

Over 60 schools accept the Washington Grant, College Bound Program, and Passport to Careers funding. Find a school at www.wsac.wa.gov/sfa-institutions

Independent Living Program (ILP)

This program provides you with basic life skills and support. It will help you live independently by building skills and knowledge in these areas:

Educational stability	Post high school education preparation
Employment/vocational readiness	Income maintenance
Housing	Daily living skills
Interpersonal skills	Self-advocacy
Bridging of healthy/supportive relationships	Advocacy and achievement

For more information about Independent Living, email ILSKIDS@dshs.wa.gov, contact your local DCFS office, or visit www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/foster-youth

Medicaid to 26

You may be eligible for continued health care benefits even if you are no longer in foster care or other eligible out-of-home placement. To find out if you are eligible, call 1-800-562-3022 extension 15480.

TRiO Student Support Services Program (TRiO SSS)

This program is offered at many community colleges and four-year schools. This program can be a great support. In TRiO, you can get tutoring, academic counseling, and learn study skills. This program can help you navigate the college system. It also offers social and cultural events to help you build a supportive social network.

Financial Aid

Financial aid is money to help you pay for post-high school (or postsecondary) education. It comes from the federal and state governments, colleges and universities, banks, and organizations.

Applying for financial aid is a separate process from applying for admission to a college. You must do both. To receive financial aid, you must apply for it using the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA (www.studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa) or the Washington Application for State Financial Aid or WASFA (www.wsac.wa.gov/wasfa). Colleges use the results of the FAFSA or WASFA to create a financial aid package unique to you.

Both applications open October 1. Complete this application as soon as possible beginning your senior year to make sure you receive the maximum amount of aid available. You should file every year you attend school.



Foster Care-Specific Financial Aid Programs

There are financial resources to help you turn your dreams into degrees. If you have been in foster care any time after turning 13, education and training beyond high school will likely be paid for at most Washington State colleges or career training program.

College Bound Program

The College Bound commitment is a state-funded program managed by the Washington Student Achievement Council. It is an early promise of state financial aid to help pay for education after high school. College Bound funding combines with other state financial aid to cover college tuition at public college rates, some fees, and some money for books. If you have been in foster care any time from grade 7 to age 21 and have not graduated from high school, you are automatically enrolled in the College Bound program. For more information about the program, eligibility requirements, and other financial aid options in Washington, visit www.collegebound.wa.gov, email collegebound@wsac.wa.gov, or call 888-535-0747, option 1.

Passport to Careers Program

The Passport to Careers program helps foster youth and unaccompanied homeless youth prepare for and succeed in college, apprenticeships, or pre-apprenticeship programs. Through the Passport to College program, students receive a scholarship that assists with the cost of attending college (tuition, fees, books, housing, transportation, and some personal expenses), support services from college staff, and priority consideration for the State Work Study program. The Passport to Apprenticeship Opportunities program will assist students participating in registered apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship programs with covering occupational-specific costs such as tuition for classes, fees, work clothes, rain gear, boots, and occupation-related tools. Students with questions about eligibility for the Passport to Careers program should contact 1-888-535-0747 (option 3), email passport@wsac.wa.gov, or visit: www.wsac.wa.gov/passport-to-careers

Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program

This national program offers financial assistance to eligible youth to attend an accredited* college, university, vocational or technical college. You may receive funding for qualified school related expenses, including Running Start. Funding is limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis to eligible students. ETV can help pay for expenses such as tuition, fees, books, housing, food, transportation, and other educational costs. For more information, visit www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/foster-youth, email ETVWASH@dshs.wa.gov, or call 1-877-433-8388. *For a list of accredited colleges, universities, technical or vocational institutes in Washington State and to view eligibility requirements visit: <https://wsac.wa.gov/sfa-institutions>

Washington State Governors' Scholarship for Foster Youth

This scholarship helps youth in foster care continue their education and earn a college degree. Scholarship amounts vary depending on the college you attend, and are available for up to five years. You must be enrolled full time and maintain satisfactory grades in order to renew the scholarship each year. For more information, visit <https://www.collegesuccessfoundation.org/scholarship/governors-scholarship-for-foster-youth>



www.wsac.wa.gov
www.gearup.wa.gov
www.collegebound.wa.gov

The contents of this publication were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, the content does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

FOSTERING COLLEGE KNOWLEDGE

Planning & Paying for Education After High School

For Youth in Foster Care and Alumni



Get Organized

Create a binder to get prepared and stay organized. Keep information related to admissions, financial aid, scholarships, test scores, and more in your binder. Remember to keep information secure and private.

Grade	Ready Explore	Set Prepare	Grad Pay
06	Think about Your Interests	Do Your Best in School	Start a Savings Account
07	Talk to Adults about Post-High Pathways	Take Challenging Classes	Learn about the College Bound Program
08	Create a High School and Beyond Plan	Successfully Complete Pre-Algebra	Learn How to Stay Eligible for the College Bound Funding
09	Get Involved In School- or Community-Based Activities	Create a Student Portfolio	Register for theWashBoard.org, a Free Scholarship Service
10	Research College and Career Options	Make Sure You Are on Track to Take the Core 24 Classes	Take ACT Aspire or PSAT
11	Participate in College Fairs and Campus Visits	Register and Take a College Admissions Exam (ACT, SAT, ASVAB or ACCUPLACER)	Apply for Scholarships
12	Research Careers and Do a Job Shadow	Apply to 3 or More Postsecondary Schools	Complete the FAFSA or WASFA



The most important things you can do to help yourself prepare for life after high school are attend school regularly, take challenging courses to meet the Minimum College Admission Standards, and talk to your school counselor and other adults about your plans.

College Preparation Programs

If you want to attend college, you need to start preparing by working hard in high school, taking challenging courses, and getting good grades.

Supplemental Education Transition Planning Program (SETuP)

SETuP can provide information to you and your foster family about post-high school education and training opportunities. SETuP providers in your region may be able to help prepare you for college by offering:

- Financial aid application assistance.
- College application coaching and assistance.
- Pre-college testing guidance based on educational goals.
- Connecting you to other support services.

For more information and to find your regional SETuP contact, visit www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/foster-youth

Support Services in College

Successful college students use a variety of available resources such as tutoring, informal student study groups, meeting with professors during office hours, meeting with an academic advisor, and asking for help when they need it. There are many free resources to help you transition to college and get personal, health, financial, and academic support. If you are a foster youth or first-generation student, meaning you are the first person in your family to go to college, colleges may have support programs designed just for you.



Extended Foster Care Program

When you turn 18, you can volunteer to continue receiving foster care services, including placement services, while you complete high school or a post-high school academic or vocational program, or participate in a program or activity designed to promote employment. For more information, visit www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/foster-youth

First Year Supportive Programming

When choosing a college, investigate their Equal Opportunity Programs (EOPs), often labeled as First-Year Experience Programs, Summer Bridge Programs, Freshman Seminars, etc. These programs support youth in making a successful transition to college.

Foster Care Alumni Services

Ask the colleges that you would like to attend if they offer any specialized services or programs for former foster youth.

Housing

Some colleges have priority housing and year round options. The Independent Youth Housing Program is available in certain parts of the state. It provides rental assistance and case management services to eligible youth who have aged out of the foster care system.

This program may be able to help you find a safe, affordable place to live and help you become independent. Learn more about eligibility and its services at www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/foster-youth

Transitioning to College: A Checklist of Activities

Asking these questions will help you find the best fit as you transition to higher education.



Social

- How can I find a mentor or advocate?
- Are there any foster peer groups that meet on campus?



Healthcare

- Do you offer workshops or support on life skills training, wellness, and self-care?
- What mental health services are available?



Finances

- Where can I go for help with finances?
- Where do I go if I need a fee waived?
- How can I get an emergency loan/ financial support if needed?



Academic

- Do you offer an orientation? Is there help with the cost of transportation?
- Do you offer a summer transition program? Is there help with transportation?



Transportation

- Is there free or cheap transportation available?



Housing

- Do you provide year-round housing including during winter breaks?
- Can I have my housing fees waived, deferred, or included in my financial aid package?
- Do you offer LGBTQ+ safe housing?



On-Campus Support Services

- How do I access tutoring and academic support services?
- Is there a Passport Navigator here?
- Where do I go to register for disability services? What documentation is required?
- How can I apply to be a part of a TRiO SSS program, if available?
- Are there food or clothing banks on campus or nearby?