# **TOP 5** ACTIVITIES

*During this period of school closures and remote learning, Wash­ington State GEAR UP is committed to promoting resources to support our educators, students, and families that can be done remotely. This Top 5 list is designed specifically for high school juniors and seniors to help them prepare for, apply to, and pay for postsecondary education. Note: You do not have to be a GEAR UP student to use our resources – they are available to all students!­­­*

## **Apply to College.** It is not too late to apply! Many colleges are still accepting applications for fall 2020 enrollment. The 12th Year Campaign guides high school juniors and seniors through the important steps needed to apply and pay for college. **Visit:** [12th Year Campaign Student Workbook](https://gearup.wa.gov/file/12th-year-campaign-student-workbook)

## **File a Financial Aid Application & Sign Up for Otterbot for Help.** There is money available to help you pay for college, including the Washington College Grant and federal financial aid like the Pell Grant. To find out more about how much money might be available to you, create a FSA ID and file a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) OR if you are not eligible for federal aid because of your immigration status, you may be eligible to get state financial aid by filing the Washington Application for State Financial Aid (WASFA). **Visit:** [FSA ID](http://fsaid.ed.gov/) and [FAFSA](https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa) OR [WASFA](http://www.readysetgrad.org/wasfa)

## Have questions about financial aid? High school seniors can sign up for Otterbot—the Washington Student Achievement Council’s free texting service designed to help Washington high school seniors navigate financial aid for college and career education. Access Otterbot via text message 24 hours a day, seven days a week by texting "Hi Otter" to 360-928-7281. **Visit:** [Otterbot Information](https://wsac.wa.gov/otterbot)

## **Compare Financial Aid Award Letters.** Understanding a financial aid award letter can be confusing, and if you are applying to more than one program or institution, it is important that you compare the financial aid offers to help you make the best decision about where to attend. **Visit:** [Paying for College Resources](https://gearup.wa.gov/node/4315) to gain a better understanding of financial aid and award letters, and use our worksheets to help you sort through the information.

## **Access the College Bound Scholarship.** The College Bound Scholarship program is an early commitment of state financial aid to eligible students who sign up in middle school and fulfill the scholarship pledge. Learn how to stay eligible and to access this award. **Visit:** [CBS Information](https://readysetgrad.wa.gov/college/college-bound-scholarship-program) and [Paying for College Resources](https://gearup.wa.gov/node/4315)

## **Apply for Scholarships.** Even when you receive state and federal financial aid, you may still need additional money to help pay for school. Every year, scholarship funds go unawarded because not enough students apply. Find scholarship search engines, like [TheWashBoard.org](http://www.thewashboard.org/login.aspx), where there is over $50 million available to Washington’s students. You can also find scholarship listings, resources, support, and strategies here:[Scholarship Listing and Resources](https://gearup.wa.gov/educators/scholarships)

## **Additional Resources**

Find additional free resources and tools, information on college applications, federal and state financial aid, scholarships, and more on our websites: [GEAR UP Student and Family Resources](https://gearup.wa.gov/student) | [12th Year Campaign Student and Family Resources](https://readysetgrad.wa.gov/educators/grad/students-and-families)

## **No- Cost or Low-Cost Connectivity**

* [Charter Communications](https://corporate.charter.com/newsroom/charter-to-offer-free-access-to-spectrum-broadband-and-wifi-for-60-days-for-new-K12-and-college-student-households-and-more) announced on March 13, 2020 that for 60 days the company will offer free Spectrum broadband and Wi-Fi access to homes with K-12 and/or college students who do not already have a subscription. Installation fees will also be waived for these households. Enroll by calling 844-488-8395. Charter will also continue Spectrum Internet Assist, a program offering low-cost broadband internet of 30 Mbps for low-income households without school-aged children.
* Comcast, which owns Xfinity, will offer [60 days free and increased speeds for new families who join the Internet Essentials program](https://www.internetessentials.com/covid19), an internet access program for low income families that is normally $9.95 a month.
* [AT&T](https://about.att.com/pages/COVID-19.html) announced on that it would not cancel service and would waive late fees for any wireless, home phone, broadband residential or small business customer experiencing hardships because of the coronavirus pandemic and can't pay their bills. Qualifying low income households can apply for $10 a month internet access through the Access from AT&T program. Fixed Wireless Internet and Wireline customers can use unlimited internet data. AT&T will also keep public Wi-Fi hotspots open.