



WASHINGTON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT COUNCIL

College Bound Scholarship

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Frequently Asked Questions

What is the College Bound Scholarship (CBS)?

CBS is Washington's early college promise program and an early commitment of state financial aid to eligible 7th or 8th grade students. The scholarship is a state-funded program administered by the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC). It was created to improve high school graduation and college enrollment rates for low-income students. It encourages students who might not otherwise consider college because of the cost to dream big and continue their education beyond high school.

Who is eligible to apply?

7th and 8th grade students whose families meet the income requirements or receive basic food/TANF benefits are eligible to apply. Students must apply by June 30 of their 8th grade year.

Starting with the 2019-2020 academic year, certain 9th grade students may be eligible to complete a College Bound application. Students must meet eligibility requirements listed below:

- Must have attended middle school in Washington State during 7th and 8th grade.
- Must *not* have been eligible during middle school.
- In 9th grade, student meets household income requirements, or other eligibility criteria, for College Bound sign-up.

WSAC has partnered with OSPI to provide counselors with pre-populated applications for eligible 9th grade students to complete.

Students in foster care are also eligible. Youth placed in state foster care between 7th grade and age 21 (or before they graduate high school) are automatically enrolled in College Bound via a data-sharing agreement between WSAC and the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF).

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) beginning their senior year of high school.

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



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- Be income eligible, as determined by their college with the information from their FAFSA or WASFA.
- Be accepted to an eligible college (www.readysetgrad.org/eligible-institutions), and begin attending within one year of high school graduation.
- Be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen and Washington resident, or meet program state residency requirements.

How much is a CBS 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. CBS will combine with other state financial aid to cover tuition (at comparable public tuition rates), some fees, and a small book allowance. Students will receive their scholarship through their college as part of a financial aid package, which may also include federal grants, the Washington College Grant, work study, scholarships, or loans.

How does the Washington College Grant (new in 2019) affect the College Bound Scholarship?

Answer: The College Bound Scholarship works with the new Washington College Grant to engage and support students beginning in middle school, to promote college and career education, and to provide financial aid to eligible students and families. Students should maximize their financial aid opportunities by applying for the College Bound Scholarship during middle school, and then filing a FAFSA or WASFA financial aid application during their senior year, making them eligible for the Washington College Grant as well.

Where can students use the scholarship?

Students can earn an approved certificate or degree at any of 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.

What is the funding for the scholarship?

The Legislature provided \$36.6 million in the 2019-2021 biennium.

How many students have applied for the program?

More than 300,000 students have completed an application since the program’s inception.

How many students are currently receiving the scholarship?

More than 18,541 students received College Bound in 2018-19.*

Where do College Bound recipients attend college?

Fifty-seven percent attended Washington public and private four-year institutions, and forty-one percent attended public two-year colleges in 2018-19.



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Do College Bound students graduate high school at higher rates?

Since the first CBS cohort graduated from high school in 2012, College Bound students have graduated at rates that are at least ten percentage points higher than their low-income peers who did not sign up for the program.

Who are the partners that assist in signing up and supporting College Bound students?

Answer: The program works collaboratively with the K-12 system, state agencies, regional college access groups, and nonprofit organizations such as the Washington College Access Network to sign students up and support them as they move through middle and high school.

* This overall number is representative of the number of students in eligible Washington institutions receiving College Bound Scholarship funds. It does not count eligible students who were funded by other means, or who attended college out of state or at an ineligible Washington institution. This is an unduplicated total count, meaning not all enrollments are counted; rather, an individual enrolled in multiple institutions is counted once.