



*Advancing equity, higher education attainment, and robust financial aid by elevating the diverse voices of Washington's students*

# Overview

- I. Solidarity
- II. Why do we educate?
- III. What to expect?
- IV. What to know about the State Need Grant
- V. The Visit

# Solidarity

Everyone in this room is here because we all believe in:

- Increasing the access and affordability of higher edu.
- Power of our narrative and experience.
- Importance of educating lawmakers of student experiences.

# Washington State Need Grant

The **State Need Grant (SNG)** program provides need-based financial aid to income-eligible students pursuing postsecondary education. Eligible students have a household income that is less than 70 percent of the state's median family income ~\$61,500 for a family of four.

Grant recipients can use the financial aid at Washington's eligible institutions: public two and four year colleges, and private institutions.

# What's the issue here?



The state legislature has left the State Need Grant underfunded since deep cuts in 2008 during the recession.

Less state aid means more student debt for the most low-income students in Washington.

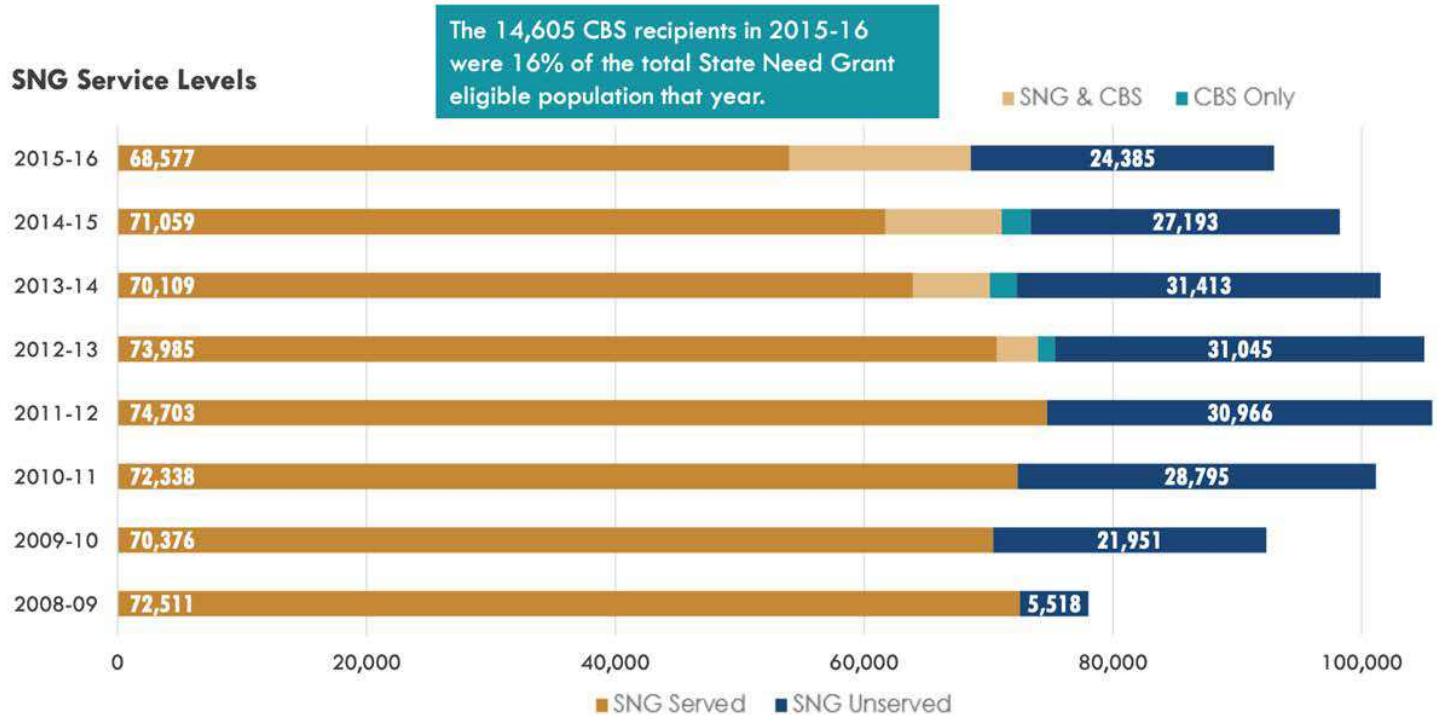
# SNG Specifics

Nearly 69,000 recipients in 2016-17. More than 20,000 students were eligible and unable to receive the grant due to lack of funding.

Total State Need Grant expenditures in 2016-17 were approximately \$290 million.

## State Need Grant Service Levels

Nearly 69,000 students received SNG in 2015-16, but another 24,000 students were unserved.



Although enrollments have declined in the two-year sector, total eligible students remain high.

# DREAMers and WA SNG

**As of 2014, State Need Grant funding was available to non-citizens who meet the residency requirements established in HB 1079: RCW 28B.15.012(2)(e)**

- Has completed the full senior year at a Washington high school and obtained a diploma or a GED® (GED for State Need Grant and Passport to College).
- Has lived in Washington State for at least three years prior to, and continuously since, earning the high school diploma or equivalent.
- Signs a written affidavit to apply to become a permanent resident of the United States, when eligible.

**As of 2015, State Need Grant, Passport to College, and College Bound Scholarship are available to students who have DACA status:**

- Must meet the same residency requirements as U.S. citizen (typically a family living in the state for one year prior to college).
- Must provide DACA documentation to college financial aid office.
- Eligibility for College Bound Scholarship still restricted to those who successfully applied in 7th or 8th grade.



## Our “Ask” as W A- SEN Students

We want the state legislature to recognize the importance of funding the State Need Grant and ensure that we have predictable and stable funding.

Stable funding allows students and their families to better plan for college expenses.

How do we get to a fully funded and stable SNG program?

# Why do we educate?

- Your personal testimony is your power
- Puts a face to the numbers
- We educate legislators: We bring what is happening on campuses to the members.
- We educate legislative staff: They make many of the important decisions in the capital by directly advising their representative.
- Advocate on behalf of those who are unable to be present



# New Funding for SNG

- In the 2017-19 biennium budget, the state legislature appropriated new funds to serve 875 more students on the SNG.
- In 2018, the state legislature (Democrats) promised to fully fund SNG by 2021.
- Make sure to thank legislators for that new funding, it's not where we want to be but it allows us to continue having the conversation about the importance of SNG.

# Questions?

# Other SNG talking points and influences

## Legislators care about the workforce.

- In order to meet Washington's education attainment goals there needs to be increased access and affordability to our post-secondary institutions.
- By 2023, of adults ages 25-44 in Washington: 70% will have post-secondary credentials

## K-12 to Higher Education Pipeline

- We want to make sure that students are set up for success throughout their entire educational career.
- Ensure that the K-higher education pipeline is fully funded.

# Other SNG talking points and influences

They say:	We say:
<p>“ Would you want a tuition decrease/ freeze or would you like the state legislature to increase funding to the State Need Grant?”</p>	<p>“ We can’t say we choose one over the other. Both funding the SNG and reducing the overall costs of attendance increases the affordability and access of our higher education institutions.”</p>
<p>“ Where do you suggest that we get the funds to fill this gap?”</p>	<p>“ We know that the legislature has a lot of other legislative priorities that require funding. We are here to make the case for a more affordable system of higher education, and we think the SNG is a great way to achieve that goal.”</p>

# Other SNG talking points and influences

They say:	We say:
<p>“ I don’t support entitlements, I want to support middle class students and would rather work on lowering tuition and other college costs”</p>	<p>“ If SNG is fully funded, schools don’t have to try and get low income student funding from other sources such as tuition waivers or grants. When SNG eligible students are funded through SNG, then grants and tuition waivers are freed up for middle income students”</p>
<p>“ There should be GPA requirements in place to make sure top performing students get funding to keep going”</p>	<p>“ State Need Grant is a need based program and we support keeping it that way. There are other programs such as College Bound that require a certain GPA throughout high school in order to get funding. So many different factors can impact GPA and academic performance.”</p>
<p>“ I believe that we should be funneling students toward high demand degrees in STEM fields. We should be prioritizing SNG funds students pursuing these degrees”</p>	<p>“ We believe that students should be able to choose the field of study that best fits them regardless of their income level. There are programs, such as the Opportunity Scholarship, that prioritize funding for low income students in STEM majors”</p>



# What does the visit look like?

- In your meetings, we want you to always be comfortable, both in the setting and in the materials you are advocating with.
- Please make sure to review everything several times before you go into the meeting.
- Visits tend to be very cordial and pass by quicker than you think.
- Expect the legislator to try and control the meeting at the beginning
- Sometimes there can be a bad meeting with a legislator but there are ways to bounce back and keep your agenda going

# What does the visit look like?

- Introductions
- Name, campus, and major
- Thank the legislator or staff for meeting with you
- Go over why you are there and who you are with
- Dive into State Need Grant specifics
  - What is the state of the SNG?
  - How many are currently affected
- Personal Testimonies
  - How have you been personally affected? If not, how is someone you know personally affected?
- Close with a “The stories you heard today are just one of many thousands of students who are impacted by the future of the State Need Grant. Please let us know if you have any questions.”

# Roles of Educating

## Facilitator

- keeps meeting on agenda points
- initiates introduction and leg. agenda

## Note-taker

- takes down key points from meeting
- notes legislative commitments
- keeps note of questions asked

## Presenters

- introduce legislative items
- provides facts and evidence

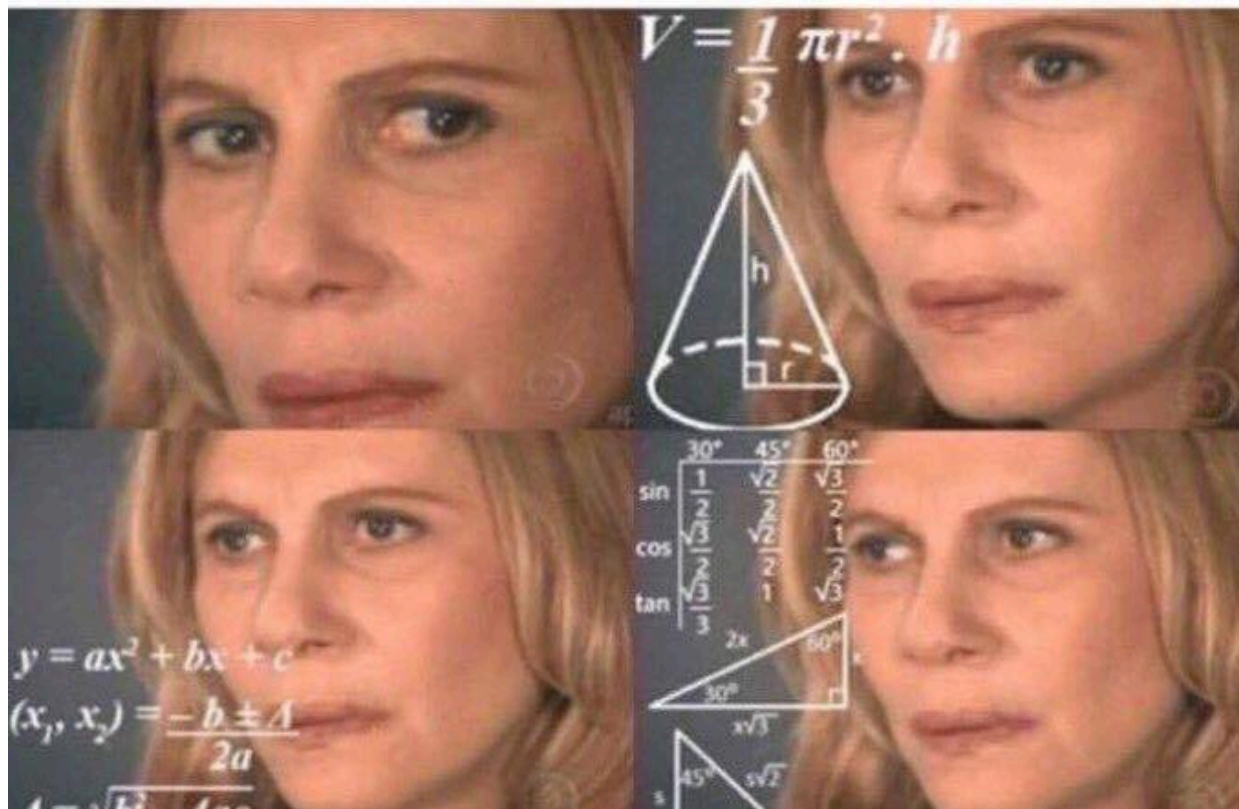
## Testimonials

- gives personal story on the impact of the legislation we want passed

# Helpful Tips for Your Visit

- Be prepared
- Have control of the meeting
- Know your legislator
- Assign roles strategically
- Don't lie!
- Be flexible
- Don't talk in the elevators or hallways
- Keep technology put away
- Debrief your visit

# How to Avoid Awkward Pause



Practice, practice, practice! Run through your visit, nail down transitions, and time yourselves.