



Washington Student Achievement Council

## Weekly Bulletin

Washington State GEAR UP

**Issue:** August 18-22 2025

### WA State GEAR UP Program Updates

- **Customizable [Quarterly Family Newsletters](#).** These templates provide college and career readiness information for 7th—12th-grade students and are available in *Arabic, Chinese, English, Korean, Marshallese, Punjabi, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese*.
- **Match Tip: IT Staff As Match**—You may count the hourly rate and benefits of IT staff (or other staff) when they set up and/or maintain any tech purchased by GU, when they provide technical assistance, and when they train GEAR UP staff. Any equipment or supplies that they provide are allowable as match.

### Financial Aid Updates

- **Sign Up! [12th Year Campaign](#).** This WA State campaign includes the American College Application Campaign and College Goal Washington (Financial Aid Filing). Sign up to receive free training, printed materials, and other resources to support their students in 2025-26!

### Student Recruitment & Outreach Events

- **[Fall PNACAC College Fairs](#):** Thurston County Fair – Oct. 13 (SMU) and Pierce County Fair - Oct. 16 (TCC).
- **[Fall NACAC College Fairs](#):** Virtual and in-person events. Dates: Sept. 14 (Virtual), Oct. 9 (Performing and Visual Arts, Seattle), Oct. 12-13 (PDX), Oct. 15 (Spokane), Oct. 17-18 (Seattle), Oct. 19 (Virtual), and Nov. 9 (Virtual).

### Optional Professional Development

- **[Apply for a Fall Learning Lab](#).** These NCCEP courses are for small cohorts of GU professionals. Join a three-month session starting Sept. 8! **Save your spot by Aug. 25.**
  - **College Advising Learning Lab:** Led in collaboration with Bottom Line, participants practice college advising strategies, including identifying fit factors, making college lists, completing applications for college and financial aid, and deciding which college to attend.
  - **NEW! Onboarding Learning Lab:** Redesigned with input from GU Directors, this introductory experience covers the basics for anyone new to GU. Participants build a national network while learning about GU's history, administration, and regulations.
- **[WCHSCR Fall Counselor Tour](#).** Sept. 8 (ECC), Sept. 9 (UWB), Sept. 10 (CPTC), Sept. 11 (CBC), Sept. 12 (EWU), Sept. 16 (Virtual).
- **[NCAN National Conference](#).** Sept. 8-10, New Orleans, LA.
- **[GEAR UP West](#).** Oct. 26-28, Portland.

### Resources

- **WAGU Featured Resource: [ABC's of College](#).** This is a set of 8.5x11 posters that can be displayed throughout your school to help add to your college-going culture. Each page displays one term related to college or getting ready for college.
- **[The Common Black College App](#)** is similar to the regular Common App but is specifically designed for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). [Learn more about the Common Black College App](#).
- **College Application Fee Waivers: [Common App Fee Waivers for GEAR UP Students](#).** All GEAR UP students qualify for a fee waiver on the Common Application. Access the Educator [College Application Fee Waiver Resource Guide](#) and the Student [Fee Waiver Flyer](#). Additionally, students who had waivers for the SAT/ACT automatically qualify for waivers. Information is available here: [Using SAT waiver](#) and [Using ACT waiver](#)

- [The College & Career Knowledge Project](#). This WA-state-specific comprehensive workbook compiles digital handouts to support college and career education planning. [Order hard copies](#), find downloadable [handouts](#), and [lesson plans](#).
- [OtterBot](#). OtterBot is a free texting service designed to help Washington students navigate financial aid for college and career education. Students can access OtterBot via text message 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Text "Hi Otter" to 360-928-7281.

## In The News

Need help crafting a GEAR UP story for local media? Explore [NCCEP's tools](#) and don't forget to [Share Your GEAR UP Good News](#).

- [Getting To & Through College: Notes from a Student from a Mixed-Status Family](#)
- [How One School Turned Career Training into a Turnaround Strategy](#)
- [Inaccurate, Impossible: Experts Knock New Trump Plan To Collect College Admissions Data](#)
- [Supporting Middle School Students Within Their Zone of Proximal Development](#)
- [Decoding Student Trust](#)
- [‘Higher Ed Alone Cannot Save Democracy’](#)
- [Carrying Culture & Science into the Future](#)
- [What's Behind the Trump Administration's Immigration Memes?](#)
- [New PSLF Rule Could Limit Debt Relief Access for Thousands](#)
- [3 Simple Ways to Boost Student Motivation](#)
- [Tribal Colleges Rely On Federal Funding. Their Leaders Fear the Trump Years.](#)
- [Judge Strikes Down Trump Administration Guidance Against DEI Programs At Schools](#)

## Scholarships & Opportunities

Find more opportunities at: <https://gearup.wa.gov/educators/scholarships>.

- **Free and Safe: [Get Schooled Essay Review](#)**. Submit your personal statement, supplemental college application essays, and scholarship essays for feedback. They will provide actionable suggestions and feedback within one week.

Scholarship	Brief Description	Due
<a href="#">Make Me Laugh Scholarship</a>	(\$1,500) - Make Me Laugh is a fun scholarship that lets you cut loose and lighten up the atmosphere. Looking for a scholarship for comedians? Now is your chance to show us your funny bone. Perhaps you always have an embarrassing yet funny story to share. Great! We'll promise to laugh with you, not at you. Must be 14 years of age or older at the time of application.	8/31
<a href="#">American Fire Sprinkler Association Second Chance Scholarship Contest</a>	Open to anyone who has graduated from high school or its equivalent and wants to pursue a college degree or trade school education. Enter for the chance to win 1 of 5 \$1,000 College Scholarships.	9/1
<a href="#">Conscious Consumer Scholarship</a>	\$1,000 - Today, it's vital to be a conscious consumer — understanding, handling, and making smart financial decisions. This is especially true for students today who are building financial literacy skills as they start their careers.	9/1
<a href="#">Be Bold" No-Essay Scholarship</a>	The \$25,000 "Be Bold" Scholarship is an easy, no-essay scholarship that will be awarded to the applicant with the boldest profile.	9/1
<a href="#">Scholarship Poetry Contest</a>	Open to all U.S. HS students. Applicant must submit an original poem with 20 lines or fewer. Up to \$500.	9/30
<a href="#">Coca-Cola Scholars Scholarship</a>	(\$20,000) - High school seniors with a minimum 3.0 unweighted GPA may apply on our website in August of their senior year until the September 30 deadline. 150 Coca-Cola Scholars are selected each year to receive this \$20,000 scholarship.	9/30
<a href="#">Dr. Pepper Tuition Giveaway</a>	(\$2,500-\$100,000) - Make and submit a video that helps us get to know you. Tell us about your academic goals, professional aspirations, or even personal dreams. Your video will be judged on the following four criteria: career goals, need for tuition assistance, impact of tuition assistance, and overall presentation quality and delivery. It must be 60 seconds or less and in MP4, MOV, or WMV format. Be passionate, be creative, be you.	9/30

<a href="#">Don't Text and Drive Scholarship</a>	(\$1,000) - Complete the application form, including a 140-character message about texting while driving. The top 10 applications will be selected as finalists. The finalists will be asked to write a full-length 500- to 1,000-word essay about texting while driving.	9/30
<a href="#">Shout It Out Scholarship</a>	(\$1,500) - In 250 words or fewer, submit an online written response to the question: "If you could say one thing to the entire world at once, what would it be and why?"	9/30
<a href="#">NCWIT Award for Aspirations in Computing</a>	For 9th - 12th grade students, it recognizes their computing-related achievements and interests, and encourages them to pursue their passions.	10/28
<a href="#">U.S. Bank Scholarship Program</a>	Complete a series of Financial Genius for Life online learning modules for a chance to win. \$2,500-\$20,000	10/30
<a href="#">Voice of Democracy Scholarship.</a>	(\$35,000) The Voice of Democracy audio-essay program offers high school students a unique opportunity to express themselves through a democratic and patriotic-themed recorded essay. The national first-place winner receives a \$35,000 scholarship paid directly to the recipient's American university, college, or vocational/technical school.	10/31
<a href="#">Zombie Apocalypse Scholarship</a>	(\$2,000) - In 250 words or fewer, submit a response to the question: "Imagine that your high school or college has been overrun with zombies. Your math professor, the cafeteria ladies, and even your best friend have all joined the walking dead. Flesh out a plan to avoid the zombies, including where you'd hide and the top-five things you'd bring to stay alive."	10/31



The opinions expressed in these articles do not necessarily represent those of Washington State GEAR UP, the Washington Student Achievement Council, or the Department of Education. You should not assume endorsement by these entities.

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