



Washington Student Achievement Council

Weekly Bulletin

Washington State GEAR UP

Issue: August 25-29, 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:** Did you know that community volunteers or guest speakers can be a match? Are you counting their preparation and travel time? Well, if not, you CAN! That preparation time is part of their preparation for your event, so it is valuable match time. It must be documented separately on the Goods and Services match form, so list it as preparation time.

Financial Aid Updates

- **Sign Up! [12th Year Campaign](#).** This 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.
 - **Virtual Financial Aid Nights for Seniors & Juniors:** Inviting all students to learn about how to pay for education after high school. You will learn about the types of financial aid offered to you and will receive support on taking the first step to applying.
 - [Register Now: September 30, 2025, 5:30-6:30 pm](#)
 - [Register Now: November 19, 2025, 5:30-6:30 pm](#)
 - Parents/guardians
 - [Register Now: September 24, 2025, 5:30-6:30 pm](#)
 - [Register Now: November 18, 2025, 5:30-6:30 pm](#)
- **[FSA Launches Beta Version of FAFSA Ahead of Schedule](#).** The Department of Education has begun beta testing the 2026-27 FAFSA form, which will officially open for all students on Oct. 1.
- **[FAFSA 2026-27: Preview Now Available](#).** Kick off FAFSA season with our ready-to-use PowerPoint and PDF, including screenshots, step-by-step guides, and updates for the 2026-27 form. Ideal for staff training and student support, it covers dependent, independent, and provisionally independent scenarios, along with correction situations. Pro Tip: Have students create FSA IDs early to ease the process!

Student Recruitment & Outreach Events

- **Opportunity! [Join the Youth Co-Design Team to help shape the 2025 Youth Advocacy Summit in Spokane](#).** Earn \$200 while developing your leadership and advocacy skills. Looking for HS and college students from Eastern WA! Hosted by LEV, AWSL, and Gonzaga. Involves 3-4 virtual meetings and one in-person event. Due Sept. 5
- **[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).
- **[My Journey](#).** ACT hosts a series of free virtual events to help students and families navigate the college admissions process. Topics include college knowledge for parents and college pathways for athletes. Check out the full list! Various dates: Aug. 27- Oct. 15, 4:30 PM. [Download Event Poster \(PDF\)](#).

Optional Professional Development

- Webinar: **[FAFSA and Homeless Youth: Scenarios and Solutions](#)**. By SchoolHouse Connection. Aug. 27, 11 AM.
- **[Fall Counselor Virtual Workshops](#)**. By College Board. Attend free professional development webinars tailored for new and experienced counselors to access timely resources and updates on College Board programs and services. Various times and dates: Aug. 26-Sept. 11.

- [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.
- Webinar: [Supporting Unaccompanied Students](#). By SchoolHouse Connection. Sept. 17, Noon.
- Webinar: [Expanding College Access with the Common App](#). By SchoolHouse Connection. Sept. 30, 10 AM.
- Discussion Lab: [Launching Family Engagement this School Year](#). NCCEP Discussion Labs are an opportunity for GU staff to share, learn, and problem-solve together. Sept. 18, 11 AM.
- [GEAR UP West](#). Oct. 26-28, Portland.
- Virtual: [2026 National GEAR UP Academy](#). Feb 2–6, 2026

Resources

- **WAGU Featured Resource: [NGUW Toolkit](#)**. Mark your calendar for the nation's largest celebration of all things GEAR UP! [National GEAR UP Week](#) will take place from Sept. 22-26, with the theme "Planting Seeds, Growing a Nation." Get ideas and tips on how to celebrate National GEAR UP Week in your school!
- [CareerBridge.wa.gov](#) is an award-winning website created and managed by the Workforce Board, featuring more than 6,500 Washington education programs all in one place. CareerBridge includes detailed program costs and schedules, what graduates earn, how to pay for school, and which fields are expanding in the coming years. Their [Where Are You Going? career guides](#) are free and ship anywhere in the state.
- [How to Engage Students the Moment They Enter the Classroom](#). Openers matter and set the tone for the lesson that follows. Here's how to start strong when you need to.
- [15 Quick \(and Mighty\) Retrieval Practices](#). From concept maps to flash cards to Pictionary, these activities help students reflect on—and remember—what they've learned.
- [Identifying Students Experiencing Homelessness](#). These checklists provide strategies and resources to ensure that students experiencing homelessness are identified as soon as possible and receive support after they have been identified.
- [Quick Guide for Counseling Staff Working with Students Experiencing Homelessness](#)
- [Tips for Teachers & Staff: How to Support Students Experiencing Homelessness](#)

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](#).

- [These Programs Help Poor Students With College. Trump Wants To Pull The Funding](#)
- [The Changing Face of College Applications, By the Numbers](#)
- [How Will Fall Enrollments Look?](#)
- [Home Is Where the Job Shadow Is](#)
- [What Americans Really Think of Public Schools](#)
- [Survey Shows Rising Concern Over Federal Aid Staff Cuts](#)
- [Washington Among Six States Tapped For Youth Apprenticeship Work](#)
- [What School Leaders Would Say to Themselves If They Could Go Back in Time](#)
- [Survey Data Considers Why Students Don't Complete FAFSA](#)

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
Make Me Laugh Scholarship	(\$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
American Fire Sprinkler Association Second Chance Scholarship Contest	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

Conscious Consumer Scholarship	\$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
Be Bold" No-Essay Scholarship	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
Home Depot Path to Pro Scholarship	\$2,500 scholarship for students attending an approved trade-related program (Carpentry, Electrical, HVAC, Plumbing, or Construction Management) at an accredited two-year school.	9/30
Scholarship Poetry Contest	Open to all U.S. HS students. Applicant must submit an original poem with 20 lines or fewer. Up to \$500.	9/30
Coca-Cola Scholars Scholarship	(\$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
Dr. Pepper Tuition Giveaway	(\$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
Don't Text and Drive Scholarship	(\$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
Shout It Out Scholarship	(\$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
WSOS Career & Technical Scholarship (CTS) 101	This scholarship provides up to \$1,500 per quarter, every quarter, toward eligible associate degrees, certificates, or apprenticeships at eligible community or technical colleges. CTS funding can also be used at two apprenticeship sponsors, AJAC Advanced Manufacturing Apprenticeships and Evergreen Rural Water. Search the sponsor name in the eligible programs list . WSOS can cover costs beyond tuition, such as housing, transportation, food, and more.	10/16
NCWIT Award for Aspirations in Computing	For 9th - 12th-grade students, it recognizes their computing-related achievements and interests, encouraging them to pursue their passions.	10/28
U.S. Bank Scholarship Program	Complete a series of Financial Genius for Life online learning modules for a chance to win. \$2,500-\$20,000	10/30
Voice of Democracy Scholarship.	(\$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
Zombie Apocalypse Scholarship	(\$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



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