



2023-24

Frequently Asked Questions for Students and Parents/Guardians



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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COLLEGE BOUND REQUIREMENTS

1. What are the College Bound requirements?

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.
 - **NEW:** Beginning fall 2023, there is no high school GPA requirement for students to receive College Bound at a community college or 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.

To receive College Bound, students must fulfill the pledge and:

- Be determined as [income-eligible](#) by their college with the information from their FAFSA or WASFA.
- Start attending college within one year of graduating from high school. In order to receive College Bound funds, they must attend an eligible college at wsac.wa.gov/sfa-institutions.
- Meet the program's [state residency](#) standards for College Bound.

Students must meet the pledge requirements found at wsac.wa.gov/college-bound#using-the-scholarship.

2. How will a student know if they have a complete College Bound application?

Free and Reduced-Price Lunch eligible 7th, 8th and newly eligible 9th graders are automatically enrolled in College Bound. After they are automatically enrolled, they will receive a certificate in the mail. The certificate is not needed to receive College Bound and does not guarantee the student will receive College Bound. Their application will remain complete throughout high school and college. The student can check with their high school counselor or contact us to see if they have a complete application.

3. Do students have to graduate with their high school class to receive College Bound?

No. Students may graduate earlier or later than their original high school class, but they must graduate. However, a GED may qualify if they were in foster care at any point between 7th grade and high school graduation. Please contact the College Bound program staff to discuss the student's specific situation.

4. Do Running Start students meet the graduation and one-year enrollment deadline requirements?

Yes. However, the student will need to provide the College Bound program staff with a transcript to confirm that they have met the graduation requirement.

Yes, if students receive 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. 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 College Bound. The student may need to submit a transcript to WSAC to confirm enrollment.

5. What if the high school does not provide grades or GPAs?

Ask the principal or registrar to send a letter to WSAC that states how they calculate grades or GPAs.

6. What do home school students need to do to meet the graduation requirements?

Home school students will need to provide a final high school transcript to verify high school completion and a copy of the Letter of Intent to Home School form. Home-schooled students must also verify their readiness by providing one of the following three methods:

- A standardized test (PSAT, SAT, Plan, ACT, or the Smarter Balanced Assessment test).
- A college placement exam such as Accuplacer.
- Complete at least 12 academic college credits or credits specific to their program with a 2.0 GPA or higher.

7. Do students have to enroll in college right after they graduate from high school to receive College Bound?

No. However, the student must start college no later than the fall term (as defined by the college) one academic year following high school graduation.

For example, if the student graduated high school by August 2023, they have until fall 2024 to enroll and earn college credit or have financial aid disbursed to them, whichever comes first. Be sure the student meets all the college's deadlines for class registration and financial aid to complete enrollment.

APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID

8. Which application should students use?

Students should use the FAFSA if they are a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen as defined by the U.S. Department of Education. According to the U.S. Department of Education, the most common category of eligible non-citizen is that of a permanent resident (someone with a “green card”), but there are other categories as well. For more information, visit the U.S. Department of Education’s website at studentaid.gov/understand-aid/eligibility/requirements/non-us-citizens.

Students should file the WASFA if they have DACA status, or if they are ineligible for federal financial aid due to immigration status. Find more information at wsac.wa.gov/wasfa.

9. When do students need to complete the FAFSA or WASFA?

The FAFSA and WASFA will open in December 2023 for the 2024-2025 academic year (using 2022 taxes). If the student plans to attend college in the 2024-2025 academic year, they should complete the FAFSA or WASFA as soon as the financial aid application opens and should follow the specific deadlines of the college of their choice. This will ensure that they will receive the maximum award they are eligible for.

Finally, their college may have additional forms they require for financial aid. Be sure to have the student ask!

10. If the student is not sure that they are going to college (or don’t know where they’re going), should they still file the FAFSA or WASFA?

Yes. If there’s any chance the student may attend college in the 2024-25 academic year, have them file the application. Both the financial aid applications are free and usually take less than an hour to complete.

They should never pay to complete the FAFSA or WASFA. There are many resources available to help them. Students are encouraged to ask their school counselor or visit wsac.wa.gov/apply for a list of free, statewide financial aid filing events.

11. Do students have to file a FAFSA or WASFA every year they are in college?

Yes, they cannot receive financial aid (including College Bound) without a financial aid application.

12. How will the colleges know the student has a complete College Bound application?

Colleges have access to WSAC’s secure portal to determine if the student is College Bound. This will happen automatically. Students need to be sure to list every college they are considering on the financial aid application.

13. Is the FAFSA or WASFA the only financial aid form students have to complete?

No. Completing their financial aid application is only the first step of the financial aid process. Their college will likely have other financial aid forms for them to complete. Check with the financial aid office at the college the student wishes to attend.

14. What happens after students file the FAFSA or WASFA?

WSAC will match the student's College Bound application with their FAFSA or WASFA. The college(s) then determine eligibility and/or College Bound amount. Students can contact the financial aid office at their college if they have any questions.

15. How do students correct a mistake or update their information on their financial aid application?

If the student wrote an incorrect email or mailing address, forgot to sign their application, or need to update their income, they may login at studentaid.gov to make those changes.

If the student filed the FAFSA and incorrectly reported their SSN, they must contact the financial aid office at the college. If they need to correct the information on their WASFA, please login at wsac.wa.gov/wasfa.

PAYING FOR COLLEGE

16. What are the income requirements to receive College Bound?

Per College Bound statute, income reported on the student’s financial aid application must be less than 65 percent of the median family income (MFI). To see the complete MFI chart with amounts for different family sizes, go to wsac.wa.gov/college-bound#income-eligibility-to-receive-cbs or see the chart 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.

17. Can students attend a private college even though the tuition is more?

Yes. College Bound covers tuition at public tuition rates. Students can use this amount at an eligible private four-year college. The College Bound amount would be like either the University of Washington (UW) or Washington State University (WSU).

18. How do students get the amount for books?

It would be included in their College Bound financial aid award if they are eligible.

19. What does College Bound cover?

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

The specific amount labeled “College Bound” on the financial aid package will look different at each college and for each student, but the costs listed above will be covered by state financial aid. Other forms of financial aid for college costs beyond tuition may be available. This additional aid may be federal grants, work-study, scholarships, and loans.

Other college costs such as room and board, transportation, personal expenses, etc. are the responsibility of the student and could be covered by a combination of federal grants, loans, scholarships, work-study, and family funds.

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 when Combined with the Washington College Grant for 3 Quarters/2 Semesters		
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

20. How do students make sure they keep receiving College Bound once they're in college?

Students must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) as determined by their college's financial aid office— this varies among schools but is typically a 2.0 GPA. They must also file a new financial aid application each year to ensure that they meet the income requirement.

21. Do the College Bound funds need to be paid back?

College Bound is a Washington State grant and does not have to be paid back under normal circumstances. However, if students do not maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) or withdraw from classes beyond the allowable withdrawal date as determined by the college, they may have to repay the College Bound funds. If the student is in financial aid repayment to their college, they may also have to repay the College Bound funds.

22. How many years can students receive College Bound?

College Bound is a four-year commitment (8 semesters or 12 quarters) that must be used within five years of high school graduation. For example, if the student graduated in June 2024, they have until June 2029 to earn their certificate or degree. It is to their advantage to complete their bachelor's degree within four years. A bachelor's degree is the highest degree a student can earn using College Bound.

23. Can College Bound be used for:

- **Running Start classes?**

No. Students must meet high school graduation requirements before they can receive College Bound.

- **Summer classes?**

Yes. However, that will use one quarter or semester of eligibility, so be sure students take a full load to ensure they will receive College Bound until they graduate.

- **Online classes?**

Yes, but they must be at one of the eligible institutions.

- **Study abroad?**

Yes, but again, the program must be with one of the eligible institutions.

24. Can students take a quarter or semester off after they enroll in college?

Yes. If students are still income eligible, they can "re-start" the College Bound program. Remember two important things:

- College Bound is a four-year commitment that must be used within five years of high school graduation.
- If students don't take a full load, they are still using one of their quarters or semesters of eligibility.

25. Does College Bound pay for college fees?

There are various fees charged by the college. College Bound covers only service and activity fees, which are determined by each college. Check the college website for examples of service and activity fees.

26. A family made too much money this year to receive College Bound, but one parent may lose their job next year – could the student receive College Bound then?

Yes. Their eligibility can be re-evaluated or restarted if they have a valid College Bound application. Students must also file the FAFSA or WASFA and meet the other requirements.

FINANCIAL AID AWARD LETTERS

27. Will students receive their Award Letter (offer of financial aid) in the mail or by email?

It depends on the school. Many schools use email or other types of e-communications to notify the student about the application process and other updates. Students are encouraged to check their email often. They can also go to their college's website to see if they will be sent an Award Letter or if they have to login and retrieve it from the business office.

28. Where can students receive help if they don't understand their Award Letter?

Check out their college's financial aid web page for an explanation of the Award Letter and an explanation of their options. For more information on understanding award letters click [here](#).

As students make their decision about which college they will attend, comparing award letters is recommended. You can find out more information at studentaid.gov/complete-aid-process/comparing-aid-offers

Students should also contact the financial aid office at the college if they have more questions— they are the experts.

29. What if College Bound is not on the Award Letter or is not as much as expected?

These are a few of the possible reasons:

- Their family's income does not meet the standard of 65 percent of MFI (see chart [here](#))
- Their financial aid award is greater than their 'need' as calculated by the FAFSA or WASFA
- Other state financial aid (such as the Washington College Grant) met the commitment of College Bound.

Students should check their college's financial aid office if they have questions.

30. Why does the student owe money to the state and what can they do about it?

Students can reach out to WSAC's repayment contact at repayment@wsac.wa.gov or 888-535-0747, option 4. Additionally, whichever company they are working with for repayment: University Accounting Service, uasconnect.com, 844-870-8701 or Financial Asset Management Systems, famspayonline.net, 800-399-4984.

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT

31. Where can students use the College Bound funds? Is there a list of eligible colleges?

There are over 65 eligible institutions in Washington. They include public community or technical colleges, public four-year institutions, approved independent colleges or universities, and private career colleges where students may use their College Bound funds. Find the list at wsac.wa.gov/sfa-institutions.

32. Can students attend college part-time?

Yes. However, their College Bound funds will be reduced. For example, 9 to 11 quarter credits are considered 3/4 time and College Bound will be reduced to a 75 percent award. Enrolling in 6 to 8 quarter credits will result in a 50 percent pro-rated award. 3 to 5 quarter credits will result in a 25 percent award. It is also important to remember that there is a limited number of quarters or semesters of College Bound funds for students to use.

33. What type of degree or certificate can students earn using College Bound funds?

Students may earn any approved degree or certificate offered by one of the eligible schools listed above. Funds may not be used for a Theology program at any school. The highest degree they can earn using College Bound is a bachelor's degree.

34. When should students apply to college?

Every college has different application deadlines. For some large universities, students may begin applying up to one year prior to their high school graduation. For community or technical colleges, they may need to apply several months before classes begin. For exact dates, students will need to check with the colleges they are considering.

35. What is a college application fee?

Some, but not all colleges, require an application fee when students apply. However, there may be application fee waivers available. If students qualified for an SAT or ACT test waiver, they should also be eligible to receive the application fee waiver. Students will need to ask the admissions office about waivers or search the college website.

36. Are there other forms and deadlines?

Yes. Students will have to complete forms for the college's financial aid office, residential life (housing and meal plan), and possibly others. Students will need to respond to all requests immediately – delaying could affect their financial aid award, housing assignment, or class schedule. Students are encouraged to keep a calendar and check their mail or email often.