



Making college affordable for low- and middle-income students

Expanding the reach of the State Need Grant

Students from low- and middle-income families are finding it increasingly difficult to pay for their college education. Washington’s financial aid programs are outstanding, but do not reach enough students. Independent Colleges of Washington believes the legislature should:

Increase SNG eligibility to 100% of MFI

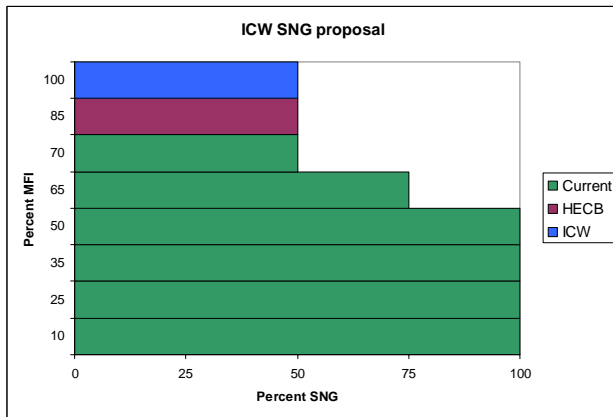
The eligibility cutoff for the State Need Grant is 70 percent of the state’s median family income. Students at this income level may receive half the maximum grant. The HEC Board has requested this be increased to 85 percent of MFI. ICW proposes a giant step to 100 percent of MFI, or \$72,000 for a family of four.

This would push eligibility for the Need Grant program well into the lower middle class, a group that feels a great pinch in paying for college; they make too much to qualify for most need-based aid programs, and not enough to take on the increased cost without burdensome levels of debt or working long hours at the expense of their studies.

Cost: \$64 million for the biennium

(\$37.1 million to go to 85% of MFI)

HECB estimates



Accept HECB budget recommendations

Enact HECB budget request to close the gap between grant amounts and actual tuition and fees, to cover possible tuition increases, and to improve SNG for students attending part-time.

Cost: \$37.6 million to close tuition gap
\$30.6 million covers tuition hikes
\$9.4 million for part-time students

TOTAL COST: \$141.6 million

HECB proposal: \$114.7 million

Benefits of this proposal

Meets public demand and student need

The expanded eligibility will allow the state to help thousands of students from an income group that has been crying out for a hand with rising college expenses.

Creates access and opportunity

ICW research has found that need-based aid levels the playing field. Aid recipients match their more well-off classmates in graduation rates, post-graduation employment rates and income, graduate school attendance, job satisfaction, and living independently from their parents.

Empowers students and families

By investing in students, not institutions, the state empowers students to choose the college – public or private – that is right for them and their career aspirations and dreams. It allows students and their families to be good consumers, and to choose a college based on quality of programs and not simply on “sticker price.”