

EDUCATION

FINANCE

AND POLICY

EFP Takeaways

Washington's College Bound Scholarship Program and Its Effect on College Entry, Persistence, and Completion

Background

Indiana, Oklahoma, and Washington have designed state-based college financial aid programs to low-income middle school students who make a pledge to do well in school, be a good citizen, not be convicted of a felony, and apply for financial aid to college. Mark C. Long, Dan Goldhaber, and Trevor Gratz consider the effects on student outcomes of one of these programs, Washington's College Bound Scholarship (CBS). Their work is published in vol. 16 issue 4 of *EFP*.

The Study

The authors use K-12 and postsecondary data from Washington State's Education Research and Data Center that include two cohorts of students prior to the implementation of the CBS and four cohorts after. The authors then compare differences between outcomes for eligible students in cohorts 1-2 (before CBS was in place) and cohorts 3-6 (after CBS began). Finally, they compare these differences with outcomes for students who did not meet the requirements.

For more details:

- View the [full issue](#).
- See the [full article in *Education Finance and Policy*](#).
- [Sign up here to receive future *EFP Takeaways*](#).
- Summary of:
Long, M., Goldhaber, D., & Gratz, T. (2021). Washington's College Bound Scholarship Program and Its Effect on College Entry, Persistence, and Completion. *Education Finance and Policy*, 16 (4): 690-715.

Findings

The authors find little evidence that the promise of college financial aid to middle school students in exchange for pledging to do well in school influences the overall likelihood that students enroll in college. However, this result could be due to low program uptake for the cohorts analyzed; only 39% of eligible students registered for the program.

There is evidence that the program leads to a shift in students' college enrollment towards in-state institutions and away from out-of-state institutions, which might be expected given that the program provides aid to students conditional on in-state college attendance.

The authors suggest that student take-up rates and outcomes might improve if the program no longer required participants to sign a pledge.

