



SFA PARTNER

Quarterly Update

October 2016

From the Director

Hello SFA Partners,

We hope your new school year is off to a good start! We've heard from a number of colleges that enrollments are up and that, of course, means financial aid applications are up for those schools as well. In addition, with the 2017-18 FAFSA and WASFA processors starting their work this year on October 1, it promises to be an exciting and interesting year for everyone!

In this issue, we have included information on how two of our partner institutions – Central Washington University and Spokane Falls Community College – have developed preliminary 2017-18 financial aid award notifications, which will be sent to their students within a few weeks of the time the schools receive electronic information from the FAFSA processor. We hope you will review the article on this topic and perhaps kick around this idea on your own campuses to determine if early notifications would be a helpful addition to provide to your students.

In late September, we sent the Median Family Income (MFI) chart for use with 2017-18 awarding of SNG and CBS. We are providing additional guidance in this issue that we hope will be helpful for 2017-18 awarding. Other important information, such as final 2017-18 SNG and CBS award amounts, cannot be provided until the 2017 Legislative Session is concluded.

Also, the **SFA Partner** is now “one year old!” It is a good time to receive feedback and suggestions from our reading partners! Please help us out by completing the short survey on the **SFA Partner**. You will find the survey link located at the end of this [document](#).

Lastly, if you will be attending the WFAA Conference, I and other members of our staff look forward to engaging with you in the sessions. I will also be providing a WSAC update on Friday, October 14.

Wishing everyone a wonderful new fall season!

Becky Thompson
Director of Student Financial Assistance

Click on these links or scroll down to learn more about the following topics:

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Important Dates to Remember

- ✓ **FAFSA and WASFA available for 2017-18 academic year: October 1, 2016**
- ✓ **WFAA Fall Conference: October 12 – 14, 2016**
- ✓ **Unit Record Report – submission due date: October 14, 2016**
- ✓ **WSASEA Conference: November 1, 2016**
- ✓ **Pave the Way Conference: Nov. 1 & 2, 2016**
- ✓ **Fall Interim Reports for SNG/CBS/Passport due: November 4, 2016**

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Early 2017-18 Financial Aid Award Letters

One of the outcomes hoped for with the opening of the FAFSA and WASFA application process this year on October 1, is that colleges will be in a better position to provide financial aid award letters sooner to students. WSAC applauds that a number of Washington colleges and universities have initiated earlier notification dates, some have created early award letters to FAFSA filers, and many others are discussing implementing these types of options on their campuses.

We would like you to know of two colleges that have automated early preliminary award notifications to their students who have submitted FAFSAs. If you wish to find out more about their processes, you may contact them to get a copy of their award letters.

If you would like to share with us changes your college has implemented, either in notification dates or in these types of preliminary award notifications, please send details to Steve Thorndill at Stevet@wsac.wa.gov.

In addition, we would be glad to see and share information from any colleges who are able to provide early financial aid awards to their WASFA filers. Please also send that information to Steve Thorndill.

Central Washington University to Launch Early Financial Aid Notifications to 2017-18 FAFSA Filers

Beginning later this fall, Central Washington University plans to send tentative 2017-18 financial aid award notifications to students who list CWU on the 2017-18 FAFSA. Once the initial date is established, CWU expects to send awards about two weeks after the FAFSA results have been received by CWU and will include estimated federal, state and institutional financial aid awards. According to Adrian Naranjo, CWU Director of Student Financial Services, “We will be providing these early awards to give students and their families additional time to plan for their 2017-18 college enrollment and to relieve the stress that comes with late financial aid awards.” Later in the spring, when tuition and state financial aid allocations are finalized, CWU will send students final financial aid awards. If you wish to receive a sample copy of a CWU tentative financial aid notification once they are available, please email Adrian at naranjoa@cwu.edu.

Spokane Falls Community College Ready to Send Estimated 2017-18 Financial Aid Notifications

Within a week of the time that Spokane Falls Community College receives 2017-18 FAFSA data from EdConnect, SFCC will mail estimated award letters to assist students and their families with 2017-18 planning. The award letters include estimated direct and indirect educational costs, estimated Pell Grant assistance and possible additional other funding sources from federal, state and institutional grants. SFCC Financial Aid Director, Marjorie Davis, states, “This will be our third year of sending out early estimated awards. We’ve heard during the last two years from many students and their parents that this information was very helpful in their being able to enroll at SFCC.” Later in the year, when tuition and state aid award amounts for 2017-18 are finalized, SFCC will send students final award letters. If you wish to receive a sample copy of the SFCC estimated financial aid award letter, please email Marjorie at marjorie.davis@spokanefalls.edu.

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SNG and CBS Guidance for 2017-18 Awarding

The following guidance was emailed to FAAs by Carissa Glassburn on 9/30/16

Median Family Income Chart for 2017-2018

The MFI Chart for 2017-2018 State Need Grant (SNG) and College Bound Scholarship (CBS) awarding can be accessed by clicking [here](#). Please note the 70% MFI column is for SNG awarding only, as the maximum MFI for CBS awarding is 65%.

Release of 2017-18 SNG and CBS Award Chart

We don’t expect that the 2017-18 award chart will be released until the 2017 Legislative Session is complete (estimate late in the spring of 2017). Tuition at public colleges and universities for the 2017-18 year may also be determined then. For preliminary 2017-18 state aid awarding, WSAC recommends:

- Using the current 2016-17 award chart to provide estimated 2017-18 SNG and CBS award amounts until the official 2017-18 award chart is available. The 2016-17 chart can be found on page 29 of the 2016-17 SNG & CBS Program Manual.

- Including the Washington State Aid Conditions of Award statement with all award letters. The full conditions statement can be found on page 73 of the program manual. The following excerpt appears as condition #4.

The offer of this financial assistance is subject to, and conditioned upon, the availability of funds. The Washington Student Achievement Council and the institution through which the grant or scholarship is awarded reserve the right to withdraw, reduce, or modify the awards due to funding limitations or due to changes in circumstances which affect your eligibility for the program(s).

Be Sure to Include Estimated CBS Awards on Award Letters if “OK to Award = Yes”

When a CBS application record first matches with a FAFSA or WASFA, the student’s record will appear in the “Cruncher.”

If OSPI has not reported that student as graduated, the “HS Req. Met” status, will show as either:

- **Unknown** – no GPA available in OSPI record
- **Unlikely** – the reported GPA was less than 2.0
- **Likely** – the reported GPA was 2.0 or higher

Those with “Likely” status will also show as “OK to Award = Yes”

- **Be sure to award all eligible CBS students in this category with both estimated SNG and CBS awards.**

SNG Allocations for 2017-2018

Many factors will impact individual school allocations. These may include enrollment changes, award amounts, state appropriations, and program policies such the requirement to award SNG to 100% of your eligible CBS students. WSAC expects to provide colleges with preliminary 2017-18 SNG allocations that will include 90% of the total state funds available for SNG at the end of 2017 legislative session. In August 2017, after all college final interim reports for the 2016-17 year have been reviewed and reconciled, final SNG allocations will be sent to colleges.

Colleges will also have to project their enrollment levels of eligible CBS students for the 2017-18 year and hold back sufficient SNG funds to fully coordinate their awards.

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SNG and CBS Options for DREAMers

The following information was shared in September with high school counselors at nine Washington Council for High School College Relations (WCHSCR) workshops held throughout the state. This shows in what cases DREAMers might be eligible to receive State Need Grant funding and in what cases DREAMers could be eligible to receive College Bound Scholarship funding. In addition, DREAMers with DACA status could also be awarded Passport to College Scholarships and State Work Study if they meet all other program requirements.

DREAMers wishing to apply for state aid should complete the Washington State Application for Financial Aid (WASFA) instead of the FAFSA.

Defining DREAMers

DREAMers

Non-citizens who meet Washington residency requirements (HB1079).

Non-citizens with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), a federal status.

Non-citizens who do not meet state residency requirements.

- Come from all backgrounds and life circumstances.
- Majority are youth brought to the U.S. by their parents at an early age.
- Living in the U.S. without immigration papers; Sometimes referred to as “undocumented.”

State Financial Aid for DREAMers

State Need Grant for non-citizens who meet the residency requirements:

- Have a Washington high school diploma or a GED®.
- Be a Washington resident
(detailed qualifications at ReadySetGrad.org/WASFA).
- Sign an affidavit to apply for permanent residency in the United States.

State Need Grant and the College Bound Scholarship for students who have DACA status:

- Must meet the same residency requirements as U.S. citizen.
- Must provide DACA documentation.
- Eligibility for College Bound Scholarship still restricted to those who successfully applied in 7th or 8th grade.

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The “State Aid Commitment” to Eligible CBS Scholars

The intent of the Legislature is to provide eligible College Bound Scholars attending public colleges and universities with **state grant or scholarship aid** to meet the student’s tuition and a small amount towards books. CBS Scholars attending private institutions are eligible for similar amounts to the amounts available at public institutions.

WSAC annually publishes a chart that authorizes the maximum amount that eligible CBS Scholars can receive for each academic year (3 quarters or 2 semesters at most institutions) of enrollment as full-time students and have part of it funded from the College Bound Scholarship program. Colleges can prorate the chart amounts for part-time enrollments and may increase the award amounts for CBS Scholars attending more than 3 quarters or 2 semesters.

Funds received from the following six programs are considered as state aid for meeting the “State Aid Commitment” to eligible CBS Scholars.

- **State Need Grant** – due to 100% coordination requirements, all eligible CBS Scholars must receive a maximum State Need Grant.
- **Passport to College Promise Scholarship** – a state scholarship program for current and former foster youth.
- **Opportunity Scholarship** – A private/public program administered by the College Success Foundation to help low- and middle-income Washington residents earn bachelor’s degrees in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and health care fields of study.
- **SBCTC Opportunity Grant** – The Opportunity Grant administered by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges helps low-income adults train for high-wage, high-demand careers.
- **SBCTC Worker Retraining Funds** – Workers who are unemployed or have been notified by their employers that they are about to be laid off may be eligible for these funds administered by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.
- **American Indian Endowed Scholarship** – A scholarship for financially needy students with close social and cultural ties to an in-state American Indian community.

If an eligible CBS Scholar receives sufficient funds in any year to at least meet the “State Aid Commitment,” that student will not receive additional funding that year from the College Bound Scholarship program.* However, the great majority of eligible CBS Scholars receive only State Need Grant from the above list of eligible state aid programs. In those cases, students will receive full State Need Grant awards with the balance of their “State Aid Commitment” provided through College Bound Scholarship funding.

* There may be cases where eligible CBS Scholars receive total state aid that exceeds the “State Aid Commitment.” In these cases, the CBS Scholar would not receive College Bound Scholarship funding for the year, because the other awarded state gift aid exceeds the amount required to award to the student.

An example of this is an eligible CBS Scholar, who receives a SNG award and a Passport to College Scholarship award of \$4,500, which together may exceed the CBS “State Aid Commitment.”

Similar situations could occur with combinations of SNG and Opportunity Scholarship funding.

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Reviewing High School Transcripts of CBS Students

In most cases, an OSPI data match will verify that CBS students have graduated from Washington high schools with 2.0 or higher GPAs – and, if so, the Cruncher field updates to “Yes” for **HS Req. Met**. The **OK to Pay** field then updates to “Yes” as well. In these cases, colleges do not have to review high school transcripts.

However, timing is everything. You may have cases where a student starts fall term, the OSPI match has not occurred, and the student really needs the CBS funding. In this case, a college FAA can obtain a final high school transcript and update the **HS Req. Met** field in the Cruncher if they can verify the following two items:

1. Student’s final high school GPA was 2.0 or higher
2. Student graduated from a Washington high school.

If you make this determination, be sure to keep the copy of the transcript with the student’s financial aid record, subject to possible future review by WSAC staff.

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WASFA 2017-18 Applications Can Now Be Submitted

The new WASFA vendor, Regent Education, Inc., went live on October 1, for processing of 2017-18 WASFA applications. Regent is also now handling all new 2016-17 WASFA applications. WASFA was designed for DREAMers to complete a FAFSA-like application to apply for state financial aid programs.

Applicants can access the WASFA on the <http://www.readysetgrad.org/WASFA> site. The links provided on that site will direct them to the application now on the Regent site.

For applicant questions, WSAC created a new email address: wasfa@wsac.wa.gov. Please direct students there for help, or to WSAC’s toll free line at 888-535-0747, Option 2.

Accessing WASFA Applicants: WSAC is developing a new process for FAAs to access WASFA applicants that will be covered in a webinar later in October. Instead of logging into the Regent site, like FAAs did with the previous processor, FAAs will use a new WSAC Portal interface. This information, along with an instructional guide, will be available at the time of the webinar.

If you have any questions, contact Carissa Glassburn at carissag@wsac.wa.gov or call 360-753-7841.

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Volunteer for the 12th Year Campaign/College Goal Washington!

The [12th Year Campaign](#), a combination of two national programs (College Goal Washington and the College Application Campaign), aims to boost college and financial aid application rates in Washington. Washington Student Achievement Council administers this campaign to provide high school seniors with support for two important processes: applying to colleges, and applying for financial aid. The 12th Year Campaign will play an integral role in meeting the state’s goal of at least 70 percent of Washington adults ages 25-44 earning a postsecondary credential by 2023.

Students at these events need your help! If you are willing, interested and able to volunteer at a [College Goal Washington site](#), please let us know where you can assist by signing up via our volunteer registration [form](#). If your college is interested in hosting a site, please sign up via our online site [form](#). If you have any questions about the campaign, please contact Christina Winstead, program associate, at christinaw@wsac.wa.gov or 360-753-7856. Thank you for all you do for Washington students!

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Register Now for **Pave the Way Conference: Nov. 1 & 2, 2016**

WSAC is pleased to invite FAAs to attend this conference at the Greater Tacoma Convention and Trade Center. This year's theme is: "Advancing Equity, Access, Readiness & Support." Engage with over 500 P-12 and postsecondary educators and leaders to help *Pave the Way* for educational attainment in Washington. Comments from the 2015 conference attendees include:

- "The keynote speakers were very inspiring. I came back to work with renewed motivation for working with students and with a different perspective."
- "I appreciated the opportunity to learn from amazing professionals and hear from students."
- "I enjoyed the focus on equity and diversity, and the showcasing of positive solutions."
- "This was inspiring and full of concrete things I have started applying to my work already."
- "This is one of the best conferences I've been to."

For more information, visit: www.wsac.wa.gov/pavetheway

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2016-17 State Work Study (SWS) Update

Allocations/Fund Management

The 2016-17 SWS appropriation remains at \$7.8 million.

SWS allocations are based on the institution's calculated percentage of available program resources as adjusted by historical utilization performance. The 2016-17 SWS allocation notification letters were emailed to institutions on August 12, 2016.

SWS's first Survey Round of the 2016-17 fiscal year will be conducted in November, providing institutions with an opportunity to request additional SWS funding and/or return funds that would otherwise go unspent so they can be redistributed to institutions with additional SWS capacity.

Employer Match Rates

The 2016-17 employer types and associated maximum reimbursement and minimum match rates will remain at 2015-16 levels and are as follows:

- For-profit employers = 40% maximum SWS program reimbursement/60% minimum employer match contribution.

- Public/Private institutions/governmental agencies: city, county, state, federal = 60% maximum SWS program reimbursement/40% minimum employer match contribution.
- Non-profit community service providers/school districts/STEM - businesses whose primary business activity is in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and/or mathematics = 70% maximum SWS program reimbursement/30% minimum employer match contribution.

Institutions must apply appropriate minimum matching rates/maximum employer reimbursement rates per employer type as described above. SWS contract renewal instructions were mailed to all employers with active 2015-16 contracts in the portal beginning in May 2016. All employers must have approved and active 2016-17 SWS contracts and job descriptions prior to students earning SWS dollars between July 1, 2016 and June, 30, 2017.

Local Minimum Wages

SWS comparability rules require that SWS student employees are paid comparably to what a non-student would earn in the same position. When local laws require a higher minimum wage, the minimum wage for SWS students must be aligned with the local minimum in order to maintain comparability. Localities with minimum wages higher than the state minimum wage are as follows:

Seattle

As of January 1, 2016, the City of Seattle required the following minimum wages for Seattle-based employees:

- For employers with less than 500 employees, a minimum of \$12 per hour.
- For employers with 500 employees or more, a minimum of \$13 per hour.

As of January 1, 2017, the minimum wage for Seattle-based employers will again increase:

- For employers with less than 500 employees, the minimum will increase to \$13 per hour.
- For employers with 500 employees or more, the minimum will increase to \$15 per hour.

SeaTac

- As of January 1, 2016, the City of SeaTac required a minimum wage hourly wage of \$15.24.
- As of January 1, 2017, SeaTac's current minimum wage will be increased by the rate of inflation.

Tacoma

- As of February 1, 2016, the minimum hourly wage within Tacoma city limits increased to \$10.35.
- As of January 1, 2017, the minimum hourly wage within Tacoma city limits will increase to \$11.15.

Washington Application for State Financial Aid (WASFA) and State Work Study (SWS)

Students completing the WASFA are asked if they are interested in applying for SWS. If the student can work legally in the United States as a result of participation in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (DACA), can demonstrate residency and need via the WASFA, and meets all other SWS eligibility criteria, the student would be eligible for SWS.

Other Policy Reminders

Non-residents remain ineligible for SWS in 2016-17.

Due to the loss of Federal Title IV funding formerly incorporated into the SWS program, SWS earnings no longer meet the federal definition of the type of income that can be excluded from income benefit calculations for federally funded assistance programs.

Washington State Association of Student Employment Administrators (WSASEA)

WSASEA generally holds its annual Fall Town Meeting in late October or early November each year. This year, the Fall Town Meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 1, 2016 at Pacific Lutheran University. The Town Meeting is free to WSASEA members and registration materials should be available on WSASEA's website in the near future.

Student employment professionals are encouraged to attend the Fall Town Meeting to participate in unique training opportunities, share effective practices and procedures, and hear important student employment regulatory updates from federal and state officials. It offers a chance to network with other administrators from around the state, to get advice and help from colleagues, and learn more about the profession.

For more information about WSASEA and the Fall Town Meeting, please see the following links:

<http://www.wsasea.org/index.html>

http://www.wsasea.org/Events/town_meeting.htm

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Please Provide Us with SFA Partner Survey Feedback!

Thank you for reading this anniversary edition of the **SFA Partner**! We hope you found it filled with timely reminders and useful tips to guide you in your daily work with the students at your campus, and supportive of you in administering the state-funded financial aid programs.

We ask that you take a moment now to help us keep the **SFA Partner** vital and responsive to your changing needs. Please click the link [here](#) and complete our brief survey (five minutes or less).

We look forward to receiving your comments and suggestions in the coming days, and improving our product to better suit your needs! Once again, we thank you for helping us help **you** through the work of this publication!

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WSAC Connections

Looking for our program contacts? Check out WSAC's FAA Resources page at <http://www.wsac.wa.gov/FAA-resources>. You will find recently updated contact links for the Student Financial Assistance and College Access and Support staffs tucked into the purple "Resources" box at the right-hand screen edge. To open, click the appropriate sub-bullet shown under "Contact lists by program."

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