: each college shall take the cost of tuition and mandatory fees in number 1 above, add \$1,000 for books and supplies then add \$1,500 for wrap-around individual support services.

The product is the maximum the college will spend on one FTES. Divide this number into the colleges' total allocation to determine the minimum number of FTES the college will serve.

Example: 45 credits tuition and mandatory fees = \$3,800, plus \$1,000 books = \$4,500, plus \$1,500 wrap-around support services = \$6,300 per FTES. The college's total allocation is \$300,000 so divide that by \$6,300 = approximately 48 FTES to be served.

3. To determine the amount of wrap-around individualized support dollars the college may access, multiply the FTES in number 2 above by \$1,500. The answer is the maximum the college may spend on wrap-around individualized support services such as salary, benefits, and training for a single point of contact (i.e. Opportunity Grant Coordinator), faculty to teach student success classes, tutoring, counseling, retention strategies, and **emergency childcare, transportation, and other emergent student costs.**

Example: 48 FTES X \$1,500 = \$72,000 available for wrap-around individualized support dollars. If needed, these dollars may be moved to the financial aid category.

4. The total allocation minus the amount for wrap-around individualized support services is the amount of financial aid the college must spend on OG participants' tuition, fees, books, supplies, and tools.

Example: Original allocation \$300,000 minus \$72,000 available for wrap-around = \$228,000 to be used on student financial aid.

5. The college may not move money from the financial aid category but may move money from the wrap around category to the financial aid category without notifying the SBCTC.
6. The Opportunity Grant funds must be expended by June 30th of each fiscal year. Current year funds may pay for summer quarter tuition and fees if the tuition is due and classes begin before June 30th of current fiscal year.

2011-12 Opportunity Grant Program Funding by College

College	FY12 Total Allocation	FY12 FTES Target and Budget		
		FTES Target	Student Aid	Wrap Around
Bates Technical College	\$279,412	44	\$213,412	\$66,000
Bellevue College	\$379,412	60	\$289,412	\$90,000
Bellingham Technical College	\$373,412	59	\$284,912	\$88,500
Big Bend Community College	\$428,412	68	\$324,912	\$103,500
Cascadia Community College	\$279,412	44	\$213,412	\$66,000
Centralia College	\$369,412	59	\$280,912	\$88,500
Clark College	\$279,412	44	\$213,412	\$66,000
Clover Park Technical College	\$448,412	71	\$341,912	\$106,500
Columbia Basin College	\$279,412	44	\$213,412	\$66,000
Edmonds Community College	\$461,412	73	\$351,912	\$109,500
Everett Community College	\$319,412	51	\$242,912	\$76,500
Grays Harbor College	\$299,412	48	\$227,412	\$72,000
Green River Community College	\$354,412	56	\$270,412	\$84,000
Highline Community College	\$461,412	73	\$351,912	\$109,500
Lake Washington Institute of Technology	\$279,412	44	\$213,412	\$66,000
Lower Columbia College	\$306,412	49	\$232,912	\$73,500
North Seattle Community College	\$329,412	52	\$251,412	\$78,000
Olympic College	\$334,412	53	\$254,912	\$79,500
Peninsula College	\$399,412	63	\$304,912	\$94,500
Pierce College Ft. Steilacoom	\$369,412	59	\$280,912	\$88,500
Pierce College Puyallup	\$319,412	51	\$242,912	\$76,500
Renton Technical College	\$279,412	44	\$213,412	\$66,000
Seattle Central Community College	\$379,412	60	\$289,412	\$90,000
Shoreline Community College	\$445,412	71	\$338,912	\$106,500
Skagit Valley College	\$279,412	44	\$213,412	\$66,000
South Puget Sound Community College	\$279,412	44	\$213,412	\$66,000
South Seattle Community College	\$319,412	51	\$242,912	\$76,500
Spokane Community College	\$319,412	51	\$242,912	\$76,500
Spokane Falls Community College	\$279,412	44	\$213,412	\$66,000
Tacoma Community College	\$279,412	44	\$213,412	\$66,000
Walla Walla Community College	\$461,412	73	\$351,912	\$109,500
Wenatchee Valley College	\$279,412	44	\$213,412	\$66,000
Whatcom Community College	\$279,412	44	\$213,412	\$66,000
Yakima Valley Community College	\$392,412	62	\$299,412	\$93,000
Total CTC System	\$11,624,008	1842	\$8,861,008	\$2,763,000

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

- The college must maintain a retention program for Opportunity Grant (OG) students. A program may include, but not limited to: a single point of contact, student success workshops or classes, attendance tracking, intrusive advising, counseling, mentoring, tutoring, early alert systems, automated communication systems, graduation acknowledgment, and cohort based models.
- In the OG legislation, the student may receive OG funding for 45 credits of eligibility but no more than three years from initial receipt of grant funds. Students called up to active military duty should be exempt from the continuous three year enrollment requirement, Extend the timeframe to exclude the time away for the military service. However, total enrollment should not exceed three years of college attendance. This may include required related courses in a program. (See FAQs at the end of this document for more information)
- The student must maintain a minimum cumulative 2.0 grade point average *and* meet the college's satisfactory academic progress policy. If a student's cumulative grade point average falls below 2.0, the student may petition the college. The college has the authority to establish a probationary period until such time as the student's grade point average reaches required standards.
- An OG eligible program of study must be approved by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (see [Criteria for Program Approval](#)).

CHAPTER 3

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Eligible Opportunity Grant (OG) students must:

- Make a formal application to the program
- Be a Washington resident student as defined in [RCW 28B.15.012](#).
- Enroll in an Opportunity Grant-eligible program of study. See [Criteria for Program Approval](#).
- Have family income that is at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level using the most current guidelines available from the United States Department of Health & Human Services. See [HHS Poverty Guidelines](#) for the 2011-12 academic year.
- Have financial need based on federal methodology from the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid).

To be eligible for Opportunity Grant (OG) consideration, the student must NOT:

- Be in unsatisfactory academic progress
- Owe a repayment to the OG program
- Receive OG funds for a second quarter until they have submitted a FAFSA
- Receive funds beyond 45 credits
- Have exceeded any of these limits:
 - 45 quarter credits or \$3800 of tuition/fees
 - \$1000 per year for books/supplies
 - Student's OG award, in combination with other forms of aid, may not exceed the calculated need.

Students must complete a formal application for the Opportunity Grant program. Each college has the authority to create their Opportunity Grant application. The application must include a personal interview, an essay, or written responses to questions. Include a release in the application so the student may be contacted in the future either for an exit interview, media contact, or data tracking purposes.

Eligibility Prior to FAFSA

If a student meets the first three bullets of eligibility guidelines above but has not filed a FAFSA, they may receive the Opportunity Grant for one quarter. The intent of the legislation is for the student to leverage all other eligible funds and to decrease the student's loan indebtedness. A student may receive Opportunity Grant and scholarships, Worker Retraining, Work First, Pell Grant, State Need Grant, Work Study, and other forms of state and federal financial aid.

A student may not receive a second quarter of Opportunity Grant until they have submitted a FAFSA and show financial need through the FAFSA needs analysis. If a student receives one quarter of Opportunity Grant then files a FAFSA and it is returned with zero financial need, then the student

may not receive Opportunity Grant funding for future quarters (see below for income Special Circumstances).

Income Special Circumstances

If a student's future income is less than their previous year income, they may be able to submit the FAFSA with the future income due to special circumstances. Financial aid officers may use professional judgment and base the student's FAFSA on future income if they have special circumstances such as loss of employment, separation, or divorce.

FAFSA Eligibility

Students are required by the legislation to submit a FAFSA to document financial need. The FAFSA is used as an income eligibility measure. There are many students who are financially eligible for traditional aid resources, but don't receive aid because other factors make them ineligible. For example, they don't pass ability to benefit tests, they are in programs of study that aren't eligible for state and federal aid, they are in default status due to prior financial aid awards, etc. Therefore, many students who may not be eligible for traditional aid resources may be eligible for Opportunity Grant funding and participation.

FINANCIAL AID AND CODING

An eligible student may receive Opportunity Grant for tuition and mandatory fees up to 45 credits. Opportunity Grant students may receive up to \$1,000 an academic year for books, supplies and required tools. It is acceptable for a full-time student to receive an award of \$333 a quarter for books, supplies and tools or \$250 a quarter if they are attending four quarters (summer). This disbursement can be made directly to the student. If the student attends less than full-time then the award will need to be prorated.

Students receiving Opportunity Grant funds must receive an accepted award code, code '2' in the Financial Aid System (FAM). The financial aid award codes are the financial aid program codes (FAPC) below without the zero in front.

Opportunity Grant Financial Aid Program Codes

0ZD	TUIT	OP GRNTII TUIT	(Tuition and fees)
0ZE	BOOKS	OP GRNTII BOOK	(Books, supplies, etc...)
0ZF	TOOLS	OP GRNTII TOOL	(Tools, specialty equipment, supplies, etc...)
0ZG	CHILD	OP GRNTII CHLD	(Emergency child care)
0ZH	TRANS	OP GRNTII TRNS	(Emergency transportation)
0ZI	OTHER	OP GRNTII OTHR	(Tutoring, exam/license fees, career services, etc...)

CHAPTER 4

REFUNDS, DE-OBLIGATIONS, RE-ALLOCATIONS, AND PENALTIES

REFUNDS

Any student receiving Opportunity Grant funding who officially or unofficially withdraws will have funds returned to the Opportunity Grant institutional account based on the college refund policy. All Opportunity Grant funds collected from student refunds may be re-awarded to other Opportunity Grant eligible students if refunds are received in the same fiscal year as disbursed. Please follow your college's standard refund policy.

Should the student re-enroll at a later date, those funds surrendered will apply and count toward the academic year Opportunity Grant tuition/fees funding maximum.

There typically are no refunds for books/supplies purchased.

DE-OBLIGATIONS

Colleges not expecting to meet their Opportunity Grant annual enrollment targets should return funds to the SBCTC for re-allocation to other colleges. Funds not expended by June 30 must be returned to the state and may not be carried forward.

Colleges should de-obligate Opportunity Grant funds each year by completing and submitting an Opportunity Grant "Additional Funds Request/Return of Funds" form. The form will be sent electronically to the Opportunity Grant managers each January. Amounts to be returned for re-awarding are due to the SBCTC electronically by February 15. Enrollment targets will be adjusted for colleges de-obligating funds.

RE-ALLOCATIONS

Colleges may request additional Opportunity Grant funds each year by completing and submitting an Opportunity Grant "Additional Funds Request/Return of Funds" form. The request form will be sent electronically to the Opportunity Grant managers each January. Requests are due to the SBCTC electronically by February 15.

Any de-obligated funds, as well as SBCTC reserve funds, will be re-allocated on a formula basis. Historically, requests exceed funds available.

Enrollment targets will be adjusted for colleges receiving re-allocated funds.

PENALTIES

Per legislation, the SBCTC is accountable for student retention and completion rates of opportunity grant-eligible programs of study. The SBCTC is required to set annual performance measures and targets, as well as monitor the performance at system colleges. Legislation also requires the SBCTC to reduce funding at the colleges that do not meet retention targets for two consecutive years.

Retention data will be collected annually each fall. A retained student is defined as a student who:

1. Began summer/fall quarter and was enrolled spring quarter
2. Completed program of study any quarter within the year

Should a college not meet the retention target for two consecutive years, Opportunity Grant funding will be reduced.

CHAPTER 5

PROGRAM REPORTING

ANNUAL REPORTS

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) will automatically receive a quarterly report from the data warehouse. This report will only give a small ‘snap-shot’ of the Opportunity Grant data. In order for students to be included in the Opportunity Grant reports, a student must:

1. Have AWD-CODE matching the FAPC codes above in the Financial Aid System (FAM)
2. Have AWD-STATUS = 2 and an AWD-AMOUNT greater than 0
3. Be enrolled in a college class (in SMIS) during the quarter being reported
4. This data needs to be entered into the Financial Aid system prior to the quarterly run of MIS Job SR9398J in order to be included in the quarterly report
5. The MIS job to extract Financial Aid data changes each year.

In order to collect more narrative data or data not available through the FMS and SMS data bases - a year-end ‘Data Collection Report’ will be due by August 15 following the end of the academic year. The data collected will assist with common legislative questions regarding student participation. SBCTC will also use the Student Achievement data to track your college’s momentum points through the Opportunity Grant program.

STUDENT PROGRAM COMPLETIONS

As student retention is measured by continued enrollment and/or program completion, it is essential that all students completing programs of study be coded with the appropriate exit code. The most common exit codes for Opportunity Grant students are as follows:

- 1 Workforce Degree (Associate in Technical Arts or Associate in Applied Science not designed for transfer)
- 2 Certificate, >= 90 credits
- 3 Certificate, 45-89 credits
- 4 Certificate, < 45 credits
- 9* Unique Program Completion or Non-credit occupational training completion

* The intent of Exit Code 9 is to recognize job-specific completions, particularly non-credit certification courses. Exit Code 9 was created as part of the performance funding initiative specifically related to non-credit instruction. Although its use has expanded, it is not intended to be a catch-all for workforce completions. Even though a program may be an approved vocationally-oriented course of study with an EPC, Exit Code 9 is not appropriate for multi-occupational or non-specific completions such as Job Prep, Prep for Training, New Chance, and so forth.

The full listing of exit codes can be found under “Completions” on the [SBCTC Data Warehouse](#) web page or check with your college registrar.

EMPLOYMENT AND WAGE REPORT

Employment and wage data is collected by linking the unemployment insurance data match of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana through Employment Security.

Wage and employment statistics of “exiting” Opportunity Grant students; that is, those who have not been enrolled for a full year, whether they completed a program or not, will be matched. Once students are deemed “exiting” students, their wages and employment status are evaluated three quarters after they leave college.

Collection began in fall 2009. A full report is available late fall of each year.

CHAPTER 6

PROGRAM AUDITS AND RECORDS RETENTION

SBCTC OPERATIONS REVIEWS

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) conducts annual operations reviews. These are not formal audits however some aspects of the reviews rely on standard auditing techniques. The SBCTC is charged by statute with oversight responsibility for the state's community and technical colleges. SBCTC efforts in this regard are to test compliance with the rules and regulations established by the state and the SBCTC.

The operations review related to the Opportunity Grant program will include, but not limited to, the following:

1. All Opportunity Grant expenditures must be for student financial aid and/or wrap-around services
2. Opportunity Grant funds for financial aid awards must not exceed legislative maximums
3. Opportunity Grant funds may not be used for non-resident students

RECORDS RETENTION

Records, both student and financial, relating to the Opportunity Grant program must be maintained in accordance with the [Washington State Record Retention Schedule](#). It is recommended that Opportunity Grant program managers coordinate their records retention plan and schedule with their institution's records officer.

CHAPTER 7

STATUTES

RCW 28B.50.271

Opportunity grant program.

(1) The college board shall develop and implement a workforce education program known as the opportunity grant program to provide financial and other assistance for students enrolled at qualified institutions of higher education in opportunity grant-eligible programs of study as described in RCW [28B.50.273](#). Students enrolled in the opportunity grant program are eligible for:

(a) Funding for tuition and mandatory fees at the public community and technical college rate, prorated if the credit load is less than full time, paid directly to the educational institution; and

(b) An additional one thousand dollars per academic year for books, tools, and supplies, prorated if the credit load is less than full time.

(2) Funding under subsection (1) (a) and (b) of this section is limited to a maximum forty-five credits or the equivalent in an opportunity grant-eligible program of study, including required related courses. No student may receive opportunity grant funding for more than forty-five credits or for more than three years from initial receipt of grant funds in one or a combination of programs.

(3) Grants awarded under this section are subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose.

RCW 28B.50.272

Opportunity grant program — Student eligibility — Funding — Performance measures — Documentation — Annual summary.

(1) To be eligible for participation in the opportunity grant program established in RCW [28B.50.271](#), a student must:

(a) Be a Washington resident student as defined in RCW [28B.15.012](#) enrolled in an opportunity grant-eligible program of study;

(b) Have a family income that is at or below two hundred percent of the federal poverty level using the most current guidelines available from the United States department of health and human services, and be determined to have financial need based on the free application for federal student aid; and

(c) Meet such additional selection criteria as the college board shall establish in order to operate the program within appropriated funding levels.

(2) Upon enrolling, the student must provide evidence of commitment to complete the program. The student must make satisfactory progress and maintain a cumulative 2.0 grade point average for continued eligibility. If a student's cumulative grade point average falls below 2.0, the student may petition the institution of higher education of attendance. The qualified institution of higher education has the authority to establish a probationary period until such time as the student's grade point average reaches required standards.

(3) Subject to funds appropriated for this specific purpose, public qualified institutions of higher education shall receive an enhancement of one thousand five hundred dollars for each full-time equivalent student enrolled in the opportunity grant program whose income is below two hundred percent of the federal poverty level. The funds shall be used for individualized support services which may include, but are not limited to, college and career advising, tutoring, emergency child care, and emergency transportation. The qualified institution of higher education is

expected to help students access all financial resources and support services available to them through alternative sources.

(4) The college board shall be accountable for student retention and completion of opportunity grant-eligible programs of study. It shall set annual performance measures and targets and monitor the performance at all qualified institutions of higher education. The college board must reduce funding at institutions of higher education that do not meet targets for two consecutive years, based on criteria developed by the college board.

(5) The college board and higher education coordinating board shall work together to ensure that students participating in the opportunity grant program are informed of all other state and federal financial aid to which they may be entitled while receiving an opportunity grant.

(6) The college board and higher education coordinating board shall document the amount of opportunity grant assistance and the types and amounts of other sources of financial aid received by participating students. Annually, they shall produce a summary of the data.

(7) The college board shall:

(a) Begin developing the program no later than August 1, 2007, with student enrollment to begin no later than January 14, 2008; and

(b) Submit a progress report to the legislature by December 1, 2008.

(8) The college board may, in implementing the opportunity grant program, accept, use, and expend or dispose of contributions of money, services, and property. All such moneys received by the college board for the program must be deposited in an account at a depository approved by the state treasurer. Only the college board or a duly authorized representative thereof may authorize expenditures from this account. In order to maintain an effective expenditure and revenue control, the account is subject in all respects to chapter [43.88](#) RCW, but no appropriation is required to permit expenditure of moneys in the account.

RCW 28B.50.273

Identification of job training programs — Designation as opportunity grant-eligible programs of study — Marketing.

The college board, in partnership with business, labor, and the workforce training and education coordinating board, shall:

(1) Identify job-specific training programs offered by qualified postsecondary institutions that lead to a credential, certificate, or degree in green industry occupations as established in chapter 14, Laws of 2008, and other high demand occupations, which are occupations where data show that employer demand for workers exceeds the supply of qualified job applicants throughout the state or in a specific region, and where training capacity is underutilized;

(2) Gain recognition of the credentials, certificates, and degrees by Washington's employers and labor organizations. The college board shall designate these recognized credentials, certificates, and degrees as "opportunity grant-eligible programs of study"; and

(3) Market the credentials, certificates, and degrees to potential students, businesses, and apprenticeship programs as a way for individuals to advance in their careers and to better meet the needs of industry.

RCW 28B.50.274

Opportunity partnership program.

(1) Community and technical colleges shall partner with local workforce development councils to develop the opportunity partnership program. The opportunity partnership program may be newly developed or part of an existing program, and shall provide mentoring to students participating in the opportunity grant program. The program must develop criteria and identify opportunity grant students who would benefit by having a mentor. Each participating student shall be matched with a business or labor mentor employed in the field in which the student is interested. The mentor shall help the student explore careers and employment options through any combination of tours, informational interviews, job shadowing, and internships.

(2) Subject to funds appropriated for this specific purpose, the workforce training and education coordinating board shall create the opportunity partnership program. The board, in partnership with business, labor, and the college board, shall determine the criteria for the distribution of funds.

(3) The board may, in implementing this section, accept, use, and dispose of contributions of money, services, and property. All moneys received by the board for the purposes of this section must be deposited in a depository approved by the state treasurer. Only the board or a duly authorized representative thereof may authorize expenditures from this account. In order to maintain an effective expenditure and revenue control, the account is subject in all respects to chapter [43.88](#) RCW, but no appropriation is required to permit expenditure of moneys in the account.

CHAPTER 8

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What are the retention expectations of the program?

The retention target is 70 percent for a full year -- students who start in summer/fall and finish spring quarter. For students who are in a program that is less than 45 credits, the retention would be 70 percent from beginning to the end of their program.

2. Can non-citizens receive the Opportunity Grant?

Yes. Non-citizens can receive Opportunity Grant funds if they meet the eligibility guidelines. It is unlikely that these students have a social security number and will not be able to submit the electronic FAFSA to the processors. A completed paper FAFSA may be substituted to show financial need should the college financial aid office choose to complete a manual review to meet this eligibility requirement.

3. Does the student need to be 18 years old to receive the grant?

The student does not need to be 18 but needs to be matriculated into the college as an adult. Dual credit students or high school students are not eligible to receive the grant.

4. Does a student need to have less than an associate's degree to be eligible for Opportunity Grants?

The intent of the legislation is to recruit and retain underserved students for high-wage, high-demand pathways. The best definition of underserved would be a student without higher education experience or less than an associate's degree. While there are no specific legislative restrictions in awarding Opportunity Grant funds to students with associate degrees and/or higher, it would be advisable to award these students on a funds available basis.

Students holding a baccalaureate degree or higher and who qualify for federal student loans would not be eligible for Opportunity Grant funds as their financial need would most likely be met.

5. How can I award the student the \$1,000 for books, supplies and tools?

The Washington Financial Aid Association has determined the average cost of books and supplies is \$972 a year. Opportunity Grant students may receive up to \$1,000 an academic year for books, supplies and required tools. It is acceptable for a full-time student to receive an award of \$333 a quarter for books, supplies and tools or \$250 a quarter if they are attending four quarters (summer).

Programs with higher initial quarter books or supplies/tools costs may adjust the award accordingly.

This disbursement can be made directly to the student. If the student attends less than full-time then the award must be prorated.

6. Should we use previous year income or current year income to determine eligibility?

The institution may make its own policy to determine which year of income to use. With typical federal financial aid, the aid is based on the previous calendar year of income. However, your financial aid office may use Professional Judgment and base the aid on current calendar year income (with the remainder of the year projected).

7. Can a student receive the Opportunity Grant before they apply for the FAFSA?

While the student is applying for the FAFSA, they may receive the Opportunity Grant if they meet the eligibility guidelines:

- Washington resident student as defined in RCW 28B.15.012
- Enrolled in an Opportunity Grant-eligible program of study
- Family income that is at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level using the most current guidelines available from the United States Department of Health & Human Services
- Financial need based on the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)

Once the FAFSA needs analysis had been returned and it indicates that the student does not have financial need, then the student may not receive Opportunity Grant funding for future quarters.

8. Does the student need to be eligible for the FAFSA to receive Opportunity Grant funding?

Students are required by the legislation to submit a FAFSA to document financial need. The FAFSA is used as an income eligibility measure. There are many students who are financially eligible for traditional aid resources, but don't receive aid because other factors make them ineligible. For example, they don't pass ability to benefit tests, they are in programs of study that aren't eligible for state and federal aid, they are in default status due to prior financial aid awards, etc. Therefore, many students who may not be eligible for traditional aid resources may be eligible for Opportunity Grant funding and participation.

9. Do I need to determine independency/dependency on the initial Opportunity Grant application? If my student meets the definition of a dependent student on the FAFSA, do I need to gather parental income?

On the initial Opportunity Grant application, the college may make the determination if they would like to collect independency/dependency information. If the college chooses not to determine dependency initially, they may base the first quarter Opportunity Grant award on their standard application and then future quarters of Opportunity Grant will be determined from financial need from the FAFSA.

If the student is deemed dependent on the FAFSA, then family income will be taken into consideration in determining financial need. If there are extenuating circumstances, the financial aid office has the option of using Professional Judgment to override dependency and use only student income.

10. When does a student's clock start ticking on using the 45 credits of Opportunity Grant eligibility?

A student may receive Opportunity Grant funding for 45 credits of eligibility but no more than three years from initial receipt of grant funds. Therefore a student's 45 credits of eligibility may be separated out from the student's three years of eligibility. A student will begin to use his or her 45 credits of eligibility when grant funds have paid for those 45 credits of tuition and fees. Once a student has been identified as an Opportunity Grant student either by receiving grant funds for tuition, books, supplies/tools, or by receiving wrap around services, the student's three years of eligibility begins to diminish.

An example would be a student whose tuition is being paid by another source but the Opportunity Grant is paying for books. The student's 45 credits of eligibility, has not been used, but the student has begun to use his or her three years of eligibility. The student's 45 credits of eligibility will begin to diminish when the Opportunity Grant has been used to pay directly for the tuition and fees (up to 45 credits). Keep in mind that a student may not receive more than \$1,000 an academic year for books, supplies and mandatory tools.

Another example is a student who is in a vocational program that requires a student to take 20 credits per quarter. The college can make the decision to use Opportunity Grant funds to pay for two quarters at 20 credits each (40 credits total) and then 5 credits of the third quarter (45 credits of eligibility used total), or the college can fund 15 credits per quarter for three quarters (for a total of 45) with the student's other 5 credits per quarter being paid by the student or other financial aid/outside source funds.

Students called up to active military duty may extend beyond the three year maximum.

11. I have a student with 5 credits of OG eligibility remaining but the student has not used \$1,000 books and supplies. May I give the student full-time books and supplies if they are actually taking a full-time load?

Yes, if the student's credit load is full-time then you may pay full-time books and supplies. Once the student has used up his or her 45 credits of eligibility, then the student is no longer eligible for book and supplies even if three years has not passed.

12. May I use OG funds to pay for a student's summer quarter tuition?

If your college's summer quarter is the academic year's first quarter and tuition is due after July 1, 2012, then you may use 2012-13 OG funds. Check with your business/finance office for campus policy and procedures.

13. What if a student has very expensive books and supplies costs the first quarter but only attends part-time each quarter? Is there flexibility in prorating the award?

The books and supplies need to be prorated if the student attends less than full time, but they may be prorated for the year rather than the quarter (this is different than traditional aid).

Example: If you have a CNA student taking 7 credits then they would be considered a ½ time student. Half-time or 50 percent of the student's \$1,000 books and supplies would be \$500 for the year. If the student has higher costs in the first quarter then you may use up to the \$500, but not exceed the \$500 for the academic year unless the student enrolls in ¾ or full-time credits in future quarters.

Of course a school may choose to go the traditional route of prorating each quarter – this above example is just an option.

14. May OG pay for a repeated class?

Yes, you may use OG to repeat a class (even if OG paid for it previously), but the repeated classed diminishes the students 45 credits of eligibility. Of course, the student must abide by your Satisfactory Academic Progress policy.

15. What type of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy must my college implement?

The OG legislation indicates that a student must maintain a cumulative 2.0 grade point average. If a student's cumulative grade point average falls below 2.0, the student may petition the college. The college has the authority to establish a probationary period until such time as the student's grade point average reaches required standards.

Other than the guidelines above, your college may decide on a complete policy. Your college may decide to use the same policy as traditional financial aid, or your college may allow OG students to receive OG even if they are on suspension for traditional financial aid. Your Opportunity Grant team will decide the process. Make sure you define your policy and consistently apply it.

16. Will OG pay for pre-requisites?

The OG legislation allows 'required related' course to be included in the OG funding. If a student is required to take a remedial math/English class or a pre-requisite in order to start their program, then these types of classes may be included in the funding. However, the student may only receive 45 credits of funding, including required related courses, so make sure the student understands this policy and has other funding sources to finish their program.

The risk with funding the pre-requisites is that the student may run out of funding then leave the program and affect your college's retention numbers. Once you have decided upon your local policy, define it in writing and consistently apply it.

17. How often may we award emergency funds?

Individual colleges may decide to award emergency funding more that once a year for a different emergency, or the college may decide to only offer the funding once a year per student. It is up to the college to make the decision and define their procedures.

Example of awarding emergency funding more that once per year:

A student has a shut off notice for power and brings the documentation into the office. After reviewing the request, you (or your team) decide the student is eligible and award the student OG emergency OZI 'Other.' A few months later the student comes in and his or her car has broken down and s/he submits an estimate for repairs. After reviewing the student's request, you may decide to award the student OG emergency funds OZH 'transportation' due to a different emergency.

18. May we add an additional family member to the poverty guidelines if two family members are in college?

The college may make the decision to add a family member to the poverty guidelines if a sibling is under 24 years old is in college at the concurrently. Just make sure you define your policy and consistently apply it.

19. Can we add high-demand, high-wage pathways to our approved programs list?

Yes, please see Criteria for Program Approval for more information. Approved I-BEST programs are automatically approved Opportunity Grant programs.

20. How do you calculate a Full Time Equivalent Student (FTES)?

FTES Calculations:

Quarterly FTES = Credits registered for the quarter divided by 15

Annualized FTES = Credits registered for the quarter or year divided by 45

Example 1:

Student registers for 12 credits. This student is full-time for financial aid, veteran's, Opp Grant, etc...purposes, yet is really only a .75 quarterly FTES

12 credits divided by 15 = .75 FTES

Example 2:

Student registers for 12 credits fall quarter, 17 credits winter quarter, and 16 credits in spring. This student is only .75 FTES fall, but is 1.0 FTES for the year.

12 credits + 17 credits + 16 credits divided by 45 = 1.0 FTES

Example 3:

Student 1 registers for 18 credits, Student 2 registers for 17 credits, and Student 3 registers for 20 credits, all fall quarter. The quarterly FTES is 3.67, while the annualized FTES is 1.22

Quarterly FTES—18 credits + 17 credits + 20 credits divided by 15 = 3.67 FTES

Annualized FTES—18 credits + 17 credits + 20 credits divided by 45 = 1.22 FTES