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| Issue: January 20-24, 2025 |

## WA State GEAR UP Program Updates

* **Updated!** Find our [**Program Staff contact sheet**](https://gearup.wa.gov/file/program-staff) on our website.
* [**Fee Waivers for GEAR UP Students**](https://www.edpartnerships.org/nccep-blogs/2024/10/22/xfs60sji2uyrqm2lqp6heidewd61sr)**.** NCCEP has partnered with the Common App and NACAC to provide GEAR UP families with fee waivers for college applications. *Access the Educator* [*College Application Fee Waiver Resource Guide*](https://mcusercontent.com/a0d96cacbd72776b465181daf/files/3db561a3-8453-c377-5cef-dbc5d80b0ec8/Educator_FeeWaiver_V4.pdf?mc_cid=0acaf88806&mc_eid=06e838aba2&mc_cid=726e01d077&mc_eid=a2f060beda) *and the Student* [*Fee Waiver Flyer*](https://mcusercontent.com/a0d96cacbd72776b465181daf/files/11da894d-ad8a-81af-7e0c-fa1052a12e64/Student_FeeWaiver_V5.pdf?mc_cid=0acaf88806&mc_eid=06e838aba2&mc_cid=726e01d077&mc_eid=a2f060beda)*.* **NOTE:** *All GEAR UP students qualify for a fee waiver on the Common Application. There are no exceptions. Please let WSAC know if you have any issues with this or if an Admissions staff member tells you otherwise. See the links above.*
* **Customizable** [**Quarterly Family Newsletters**](https://gearup.wa.gov/node/1433)**.** These templates provide college/career readiness information for students by grade level (7-12). They are available in English and Spanish*.*
	+ Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Marshallese, Punjabi, Russian, Somali, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese will be posted by the end of the month!

## FAFSA Updates and Resources

* **Need more help?**[**Contact Otter**](https://wsac.wa.gov/otterbot)**!** A free texting service to support all Washington high school students and their parents/guardians. It is designed for high school students who are enrolled in [College Bound](https://wsac.wa.gov/college-bound).
* [**2025–26 FAFSA Counselor Resource**](https://financialaidtoolkit.ed.gov/resources/2025-26-fafsa-counselor-resource.pdf?mc_cid=44b937d9ac&mc_eid=a2f060beda)**.** This FSA guide highlights challenging FAFSA sections, like inviting a parent contributor or completing the finances section, with clear, step-by-step instructions. Use it when working with students or share it with others seeking FAFSA guidance.
* [**Communicating With Students from Families with Mixed Immigration Statuses About Completing the FAFSA.**](https://www.nasfaa.org/mixed_immigration_statuses_fafsa)Our partners at the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) released a new resource guide that financial aid administrators and partners can use to address mixed-immigration-status families’ concerns about whether filing the FAFSA could expose them to additional deportation risk.

## Student Recruitment & Outreach Events

* [**Bring AJAC To Your Classroom!**](https://www.ajactraining.org/programs/youth/ajac-classroom-presentation) From AJAC Advanced Manufacturing Apprenticeships. AJAC prefers in-class presentations over career fairs. See [AJAC Class Presentation Application](https://www.tfaforms.com/5136888)
* [**12th Year Campaign Financial Aid Information & Filing Events.**](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1oELovlvqYmCD7NY0nDw7A_b1Bbeoj4-M7VNBDaQfxoI/edit#heading=h.42fu3w63mb46) Most events are virtual. Spanish events are available.
* [**The Washington Council’s College Planning Day**](https://www.wa-council.org/2023/10/05/2021-college-planning-day-virtual-april-22-2021/) provides a one-stop opportunity for high school juniors and undecided seniors to learn about Washington State’s higher education options. Host site contacts to RSVP and Bus Subsidy request information can be found on [The Washington Council website.](https://www.wa-council.org/)
* Mar. 11 – Saint Martin’s University – Lacey, WA
* Mar. 12 – WSU Vancouver – Vancouver, WA
* Mar. 19 – Heritage University – Toppenish, WA
* Mar. 25 – Western Washington University – Bellingham, WA
* Mar. 26 – UW Bothell – Bothell, WA
* Mar. 27 – UW Tacoma – Tacoma, WA

## Optional Professional Development

* [**2025-26 Difficult FAFSA Scenarios E-Learning Course Available**](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2F458rl1jp.r.us-east-1.awstrack.me%2FL0%2Fhttps%3A%252F%252Fwww.ncan.org%252Fstore%252FListProducts.aspx%253Fcatid%3D797860%2F2%2F01000193d44d9362-e6e93b78-0ff5-49cc-9087-528172d9b260-000000%2FJdAAkdb-ydv62qspkO2M6CkqxCM%3D404&data=05%7C02%7Cbethk%40wsac.wa.gov%7Cd6dfb83db8c24ed9948208dd1e8b0e8d%7C11d0e217264e400a8ba057dcc127d72d%7C0%7C0%7C638700304777675180%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=NlHpXoszUqcIPFHVdgKp12xlkGLHHSMrPPrN0iaYPew%3D&reserved=0). This NCAN course will help you support students with complex FAFSA situations with hints and tips about completing the form. Complete the trifecta of FAFSA 101, FAFSA 201, and Difficult FAFSA Scenarios, and you will be ready to take on any FAFSA situation. All e-learning courses are free for NCAN members.
* **Webinar:** [**Waitlists, Defers, and Holds: What to Do and What to Avoid.**](https://www.pnacac.org/professional-development/webinars) By PNACAC. Learn best practices and pitfalls to avoid in this 101 series designed for high school counselors. Open to PNACAC members only. PNACAC [membership](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Foregongoestocollege.us5.list-manage.com%2Ftrack%2Fclick%3Fu%3D2f8d5fa6686219d36cc349dfd%26id%3D826877f5eb%26e%3Dc4902e16a9&data=05%7C02%7Cbethk%40wsac.wa.gov%7C28426aaba5a64cc7035808dd1a059218%7C11d0e217264e400a8ba057dcc127d72d%7C0%7C0%7C638695333423023498%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C80000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=Cok8HJ671DZnrXkhltnCQ40uvyJu2DmOdgwgL61mq9Y%3D&reserved=0) is free for public secondary schools. Feb. 13, 9 AM.
* [**WSCA Conference**](https://www.wscaconference.org/). Mar. 5-7. Seattle. The call for proposals is now open!
* **Virtual:** [**NCCEP GEAR UP Academy.**](https://www.edpartnerships.org/academy) Feb. 3-6. Reg is now open!
* [**WA State Indian Education Association's 40th Annual Conference**](https://wsiea.org/2025-conference/)**.** Apr. 1-3, Spokane. The [Call for Presenters](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeLFBZWBEKvynBUh_Bf8H2ilb2tIzMkmpXBNwFG1Xp-8mN7Gg/viewform?fbclid=IwY2xjawHydiNleHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHQrsf6E_uzokNiPhK9R--CFjMN43Vp7d6jPIiJBAQjLSBG0yiW7BbGViUg_aem_tj2DEekF1e6U44KW5OinJw) is open. [**NCCEP/GEAR UP Annual Conference**](https://www.edpartnerships.org/annual)**.** July 13–16, San Francisco. [Apply to present!](https://www.cvent.com/c/abstracts/0f5e9c32-85ce-490e-81d1-14a54a133ffa)

## Resources

* **WAGU Featured Resource:** [**Student Alumni Webpage Template**](https://website-4d0dff95.inf.mbd.mybluehost.me/file/student-alumni-webpage-template). Show alums that you still support them by adding an Alumni Support webpage on your school’s website.
* [**988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline**](https://wa988.org/). Feeling overwhelmed? Are you struggling with thoughts of suicide, coping with excessive drinking, or managing anxiety? You're not alone. The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is available 24/7 to provide support. Help is just a call, text, or chat away. Free, multilingual, confidential.
* **WA State College and Career Lessons:** [**Create Your Future with College Bound.**](https://www.collegesuccessfoundation.org/our-approach/partnerships-initiatives/washington-college-access-network-wcan/#create-your-future-with-college-bound-materials-student-materials) Download five student-facing activities for use in middle school. [**College and Career Knowledge.**](https://wsac.wa.gov/12th-year-campaign#college-career-knowledge-handouts) Find the latest version on WSAC. Access and download the [Scope and Sequence for student lessons and their corresponding lesson plans.](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1CHUMoXewdbR0C_wuYiJtQC_-0C3t9b20SVyM8KS4CC0/edit?tab=t.0)
* [**Support For Those Who Support Our Students**](https://www.washingtonea.org/educators/secondary-traumatic-stress)**.** Secondary trauma can impact our work and home life as school staff, especially those of us who work closely with students. Find resources to help.
* [**So, You’ve Got a Diagnosis—Now What?**](https://wapave.org/so-youve-got-a-diagnosis-now-what)From WA PAVE. Understanding your disability, your rights, and how to succeed in self-advocacy and school. [Download the Navigating a New Diagnosis infographic.](https://wapave.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Navigating-a-New-Diagnosis-as-a-Teen.pdf)

## In The News

* [College Is Worth It For Most Students, But Its Benefits Are Not Equitable](https://hechingerreport.org/opinion-college-is-worth-it-for-most-students-but-its-benefits-are-not-equitable/)
* [Hopes And Fears: Higher Ed Leaders Sound Off On Trump’s Return To Power](https://www.insidehighered.com/news/government/politics-elections/2025/01/20/higher-eds-hopes-and-fears-trump-retakes-reins)
* [Migrants Left In Despair At The Border As Asylum System Shuts Down](https://www.npr.org/2025/01/20/g-s1-43855/trump-inauguration-border-asylum-app-cbpone)
* [Trump's Anti-Transgender Order Defines 'Male' And 'Female'](https://www.npr.org/2025/01/20/g-s1-43955/trumps-anti-transgender-order-defines-male-and-female)
* [In Era Of Budget Cuts, Washington Schools Chief Calls For More Ed Funding](https://www.kuow.org/stories/in-era-of-budget-cuts-washington-schools-chief-calls-for-more-ed-funding)
* [How Washington’s Education Department Is Gearing Up For The New Trump Administration](https://www.theolympian.com/news/local/education/article298660578.html)
* [These High Schoolers Are Suing For Better Schools. Can They Win?](https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/these-high-schoolers-are-suing-for-better-schools-can-they-win/2025/01)
* [Student Motivation Is A Perennial Concern. What Are We Missing?](https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/opinion-student-motivation-is-a-perennial-concern-what-are-we-missing/2025/01)
* [Student Anxiety Crisis: Counselors Can Empower Kids Decide Their Future](https://www.edpost.com/stories/how-to-empower-students-and-reduce-their-anxiety-about-their-future)

## Scholarships & Opportunities

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

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

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| **Scholarship** | **Brief Description** | **Due** |
| [Bezos Scholars Program](https://www.bezosscholars.org/apply) | Successful applicants are public high school juniors and staff members from their school who serve as educators and participate fully in the program. Successful applicants have a strong drive and commitment to their education and demonstrate maturity, curiosity, resilience, and leadership.  | 1/21 |
| [AMS Young Scholars Program](https://www.ams.org/grants-awards/emp-epsilon) | The American Mathematical Society (AMS) Young Scholars Program funds summer mathematics programs for U.S. high school students. It supports initiatives that inspire curiosity and build confidence in mathematics. Award amounts vary.  | 1/22 |
| [The UW DO-IT Scholars Program](http://www.washington.edu/doit/Programs/scholar.html) | DO-IT Scholars are Washington State high school students with disabilities planning to continue their education after graduation. Scholars prepare for their transition to college—which includes exploring careers, independence, self-advocacy, and leadership. It is open to high school sophomores or juniors. | 1/30 |
| [Mas Family Scholarship](http://jmcff.org/#apply) | ($32,000) - Applicants must be of Cuban descent and have min. 3.5 GPA, & be financially needy.  | 1/31 |
| [NSF Game Maker Awards](https://new.nsf.gov/75years/game-maker-awards)  | The NSF Game Maker Awards is a video game design competition for K-12 students to showcase their creativity, technical skills, and passion for game design. Individual students or teams may apply. Prizes range from $1,000 to $5,000.  | 1/31 |
| [Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps Scholarship](https://www.netc.navy.mil/Commands/Naval-Service-Training-Command/NROTC/Apply/) | Selected Navy ROTC Scholarship Program applicants are awarded scholarships through a highly competitive national selection process and receive full tuition, book stipend, educational fees, and other financial benefits at many of the country's leading colleges and universities. Upon graduation, midshipmen are commissioned as officers in the unrestricted line Naval Reserve or Marine Corps Reserve. | 1/31 |
| [EngineerGirl Essay Contest](http://www.engineergirl.org/10209.aspx) | This essay contest is for K-12 students – in grades 3 through 12 (ages 8-18). To apply, applicants must write an original essay on a given topic related to engineering.  | 2/1 |
| [John F. & Anna Lee Stacey Scholarship Fund for Art Education](http://www.nationalcowboymuseum.org/education/staceyfund/) | ($500-$5,000) - For students ages 18 -35 pursuing a profession in visual arts & be skilled & devoted to the classical or conservative tradition. | 2/1 |
| [Naomi Winston Scholarship in Art](https://www.nsalwashington.org/the-winston-scholarships-in-voice-and-art/naomi-winston-scholarship-in-art/) | The National Society of Arts and Letters bestows the scholarship on young visual artists aged 16 to 22. Applicants must demonstrate exceptional talent and promise of future success. | 2/1 |
| [The American Legion National HS Oratorical Contest Scholarship](http://www.waconstitutionalspeechcontest.org/) | The American Legion’s National High School Oratorical Scholarship Program – “A Constitutional Speech Contest” aims to develop a deeper knowledge and appreciation of the Constitution of the United States on the part of high school students. Other objectives of the contest include the development of leadership qualities, the ability to think and speak clearly and intelligently, the preparation for accepting duties and responsibilities, and the rights and privileges of American citizenship. | 2/4 |
| [HACER® National Scholarship](https://www.mcdonalds.com/us/en-us/community/hacer.html) | For HS seniors planning to attend a 2- or 4-year college or university. Must have at least one parent of Hispanic heritage, have a min. 3.0 GPA, and be a legal resident. | 2/6 |
| [WSECU Scholarship](https://wsecu.org/scholarships) | WSECU members of all ages are welcome to apply. $2,000 is awarded for two-year colleges and vocational schools. $3,000 is awarded for four-year undergraduate programs and graduate programs. | 2/10 |
| [The Christophers’ Poster Contest](https://www.christophers.org/highschoolpostercontest) | Open to 9-12 graders. Must create an original poster that interprets the theme "You Can Make a Difference" & illustrates the idea that one person can change the world for the better. $100-$1,000. | 2/13 |
| [Washington State PTA Scholarship](https://wastatepta.org/events-programs/scholarship-program/) | Washington State PTA offers four $2,500 scholarships to graduating seniors from WA public high schools with an active PTA starting college (two-year or four-year) in the fall. | 2/13 |
| [Princeton Summer Journalism Program](https://psjp.princeton.edu/about-program/apply) | Free residential journalism and college preparatory program for high-achieving current juniors from low-income backgrounds interested in journalism. All program expenses, including meals, housing, and transportation, are covered. | 2/15 |
| [Gordon A. Rich Memorial Scholarship](http://www.gordonrich.org/html/index.html) | ($12,500) - The recipients of GAR scholarships are exceptionally qualified high school students with demonstrated financial need whose parents or guardians have, or had, a career in the financial services industry. | 2/20 |
| [Vegetarian Resource Group Scholarship](http://www.vrg.org/student/scholar.htm) | Due to the generosity of anonymous donors, The Vegetarian Resource Group each year will award $50,000 in college scholarship money to graduating U.S. high school students who have promoted veganism in their schools and/or communities. Vegetarians do not eat meat, fish, or fowl. Vegans are vegetarians who do not use other animal products such as dairy or eggs. One award of $10,000, six awards of $5,000, and additional runner-up prizes will be given. Entries may only be sent by students graduating from high school in SPRING 2025 | 2/20 |
| [Washington Opportunity Scholarship- Baccalaureate](https://waopportunityscholarship.org/applicants/baccalaureate/) | WSOS supports low- and middle-income students pursuing eligible high-demand STEM majors or health care. It encourages recipients to work in WA once they complete their degrees. | 2/26 |
| [Indian Health Services Scholarships](https://www.ihs.gov/scholarship/apply/) | Scholarships are available for qualified American Indian and Alaska Native students who plan to enter or are pursuing degrees in the health profession. | 2/28 |
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| 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. |