



Washington Student Achievement Council

Weekly Bulletin

Washington State GEAR UP

Issue: September 22-26, 2025

WA State GEAR UP Program Updates

- **Happy National GEAR UP Week!** National GEAR UP Week is a call to action, celebrating the program's successes and inspiring stories from students and alums. Governor Ferguson has [proclaimed this week](#) in Washington, highlighting GEAR UP's role in empowering students and families to achieve their aspirations.
- **Save the Dates:** [2025-26 GEAR UP Program Calendar](#) has been updated. Download the latest version.
- **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:** Does your building charge GEAR UP for postage and printing services, or does another program (for example, general fund) pay for them? You may submit these items as a match if your building does not bill or reimburse GEAR UP for these costs. Use a Goods and Services match form and attach documentation to verify the charges.

Financial Aid Updates

- **Save the Date:** The 2026-27 FAFSA & WASFA open on October 1, 2025. Get ready to help the Class of 2026.
- **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 Fin. Aid Nights for Seniors & Juniors:** [Sept. 30, 5:30 PM](#), and [Nov. 19, 5:30 PM](#).
- **Virtual Fin. Aid Nights for Parents/Guardians:** [Sept. 25, 5:30 PM](#), and [Nov. 18, 5:30 PM](#)

Student Recruitment & Outreach Events

- **Bring AJAC To Your Classroom!** From AJAC Advanced Manufacturing Apprenticeships. AJAC prefers in-class presentations over career fairs. See [AJAC Class Presentation Application](#)
- **My Journey.** ACT hosts free virtual events to help students and families navigate the college admissions process. Topics include college knowledge for parents and college pathways for athletes—dates through Oct. 15, 4:30 PM.
- **Fall NACAC College Fairs:** Virtual and in-person events. Dates: 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).
- **Fall PNACAC College Fairs:** Thurston County Fair – Oct. 13 (SMU) and Pierce County Fair - Oct. 16 (TCC).

Optional Professional Development

- Webinar: [Expanding College Access with the Common App](#). By SchoolHouse Connection. Sept. 30, 10 AM.
- Webinar: [Financial Aid Navigation](#). By 12th Year Campaign. Oct. 8, 10-Noon.
- Webinar: [2026-27 FAFSA Kickoff: FAFSA is Working!](#) By NCAN. Free and open to the public. Oct. 8, 11 AM.
- [GEAR UP West](#). Oct. 26-28, Portland.
- **Virtual: 2026 National GEAR UP Academy.** Feb 2–6, 2026
- [2026 NCEP/GEAR UP Annual Conference](#). Washington, DC, Jul. 19–22. *The Request for Proposals is open!*

Resources

- **WAGU Featured Resource:** [WA State GEAR UP Brochure Template](#). Customize this template for your school and check out our [Spanish language brochure template](#).
- [WSAC's High School Graduation and CADR's Tool](#). This tool provides a visual comparison of the state's high school graduation requirements and the college academic distribution requirements (CADRs), which are part of the minimum admissions requirements for any public 4-year university in WA. To add your school logo and contact information, [please use this link](#).

- [How To Make Your College Application Stand Out](#). When completing your college applications, it's essential to
- Help schools get to know you beyond your academics. Here are some tips to help you stand out.
- [The Washington Statewide Family Engagement Center](#). Discover a range of resources and toolkits to enhance engagement in your school.

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](#).

- [How Vancouver High School Students Turned Data Into Dialogue](#)
- [Five Universities In Washington Are Among the Best In The US, a New Ranking Shows](#)
- [UNCF Receives \\$70 Million Gift From Mackenzie Scott To Boost HBCU Endowments](#)
- [Moving Forward Together: Best Practices For Advising Undocumented Students](#)
- [5 Free Tools Every College-Bound Student Should Know](#)
- [Student Loan Caps Leave Future Uncertain](#)
- [Concerns Mount Over Future Of McNair Scholars](#)
- [Tri-Cities Podcaster 'Captured The Hearts' Of Listeners. Now, He's an NPR Finalist](#)
- [The Broke College Student's Guide To Managing Money](#)
- [Colleges Pull Back As Trump Cuts Programs That Help Migrant Students](#)
- [Trump Blames Tylenol For Autism. Science Doesn't Back Him Up](#)
- [With Students Back On Campus, Schools Need A Broader Approach For Addressing Their Mental Health Needs](#)

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 provide actionable suggestions and feedback within one week.
- **[BigFuture Scholarship](#)**. Class of 2026 and '27, take steps on BigFuture.org in September to earn entries for monthly \$500 and \$40,000 scholarships.

Scholarship	Brief Description	Due
Home Depot Path to Pro Scholarship	A \$2,500 scholarship is available to students attending an approved trade-related program (Carpentry, Electrical, HVAC, Plumbing, or Construction Management) at an accredited two-year institution.	9/30
College JumpStart Scholarship: Pay It Forward Scholarship	The College JumpStart Scholarship is an annual, merit-based competition—financial need is not a consideration—that is open to 10th-12th graders, college students, and non-traditional students.	9/30
Scholarship Poetry Contest	Open to all U.S. HS students. The applicant must submit an original poem of 20 lines or fewer. Up to \$500.	9/30
Coca-Cola Scholars Scholarship	(\$20,000) - HS seniors with a minimum 3.0 unweighted GPA may apply on our website in August of their senior year until the September 30 deadline. Each year, 150 Coca-Cola Scholars are selected to receive a \$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 essay of 500 to 1,000 words on the topic of 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
National YoungArts Foundation Scholarship	Up to \$50,000 for young artists in grades 10-12 or ages 15-18 with talent in cinematic arts, dance, design arts, jazz, music, photography, theater, visual arts, voice, and writing.	10/8
NSHSS Foundation STEM Scholarship	\$1,000 scholarships for underrepresented students with a 3.0 GPA or higher who plan to study a STEM field.	10/15

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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