



Washington Student Achievement Council

## Weekly Bulletin

Washington State GEAR UP

**Issue:** May 4-8, 2026

### Admissions & Financial Aid Updates

#### Updates

- [College & Career Culture Recognition Program](#) (WSAC) Tell your story and amplify your work by [May 15](#).

#### Webinars

- [Summer Steps for Financial Aid \(for Practitioners\)](#) (uAspire) [May 6, 11 AM](#).

#### Tools & Resources

- [The 2026 College Openings Update](#) (NACAC) Options for those who have not completed the admission process. Plus, Washington's public [community and technical colleges](#) are open to anyone with a high school diploma or GED.
- [Understanding Aid Options and Comparing Award Letters](#) (WSAC's Student Loan Education site)
- [Budget Planning Worksheets](#) and [Compare Fin. Aid Awards](#) (WAGU) Use to compare financial aid offers and calculate what you will actually pay.
- [Financial Aid Appeal Request Template](#) (SwiftStudent)

### Student Events

#### Webinars

- [Affording College 101](#) (uAspire) May 13, 3 PM.
- [Summer Steps for Financial Aid](#) (uAspire) Jun. 4, 2 PM.

### Optional Professional Development

#### Webinars

- [How Can Communities Work Together to Advance Parents' Postsecondary Access and Success?](#) (WSAC, Communities for Our Colleges, WA Campus Children Centers Coalition, and SBCTC) May 5, 10:30 AM.

#### Office Hours

- [Dual Credit](#) (OSPI) May 13, 3:30 PM
- [HSBP Implementation](#) (OSPI) Drop in anytime 2:30–3:30 PM every Monday (except holidays).

#### Events

- [AVID Summer Institutes](#) (dates/locations vary)
- [2026 NCCEP/GEAR UP Annual Conference](#). Washington, DC, Jul. 19–22.
- [2026 MTSS Integrated Conference](#) (OSPI) Pre-Con: Jul. 28, Conference Jul. 29-30, Wenatchee. To ensure equitable access, [\\$500 District Travel Access Grants](#) are being offered. Funded by generous sponsors, it helps offset travel, lodging, or registration costs. View [flyer](#). To apply, complete the [travel grant form](#).
- [NCAN Conference](#). Oct. 5-7, Las Vegas.

### Resources

Find more at [bit.ly/WAGUtools](https://bit.ly/WAGUtools)

- **WAGU Featured Resource:** [High School 101: Activity Idea](#). Inform incoming freshmen and their parents about high school expectations, resources, and support systems.
- [4 Meaningful Activities to Mark the End of School](#) (Edutopia) Giving middle and high school students a chance to reflect on the past year and look ahead to the next can be very beneficial.

- [GetMyFuture](#) (CareerOneStop) Youth want to work? Visit this resource. See also: [Job Launch](#) (Get Schooled)
- [Customizable Quarterly Family Newsletters](#) (WAGU). These templates provide college- and career-readiness information for 7th—12th-grade students. Available in Arabic, Chinese, English, Korean, Marshallese, Punjabi, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese.
- [Perception vs. Reality on the Value of Higher Ed](#) (Connected College). The Lumina Foundation discusses "Reality Check" research with Gallup, highlighting the gap between perception and students' experiences in higher ed.

## 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](#).

- [McMahon Still Wants To Relocate Special Ed.—And Other Budget Hearing Takeaways](#)
- [‘It’s Incredible’: Spokane Valley Teen Takes It Upon Himself To Create Sensory Aid For Blind Classmate](#)
- [As Graduation Looms, Students Need Pathways That Are Practical, Affordable, and Connected To Opportunity](#)
- [U.S. Citizen Students Face An Agonizing Choice: Affording College Or Protecting Parents From Deportation](#)
- [New Program Offers Internship For All Types Of Tri-Cities Health Care Jobs](#)
- [Research HBCUs Launch Association To Foster Collaboration](#)
- [Wayfinding Leadership: From Managing Systems To Navigating Convergence](#)
- [Do Career ‘Pathways’ Work? Delaware Offers Early Clue](#)
- [3 Daily Practices to Build a Learner-Centered Classroom](#)
- [The Quiet Revolution: Community Colleges Are Training America's AI Workforce](#)
- [Analysis Finds 26 States Missing Key Higher Ed Support Targets for Disabled Students](#)
- [Senators Cassidy, Grassley Introduce Bill to Standardize Financial Aid Terms and Definitions](#)

## Scholarships & Opportunities

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

- Resource: [How to Support Students with Disabilities and Health Challenges with Scholarships](#) (Scholarship America)

Scholarship	Brief Description	Due
<a href="#">Steps For Change Scholarship</a>	This is an income and merit-based renewable scholarship for high school seniors heading to college. Applicants must have a minimum of 3.5 GPA and submit a 1-minute video answering, "How would you value yourself?" The award amount is \$2,000.	5/15
<a href="#">Humane Education Network: A Voice for Animals HS Essay Contest</a>	High school students (ages 14-19) can submit an essay or video on animal mistreatment or suffering, or on the preservation of an endangered species. Categories include Companion Animals, Farm Animals, Wildlife, Insects/Invertebrates, or The Endangered Species Act. Prizes range from \$150 to \$650.	5/25
<a href="#">2026 NPR Student Podcast Challenge</a>	The contest is open to students in grades 4-12.	5/30
<a href="#">GEAR UP Alumni Association Summer Melt Scholarship</a>	Available to graduating GEAR UP seniors planning to enroll in a college, university, or vocational/technical program in Fall 2026, this \$250 scholarship can help cover expenses that might otherwise prevent students from successfully making that transition. Applicants will need to submit a high school transcript, proof of acceptance or enrollment, and a letter of recommendation from a GEAR UP staff member.	5/31
<a href="#">American Indian College Fund Full Circle Scholarship</a>	The Full Circle Scholarship from the American Indian College Fund offers Native American U.S. citizens the chance to pursue degrees at tribal and nonprofit colleges. If you're a member or descendant of a recognized tribe and have a minimum GPA of 2.0 while studying full-time, we encourage you to apply. This scholarship is a valuable step toward your educational goals—unlock your potential today!	5/31
<a href="#">UW Young Executives of Color Program</a>	YEOC is a free nine-month program at the University of Washington Foster School of Business for 170 high school students from 73 schools. Monthly sessions include college prep, business lectures, and mentorship. The only cost is transportation to UW Seattle.	5/31
<a href="#">Fifth Month Scholarship</a>	In 250 words or fewer, write a letter to number five about its importance. Be serious or funny—get creative! Must be 14 or older to apply.	5/31
<a href="#">WSADA “Bright Future” Scholarship Program</a>	WSADA is offering nine \$3,000 scholarships for students in Washington State automotive technology programs (see the list at <a href="http://www.wsada.org/training-locations">www.wsada.org/training-locations</a> ).	5/31
<a href="#">We the Future Contest</a>	Open to K-12, college, grad students, adults 25+, and seniors 65+. Different requirements apply; see website for details. Amount varies.	5/31
<a href="#">Native Forward Scholarship Fund</a>	American Indian Graduate Center offers funding opportunities for undergraduate students, including AS, BA, and BS degrees in all majors, with special scholarships for	6/1

	STEM majors. Must be an enrolled member of a U.S. federally recognized American Indian tribe or Alaska Native group.	
<a href="#">SchoolHouse Connection Youth Leadership and Scholarship Program</a>	Provides scholarships to youth who have experienced homelessness to ensure they complete a post-secondary education program. Assists with financial aid processes, mental health advocacy and referrals, professional legal advocacy and referrals, and assistance in locating and establishing local contacts for general support and services. \$2,000 scholarship award (\$1,000 for the 1st year, \$1,000 for the 2nd year of college). Undocumented students who meet these criteria are eligible.	6/2
<a href="#">Stuck At Prom Scholarship Contest</a>	(\$10,000) - This is the coolest scholarship contest around! Students are challenged to create and wear their own prom outfits made entirely from Duck Tape for the chance to win scholarship cash!	6/3
<a href="#">Navigate Your Future Scholarship</a>	A \$2,500 scholarship is offered to a high school graduate continuing his or her education in the aviation industry.	6/26
<a href="#">Courage to Grow Scholarship</a>	(\$1,000) - Please explain in 250 words or fewer why you believe that you should be awarded this scholarship. You must be a junior or senior in high school or a college student with a minimum GPA of 2.5 or better. U.S. citizens only, please.	6/30
<a href="#">Scholarship Poetry Contest - Fall Issue</a>	Open to all U.S. HS students. Applicants must submit an original poem with 20 lines or fewer. Up to \$500.	6/30
<a href="#">Do-Over Scholarship</a>	(\$1,500) - In 250 words or fewer, submit a response to the question: "If you could get one 'do-over' in life, what would it be and why?"	6/30
<a href="#">Geoscience IDEA Scholarship (formerly AWG Minority Scholarship)</a>	Encourages women from underserved communities to pursue education and careers in the Geosciences (Earth Sciences). Up to \$ 5,000 in awards annually, typically split among two or more undergraduate students, and matches them with AWG mentors to enhance their careers.	6/30



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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