



2020-21

## Frequently Asked Questions for Seniors



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

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# SCHOLARSHIP REQUIREMENTS

## **1. What are the College Bound Scholarship requirements?**

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

- Graduate from a Washington State high school or approved homeschool program with a cumulative 2.0 GPA or higher.
- 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 your senior year of high school.

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

- Be determined as income-eligible by your college with the information from your FAFSA or WASFA.
- Start attending college within one year of graduating from high school. In order to receive College Bound funds, you must attend an eligible college at <http://www.readysetgrad.org/eligible-institutions>.
- Meet the program's state residency standards for College Bound.

## **2. How do I know if I have a complete College Bound application?**

After completing the application in middle school, you will receive a certificate in the mail. Your application will remain complete throughout high school and college. You can check with your high school counselor or contact us to see if you have a complete application.

## **3. Do I have to have my certificate to receive the scholarship?**

No – the certificate is not needed to receive the scholarship and does not guarantee you will receive the scholarship. You must meet the pledge requirements found at <https://readysetgrad.wa.gov/college/College-Bound-Pledge>.

## **4. Do I have to graduate with my high school class to receive the College Bound Scholarship?**

No. You may graduate earlier or later than your original high school class, but you must graduate. However, a GED may qualify if you were in foster care at any point between 7th grade and age 21. Please contact the College Bound Scholarship program staff to discuss your specific situation.

**5. I am a Running Start student. I will receive my high school diploma from the college where I am taking classes. Do I meet the graduation requirement?**

Yes. However, you will need to provide WSAC with a transcript to confirm that you have met the graduation requirement.

**6. I attend an alternative high school and we do not receive grades. How will I know I have met the 2.0 GPA requirement?**

Ask your principal or registrar to send a letter to WSAC stating that you met the 2.0 GPA requirement.

**7. I am a home-schooled student. What do I have to do?**

To ensure that you have met the GPA requirement, WSAC is required to determine your college readiness. This is done by providing 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 COMPASS or Accuplacer.
- Complete at least 12 academic college credits or credits specific to your program with a 2.0 GPA or higher.

**8. Do I have to enroll in college right after I graduate from high school to receive the scholarship?**

No. However, you must start college no later than the fall term (as defined by the college) one academic year following high school graduation. For example, if you graduate high school by August 2020, you have until fall 2021 to enroll and earn college credit or have financial aid disbursed to you, whichever comes first. Be sure you meet all the college's deadlines for class registration and financial aid to complete enrollment.

## APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID

### **9. Which application should I use?**

You should use the FAFSA if you 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 <http://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/eligibility/non-us-citizens>.

File the WASFA if you have DACA status, or if you are ineligible for federal financial aid due to immigration status. Find more information at [readysetgrad.org/WAFSA](http://readysetgrad.org/WAFSA).

### **10. When do I need to complete the FAFSA or WASFA?**

The FAFSA and WASFA will open October 1, 2020 for the 2021-2022 academic year. If you plan to attend college in the 2021-2022 academic year, you should complete the FAFSA or WASFA as soon as possible after October 1 and should follow the specific deadlines of the college of your choice. This will ensure that you will receive the maximum award you are eligible for.

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

### **11. If I’m not sure if I’m going to college (or don’t know where I’m going), should I still file the FAFSA or WASFA?**

Yes. If there’s any chance you may attend college in the 2019-2020 academic year, file the application. Both the financial aid applications are free and usually take less than an hour to complete.

You should never pay to complete the FAFSA or WASFA. There are many resources available to help you. Ask your school counselor or visit [www.readysetgrad.org/cgw-info](http://www.readysetgrad.org/cgw-info) for a list of free, statewide financial aid filing events.

### **12. Do I have to file a FAFSA or WASFA every year I am in college?**

Yes, you cannot receive financial aid (including the College Bound Scholarship) without a financial aid application.

### **13. How will the colleges know I am a College Bound student? Do I have to tell them?**

No, you won’t need to tell them. Colleges have access to WSAC’s secure portal to determine if you are College Bound. This will happen automatically. Be sure to list every college you are considering on the financial aid application.

#### **14. Is the FAFSA or WASFA the only financial aid form I have to complete?**

No. Completing your financial aid application is only the first step of the financial aid process. Your college will likely have other financial aid forms for you to complete. Check with the financial aid office at the college you wish to attend.

#### **15. What happens after I file my FAFSA or WASFA?**

WSAC will match your original College Bound application with your FAFSA or WASFA. Once you've completed your financial aid application, the college(s) that you mark in the application then determine your eligibility and/or College Bound amount. You can contact the financial aid office at your college if you have any questions.

#### **16. How do I correct a mistake or update my information on my financial aid application?**

If you wrote an incorrect email or mailing address, forgot to sign your application, or need to update your income, you may login at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov) to make those changes. If you filed the FAFSA and incorrectly reported your SSN, you must contact the Financial Aid office at the college. If you need to correct the information on your WASFA, please login at [readysetgrad.org/WASFA](http://readysetgrad.org/WASFA).

## PAYING FOR COLLEGE

### **17. How do I know if my family meets the College Bound Scholarship income requirement?**

Per College Bound statute, your family's income 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 [www.readysetgrad.org/cbs-mfi](http://www.readysetgrad.org/cbs-mfi). Keep in mind that this number changes annually.

### **18. Can I attend a private college even though the tuition is more?**

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

### **19. How do I get my allowance for books?**

It will be included in your College Bound financial aid award.

### **20. What does the scholarship cover?**

The College Bound Scholarship is an early commitment of state financial aid to eligible students. It is based on three specific costs: tuition at public college rates, some fees, and a small book allowance.

The specific amount labeled "College Bound" on your 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.

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



Maximum CBS Award* 2020-21		
Institutions		Award
Public Research	University of Washington	\$11,540
	Washington State University	\$11,235
Public Comprehensive	Western Washington University	\$7,881
	Central Washington University	\$7,677
	The Evergreen State College	\$7,667
	Eastern Washington University	\$7,197
	Applied Bachelor's	\$7,264
Private Four-year Colleges & Universities		\$11,904
WGU-Washington		\$6,280
Public Community & Technical Colleges		\$4,719
Private Career Colleges		\$4,719

\*When combined with other state financial aid such as Washington College Grant (<https://readyssetgrad.wa.gov/college/washington-college-grant>).

### 21. How do I make sure I keep receiving my scholarship once I'm in college?

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

### 22. Will I have to pay back the funds I receive for the scholarship?

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

### 23. How many years can I receive my scholarship?

College Bound is a four-year scholarship (8 semesters or 12 quarters) that must be used within five years of high school graduation. For example, if you graduated in June 2020, you have until June 2025 to earn your certificate or degree. It is to your advantage to complete your bachelor's degree within four years. The highest degree that College Bound can be used towards is a first bachelor's degree.

## **24. Can I use College Bound for:**

- **Running Start classes?**

No. You must meet high school graduation requirements before you can receive College Bound.

- **Summer classes?**

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

## **25. I may need to take a quarter or semester off school. Will I lose my scholarship?**

As long as you are still income eligible, you can “re-start” the College Bound Scholarship. Remember two important things:

- The College Bound Scholarship is a four-year scholarship that must be used within five years of high school graduation
- If you don’t take a full load, you are still using one of your quarters or semesters of eligibility.

## **26. 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.

## **27. My family made too much money this year to receive the scholarship, but my father may lose his job next year – could I receive College Bound then?**

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

## **28. We were selected for income verification by the college. What does that mean, and why were we selected?**

This process is a way for your college to confirm the data you reported is accurate, such as tax returns, on your FAFSA or WASFA. It is a random process and it is important that you contact the financial aid office immediately. Don’t delay – doing so could affect your financial aid award and your ability to attend college.

## FINANCIAL AID AWARD LETTERS

### **29. Will I receive my 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 you about the application process and other updates. Be sure to check your email often. You can also go to their website to see if you will be sent an Award Letter or if you have to login and retrieve it from the business office.

### **30. I don't understand my Award Letter. Where can I get help?**

Check out your college's financial aid web page for an explanation of the Award Letter and an explanation of your options. Many colleges now use the "Shopping Sheet," a standardized financial aid Award Letter. To see an example of a standardized shopping sheet, go to <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/sites/default/files/comparing-colleges.pdf>

As you make your decision about which college you will attend, comparing award letters is recommended. You can use an online calculator at <http://studentaid.ed.gov/fafsa/next-steps/comparing-aid-offers>.

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

### **31. I don't see the College Bound Scholarship on my award letter, or it's not as much as I expected.**

These are a few of the possible reasons:

- Your family's income does not meet the standard of 65 percent of MFI (see chart: [www.readysetgrad.org/cbs-mfi](http://www.readysetgrad.org/cbs-mfi))
- Your financial aid award is greater than your 'need' as calculated by the FAFSA or WASFA
- Other state financial aid (such as the Washington College Grant) met the commitment of the College Bound Scholarship.

Check with your college's Financial Aid office if you have questions.

### **32. Why do I owe money to the state and what can I do about it?**

You can view the answers to frequently asked questions regarding repayment at <https://readysetgrad.wa.gov/college/washington-college-grant>

## COLLEGE ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT

### **33. Where can I use my College Bound Scholarship? Is there a list of eligible colleges?**

There are over 60 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 you may use your College Bound Scholarship. Find the list at [www.readysetgrad.org/eligible-institutions](http://www.readysetgrad.org/eligible-institutions).

### **34. Can I attend college part-time?**

Yes. However, your College Bound funds will be reduced. For example, 9 to 11 quarter credits is 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 credit enrollment 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 you to use.

### **35. What type of degree or certificate can I earn?**

You 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 you can earn using the scholarship is a bachelor's degree.

### **36. When should I apply to college?**

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

### **37. What is a college application fee?**

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

### **38. Are there other forms and deadlines?**

Yes. You will have to complete forms for the college's Financial Aid Office, Residential Life (housing and meal plan), and possibly others. Respond to all requests immediately – delaying could affect your financial aid award, your housing assignment, or class schedule. Keep a calendar and check your mail or email often.