



Washington Student Achievement Council

Weekly Bulletin

Washington State GEAR UP

Issue: September 29- October 3, 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:** Have you done your Staff Orientation & Match Training (required annually)? Did you collect match forms from all the participants? It's a Code 1 on the In-Kind Match Form (School Staff).
- **Reminder:** Parent surveys due by Oct. 30. Questions? Contact [Sandra](#).

Financial Aid Updates

- **[OfferBot](#)** is a free WSAC text messaging service that helps students with post-HS planning and financial aid. It's expanding to include 9th—12th-grade College Bound students and their parents/guardians.
- **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 Parents/Guardians:** Nov. 18, 5:30 PM, **for Seniors & Juniors:** Nov. 19, 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 Financial Aid Awareness & Access](#).** By OSPI and WSAC. **Oct. 1, 9 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.
- **Discussion Lab: [Continuing the Momentum of National GEAR UP Week](#).** By NCCEP. Oct. 30, 11 AM.
- **Virtual: [2026 National GEAR UP Academy](#).** Feb. 2–6.
- **[American Association of Community Colleges Annual Conference](#).** Apr. 10-14, Seattle.
- **[2026 NCCEP/GEAR UP Annual Conference](#).** Washington, DC, Jul. 19–22. *The Request for Proposals is open!*

Resources

- **WAGU Featured Resource: [Zombie Apocalypse Scholarship Activity](#).** Use the game to demonstrate to students how scholarships are often evaluated and help them learn how to avoid common pitfalls. Based on an actual annual scholarship, due 10-31.
- **[How To Make Your College List](#).** From Oregon Goes To College Resource. Discover the necessary steps and download a template.
- **[How to Secure the Perfect Recommendation Letter](#).** From ACT. It can take some work, but the reward for your patience will be an authentic, glowing letter that helps colleges understand your unique capabilities and potential for growth. See their [example of a recommendation letter request email](#).

- [Mental Health College Guide for Students and Educators](#). From NAMI and the JED Foundation. Discover resources, practices, and collaboration strategies for mental health and wellness in college.

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](#).

- [So You Went to Trade School. Do You Out-Earn High School Grads in Your State?](#)
- [How Will a Federal Shutdown Affect Schools? 5 Big Questions, Answered](#)
- [What to Expect When You're Expecting a Government Shutdown](#)
- [Will Chatbots Replace Mentors?: Tips for Navigating a Disruptive Technology](#)
- [Educators Worry about How Trump's Autism Rhetoric Will Affect Students, Parents](#)
- [What Schools Stand to Lose in the Battle over the Next Federal Education Budget](#)
- [Reframing Higher Education](#)
- [Study Finds 2/3 of Public Universities Unaffordable for Low-Income Students](#)
- [Rural Community Colleges Are Uniquely Positioned to Tackle Complex Regional Challenges and Drive Community Transformation. Here's How](#)

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.

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	10/16

	the eligible programs list . WSOS can cover costs beyond tuition, such as housing, transportation, food, and more.	
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.	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
Elks Most Valuable Student Competition	\$1,000 to \$7,500 per year for full-time students (minimum 12 semester hours) pursuing a four-year degree at a U.S. college or university.	11/12
Jack Kent Cooke College Scholarship Program	For high-achieving high school seniors with financial need. It is aimed at those attending top four-year colleges. Each award covers a significant portion of educational expenses, including tuition and living costs, and varies based on individual circumstances and other financial aid received.	11/12
Odenza Marketing Group Scholarship	(\$500) Submit two small essays: one about travel and one on why you deserve the scholarship. Ages 16-25, must have a GPA of 2.5+ and be a US citizen.	11/15
10 Words or Less Scholarship	(\$500) - In 10 words or fewer, say why you deserve the scholarship.	11/15
Governor's Scholarship for Foster Youth	(\$2,000-\$4,000) - Helps youth from foster care continue their education and earn a college degree.	11/30
Leadership 1000 Scholarship	Provides up to \$5,000 per academic year to high school seniors from eligible WA high schools planning to enroll in a college or university. This renewable scholarship also offers career guidance, financial aid support, and networking opportunities.	11/30
Education Matters	(\$5,000) - In 250 words or fewer, respond to: "What would you say to someone who thinks education doesn't matter or that college is a waste of time and money?" This award is for students aged 14+ who are legal residents.	11/30
Dell Scholars Program.	(\$20,000) - For students who have demonstrated grit, potential, and ambition in their quest for education.	12/1
Ron Brown Scholar Program	This program awards 20 or more college scholarships annually, each in the amount of \$40,000, to extraordinary African American high school seniors. Students must attend a four-year accredited college or university.	12/1
Point Foundation: The Point Flagship Scholarship	Empowers LGBTQ+ and ally students in pursuing undergraduate, graduate, & doctoral degrees at accredited colleges by offering financial support, community resources, and professional development opportunities. Financial award based on need, renewable for up to four years of support.	12/5
Scholastic Art & Writing Awards Scholarships	Teens in grades 7–12 (ages 13 and up) can apply in 28 categories of art and writing. See link for local deadlines: http://www.artandwriting.org/the-awards/guidelines-deadlines/	12/5
Dirk Derrick Car & Truck Accident Injury Scholarship	\$1,000 – For any current or soon-to-be undergraduate student who has had their life altered due to an injury from a car or truck accident, be it their injury or that of a loved one, or an influential individual.	12/15
NASA Student Art Contest	This year's theme encourages students to recognize the relationship between art, science, and technology that exists all around them and discover new ways to connect the dots. The contest is open to K-12 students who are residents of the United States.	12/31
Mann Lake Beekeeping Scholarship	For those who are currently enrolled in or about to be enrolled in an apiology program, majoring in agriculture & environmental sciences, or other related studies. Offers a one-	12/31

	time award of \$1,000 to cover educational-related costs, including tuition, books, computers, room and board, and other educational expenses.	
Stromberg's Scholarship Program	Provides a one-time reward of \$1000 to pay for tuition, books, computers, accommodation, or any education-related expense. No GPA requirement and no application forms.	12/31
Top Ten List Scholarship	(\$1,500) - In 250 words or fewer, submit a response to the question: "Create a Top Ten List of the top ten reasons you should get this scholarship."	12/31
Unigo \$10K Scholarship	(\$10,000) - Submit an online written response to the question: "2020 was a year to be remembered. What will you remember most about 2020 and why is it important to you?" (250 words or fewer)	12/31



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.

[SUBSCRIBE](#) | [UNSUBSCRIBE](#)

gearup.wa.gov