

# Passport to College Promise Scholarship

*Washington's commitment to students from foster care*

Higher Education Coordinating Board  
November 17, 2011

# Purpose of Passport

- **College enrollment rates for youth from care are far lower for foster youth**
  - 20% compared to 60%
  - Half as likely to earn a degree in six years
- **Created in 2007 as a six year pilot – to improve college success of students from foster care with**
  - Scholarship
  - Campus support services
  - College Success Foundation support services

# Proactive Student Identification

- **Several methods successfully identify 1,234 eligible students, while respecting privacy**
  - Passport Consent Form – 310 (55%)
  - Common Application – 68 or (44%)
  - FAFSA – 856 or (15%)
- **DSHS review process is manual**
- **Information on enrollment materials has not been necessary for identification**
- **FAFSA simplification loses ability to capture students with dependents**

# Passport Student Progress

- **Passport data provides detailed educational outcomes for youth from foster care.**
- **Each year about 600 students are eligible and 1/3 enroll.**
- **More than half of students who apply enroll.**
- **2/3 of each the first two new cohorts have re-enrolled.**

# Enrollment by Sector

Sector	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Research	9	14	22
Comprehensive	15	30	41
Private Four-Year	10	18	22
Community/Technical	119	244	297
Private Career	4	12	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>381</b>

- Additional 178 students enrolled in 2010-11

## Campus staff were surveyed regarding withdrawn students

- 69% had not made academic progress standards
- 5% completed training or certificate programs
- 10% had relocated or transferred
- 4% had legal issues
- 3% had family commitments

# Support Activities

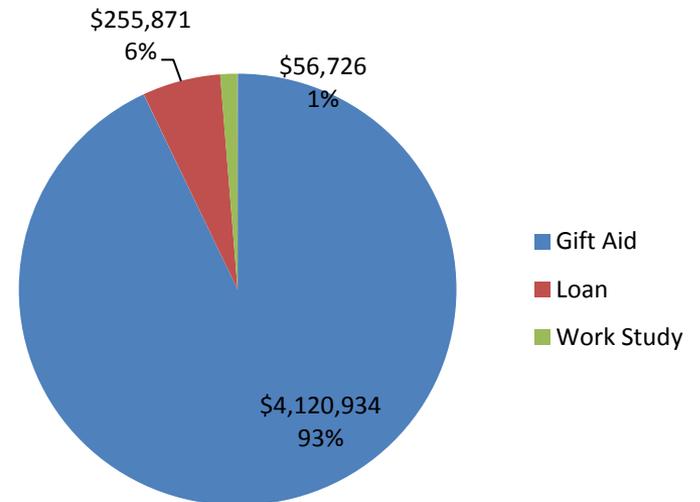
**Forty-nine institutions participate in the Passport “viable plan” by**

- offering intensive support services; and
- designating staff to work directly with students.

**College Success Foundation has worked to increase college enrollment and retention of Passport students since 2009.**

# Affordability

- Students received 92% of the maximum term award each term, compared to 81% last year.
- The majority of aid received is gift aid.
- 15% borrowed \$4,600 on average.
- 7% participated in work-study.
- About half receive federal ETV.
- 7% received Governor's Scholarship.



# Program Funding

**The 2011 Legislature redirected funds from the Foster Care Endowed Scholarship for purposes of Passport.**

## **Recommendations:**

- ✓ Make Passport as a permanent financial aid program.
- ✓ Seek to identify a sustainable funding source.

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## **Passport to College Promise Scholarship** *Washington's commitment to students from foster care*

### **Executive Summary**

The findings in this report are based on the first three years of the six-year pilot of the Passport to College Promise Scholarship program, which is administered by the Higher Education Coordinating Board. In 2007, the state of Washington created Passport in an effort to increase the number of foster youth participating and succeeding in postsecondary education.

The program is a response to findings that foster youth are less likely to secure the benefits of higher education than either the population as a whole or other disadvantaged groups.

Studies show high school graduates from foster care backgrounds are far less likely than high school graduates in the general population to attend college. Those who do attend have a record of lower degree or certificate completion than their non-foster peers.

The primary purposes of Passport are to:

- Provide former foster youth with financial assistance beyond other state, federal, private and institutional financial aid for which they are eligible.
- Provide incentive funding to postsecondary institutions that designate campus support staff, and take other steps to recruit and retain former foster youth.
- Establish additional student intervention and retention services to foster youth through the College Success Foundation.

### **Report Findings**

During the program's first two years, the maximum Passport award (based on tuition at the state's highest-priced public university) was \$6,793.

During the third and current academic years, maximum awards were reduced to \$3,000 to allow existing funds to serve an increasing number of students and provide support services.

In 2010-11, students received 92 percent of the maximum award, versus 81 percent the previous year. This indicates Passport is filling the gap not met by other student financial resources.

Assessing educational outcomes for foster youth after high school is difficult, but Passport data do provide a means to assess the educational outcomes of Passport-eligible foster youth, who number between 500 and 600 each year.

Efforts to retain Passport students have increased the number of former foster youth enrolling in higher education and working toward college degrees and certificates.

- Several methods utilized by the Higher Education Coordinating Board, the Department of Social and Health Services, and local campuses are now in place to successfully identify eligible students without requiring them to complete lengthy applications disclosing personal information.
- Just over one-third of eligible students enroll in Passport, and the numbers have been increasing each year. About two-thirds of Passport students who enrolled during the program's first two years re-enrolled in Passport for a second year. Approximately three-quarters of Passport recipients attend community and technical colleges.
- Among those who failed to attain a college degree, the majority reported they did not meet satisfactory academic progress requirements. The data suggest that continued work with campuses and the College Success Foundation is needed to improve enrollment and retention of Passport-eligible students.

So far, the Legislature has appropriated sufficient funds to serve existing Passport students and to provide incentive funding to institutions and additional student support services through the College Success Foundation.

This report recommends that the Legislature make Passport a permanent program in statute and identify a sustainable funding source to support improved enrollment and retention for Washington's most vulnerable students.

**RESOLUTION NO. 11-25**

**WHEREAS**, The Legislature, through RCW 28B.117, authorized the Passport to College Promise program to help encourage foster care youth to prepare for, attend, and successfully complete higher education; and

**WHEREAS**, The Legislature requested a status report on the extent to which foster youth are participating and persisting in postsecondary education; and

**WHEREAS**, Higher Education Coordinating Board staff have developed a report that includes:

- Information on Passport student identification, college enrollment, persistence and completion;
- A review of affordability, Passport award amounts, and other aid sources for students from foster care;
- An overview of student support activities including institutional support services and contracted services with the College Success Foundation; and
- Program funding needs; and

**WHEREAS**, Report findings regarding Passport include successful student identification methods, strong recruitment and persistence rates, well-rounded financial aid packages, and solid support services through campuses and the College Success Foundation; and

**WHEREAS**, In collaboration with the Passport advisory committee, staff have identified areas for improvement and offered programmatic and funding recommendations in the report; and

**WHEREAS**, Higher Education Coordinating Board staff recommend that Passport become a permanent financial aid program supporting youth from foster care, and that a sustainable funding source be identified.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the Higher Education Coordinating Board adopts the staff report on the Passport to College Promise Scholarship program, and authorizes staff to convey the report to the Legislature.

Adopted:  
November 17, 2011

Attest:

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Ethelda Burke, Chair

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Earl Hale, Vice Chair

