

WA Grant, College Bound, & Passport: Maximum Time Frames

Aligning eligibility time frames across state and federal financial aid programs will provide predictable support and increase educational success for disadvantaged students.

The Problem

Inconsistent state and federal financial aid policies make it hard for many low- and middle-income students to navigate and plan their path to a credential. The maximum time frame to receive state aid varies across programs, and all are shorter than the federal standard. Given the numerous disruptions to educational plans and progress in recent years, students otherwise on track to graduation are at higher risk of maxing out the shorter time frames before earning a degree or credential. People who lose access to state financial aid before completing a program often must choose between taking on more student loan debt or dropping out altogether.

The Solution

Aligning eligibility time frames across state and federal financial aid programs will provide predictable, consistent support for students and families. WSAC expects this would decrease student loan debt, help secure students' basic needs, streamline pathways to graduation, and increase the number of students who can complete a degree or credential.

How It Works

This proposal would allow students to receive state financial aid for the same amount of time that they can receive federal aid. It would align the maximum eligibility time frames for the Washington College Grant (WA Grant), College Bound Scholarship (CBS) and Passport to Careers (PTC) programs with that of the federal Pell Grant at 150%—the equivalent of 18 full-time academic quarters. Consistency across programs will reduce confusion for recipients, while also reducing administrative burdens for campus financial aid staff.

By the Numbers

- In 2023-24, over **6,800 Washington students** are on track to complete their program but are within one year of losing state financial aid.
- The federal Pell Grant allows maximum eligibility up to 150%—the equivalent of 18 full-time academic quarters. Limits for state financial aid are lower and vary by program:
 - The maximum time frame to receive WA Grant is the equivalent of 15 full-time academic quarters per person.
 - For CBS, the maximum is equivalent to 12 quarters, and funds must be accessed within five years of high school graduation.
 - PTC limits recipients to the equivalent of 15 quarters for its college pathway while allowing 18 for its apprenticeship pathway. All PTC eligibility expires at the age of 26.
 - This proposal would align maximum time frames across these programs, as well as removing age (PTC) and time-since-graduation (CBS) limits.
- WSAC estimates that implementing this proposal would require approximately **\$8.3 million annually**.



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