

Access

Affordability

Achievement



“I would not be able to receive a higher education if it were not for the State Need Grant. Thanks to the financial support, I will get my pre-nursing finished and head toward my goal of forensic nursing.”

– Current SNG recipient

“A reduction or elimination of the SNG would have a major impact on my life. I would not have the opportunity to graduate and pursue a career that pays enough to support my children. As a single parent, going back to school is the best thing I can give my children so we can be a strong family.”

– Current SNG recipient

Washington State Need Grant

Program Overview

The State Need Grant (SNG) program has assisted needy and disadvantaged students for more than 40 years by offsetting a portion of their higher education costs. SNG recipients are traditional and non-traditional students—spanning all age groups.

The maximum award values for full-time enrollment in 2012-13 range from \$1,412 to \$10,868, depending on the sector attended.

Award values are based on the tuition and fee rates at Washington’s public colleges and universities. Award amounts are prorated by income category and for part-time students.

To be eligible for the SNG, a student must come from a family whose income does not exceed 70 percent of the state’s median family income (MFI), which currently is \$57,500 for a family of four.

Benefits to the State

While rising tuition costs affect students from all income levels, students from Washington’s lowest-income families are the most vulnerable. They are less likely to enroll, and more likely to drop out, if financial aid does not offset tuition increases.

The State Need Grant program helps students access higher education and attain degrees to become productive citizens.

Benefits to Students

State Need Grants help the state’s lowest-income undergraduates pursue degrees, sharpen skills, and retrain for new careers.

More than 75,000 low-income recipients received more than \$266 million in SNG funds during the 2011-12 academic year to pursue their higher education goals.



WASHINGTON
OPPORTUNITY PATHWAYS



“Since the elimination of the SNG from my financial aid package, I may have to drop out of college after this quarter. I originally wanted to get my four-year degree, but now I think I’ll be lucky to afford earning a two-year degree.”

– Former SNG recipient

Emerging issues and trends

- **Lowest-income students served first.** State Need Grant data shows an increasing trend of colleges prioritizing their lowest income students in their awarding processes.
 - In the 2011-12 academic year, 83.7 percent of SNG recipients lived in the lowest-income category—versus 82.3 percent in the 2010-11 school year.
- **Extension of the Less Than Half Time Pilot Project.** Students attending with three to five credits have been served through a six-year pilot that the 2011 Legislature extended for the current, 2011-13 biennium.
 - The Council will be preparing a report regarding academic outcomes for these students.
- **Increasing Demand.** The number of students eligible for SNG has increased dramatically, severely straining the capacity of the program to serve all eligible students.
 - In 2011-12 about 32,000 students were left un-served for one or more terms.

Program funding

- The Washington Legislature has allowed the State Need Grant to keep pace with tuition and fees for the last nine biennia.
- The program is funded at \$303 million in 2012-13.
- Current funding allows full awards to students at or below 50 percent MFI. Those with incomes between 50 and 70 percent MFI receive a prorated award.
- State Need Grant is funded from the General Fund, and the Opportunity Pathway Account, which receives a portion of Washington’s Lottery proceeds.

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Student financial aid programs in Washington are known collectively as Opportunity Pathways. The Washington Student Achievement Council administers these programs, helping tens of thousands students annually earn college certificates and degrees.

