College Bound Scholarship
WASHINGTON

2023-24

Frequently Asked Questions
For Counselors and School Staff

The College Bound program was established by the Washington State Legislature in 2007 and is administered by the Washington Student Achievement Council.

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GENERAL INFORMATION AND MIDDLE SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

1. What is the College Bound Program?

It is an early commitment of state financial aid, like the Washington College Grant, to eligible 7th or 8th grade students. The scholarship is a state-funded program administered by the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC).

2. What are the requirements for students to be automatically enrolled in the College Bound Scholarship?

Students enrolled in public school who are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch (FRPL) in 7th, 8th, or newly eligible in 9th grade will be automatically enrolled in College Bound. This is through a partnership with OSPI and WSAC. OSPI identifies free and reduced-price lunch eligible students via data from districts that is reported through CEDARS. Additionally, students in state foster care at any point from 7th grade through age 21 (or they graduate high school) will be automatically signed up. This is through a partnership with the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) and WSAC.

For full details on the requirements to receive College Bound, please go to the Eligibility to Receive the College Bound Scholarship section of this FAQ.

3. If a family's income is greater than the income requirement, can a student apply anyway?

No. For other ways to pay for a college education, visit wsac.wa.gov.

4. How do homeschool and private school students sign up?

If a student is enrolled in a private school or homeschool program in Washington, the parent/guardian can contact us at 888-535-0747, option 1 to start the application. The parent/guardian and student will then need to complete, sign, and return a form to complete the application.

5. Do students have to have a Social Security number (SSN) to enroll in College Bound?

No, not to enroll initially. However, to receive the scholarship, students must be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen and meet the program's state residency requirements when applying for financial aid.

6. How will students know they have been enrolled in the College Bound program?

A certificate will be mailed when we have an address on file. Please check the portal periodically to be sure all addresses are updated**.**

7. Do students need the certificate to receive the scholarship?

No – the certificate is not needed to receive the scholarship and does not guarantee receipt of the scholarship. Students must meet the pledge requirements found at collegebound.wa.gov to receive the scholarship.

8. What is the College Bound Pledge?

As part of the College Bound sign-up process, students pledge to:

- Graduate from a Washington State high school or approved homeschool program with a cumulative 2.0 GPA or higher if they plan to attend a four-year public or private college directly after high school.
    - Beginning fall 2023, there is no high school GPA requirement for students to receive College Bound at a community college of technical school.
- Have no felony convictions.
- Apply for financial aid by completing the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) or WASFA (Washington Application for State Financial Aid) beginning their senior year of high school.

In order to receive the scholarship, students must fulfill the pledge and:

- Be income eligible, as determined by their college with the information from their FAFSA or WASFA.
- Be accepted to college and begin attending within one year of high school graduation. In order to receive College Bound funding, they must attend an eligible college: wsac.wa.gov/sfa-institutions.
- Be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen and Washington resident or meet the program's state residency requirements.

9. How much is the scholarship award?

The amount labeled "College Bound" will vary for each individual student depending on the school they attend and other state financial aid they receive. The College Bound funds will combine with other state financial aid to cover tuition (at comparable public tuition rates), some fees, and a small amount for books. Colleges may offer additional financial aid for expenses beyond these costs. This additional aid may be in the form of federal grants, work study, scholarships, and loans. Students will receive the scholarship through their college or university as part of their financial aid award.

College Bound fills the gap after other state aid has been awarded to reach the maximum CB award amounts listed below.

2023-24 Maximum CB Award Amounts*		
Institutions		**Award**
Public Research	University of Washington	$12,456
	Washington State University	$12,036
Public Comprehensive	Western Washington University	$8,450
	Central Washington University	$8,193
	The Evergreen State College	$8,302
	Eastern Washington University	$7,761
	CTC Applied Bachelor's	$7,822
Private Four-year Colleges & Universities		$12,456
WGU-Washington		$7,540
Public Community & Technical Colleges		$5,073
Private Career Colleges		$5,073

*When combined with other state financial aid such as the Washington College Grant.

10. Where can students use College Bound?

Students can earn an approved certificate or degree at Washington's two- or four-year public colleges, an approved independent college or university, or a private career school that participates in the Washington College Grant program. For a complete list, visit wsac.wa.gov/sfa-institutions.

11. What will the income requirement be to receive the scholarship when students graduate from high school?

To receive the scholarship, the family's income must fall within 65 percent of the state's median family income. Eligibility will be determined by the college's financial aid office when the student completes the FAFSA or WASFA when applying to college. The income chart is available here and below. Keep in mind that this number changes annually.

2023-24 Median Family Income Chart	
Household size	**Annual Income***
1	$38,000
2	$49,500
3	$61,500
4	$73,000
5	$84,500
6	$96,500
7	$98,500
8	$100,500

*Household income must be less than or equal to this amount.

COUNSELORS AND THE TOOLBOX

12. What is the Toolbox?

The Toolbox is housed within the WSAC secure portal. The Toolbox allows schools to see which students are enrolled and update student contact information. The Toolbox displays live data, once an application is entered the student will appear on your school's list. OSPI provides weekly updates on current enrollment information for students.

13. How do I get access to the Toolbox?

The Toolbox is part of our secure portal. For access to the portal, email College Bound at collegebound@wsac.wa.gov with your name, title, school, district, and phone number.

14. How do I log in to the portal?

Visit wsac.wa.gov and click on the link for The Portal under the Administration tab, or go to portal.wsac.wa.gov/.

15. How do I change my password for the portal?

Click the "Forgot your password?" link on the portal login page.

16. Which students should I import into the portal?

We recommend only uploading those who are currently eligible for FRPL to update contact information. You may want to check with your district to see if they are currently doing so.

17. Do FRPL privacy regulations prohibit me from importing students?

No. Per guidance from OSPI and WSAC's legal counsel, as well as Washington's Attorney General's Office:

"It is permissible for a school official to share additional identifying information regarding a FRLP-eligible student with WSAC—not just the student's name and eligibility status. As we understand it, the additional identifying information does not come from the student's FRLP application. Instead, it's information that the school official maintains or has access to outside of the FRLP program. Therefore, that additional information is not subject to the FRLP privacy rule.

We don't think this is a "loophole". The general reason that eligibility information can be shared with school or health officials is so that education and health programs can combine the program status information with other information for the purpose of providing services. It wouldn't make sense if the FRLP privacy rule limited their ability to do that.

Having said this, any additional student information disclosed by a school official may be subject to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and schools should be careful to make sure that the disclosure complies with FERPA requirements."

WSAC has data share agreements available should your district want to file one regarding uploading to WSAC. A recommended best practice is to have a data share agreement between your district's food nutrition services office and whomever will be doing the CBS upload. A template for that agreement can be found at www.k12.wa.us/ChildNutrition/Programs/NSLBP/FreeReduced.aspx (it is located under the Disclosure of Free and Reduced-Price Information and Eligibility Status section). Please contact College Bound program staff with any questions.

You can create your list of eligible students by using the Free and Reduced Priced Meals Demographic report found in the Attributes and Programs tab in CEDARS.

OSPI's Confidentiality Requirements of Common Programs may also be a helpful resource.

18. What if my school is 100% FRPL (CEP/Provision 2)?

For districts and/or schools that participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) and Provision 2 programs, CBS applications for eligible students are automatically started with WSAC via information from OSPI. Applications are only created for free and reduced-price lunch (FRPL) eligible students. There are multiple sources of information to determine that a student is eligible for FRPL, some of which are the FRPL application/family income survey, SNAP, TANF, Medicaid, foster youth, and migrant students. For more information on the sources of data pulled from OSPI, please click here to view slide #7.

CEP and Provision 2 schools are still required to provide eligibility information to OSPI, and this is what denotes if a student's record is sent to WSAC to be automatically enrolled in CBS. However, WSAC does

not receive contact information for these students and needs district help to update application records so students can be notified of the CBS opportunity. Districts should use the WSAC Portal to update student contact information. There is a Bulk Update tool in the portal that allows for updating multiple records at one time. WSAC has training tools available in the portal and can provide one-on-one support to assist with uploading this information.

19. Can you remove duplicate records?

Yes –please email College Bound with the student's full name and birthdate at collegebound@wsac.wa.gov.

20. Can I change info in the Toolbox – if so, how?

Yes, by clicking on the individual student's record, you can then click the edit button to make the appropriate changes. Be sure to save the changes after editing the information.

21. How do I remove a student from my school's list?

We cannot remove records once they are entered. If a student is no longer enrolled at your school, it will be updated when their enrollment information is updated with OSPI, and we receive the new data.

22. Why is a particular student marked "ineligible" or "not interested"?

The parent/guardian indicated the student was not eligible or they were not interested.

23. What does it mean when a student is marked as "Bad Address" in the Toolbox?

When a student shows up on a "Bad Address" list in the Toolbox it can mean one of two things:

- 1) At some point we attempted to send mail to the student's address on file and it was returned as undeliverable to our office
- 2) One or all fields in the address are blank/missing. This will be the primary reason you have many students on your bad address list.

24. Why do I have so many "Bad Addresses" in my school?

The new auto enroll process allows us to get eligible student information from OSPI to complete a CB application, we do not however get parent/guardian name or addresses for any students. That is what causes them to show up in your "Bad Address" list in the Toolbox.

25. Why is it called "Bad Address" if it is just missing an address?

The term "Bad Address" means that an address needs attention and is not an address where we can send mail. Having them marked as a "Bad Address" stops our system from generating letters to student files that either have no address or have had mail returned at some point because of an invalid address.

ELIGIBILITY TO RECEIVE THE COLLEGE BOUND FUNDS

26. What is the income requirement to receive College Bound?

To receive the scholarship, the family's income must fall within 65 percent of the state's median family income. Eligibility will be determined by the college's financial aid office when the student completes the FAFSA or WASFA when applying to college. The income chart is available here.

27. Can a student graduate out-of-state?

Students are required to graduate from a Washington State high school or approved homeschool program. If you have questions about a student's specific situation, please contact College Bound.

28. Can undocumented students receive College Bound?

Yes, if they meet both program requirements (i.e., the College Bound pledge, income eligibility, etc.) and state residency requirements. More information on these residency standards is available at wsac.wa.gov/wasfa.

29. Can a student earn a GED and receive College Bound?

Generally, no. Beginning in the fall of 2017 (Senate Bill 5890), students who experienced foster care at any point between 7th grade and the age of 21 may be able to receive College Bound after earning a high school equivalency certificate. Students should contact program staff at collegebound@wsac.wa.gov or 888-535-0747, opt. 1 to discuss their specific situation and next steps, but generally:

Students need to have been automatically enrolled into the College Bound program (see question 10).

- They will need to provide a copy of their high school equivalency certificate (currently in WA, this is the GED exam) to program staff.
- Students will need to have earned the GED prior to their 21st birthday.
- Students will need to enroll in college within one year of receiving their GED.
- Students must not have been convicted of a felony.
- Students must also be income-eligible, as determined by completing the FAFSA or WASFA.

30. Would a student meet the enrollment deadline if they are enrolled in a Dual Credit program?

Yes, if a student receives college credit through any Dual Credit programs such as Running Start or College in the High School, then they have met the one-year enrollment deadline. The College Bound funds still must be used within the five-year deadline and a bachelor's degree is the highest degree a student can earn using the scholarship. Students may need to submit a transcript to WSAC to confirm enrollment.

31. Where can a student use the scholarship?

The scholarship can be used at over 65 eligible institutions in Washington. You can find the current list at wsac.wa.gov/sfa-institutions.

32. Can College Bound be used in another state?

No, College Bound is specific to Washington.

33. Can College Bound be used for Running Start?

No, students must graduate from high school before they can use College Bound.

34. Can a student graduate from high school earlier or later than expected?

Yes, if the graduation date changes, contact College Bound to ensure the student's record is accurate.

35. Can a student take two years off after high school for a mission trip or military service?

No, the student must enroll in college within one year of completing high school to maintain eligibility.

36. Why doesn't the CB award cover all college costs?

Per state statute, College Bound is an early commitment of state financial aid, like the Washington College Grant, for eligible students that covers three specific costs: tuition at public college rates, some fees, and a small amount for books.

37. Why did a student only receive $X for College Bound?

Institutions may meet the costs covered by the College Bound commitment using different state financial aid programs, such as the Washington College Grant. The specific "College Bound" amount will differ at each institution and for each student. Additional financial aid for college expenses beyond tuition may be available. This additional aid may be in the form of federal grants, work study, scholarships, and loans. Students should connect with the financial aid office at their colleges early in the process.

38. Is the scholarship transferrable?

Yes, to other eligible institutions in Washington State.

39. Can the scholarship be used for a master's degree?

No, it is for undergraduate programs only. A bachelor's degree is the highest degree a student can earn using the scholarship.

APPEALS

40. Can a student appeal if their College Bound record is not found?

Yes, have them contact College Bound program staff at collegebound@wsac.wa.gov or 888-535-0747, option 1.

41. Can a student appeal the diploma requirement?

No, it is written into the statute for the program requirements.

42. Can a student appeal the GPA Requirement?

No, it is written into the statute for the program requirements.

43. Can a student appeal the one-year enrollment deadline?

This depends on the student's specific situation. Students should work with their college financial aid office.

44. Can a student appeal the five-year deadline?

No, it is written into the statute for the program requirements.

45. Can a student appeal the number of quarters they can use it?

No, it is written into the statute for the program requirements.