



2016-17
Frequently Asked Questions
for Counselors

GENERAL INFORMATION AND APPLICATION

1. **What is the College Bound Scholarship Program?**

It is an early commitment of state financial aid to eligible students seventh or eighth grade. The scholarship is a state-funded program administered by the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC).

2. **How do students sign up?**

The application process for the College Bound Scholarship is a two-step process. Eligible students must complete an application in 7th or 8th grade—by June 30 of their 8th grade year. Then, as seniors in high school, students must fulfill the College Bound pledge and complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or Washington Application for State Financial Aid (WASFA) to determine income-eligibility before they enroll in college.

There are three ways to start the application process in 7th or 8th grade:

- Schools can upload a list of free and reduced priced lunch eligible students to the WSAC portal online. This allows schools to begin the application process for all of their eligible students at once. To create a portal account, please contact Christina Richmond at christinar@wsac.wa.gov.
- Counselors can enter students individually via the online application (available in English and Spanish) at www.collegebound.wa.gov.
- Students and families can apply on their own at www.collegebound.wa.gov

Regardless of the initial application method, students will also need to complete a Missing Information Letter (MIL) to self-certify their income eligibility. This letter needs to be signed by the student and their parent. Counselors can download the MIL from WSAC's portal to print and give to students. Once the letter is signed by the student and parent, counselors should return them to WSAC.

3. **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.
- 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).

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 an eligible college and begin attending within one year of high school graduation.
- Be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen and Washington resident, or have DACA status.

4. **How much is the scholarship award?**

The College Bound Scholarship will combine with other state financial aid to cover tuition (at comparable public colleges), some fees, and a small book allowance. Thus, the specific amount will vary based on the college and the types of state financial aid that the student is eligible for. However, the College Bound Scholarship commitment is that the costs mentioned above will be covered. Additional financial aid for college expenses beyond

tuition will likely be offered. This additional aid may be in the form of federal grants, work study, scholarships, and loans. Students will receive their scholarship through their college or university as part of their financial aid award.

5. Where can students use the College Bound Scholarship?

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 State Need Grant program. For a complete list go to www.readysetgrad.org/eligible-institutions.

6. Do students have to have a Social Security number (SSN) to apply?

No, not to apply. To receive the scholarship, however, students must be a U. S. citizen or eligible non-citizen or have DACA status when applying for financial aid.

7. Can eligible homeschool students and private school students apply?

Yes. Write in the name of the school or select "homeschool" for the name of the school when completing the online application.

8. How will students know if their College Bound Scholarship application was accepted by WSAC?

A certificate will be mailed to the address listed on their application after it has been processed. If a student does not receive a certificate within four weeks of submitting a complete application, call 888-535-0747, option 1, or email collegebound@wsac.wa.gov.

SCHOLARSHIP ELIGIBILITY

9. What are the requirements to apply for the College Bound Scholarship?

Students should apply if they are in 7th or 8th grade and meet one of these requirements:

- Their family meets the income requirements (see the income chart on the application).
- They are in foster care or a dependent of the state.
- Their family receives basic food/TANF benefits.

10. 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 www.readysetgrad.org.

11. How do students know what their family income is?

Income is defined by USDA free and reduced price lunch guidelines as any money received on a recurring basis including gross earned income. Gross earned income means all money earned before deductions (income taxes, Social Security taxes, insurance premiums). Income includes but is not limited to:

- Salaries, tips, commissions
- Unemployment and Workers' Compensation
- Child support and alimony
- Social Security, disability, veterans benefits, Supplemental Security Income

- Net rental income, cash from savings, regular contributions from persons not living in household.

Family size is everyone for whom the parent/guardian is responsible and provides more than half of their support.

12. What if parents are separated/divorced or the student lives with someone else?

Following free and reduced price lunch guidelines, if parents are divorced or separated, the student is generally considered part of the household of the parent that has custody. If the student lives with each parent equally and one parent meets the income eligibility, the student is eligible. If a student is in a kinship caregiver situation they should use the income from their legal parents/guardians. Counselors can sign and verify a student's eligibility for free and reduced price lunch if parents are unable to.

13. 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% of the state's median family income (\$55,500 for a family of four in 2016-17). Eligibility will be determined when the student completes the FAFSA or WASFA when applying to college.