

Questions & Answers Regarding Washington Bridge Grant Implementation

1. We have a question regarding the new Bridge Grant. To be eligible, does a student need to have signed up for College Bound or are WCG recipients who qualify for the maximum WCG and did not sign up for College Bound eligible?

The Bridge Grant is only available to WCG students at the (0-60%) MFI. It is not available for eligible CBS students. To clarify, if a student signed up for CBS, but does not meet eligibility, then they could be considered for the Bridge Grant. If the student meets the eligibility for CBS and is eligible to receive a CBS award, they would not be eligible to receive the Bridge Grant.

2. What if a student is eligible for a full WCG but never signed up for College Bound? Are they eligible for the Bridge Grant?

Yes, these are the students who this grant is aimed at. Students who are not eligible for College Bound. So, in other words a student who can only get WCG.

3. Is the Bridge grant based on annual need or quarterly need?

Schools are advised to follow their standard packaging practices and be consistent in their awarding.

For example, if you evaluate eligibility on a quarterly basis versus annual basis, you would follow your standard policy. If you make exceptions to your standard policy based on professional judgement, you would document that decision in the student's file.

4. If the Bridge grant is for the first term of the year and the student is enrolled for only 2 credits summer, but then is enrolled for 6 or more credits in fall quarter, can they receive the funds? Is it the first term of enrollment or the first term they are eligible during the year?

The Bridge grant should be awarded in the first term they are enrolled in 3 or more credits and limited by need. Your institutional packaging policy will determine if you award in a lump sum payment or spread the payments over the terms in the academic year.

5. If their need is low in the first term so they don't get the full award, can they have the rest in the next term, until they reach the full \$500? Maybe they live at home or attend part-time so costs are lower, and have need for only \$450 in fall quarter. Can they receive the other \$50 in winter quarter?

Yes – and the same will be true if they have residual eligibility and transfer institutions – not to exceed \$500 total.

6. If the student received the Bridge grant, then withdrew and repaid part of the Bridge grant due to the repayment formulas, can the student receive the rest they are eligible for in the next term of enrollment during that year? Say they ended up with a net disbursement of \$250 for autumn after the refund calculation, then we approve an appeal and they enroll for the next term—can they receive the other \$250?

The Bridge grant will follow WSAC's standard repayment policy for WCG. As long as the student attends at least one class for each course for which funds were disbursed, they will not owe back Bridge grant funds.

7. A student attends full-time fall quarter and has enough annual need to receive the \$500 Bridge grant. The student does not re-enroll for the rest of the year and is now overawarded in fall quarter, does the student owe any repayment? Are there any requirements for state aid to resolve the overaward? We will have to consider how this impacts federal aid separately in terms of overawards.

In terms of state aid, a student earns their aid at the point they attend classes for which they received aid. However, federal policy could result in a return of Bridge grant.

8. What does this statement mean? "Student directive requirements apply to Bridge Grant awards"

This is a requirement for all private institutions, it does not apply to public institutions. For more information on student directives, please refer to Chapter 5 of the Washington College Grant and College Bound Scholarship Program Manual.

9. To add to the questions below, if a student exhausted their 12 QERs of CBS but still have WCG eligibility, are they also eligible for the Bridge Program?

Since the student is out of CBS QER, at that point they are not CBS eligible, so they would be eligible for the Bridge Grant.

10. Will there be an import file that can be downloaded from the portal to note if a student has already received the Bridge grant within an academic year? This would allow us to import the field into our Banner system and automate the awarding of the grant without having to look in the portal for each student. Looking for something similar to the archive or the cruncher, where I can upload a list of SSNs or WASFA IDs into the portal and receive an export of the aid year status for those students.

WSAC is working on a way to easily identify these students, which we may be able to add to either the archive or the cruncher. Additional information will be provided as soon as it is made available.

11. Is there a maximum number of years that a student can receive the Bridge Grant or if the student is WCG eligible, then they are Bridge eligible? I am thinking of students who attend part time or for limited terms within an aid year. They may get “some” WCG across more than 5 aid years (15 QER’s).

1) Funding was only approved in the budget for the 2022-23 year only – legislative action would be required if it is to continue past 2022-23.

2) The Bridge Grant is separate from WCG. The student must be receiving max WCG in order to receive the Bridge Grant, but QER does not apply to Bridge Grant specifically (right now they do not have QER associated with the Bridge Grant).

12. If a student does not have enough QERs for a full award at the 60% MFI level, are they still eligible for the full \$500 bridge?

They would be eligible in the one term they receive the partial QER of WCG at 0-60%. Must have at least .25 QER

13. For the Bridge Grant, it states the students must be enrolled for at least 3 credits. How is this calculated for clock hours?

Students attending clock-hour programs will need to be enrolled in at least 75-hours. Remainder Hours – Award Percentages

75 - 149 hours = 25% of a full-time award (report as less than half-time)

150 - 224 hours = 50% of a full-time award (report as half-time)

225 - 299 hours = 75% of full-time award (report as three-quarter time)

300+ hours = 100% of full-time award (report as full-time)

For more information on clock hours, please refer to Chapter 5 of the Washington College Grant and College Bound Scholarship Program Manual.

14. If a student does not attend all three terms but exhibits need, could we pay out a \$500 lump sum in one or two quarters? To clarify my question about a lump sum payment: Could the college pay \$500 in one term or \$250 in two terms, if the standard practice will be to disburse over three terms? If the situation is warranted.

Yes – you can do what you are suggesting – and obviously you just want to document any professional judgement decisions as to why you are doing something outside of your standard policy.

15. Our plan is to package evenly split between fall and spring but if a student is a fall grad or first-time entering student spring, we would package them with the full \$500.

All of this is permissible. Disproportionate awarding is also allowed if the student has the need and the institution's policy allows it.

16. Based off guidance below, if student doesn't end up attending spring or enrolling elsewhere, this is saying we are not to worry about providing the other \$250 applied back to fall?

Correct, not required but permissible, assuming the student has enough unmet financial need.

17. For those institutions that plan to award all in one term and that student doesn't return, no adjustment is to be made to the \$500. This isn't equitable and it seems that the policy would be that we go back and provide the \$250 in the previous term so that the student receives the full \$500? Or is this an annual award in that if a student is only packaged as a one term initially, they only are to receive ½ of the award?

WSAC is deferring to colleges to determine what is best for a student. Because, in most cases, there is other aid, that adds complications to retroactive awarding.

The annual award comment refers to the maximum being \$500 for the entire AY (which could include summer), different from WCG which is a 3 quarter/2 semester max award.

A student attending 1 term can receive a lump sum payment if the college determines it is in the best interest of the student.

18. If student's first term of attendance is summer (school's summer is a trailer) and they are receiving WCG, would we then award the full \$500 as long as the student is enrolled in at least 3 credits?

Yes correct. But as a trailer, the first term you could do that is the 2022-23 AY summer term, assuming that is summer 2023.