

# FINANCIAL AID 101



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The contents of this publication were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, the content does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

## College Is Affordable

It is no secret: college can be expensive. Do not let the cost of a college education put your goals out of reach. There are many resources available to help you achieve your dreams. Financial aid is money to help pay for college. It comes from the federal and state governments, colleges and universities, banks, and organizations. Over 80% of all college students receive financial aid to help them pay for college.

Deciding to go to college is one of the best financial investments you can make. Students who earn a college degree earn hundreds of thousands of dollars more over a lifetime. Attending college in Washington State is one of the best bargains in the nation!

Currently over 60 institutions of higher education participate in the Washington College Grant (WCG) program. WCG is one of the most generous financial aid programs in the country. Recent high school graduates and working-age adults from many low- and middle-income families can qualify to receive money for college or career training.

The Washington College Grant is one of the most generous financial aid programs in the country. People of all ages from low- and middle-income families may qualify to receive money for college, career training, and participating apprenticeships. Funding is guaranteed to eligible students. Award amounts vary based on income, family size, and the school or program attended.

### Total Cost of Attendance

In addition to tuition and fees, there are other expenses to consider when thinking about how much college may cost. Each school has its own **Cost of Attendance (COA)**. COA includes:

- **Tuition and Fees** (the price you pay to attend classes and earn credit towards a degree. Additional fees pay towards student facilities like libraries and athletic centers, services like parking passes and student identification, and other administrative costs).
- **Books and Supplies.**
- **Room and Board** (food and the cost of living in a college dormitory or apartment).
- **Transportation Expenses** (public transit pass, gas, parking, and travel).
- **Personal Expenses** (clothing, laundry, and hygiene).

Consider all these expenses when evaluating your financial aid options and deciding which college you want to attend.

### Sticker Price vs. Net Price

Know the difference between “sticker price” and “net price.” A college’s sticker price is the full-published cost of attendance. The published price of attending a college is not usually, what students pay. This **sticker price** is the cost of attendance BEFORE your grants, scholarships, and other financial aid are considered. For many students, there is financial aid available to offset these costs.

The **net price** of a college is the cost of attendance minus any grants and scholarships that you receive. This difference is key, as most students do not pay the sticker price of a college. Do not let the sticker price keep you from applying to a college. A college with high tuition may offer you a generous financial aid package and end up being more affordable than colleges with a lower sticker price.

If you want to know how much you might have to pay if you attend a particular college before you apply, use a “**net price calculator.**” Colleges are required to have these tools on their websites. When you are doing online

research, make sure that you fill out the information on these helpful calculators to see an estimate of what your college costs would be at that college. To find the average **net price** for a college or university, use the U.S. Department of Education's Net Price Calculator: <https://collegecost.ed.gov/net-price>

**PRO TIP: Look up unfamiliar terms in the “lingo” section.**

Does it seem like everyone is speaking a different language when it comes to financial aid? You are not alone! The financial aid world is filled with finance terms and jargon. This guide provides a “lingo” section to help you understand these terms.

# Paying for College

How can I fund my education? Attending college is not free, but you can afford to go. It does not matter what your family's income is. It does not matter where you live. It does not matter how much you have in the bank. There are a variety of ways and combinations to pay for it.

- **Savings:** Savings allow you to use money you already have. The more you save, the less you will have to borrow. If you save money at a financial institution like a bank or credit union, your savings will earn interest over time. Even saving a small amount each month can help.
- **Your Family:** Your family is expected to help pay for your education out of their current income, but financial aid is designed to help families with limited resources.

## Financial Aid

Financial aid is money to help pay for college or career schools. This money comes from the **federal and state governments, colleges and universities, banks, and organizations**. It includes **grants, loans, work study, and scholarships**. To get aid, you must apply.

Applying for financial aid is a separate process from applying for college admission. You need to do both steps. You should apply for financial aid using the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa> or the Washington Application for State Financial Aid (WASFA) at [www.readyssetgrad.wa.gov/wasfa](http://www.readyssetgrad.wa.gov/wasfa) if you are a non-citizen and unable to file a FAFSA due to immigration status.

Colleges will use the results of the FAFSA or WASFA to create your financial aid package each year. The FAFSA and WASFA become available online on October 1st each year. Aim to complete the FAFSA or WASFA as close to October 1st as possible during your high school senior year and every year you are in college. Financial aid dollars are limited, and colleges often award them on a first-come-first-served basis.

Very few students get all their financial aid for college from one source. When you are searching for financial aid, consider a wide variety of options and apply to as many programs as possible.

- **Aid from the Federal Government:** The federal government generally awards financial aid to students from low-income families. The largest federal grant program is the Pell Grant program. The federal government also offers other grants and loans to help students pay for their education and subsidizes work-study jobs at various colleges and universities.
- **Aid from State Government:** The state of Washington awards financial aid to students from low- and moderate-income families.
  - Washington College Grants are awarded to qualifying Washington residents attending Washington postsecondary institutions as undergraduate students.
  - The state subsidizes work study jobs at schools across the state.
- **Aid from Colleges:** In addition to administering federal and state aid programs, many colleges and universities have their own scholarship, loan and work programs. These may include:
  - Alumni-sponsored awards.
  - Privately sponsored scholarships.
  - Athletic awards.
  - College funds used for financial aid.

Some awards are based on financial need. Others are based on your academic achievement, religious affiliation, race or ethnicity, community activities, artistic talents, athletic ability, field of study or special hobbies, experiences, and interests.

- **Aid from Your Community:** Non-profit organizations, foundations, and businesses often provide scholarships as a community service. To find these programs, talk to your counselor or check out the scholarship finder on theWashBoard.org.

### **PRO TIP: When in doubt, apply!**

Most students in Washington qualify for and use some form of financial aid in order to pay for college. It is better to apply and be turned down than to miss out on money you may have received! It is free to apply for FAFSA or WASFA. What do you have to lose?

### Types of Aid

- **Grants:** Grants do not have to be repaid *if you successfully complete the courses in which you were enrolled*. They are given to the students who have the highest financial need. Most grants come from the federal and state government.
- **Scholarships:** Scholarships do not have to be repaid *if you successfully complete your coursework*. They are awarded for good grades, cultural or religious background, sports and special talents. Most scholarships come from organizations and colleges.
- **Work Study:** Work study helps you to earn money to pay for your education by working a part-time job offered through the college. There are federal, state, and institutional work study programs
- **Loans:** Loans for students have lower interest rates than most other types of loans. Unlike grants or scholarships, loans must be repaid with interest when you finish college, *even if you do not graduate*. Student loans are offered through banks, colleges, and other institutions.

Federal student loans can be a good option to pay for college costs not covered by grants, scholarships, or work study. Federal loans often have lower interest rates and more flexible repayment options than private loans. However, students and parents should be careful not to borrow any more than is absolutely needed to cover education expenses. To learn more, visit [www.studentloaned.wa.gov](http://www.studentloaned.wa.gov)

- Each loan has its own characteristics and features. Compare your options side-by-side and include:
  - The total cost to repay the loan (including the fees principal and interest).
  - How long it takes to repay the loan.
  - The amount of the monthly payments.
  - The penalty you would pay if you were late on a payment or default.
  - Whether it can be consolidated with other loans at the time of repayment.
  - Whether payments can be deferred if you re-enter college or experience financial difficulties.

Plan your loans carefully. Ask for information about interest rates and fees, repayment terms, service cancellation options, and other obligations.

### Other Options

- **Military Service:** The military offers many educational benefits that service members can take advantage of during or after service. From financial aid and college funds to programs that convert

military training into college credit, there are multiple ways for service members to further their education. Learn more: <http://todaysmilitary.com/living/paying-for-college>

- **National Service through AmeriCorps:** AmeriCorps is a national service program. AmeriCorps is a real-life education and work experience wrapped into one. As an AmeriCorps member, you volunteer to help make the world a better place: help children learn, protect the environment, or bring needed services to a low-income community. Most AmeriCorps members receive student loan deferment, and training, and may receive a living allowance and limited health benefit options. After you complete your term of service, you will also receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award to help pay for college, graduate school, or vocational training or to repay student loans. Learn more: [www.americorps.gov/for\\_individuals/benefits](http://www.americorps.gov/for_individuals/benefits)

## Qualifying for Aid

Need-based financial aid programs are designed with the assumption that students and parents have a responsibility to pay a share of educational costs. The amount you and your family are expected to pay will vary based upon factors including:

- Income.
- Assets.
- The number of children in the family.
- The number of children attending college.

The process for determining your eligibility for financial aid establishes what you and your family can reasonably be expected to pay. This is called your **Expected Family Contribution (EFC)** and is used to identify your financial need.

### CALCULATING YOUR FINANCIAL NEED

Cost of Attendance (COA)

– Expected Family Contribution (EFC)

= Financial Need

Federal and state need-based financial aid is offered only if your **EFC** is not enough to cover the cost of attending a particular school. Although your Expected Family Contribution will stay the same, your financial aid eligibility may increase when you apply to higher-priced colleges.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- The federal government provides billions in aid!
- Each year, the federal government provides more than \$150 billion in financial aid! Unfortunately, many students miss out simply because they don't complete the FAFSA.
- Submitting your FAFSA allows you to be considered for need-based grant programs such as the Federal Pell Grant — that's money you don't have to pay back provided you successfully complete your classes.

## How to Apply for Financial Aid

To qualify for financial aid, you must apply. The most important application is the FAFSA, or Free Application for Federal Student Aid. All federal financial aid programs, most programs offered by the State of Washington, and many programs offered by colleges require you to complete and submit the FAFSA.

The Washington Application for State Financial Aid (WASFA) is for people who don't file a federal FAFSA application. People who complete a WASFA are applying for state aid. There are various reasons to file a WASFA instead of a FAFSA, including if you are undocumented or a non-citizen or have undocumented parents or family members who do not wish to file a FAFSA. If you are unsure which application to file, use the WASFA questionnaire to find out at <https://wsac.wa.gov/wasfa>

### Important FAFSA Facts

- Make sure you visit the official FAFSA webpage at [fafsa.gov](https://fafsa.gov). It is **FREE** to file the FAFSA! Be cautious of websites requesting you to pay a fee.
- At [fafsa.gov](https://fafsa.gov), you can complete, submit, and track your application. If you submit online, the program will check your data before it is transmitted so that you are less likely to make an error. However, if you do not have Internet access, you can get a paper copy by calling 1-800-4-FED-AID (433-3243).
- To learn more about how to complete the FAFSA correctly, visit <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa/filling-out>
- You will need to fill out the FAFSA to qualify for the Federal Pell Grant program. Pell Grants are need-based grants given to help meet the cost of college. Amounts can change yearly. The maximum Federal Pell Grant award is \$6,195 for the 2019–20 award year (July 1, 2019, to June 30, 2020). To learn more about Pell, visit [studentaid.gov](https://studentaid.gov).
- You must file the FAFSA for every year you attend school.
- You may file the FAFSA online at [fafsa.gov](https://fafsa.gov) after October 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.
- Check the status of your FAFSA at [www.fafsa.gov](https://www.fafsa.gov) by clicking on the FAFSA follow-up. There is also an online chat function to answer any questions students or families might have.

### Important WASFA Facts

- Make sure you visit the official WASFA webpage at <https://wsac.wa.gov/wasfa>
- It is **FREE** to file the WASFA!
- You will need to fill out the WASFA to qualify for state aid.
- You must file the WASFA for every year you attend school.
- You may file the WASFA online after October 1st of each year.

#### Before You Begin...

##### For FAFSA Filing:

- You and your parents should complete your income tax returns. While you are not required to have completed your tax returns in order to submit the FAFSA, much of the information required on the FAFSA is the same. You also can save time by using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool, which automatically takes information from your tax return and fills in required information on the FAFSA form.
- Create an FSA ID. This is a username and password and allows you to gain entry to certain U.S. Department of Education websites. This FSA ID also acts as your online signature, which will allow you to submit your FAFSA once you have completed it online. This ID will also allow you to check the status of your FAFSA later and to file again for next year. You can create your FSA ID by going to [fsaid.ed.gov](https://fsaid.ed.gov).

##### For WASFA Filing:

- Before getting started, review the WASFA instructions at <https://wsac.wa.gov/wasfa> and gather any documents or other information you may need.



## When to Apply

The FAFSA and WASFA become available online on October 1st of the year that you plan to go to college. It is important to note that college, state, and private financial aid deadlines vary — so make sure you check with your college to find out their FAFSA or WASFA submission deadline. Regardless of the deadline, you should aim to complete the FAFSA or WASFA as close to October 1st as possible because financial aid dollars are limited and often are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.

**Additional forms that may be required.** The FAFSA or WASFA may not be the only form required to receive an award letter from a postsecondary school. Some colleges require the College Board CSS Profile form or an institution-specific form. You must also complete the college admissions process. Check with each of the colleges and universities you listed on your FAFSA to determine their requirements and deadlines. Furthermore, individual financial aid programs — particularly scholarship programs — often require you to submit an application in addition to the FAFSA or WASFA.

## After submitting the FAFSA...

- Check your FAFSA status and make corrections if necessary.** You can check the status of your FAFSA immediately after submitting it online. You can check the status of a paper FAFSA after it has been processed (roughly 7–10 days from the date mailed). Visit [fafsa.gov](http://fafsa.gov) or call 1 (800) 433-3243 to check the status of your FAFSA.
- Be on the lookout for your SAR Report.** If you filed your FAFSA electronically, you will receive an electronic Student Aid Report (SAR) within a few days of submitting your completed FAFSA (if you filed a paper FAFSA, this may take up to 3 weeks). The SAR is the result of your FAFSA. Read it immediately and follow any directions.
  - The schools that you listed on the FAFSA will also receive these results. Those schools use information from your FAFSA to figure out how much federal student aid you may receive. These colleges might also use your FAFSA to see if you are eligible for additional institution-specific financial aid programs.
- Once you've received your SAR, check out your "Expected Family Contribution" or "EFC." The EFC is a calculation based on the information that you reported on your FAFSA.** Your colleges use the EFC to determine the amounts of federal grants, work-study, and loans for which you may be eligible.
  - The EFC is in theory a measure of a family's ability to contribute towards a student's cost of attendance (COA), calculated according to a formula established by law. Keep in mind, the COA contains costs that you would still pay regardless of attending or not attending college. For example, you would still need to pay for room and board, transportation, and personal expenses either way. So, do not be discouraged by a higher EFC.
  - In addition to sending your information to the schools you listed, the Federal Government also sends your information to the Washington Student Achievement Council, the state agency in charge of state-level financial aid programs such as the College Bound Scholarship and the Washington College Grant. So, your FAFSA helps you apply for federal, state, and school-based financial aid!
- If you filled out the FAFSA before you filed your previous year's tax return, you may need to update information.** It's easy to make corrections on your FAFSA online at [fafsa.gov](http://fafsa.gov) by clicking on "Making FAFSA Corrections." To correct a paper FAFSA, call (800) 433-3243. Corrections usually take between 3-5 business days to process and you should then receive a revised SAR.
- Respond to any requests for verification.** You are not in trouble; colleges are required to verify that the information submitted on the FAFSA is correct for students who are randomly selected by the U.S.

Department of Education. If you are selected for verification, be sure to respond in a timely manner so that your financial aid awards are not delayed!

- Carefully review your financial aid award letters and make a final decision. Each college you selected on your FAFSA will send you a financial aid award letter that details the financial aid you are eligible to receive. Make sure you review each award letter carefully. If you have any questions regarding your award letter, call the financial aid office at the college.
- Once you make a final decision regarding where you will attend college, you will need to decide which aid to accept and which to decline.** Your college will outline the process for doing this in your award letter. Be sure to accept the aid you plan to use by your college's deadline. If you are taking out loans, be sure to borrow only what you need; otherwise you might be paying off loans for longer than you expected.

### Getting Your Money

The financial aid staff at your college will explain exactly how and when your aid will be provided. They also will tell you whether you need to fill out any more paperwork or meet other requirements. For instance, if you are receiving a federal student loan for the first time, you will be required to sign a promissory note and go through entrance counseling. Respond to requests from your college in a timely manner so there are no delays in processing your financial aid.

### 12<sup>th</sup> Year Campaign

12<sup>th</sup> Year Campaign events provide support for you and your family to file either the FAFSA or the WASFA. 12<sup>th</sup> Year Campaign offers virtual financial aid completion events that take place annually throughout October through December. Students and families receive step-by-step instructions for successfully completing and submitting their FAFSA or WASFA.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **Find A FAFSA/WASFA Filing Event Near You**
  - <https://wsac.wa.gov/12th-year-campaign>
- **Information for Students and Families**
  - <https://wsac.wa.gov/12th-year-campaign>

## Factors That Affect Eligibility

*Various factors may result in increases or decreases in your eligibility for financial aid.*

- **Dependent or Independent Status:** All students are considered either dependent (on their parents) or independent (self-supporting). Dependent students must submit financial information about their parents on the FAFSA. This information is required even if the parents do not intend to help pay for the student's education.

You are automatically considered an independent student for the 2021-22 school year if you are 24 or older as of December 31, 2020. If you are under 24, you will be considered an independent student if you are any one of the following:

- A graduate or professional student.
- Married.
- A student with legal dependents including children other than a spouse.
- On active duty military service.
- A veteran of U.S. Armed Forces.
- An orphan or ward of the court or in foster care at any time age 13 or older.
- In legal guardianship or emancipated minor status as of the date of application (or 18th birthday if a Washington resident).
- Determined to be an unaccompanied homeless youth.

To learn more, visit: <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa/filling-out/dependency>

**Appeals:** If you think that you should be considered independent because of unusual circumstances, even though you do not meet any of the criteria listed above, talk to the financial aid administrator at your college about a “dependency override”. Aid administrators may use their judgment to change your status to independent if they believe your status warrants it. The decision by the institution is final.

- **Citizenship Requirements:** Most federal financial aid programs are not available to undocumented students. However, certain undocumented students in Washington may qualify for state financial aid. See the section on WASFA for more information about undocumented students and financial aid.
- **Class Load:** Increases or decreases in your number of credits or classes enrolled in per term may affect how much financial aid you are eligible to receive. Before making changes to your class schedule, check with your financial aid administrator for more details.
- **School Transfer:** Financial aid does not automatically transfer with the student to a new institution. Students must contact the financial aid administrator at the new school to determine what actions should be taken to receive aid. Students must be sure to have an electronic version of the FAFSA results sent to the new institution by logging into <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa> and adding the school code of the new school as a FAFSA correction. Students with a Direct or PLUS Loan will need to reapply. If you transfer to a more expensive school, you may be eligible to receive more aid. See your financial aid administrator for details or if you have filed the WASFA. It is important to consider the types of aid at each institution considering the implications of potentially higher loan debt of higher cost schools.
- **Loan Repayment:** There are different types of repayment plans, for example Pay as You Earn and loan consolidation. Find the right repayment plan for you, learn how to make payments, get help if you

can't afford your payments, and see what circumstances might result in a loan being forgiven, canceled, or discharged. More information is available from the federal government at [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov).

- **Tax credits:** The IRS provides two tax credits to help offset the costs of college or career school by reducing the amount of your personal income tax: the American Opportunity Credit and the Lifetime Learning Credit. Visit [irs.gov](http://irs.gov) and view Publication 970 for information.

**Changes in Financial Status:** You might be experiencing a change in income from what you reported on the financial aid application or what your previous year's taxes reflected. You will need to connect with the financial aid department of the colleges where you applied.

SwiftStudent is a free tool that helps students understand appeals and provides templates for writing a financial aid appeal letter. This tool does not share user data with third parties.

## Additional Resources

**WSAC Financial Aid Appeals (Website):** <https://wsac.wa.gov/financial-aid-appeals>

**How to Request a Financial Aid Appeal (Video):** <https://youtu.be/O-NWbCkY1tA>

**SwiftStudent Free (Tool):** <https://formswift.com/swift-student>

# Aid for Adult Students

## A Guide for Students Ages 25 And Older

If you think financial aid is just for recent high school graduates, think again! Adult learners can qualify for many financial aid programs. In fact - **every program covered in this guide is open to adult learners, except for the College Bound Scholarship and the Passport to Careers Program!**

### The First Step

Completing the FAFSA at [fafsa.gov](https://fafsa.gov) is the first step in finding money for college. This important form will provide you access to federal, state, and college-level financial aid.

### Laid-Off and Displaced Workers

If you were laid-off from your job, you may be able to qualify for funds to go back to school to learn new skills. Visit the WorkSource website at <https://seeker.worksourcewa.com/> to learn more.

If you have recently been laid off, your last year's tax return — the information used to complete the FAFSA — may not be a good indicator of your current financial situation. If this is the case, file your FAFSA and then contact the financial aid office at the school you are planning to attend to see if they can calculate your aid using your current information. You will have to document proof of your change of income and/or employment status.

### Returning Students with Previous, Defaulted Student Loans

If you attended college before and took out student loans, the status of those loans can affect your ability to apply for and receive financial aid. If your previous student loans are in default, you should contact the lender immediately and set up a payment plan to return your loans to good standing. Income-based repayment options are now available to help you set up a payment schedule you can afford. It can take six to nine months for your loans to be returned to good standing. If you want to attend college while restoring your good-standing status, contact the college you plan to attend to see if they have any options for you while you resolve this issue. However, it is possible that you will have to wait until your eligibility is fully restored.

### Credit History

In general, your credit history does NOT affect your ability to receive federal and state financial aid or to take out federal student loans. However, as noted above, defaulting on previous student loans can affect your eligibility. In addition, if you are returning to a college you previously attended, the college may require you to pay any outstanding fees, such as library fines or parking tickets, before processing your enrollment or your financial aid.

### Finding Scholarships for Adult Students

Many private and community scholarship programs are open to adults as well as traditional age students. Start your search by checking out [theWashboard.org](https://www.washboard.org). This website is a free, web-based scholarship matching service for Washington students. It is supported by the Washington Scholarship Coalition, a public/private partnership of foundations, non-profit organizations, and state agencies. This website makes it easy to find and apply for scholarships. Plus, it is spam free. Remember: You should NEVER pay to search for scholarship opportunities online.

# Appendix

Financial Aid Options, Financial Terms Glossary, & Additional Resources

## National Service Benefits

### AmeriCorps

Joining AmeriCorps is a way to put your idealism into action. As an AmeriCorps member, you can help make the world a better place: help children learn, protect the environment, or bring needed services to a low-income community

There are opportunities in AmeriCorps for anyone who is willing to do something special, something unique, something exciting. AmeriCorps is a real-life education and work experience wrapped into one. As a member, you will learn teamwork, leadership, responsibility and other essential skills that will help you for the rest of your life. And you will gain the personal satisfaction of taking on challenges and seeing results.

**AmeriCorps Offers Tangible Benefits:** Most AmeriCorps members receive student loan deferment, and training, and may receive a living allowance and limited health benefit options. After you complete your term of service, you will also receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award (which is equivalent to the value of a Pell grant) to help pay for college, graduate school, or vocational training or to repay student loans.

**Eligibility Requirements:** To be eligible for AmeriCorps positions, you must be 17 years of age or older, have high school diploma or a GED (or are completing a GED), and be a U.S. citizen, or an eligible non-citizen. Participants may enroll in college while holding a position and may apply to projects in the state or nationally.

**Application Process:** For more information on AmeriCorps and its various programs, visit <http://www.americorps.gov/>

### Financial Assistance for Military Service

Those called to active duty while enrolled in college receive certain protections regarding financial aid eligibility, enrollment status and loan repayment. In most instances, the student will not be penalized as a result of his or her absence to perform military service. Check with the school's financial aid office for more details.

If you are currently enlisted in any branch of the military, check directly with your unit about education benefits. In addition, there are federal and state educational benefits for students who have served or are serving in the armed forces.

You may be able to use these education benefit programs for college, technical or vocational courses, correspondence courses, online courses, apprenticeships, on-the-job training, flight training licensing and certification tests, entrepreneurship training, and certain entrance examinations. For more information regarding veterans education benefits, visit [www.mymilitaryeducation.org](http://www.mymilitaryeducation.org). Please note that not all programs can be used for all types of training.

### Federal - Post-9/11 GI Bill

The Post-9/11 GI Bill provides up to 36 months of educational benefits to eligible veterans. The bill became effective August 1, 2009. You may be eligible if you have at least 90 days of aggregate service on or after September 11, 2001 or if you were discharged after September 11, 2001 with a service-connected disability after 30 days.

**Application Process:** Visit [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov) for up-to-date information on these benefits. Visit [www.mymilitaryeducation.org](http://www.mymilitaryeducation.org) to find a local Campus Coordinator.

### Federal - Montgomery GI Bill - Selected Reserve

The Montgomery GI Bill-Selected Reserve program may be available if you are a member of the Selected Reserve. The Selected Reserve includes the Army Reserve, Navy Reserve, Air Force Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Coast Guard Reserve, the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard.

This benefit pays up to 36 months, and eligibility for the program normally ends on the day you leave the Selected Reserve. One exception to this rule exists if you are mobilized (or recalled to active duty from your reserve status). In this case, your eligibility may be extended for time you are mobilized plus four months. For example, if you are mobilized for 12 months, your eligibility is extended for 16 months (12 months of active duty plus four months). So even after you leave the reserves after mobilization, you may have additional eligibility for the MGIB-Selected Reserve.

**Application Process:** Visit [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov) for up-to-date information on these benefits, or contact Veterans Affairs on the campus you choose to attend. Visit [www.mymilitaryeducation.org](http://www.mymilitaryeducation.org) to find a local Campus Coordinator.

### Federal - Reserve Educational Assistance Program

The Reserve Educational Assistance Program provides up to 36 months of education benefits to members of the Selected Reserves, Individual Ready Reserve and National Guard who are called or ordered to active service in response to a war or national emergency. The benefit is payable based on the number of days you were deployed to active duty. Your eligibility generally ends when you leave the service.

**Application Process:** Visit [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov) for up-to-date information on these benefits, or contact Veterans Affairs on the campus you choose to attend. Visit [www.mymilitaryeducation.org](http://www.mymilitaryeducation.org) to find a local Campus Coordinator.

### Federal Tuition Assistance Program

Army National Guard and Reservists may be eligible for this program while pursuing any degree up through a master's degree. Service members should check with their unit or a Higher Education Veterans Program coordinator for eligibility and application information. An eligible member can receive benefits up to \$250 per semester credit or \$167 per quarter credit and \$4,500 per fiscal year. This is not a guaranteed benefit and is offered on a first-come, first-served basis. Generally, you must submit the application before the term begins.

**Application Process:** Visit [www.goarmy.com](http://www.goarmy.com) or contact Veterans Affairs on the campus you choose to attend. Visit [www.mymilitaryeducation.org](http://www.mymilitaryeducation.org) to find a local Campus Coordinator.



# Washington State Financial Aid Programs

In addition to federal financial aid, Washington State offers grant, scholarship, and loan programs. These programs are referred to as "Opportunity Pathways."

## Need-Based Programs

- [Washington College Grant](#). The [Washington College Grant](#) (WCG) is one of the most generous financial aid programs in the country. People of all ages from low- and middle-income families may qualify to get money for college, career training, and participating apprenticeships. Funding is guaranteed to eligible students.
- [College Bound Scholarship](#). The [College Bound Scholarship](#) provides an early promise of financial aid to students from low-income families.
- [State Work Study](#). [State Work Study](#) is financial aid for low- and middle-income students. Qualifying students get an approved job, on- or off-campus, to support their education.
- [Passport to Careers](#). The [Passport to Careers](#) program helps students from foster care and unaccompanied homeless youth attend and succeed in college, apprenticeships, and pre-apprenticeship programs.
- [Washington State Opportunity Scholarship](#). The [Washington State Opportunity Scholarship](#) helps low- and middle-income Washington students earn degrees, certificates, or apprenticeships in high-demand trade, health care, or STEM fields and launch careers in Washington State.

## Merit-Based Programs

- [American Indian Endowed Scholarship](#). The [American Indian Endowed Scholarship](#) benefits eligible students who have close social and cultural ties to an American Indian tribe or community in Washington State.

## Workforce Programs

- [Teacher Programs](#). The [Washington State Educator Workforce](#) programs provide financial aid to attract and retain teachers. Participants work in subjects or locations of high need known as shortage areas.
- [Washington Health Corps](#). [Washington Health Corps](#) programs support licensed health professionals in providing primary care at approved sites in critical shortage areas.
- [National Guard Grant](#). The [National Guard Postsecondary Education Grant](#) helps members of the Washington National Guard get an undergraduate degree or certificate.
- [Aerospace Loan Program](#). The [Aerospace Loan Program](#) supports training for entry-level aerospace workers.

## College Bound Scholarship

If you are a student, parent, or educator looking for College Bound Scholarship eligibility information, applications, or other resources, please visit the College Bound page, <https://wsac.wa.gov/college-bound>

In 2007 the Washington State Legislature established the College Bound Scholarship. This program was created to provide state financial aid to low-income students who may not consider college a possibility due to the cost. The scholarship covers tuition (at comparable public college rates), some fees, and a small book allowance.

The College Bound Scholarship (CBS) provides an early promise of financial aid to students from low-income families. CBS is a commitment that tuition at public rates, some fees, and a small book allowance will be covered by state financial aid for students who meet program pledge requirements. Students can attend over 65 universities, colleges, and technical schools.

Eligible students in Washington are auto enrolled in middle school and need to meet program requirements throughout high school and college.

### Washington College Grant

WCG is available to eligible Washington residents, including undocumented students. An eligible student from a family of four making around \$56,000 or less per year would receive a full award. Partial grants are available for families making up to the state's median family income, around \$102,000 per year.

The maximum WCG award amount will cover full tuition at any [approved/eligible](#) in-state public college or university, including community or technical colleges. At an approved private college or career training program, WCG provides a comparable amount toward tuition and other education-related costs. The state is in the process of identifying eligible non-campus-based apprenticeship programs.

Amounts vary based on income, family size, and the school or program attended. Students and families can use the [financial aid calculator](#) to estimate their potential WCG award. Recipients must meet program requirements and attend an [approved institution](#) or program. Learn more about [WCG eligibility and awards](#).

Cost does not have to be a barrier to attending college. There is money available to help. Most Washington State students receive some form of financial aid to help pay for college. Use this guide to learn how you can begin finding and applying for money to finance your education!

Learn more: <https://gearup.wa.gov/students/pay-for-college> and at <https://wsac.wa.gov/wcg>

### State Work Study

The State Work Study program helps students from low- and middle-income families earn money for college while gaining experience whenever possible in jobs related to their career goals.

State Work Study opportunities are available to students at public two- and four-year colleges and universities and many accredited private or independent four-year colleges and universities in Washington. See the list: [Participating colleges and universities](#).

#### Eligibility

- ✓ To be eligible, you must meet the following criteria:
- ✓ Have demonstrated financial need based on a completed [FAFSA](#) or [WASFA](#).
- ✓ Be a [resident](#) of Washington State.
- ✓ Enroll at least half-time as an undergraduate or graduate student in an eligible program at a [participating college or university](#).
- ✓ Not be pursuing a degree in theology.
- ✓ Not owe a refund or repayment or be in default in another financial aid program.
- ✓ Maintain satisfactory academic progress.

**Awards:** Awards are based on the availability of funds and your determined financial need. While awards vary, students generally earn between \$2,000 and \$5,000 per year. Students may not work more than an

average of 19 hours per week while enrolled, or more than 40 hours per week during breaks. The total number of hours that they are eligible to work depends on their specific award.

**How to Apply:** You will automatically be considered for State Work Study when you file the [FAFSA - Free Application for Federal Student Aid](#) or [WASFA - Washington Application for State Financial Aid](#).

Contact the Student Employment or Financial Aid office at your college for more information.

### Passport to Careers Program

Passport-eligible students looking for detailed information on preparing, applying, and paying for college, apprenticeship, or pre-apprenticeship programs can find more information in the [Passport to Careers Guide](#).

The 2018 Legislature passed Senate Bill 6274, establishing the Passport to Careers program to help more Washington students—specifically, those who have been in foster care or who have experienced homelessness—prepare for careers.

The bill adds to the existing Passport to College Promise program, which has provided college scholarships and support services for foster youth who have been dependents of the state. Changes implemented as of July 2018 include expanded eligibility to youth in federal and tribal foster care and to students in pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships. The bill also adds eligibility for homeless youth beginning in 2019.

The Passport to Careers program helps former foster youth and unaccompanied homeless youth prepare for and succeed in college, apprenticeships, or pre-apprenticeship programs. Under the Passport to Careers program, there are two sub-programs:

#### **Passport to College**

#### **Passport to Apprenticeship Opportunities**

Through the Passport to College program, students receive a scholarship that assists with the cost of attending college (tuition, fees, books, housing, transportation, and some personal expenses), support services from college staff, and priority consideration for the Washington College Grant and State Work Study programs.

The Passport to Apprenticeship Opportunities program will assist students participating in registered apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship programs with covering occupational-specific costs such as tuition for classes, fees, work clothes, rain gear, boots, and occupation-related tools.

Forty-two colleges throughout Washington have committed to developing a viable plan for providing support services to students who are eligible for Passport. These colleges have a designated support staff (DSS) person to help Passport to College students navigate through college.

WSAC is also responsible for managing the [Supplemental Education Transition Program \(SETuP\)](#) to support high school students.

Since 2008, the Passport scholarship has been awarded to an average of 345 students annually.

The Passport program provides the first opportunity to obtain verifiable baseline data on foster youth aspirations and performance in postsecondary education in Washington.

### Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program

This national program offers financial assistance to eligible youth to attend an approved\* college, university, vocational or technical college. You may receive funding for qualified school related expenses, including Running Start. Funding is limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis to eligible students. ETV can help pay for expenses such as tuition, fees, books, housing, food, transportation and other educational costs.

You may be eligible for ETV if you meet any one of the following:

- ✓ You are 16 to 20, currently in a dependency action in a Washington State or Tribal Court, are in the care and custody of the Department of Social and Health Services or Tribal Child Welfare agency and are in foster care.
- ✓ You are 18 to 20 and exited state or tribal foster care because they reached the age of majority.
- ✓ You were adopted or entered a relative guardianship on or after the age of 16 to 20.
- ✓ If you have participated and received ETV funds prior to 21, you are eligible to the age of 23.

For more information, visit <http://independence.wa.gov/programs/etv-program>, email [ETVWASH@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:ETVWASH@dshs.wa.gov), or call 1-877-433-8388. \*For a list of approved schools in Washington State, visit: <http://wsac.wa.gov/colleges-and-institutions-washington>

### Washington State Governors' Scholarship for Foster Youth

This scholarship helps youth in foster care continue their education and earn a college degree. Scholarship amounts vary depending on the college you attend and are available for up to five years. You must be enrolled full time and maintain satisfactory academic progress in order to renew the scholarship each year.

For more information, visit <http://www.collegesuccessfoundation.org/wa/scholarships/governors>

**Learn more about resources for youth in care at [independence.wa.gov](http://independence.wa.gov)**

## American Indian Endowed Scholarship

The American Indian Endowed Scholarship helps financially needy students with close social and cultural ties to an in-state American Indian community pursue undergraduate and graduate studies.

### Am I Eligible? To be eligible, you must meet the following criteria:

- ✓ Have demonstrated financial need based on a completed [FAFSA](#).
- ✓ Be a Washington State resident.
- ✓ Intend to enroll full-time as an undergraduate or graduate student at a public or private college or university in Washington State.
- ✓ Not pursue a degree in theology.
- ✓ Intend to use your education to benefit the American Indian community in-state.
- ✓ Have not yet received a total of five years of this scholarship.

**How Do I Apply?** Complete the application form, print and mail it to the Washington Student Achievement Council with the required attachments. Applications are due to the WSAC postmarked by February 1 of each year. <https://wsac.wa.gov/american-indian-endowed-scholarship>

**What is the scholarship amount?** Scholarship awards range from about \$500 to \$2,000. Approximately 15 students are selected each year to receive the awards. These students are eligible to receive their college scholarships for up to five years. Renewal scholarships are not automatic and require submission of the application each year.

## Opportunity Grants

**Administered by the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges or SBCTC**

**What is an Opportunity Grant?** The Opportunity Grant program helps low-income students complete up to one year of college and a certificate in a high-wage, high-demand career. The Opportunity Grant helps low-income adults train for high-wage, high-demand careers. These careers provide a beginning wage of \$13 per hour (\$15 per hour in King County).

### To be eligible, you must:

- ✓ Complete the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid](#) (FAFSA) or the [Washington Application for State Financial Aid](#) (WASFA, for undocumented students); demonstrate unmet financial need.
- ✓ Be a [Washington state resident student as defined by law](#).
- ✓ Have an income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level (see [the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Poverty Guidelines](#)).
- ✓ Maintain a 2.0 grade point average.

### Services Provided:

- Funding for tuition and fees for up to 45 credits (one-year, full time).
- Funding for required books and supplies, up to \$1,000.
- You may also be able to get:
  - Tutoring.
  - Career advising.
  - College success classes.
  - Emergency childcare.
  - Emergency transportation.

- An industry mentor, through the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board's [Opportunity Partnership Program](#).

**Get Started:** Contact the [Opportunity Grant Coordinator at your community or technical college](#). The coordinator will help you apply and tell you which programs qualify.

### Opportunity Scholarship Program

WSOS is now offering two scholarship programs for Washington state students pursuing a credential in high-demand Washington state industries. Our Baccalaureate Scholarship is for Scholars pursuing a bachelor's degree in a STEM or health care field. The new Career and Technical Scholarship (CTS) is for Scholars pursuing a degree or certificate in a high-demand trade, health care or STEM field such as nursing, welding, or information technology.

Opportunity Scholarship funds are flexible and can be used to cover tuition, fees and other costs of attendance such as living expenses, food and more. Please see additional details, including eligibility information for each scholarship at <https://www.waopportunitiescholarship.org/>

### Washington Conditional Loan Programs: Aerospace Loan Program

The Aerospace Loan Program (ALP) provides low-interest loans to Washington students who have been accepted into the Edmonds Community College or Renton Technical College aerospace training programs and have demonstrated an inability to pay the full cost of attending the program. The Washington Aerospace Training and Research Center was created to help meet the demand for skilled aerospace workers in Washington.

Students can receive up to \$2,400 for the first CORE training module and up to \$2,700 for the second training module and/or quality assurance module. Recipients have up to four years to repay their loans after completion of their program.

**Who can apply?** An applicant must:

- ✓ Be a United States citizen or an eligible non-citizen.
- ✓ Be 18 years of age or older.
- ✓ Be a high school graduate or have a GED.
- ✓ Declare intent to work in the state of Washington in the aerospace industry.

**What is the award amount?** The maximum loan amount is \$7,800. Payments are issued twice during the 12-week training program. Students may request and receive up to \$2,400 to pay for the four-week online segment. With verification of the Core Certificate, students may request and receive up to \$2,700 to pay for the on-site classroom training segment. Students must meet the satisfactory academic progress requirements set by the program in order to receive the second payment. Students may request and receive up to \$2,700 to pay for the Quality Assurance Certificate upon successful completion of Certification Program.

**How long does it take to process my loan?** Once a completed packet is received, a credit and background report are run. An internal committee reviews the completed application. This process takes two to three weeks. You will receive a letter either by email or mail to inform you of the result of your application. If approved, you will be notified, and it is your responsibility to contact the school to register for the program. The school will contact the Council once you are enrolled in a class.

**How are the payments issued?** Payments are issued to the school twice during the 12-week training program. The school will request the first payment of \$2,400 to pay for the four-week online CORE segment. With

verification of successful completion of the CORE segment, the school will request the second payment of \$2,700 to pay for the on-site classroom training segment.

**When and how do I repay my loan?** The student/borrower has six months from the certification program completion date to begin repaying the loan. Students who withdraw from the program must begin making payments immediately. Payments are to be made monthly. The student/borrower has up to four years to repay the loan.

**Application forms and additional information at:** <https://wsac.wa.gov/aerospace-loan-program>

### Health Professional Loan Repayment/Scholarship Programs

The Legislature created the Health Professional Loan Repayment and Conditional Scholarship program to address health professional shortages in rural and underserved urban communities. The program gives financial support to eligible licensed health professionals through loan repayment or conditional scholarships. Funding amounts are set each year, though the scholarship program is not currently funded.

The Loan Repayment Program has two funding sources and operates as two separate programs. The state funds **the Health Professional Loan Repayment Program (HPLRP)**. HPLRP requires recipients to work in health professional shortage areas for a minimum of three years. Participants may work less than full time. **The Federal-State Loan Repayment Program (FSLRP)** matches state funds with a federal grant. FSLRP requires recipients to work in a federally designated Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) for a minimum of two years. This program requires full-time employment.

For the most current information on these programs, please visit: <https://wsac.wa.gov/health-professionals>

### Alternative Routes to Teacher Certification/Educator Retooling

Washington State has a long history of providing financial assistance to support the current and future teacher workforce.

**Conditional scholarship programs** encourage individuals to pursue teaching careers in subjects or locations of high need, also known as "shortage areas." Conditional scholarships provide financial support to students during their teacher preparation program. In return for funding received, the recipient commits to teach at a Washington K-12 public school for a specified amount of time. If the recipient fails to fulfill the teaching service obligation, the recipient must repay the funding, adjusted for any service completed, plus interest and fees.

**Loan repayment** supports the retention of teachers serving in shortage areas. Loan repayment programs repay all or a portion of outstanding educational loans in exchange for teaching service. Unlike conditional scholarships, which support current students, loan repayment serves current teachers by repaying loans from prior education.

**Alternative Routes Conditional Scholarship Program:** The [Alternative Routes Conditional Scholarship](#) program is designed for career changers and for individuals already working in the school system who want to transition to teaching by enrolling in an alternative route teacher preparation program. Currently, scholarships are designated to alternative route providers that have been awarded block grants through PESB. For scholarship availability, contact the grant programs directly or inquire through [PESB](#).

**Pipeline for Paraeducators Conditional Scholarship Program:** The [Pipeline for Paraeducators Conditional Scholarship](#) program is designed for paraeducators who have at least three years of classroom experience and have not yet earned a college degree. The program provides funding of up to \$4,000 per year toward earning an Associate of Arts degree, which is an entry requirement for enrollment in an Alternative Route 1

teacher preparation program. Recipients are expected to continue to earn their certification and fulfill a teaching service obligation in exchange for receiving the scholarship.

**Educator Retooling Conditional Scholarship:** The [Educator Retooling Conditional Scholarship](#) program provides financial support to Washington State certified teachers who seek to add an endorsement in a subject or geographic shortage area.

For more information, visit: <https://wsac.wa.gov/teachers>



## Financial Aid Lingo

**Co-Signer:** A credit-worthy individual, usually a parent or spouse, who has agreed to share the responsibility for repayment of a student loan with a student.

**Cost of Attendance (COA):** The total cost of attending an institution including tuition, room and board, books, lab fees, transportation, and basic living expenses.

**Credit hours:** Units of value given to courses, which equate to academic credits toward your degree. Credit hours are based loosely on the number of hours you are expected to spend in a particular class each week (not counting homework or other out-of-class study time). Different courses are worth different credit hours, but the most common format is three to five credit hours per class. Most academic programs require students to complete a minimum number of credit hours for graduation. For example, most associate's degree programs require 60 credit hours. Most bachelor's degree programs require 120.

**Default:** Being delinquent in repaying a student loan more than a predetermined number of days or failure to comply with any of the other terms of the promissory note.

**Deferment:** A deferment is an approved pause in repaying a federal student loan. Students may seek a deferment due to financial hardship; time spent continuing their education (example, graduate school), active military service, or other reasons as determined by the lender.

**Delinquency:** Missing a scheduled payment on a student loan. If delinquency persists, default will occur.

**Dependent:** Your "dependency status" is a term that determines whose information you must report on the FAFSA/WASFA. If you are a dependent student, you must report your and your parents' information. If you are an independent student, you will report only your information (and your spouse's if you are married). Questions on the FAFSA/WASFA will help you determine your status.

**Estimated financial aid package:** An overview, provided by each institution you've applied to attend, of the amount of financial aid you likely will be eligible to receive. Your financial aid package may be very different from college to college. Cost of attendance is different at each school, and schools may offer different types of scholarships.

**Expected Family Contribution (EFC):** To be eligible for most financial aid programs, families must complete the FAFSA/WASFA and provide their financial information. The EFC is calculated based on this information and shows the amount of money a family can be expected to contribute toward the student's education. The EFC is used to determine the student's eligibility for need-based financial aid but is not necessarily representative of the amount a family will pay for college.

**FAFSA:** Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

**Federal Direct Plus Loan:** This type of loan is available to parents of dependent undergraduate students and for graduate or professional students. The student must be enrolled at least half time. Financial need is not required. A credit check is required. If the parent is denied, the student may qualify for additional unsubsidized funds.

**Federal Direct Subsidized Loan:** This type of loan is for undergraduate students. The federal government pays the interest while the borrower is in school, during grace, and deferment periods. The student must attend at least half time. Financial need is required. If you are a first-time borrower, there is a limit on the maximum period (measured in academic years) that you can receive Direct Subsidized loans.

**Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan:** This type of loan is for undergraduate and graduate students. The borrower is responsible for all interest and the student must attend at least half time. Financial need is not required.

**Federal Perkins Loan:** The Federal Perkins loan is available to undergraduate and graduate students at a low interest rate. The principal and interest of the loan must be repaid to the school that disbursed the loan. NOTE: Not all institutions participate in the Federal Perkins loan program.

**Federal Pell Grant:** The Federal Pell Grant is a grant for undergraduate students who demonstrate financial need and have not yet completed a bachelor's or professional degree.

**Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG):** This type of grant provides funds to undergraduate students with exceptional financial need. Priority consideration is given to Federal Pell Grant recipients. Students could receive between \$100 and \$4,000 a year depending on need, when you apply, and funds available at your school.

**Federal Work-Study:** The Federal Work-study program provides part-time employment for undergraduate and graduate students with financial need to assist with paying educational expenses.

**Forbearance:** An arrangement to postpone or reduce a borrower's monthly payment amount for a limited and specified amount of time, or to extend the repayment period. The borrower is charged interest during the forbearance.

**Interest:** A fee charged to borrow money. Interest charges are in addition to the principal of the loan.

**Interest Subsidy:** The payment of interest on subsidized loans by the U.S. Department of Education for student borrowers while they are in school.

**Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant:** This type of aid is for students who are not eligible for a Pell grant due to not meeting the program's need requirement and whose parent or guardian died as a result of military service in Iraq or Afghanistan after September 11, 2011. The award is equal to the maximum Federal Pell Grant for the award year.

**Merit-based:** Financial aid programs that require students to meet a certain level of achievement, usually academic.

**Need-based:** Financial aid programs that award funds based on the level of financial need of a particular student.

**Origination Fee:** An amount of funds deducted from the proceeds of student and parent loans to compensate student lenders, including the U.S. Department of Education, for the cost of processing and lending loan funds.

**Principal:** The amount borrowed by the student before interest is charged.

**Private Loan:** Loans can also be obtained from private sources such as a bank or financial institution. Note that loans made by the federal government usually offer borrowers lower interest rates and have more flexible repayment options than loans from banks or other private sources. See [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov) for more information.

**Promissory note:** A written promise to do something. Students are often required to sign promissory notes as a requirement of accepting student loans. For example, students must sign promissory notes promising to pay back student loans. Additionally, students may be required to fulfill certain terms to receive some scholarships.

**Room and board:** Refer to charges applied to a student's account for living on campus or eating in the dining halls. "Room" applies to the cost of housing (living in the dorms) and "board" refers to the cost of meal or dining plans. Also refers to standard costs for students living off campus for the same components.

**Satisfactory Academic Progress:** A set of minimum expectations established by your institution's financial aid office and by the Federal Government that indicates a student is making sufficient progress towards earning a degree in a timely manner. Students who do not meet this minimum level of progress, they may lose eligibility to receive financial aid.

**Servicer:** A loan servicer sends borrowers bills for payment, collects payment for the lender and maintains the borrower's loan accounts. Lenders pay servicers to provide this function.

**Student Aid Report (SAR):** A report that summarizes information reported on the FAFSA. The SAR outlines the student's EFC and is sent to students by the Federal Government after they have submitted the FAFSA.

**Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant** is different from other federal student grants because it requires you to take certain kinds of classes in order to get the grant, and then do a certain kind of job to keep the grant from turning into a loan. It is for undergraduates who are completing or plan to complete coursework needed to begin a career in teaching at an elementary school, secondary school, or educational service agency that serves students from low-income families. Students must work in the field; otherwise, the grant turns into a loan.

**Verification:** The process your postsecondary school uses to confirm that your FAFSA is accurate. If you are selected for verification, you will have to provide supporting documentation as requested by your college. Being asked to verify this information DOES NOT mean that you have done anything wrong. Students are often selected at random for verification by the school or U.S. Department of Education.

**Washington Application for State Financial Aid (WASFA):** The Washington Application for State Financial Aid (WASFA) is for people who don't file a federal FAFSA application. People who complete a WASFA are applying for state aid. There are various reasons to file a WASFA instead of a FAFSA, including if you are undocumented or a non-citizen or have undocumented parents or family members who do not wish to file a FAFSA. If you are unsure which application to file, use the WASFA questionnaire to find out at <https://wsac.wa.gov/wasfa>

## Financial Aid Resources

[www.nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator](http://www.nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator): This is a federal website that provides a consistent set of consumer information on colleges and universities across the U.S., such as graduation and cohort default rates, retention rates, costs, accreditation, average student loan debt, etc.

[www.collegesavings.org](http://www.collegesavings.org): This website provides information about the available state sponsored 529 college savings and prepaid tuition plans, including Washington's Guaranteed Education Tuition plan (GET).

[FAFSA Priority Filing Deadlines for WA colleges and universities](#) – A Microsoft Excel document with FAFSA filing deadlines for Washington schools, financial aid office contact information, and whether the school requires a supplemental application in addition to the FAFSA.

<https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>: This is the site for completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

[www.studentaid.gov](http://www.studentaid.gov): This is the U.S. Department of Education's website for information on most federal student aid programs, including:

- Federal Pell Grant (for undergraduate studies only)
- Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (for undergraduate studies only)
- Federal Work Study
- Federal Perkins Loan
- Federal Direct Student Loans
- Federal Direct Parent PLUS Loans (available to parents of dependent students only)
- Federal Direct Grad PLUS Loans (available to graduate students only)
- Federal Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grants

Application for the above programs is made by completing the FAFSA. Notice of award eligibility and award amounts are made by the schools.

<https://studentloans.gov/myDirectLoan/index.action>: This is the federal website for information on, and making application for the Federal Direct Student Loans, as well as the Federal Parent PLUS and Grad PLUS Loans.

<http://www.wsac.wa.gov>: This is the state website for information on most state funded student aid programs, a comprehensive list of colleges, universities and other post-secondary schools operating in Washington State.

[www.gibill.va.gov/post-911/](http://www.gibill.va.gov/post-911/): This is the website for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Veterans should go to this website to find out about and apply for available education benefits.

[www.thewashboard.org](http://www.thewashboard.org): This is the "e-harmony" of scholarship matching search engines for Washington residents, or students attending Washington schools. High schools with their own scholarship web page may want to consider moving their scholarships to this site, as it streamlines the application process for both students and selection committees.

[www.icwashington.org](http://www.icwashington.org): This is the website for the Independent Colleges of Washington. The ICW offers scholarships for students enrolling in their member schools. Application information on these scholarships can be found on this website as well as on the [www.thewashboard.org](http://www.thewashboard.org) site. News releases, information about member schools and links to these schools can be found on this website.

[www.sbctc.ctc.edu](http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu): This is the website for the community and technical community colleges in the state of Washington. Information about the community college programs and services, news releases, and links to member schools can be found on this website.

[www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org): This site has information on financial aid programs, application procedures, borrowing patterns and loan debt, as well as calculators that will help you calculate an EFC, monthly payments on a student or parent loan, and the total cost of borrowing.

[www.independence.wa.gov](http://www.independence.wa.gov): This is a website administered by the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services. The website provides resources and information regarding programs and scholarships for current and former foster youth.

**Source:** *Washington Financial Aid Association* at [http://www.wfaa.org/docs/students/finaid\\_resources.html](http://www.wfaa.org/docs/students/finaid_resources.html)

## About Washington State GEAR UP

GEAR UP's vision is that all students are academically, socially, and financially prepared to enter and complete the postsecondary program or institution of their choice. [gearup.wa.gov](http://gearup.wa.gov) offers free college- and career-planning resources. The Washington Student Achievement Council coordinates Washington State GEAR UP. The Council provides strategic planning, oversight, advocacy, and programs to support increased student success and higher levels of educational attainment in Washington.

## Sources

*College Foundation of West Virginia*

*Federal Student Aid*

*Michigan Department of Treasury: Student Financial Services Bureau*

*Minnesota Office of Higher Education*

*Washington Student Achievement Council*

*Washington Financial Aid Association*

