



2024-25

Frequently Asked Questions for School Staff and College Access Professionals



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 BASICS

1. What is the College Bound Program?

College Bound is an early commitment of state financial aid, like the [Washington College Grant \(WA Grant\)](#), to help pay for eligible students' education after high school. The funding students receive is based on average tuition (at public college rates), some fees, and a small amount for books. College Bound funds can help pay for eligible students' education at over [65 participating colleges, universities, and technical schools](#) in Washington.

College Bound is a state-funded program administered by the [Washington Student Achievement Council \(WSAC\)](#).

2. What are the College Bound requirements?

Students must meet eligibility requirements twice: 1.) when enrolling into College Bound and 2.) when accessing their College Bound funds.

Students must meet our [sign-up requirements](#) to qualify for **automatic enrollment**. Our program staff can create an application for students who do not qualify for automatic enrollment but meet our sign-up requirements.

[To access their College Bound funds](#), students must fulfill their [College Bound Pledge](#) and meet all [eligibility requirements](#).

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

Per the College Bound statute, income reported on the student's financial aid application must be less than 65 percent of the median family income (MFI). For more information, please review the image below. **Keep in mind that this number changes annually.**

Note: Dependent students' income is not included when determining their College Bound eligibility. Income eligibility is based on annual gross income plus any non-taxable income. **The** student's financial aid office at their school of interest and [studentaid.gov](#) are great resources for additional information.

2024-25 Median Family Income Chart	
Household size	Annual Income*
1	\$40,500
2	\$53,000
3	\$65,500
4	\$78,500
5	\$91,000
6	\$103,000
7	\$105,500
8	\$108,000

*Household income must be less than or equal to this amount.

4. Where can students use College Bound?

There are over [65 eligible institutions](#) in Washington where students may use their College Bound funds. They include public community or technical colleges, public four-year institutions, approved independent colleges or universities, and private career colleges or universities.

Students can also use College Bound funds for online classes, summer classes, or study abroad programs at participating institutions.

Reminder: if a student attends an eligible private college or university, the tuition may only be covered at public tuition rates.

5. How do private and homeschooled students sign up?

If an eligible student is enrolled in a private school or homeschool program in Washington, the parent/guardian can contact us at 888-535-0747, option 1, or collegebound@wsac.wa.gov to start an application. **School and district staff cannot create applications for eligible non-public school students.**

To finalize enrollment, the parent/guardian and student must complete, sign, and return a form sent by our program staff via mail or email.

COLLEGE BOUND ENROLLMENT

6. How can a student be automatically enrolled into College Bound?

Students who meet one of the following requirements are automatically enrolled in College Bound:

- Students in public school who are eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Lunch (FRPL) in 7th, 8th, or newly eligible in 9th grade.
- Students in state foster care, or a dependent of the state between 7th grade and high school graduation.

Automatic enrollment for public school students happens through a partnership with WSAC and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), and automatic enrollment for students in state foster care happens through a partnership with WSAC and the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF).

Private, homeschooled, and some foster youth students do not qualify for automatic enrollment. Please visit our [College Bound website](#) or review Question 5 for information on how to enroll them.

7. What makes a 9th grader newly eligible?

The requirements for newly eligible 9th graders are as follows:

- Be enrolled in a Washington school (public, private, or homeschooled) in 7th and 8th grade.
- Not eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Lunch (FRPL) in 7th and 8th grade.
- Newly eligible for FRPL in 9th grade.

8. How will students know they have been enrolled in College Bound?

A student will receive an official College Bound certificate once they are (automatically) enrolled and we have a current mailing address on file. Our certificate is not needed to receive funding, nor does it guarantee a student will receive funds. Eligibility requirements must be met.

Students and parents can also confirm College Bound enrollment by contacting their school staff. School staff has access to our College Bound Portal, which provides an up-to-date list of current College Bound students at their school.

Our program staff can also confirm a student's current enrollment!

9. Why are my eligible students not enrolled in College Bound?

It is likely the students are not noted as eligible for FRPL. Multiple sources of information may be used to determine whether a student is eligible for FRPL, some of which are the FRPL application/family income survey, SNAP, TANF, Medicaid, foster youth (in a state-run foster youth program), and migrant students.

Here are some [resources](#) from OSPI on how families can apply for FRPL eligibility based on financial circumstances.

If students are already noted as eligible for FRPL, ensure they have filled out the appropriate paperwork and are being reported correctly to OSPI.

10. What if my school is 100% Free and Reduced-Price Lunch (CEP/Provision 2)?

CEP and Provision 2 schools are required to report eligibility to OSPI using tools like the family income survey. College Bound applications are only created for students confirmed to be income-eligible or meet other sign-up requirements.

11. What if families do not want to complete the family income survey or enroll in public assistance programs?

The school or district cannot confirm the student's eligibility and they will not be automatically enrolled.

Informing families about how this reporting can benefit their student(s) can encourage them to sign up. At some point, students and their families must provide income eligibility to participate in the auto-enrollment process.

12. Why can WSAC not enroll students who have been identified as a missed auto-enrolled student?

There must be a way to verify their income since College Bound enrollment depends on income eligibility. If students are not identified as eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (FRPL) due to enrollment in a program like SNAP or TANF or by completing the FRPL application, they may need to complete a family income survey.

There are [multiple resources](#) from OSPI on how families can apply for FRPL eligibility based on financial circumstances.

ACCESSING COLLEGE BOUND

13. How many years can students receive College Bound?

Beginning the 2024-25 academic year, **College Bound eligibility may extend up to six years of funding** (18 full-time quarters/12 full-time semesters) **or until they earn [their first bachelor's degree](#)**; whichever comes first.

This recent change transforms College Bound into a guaranteed commitment of state funding for eligible students who meet the enrollment deadline: enrolling within one year after high school graduation. Please know:

- A student does not need to enroll in an eligible institution to meet the enrollment deadline.
- The enrollment deadline can be met through Running Start, College in the High School, or an out-of-state/country school.
- College Bound funding can only be applied if the student attends or transfers to an [eligible college](#).

Students may need to submit a transcript to WSAC (collegebound@wsac.wa.gov) to confirm enrollment.

14. How much College Bound funding can a student receive?

The specific amount labeled “College Bound” on the financial aid package will look different at each college and for each student. Still, the three specific costs the award is based on: tuition at public school rates, allowable fees, and a small amount for books, will be covered by state financial aid, such as College Bound and/or the [Washington College Grant \(WA Grant\)](#).

A student’s College Bound amount is determined after the WA Grant and other state grants or scholarships have been awarded. When a student’s *need* (award amount) has been met with other state grants/scholarships, the student may receive a reduced or no College Bound award because the commitment of state funding has been fulfilled by the WA Grant rather than College Bound.

Colleges and universities determine a student’s College Bound *need* (or award amount). Learn more about **the College Bound and WA Grant Coordination (available soon)**.

The image below shows the **2024-25 Maximum College Bound Award Amounts when Combined with the Washington College Grant**.

2024-25 Maximum CB Award Amounts when Combined with the Washington College Grant for 3 Quarters/2 Semesters		
Institutions		Award
Public Research	University of Washington	\$12,878
	Washington State University	\$12,387
Public Comprehensive	Western Washington University	\$8,732
	Central Washington University	\$8,585
	The Evergreen State College	\$8,597
	Eastern Washington University	\$8,023
	CTC Applied Bachelor's	\$8,110
Private Four-year Colleges & Universities		\$12,633
WGU-Washington		\$7,540
Public Community & Technical Colleges		\$5,263
Private Career Colleges		\$5,263

15. Are undocumented students eligible for College Bound?

Yes. The College Bound Program is a state financial aid program for Washington resident students. Washington residents can be both U.S. citizens and non-citizens, including undocumented students. A Washington resident usually lives in the state for one year.

For more information on other ways to be a resident, including state rules for certain groups of people – such as tribal members or military veterans, service members, and families – please visit <https://wsac.wa.gov/student-residency>.

16. Can a student graduate from high school earlier or later than expected?

Yes. Students are not penalized for graduating before or after their expected graduation date, and their eligibility period will start once they graduate.

The best way to update students' expected graduation year is by contacting your CEDARS administrator. If you're unsure who the CEDARS administrator is for your school/district, here is the [OSPI CEDARS District Administrator list](#).

17. Can a student earn a GED and receive College Bound?

This depends. Students who experienced foster care at any point between 7th grade and the age of 21 may be able to receive College Bound after earning a high school equivalency certificate or a GED. Students should contact our program staff at collegebound@wsac.wa.gov or 888-535-0747 Option 1 to discuss their specific situation and next steps, but generally:

Students need to have been automatically enrolled in the College Bound program and:

- Provide program staff a copy of their high school equivalency certificate (currently in WA, this is the GED exam).
 - High school equivalency certificates can be sent to collegebound@wsac.wa.gov
- Earn the GED before their 21st birthday.
- Enroll in a postsecondary pathway within one year of receiving their GED.
- Fulfill the [College Bound Pledge](#).
 - Aside from the high school graduation requirement.

18. Can Running Start students use their College Bounds funds?

If a student graduates from high school with college credits or an associate degree, they may be eligible to receive College Bound funding.

However, students may not receive College Bound funding for Running Start classes without meeting the high school graduation requirement.

OTHER COLLEGE BOUND QUESTIONS

19. How does WSAC ensure a student’s application is correct once they’re auto-enrolled?

Most correspondence from WSAC will inform students and families about the importance of keeping us informed with the student’s up-to-date contact information.

We have a [contact update form](#) on our College Bound website for students and families to update their student’s College Bound application. We also depend on school staff Portal users to monitor and update their Student List using features in our College Bound Toolbox, such as the Bulk Update Tool. For more information, [please review our College Bound Portal FAQs](#).

20. Does WSAC update its College Bound student list annually to reflect household income changes?

No. Free and Reduced-Price Lunch (FRPL) is updated year-to-year, but the College Bound program does not utilize the annual updates. College Bound works like a bookmark system because students must be income-eligible to enroll and income-eligible during their final year of high school, per the need-based program requirement.

Students are not taken in and out of College Bound. Once they are enrolled—they are in. However, enrollment in College Bound does not guarantee funds. Check out our How to Access College Bound flyer for more information!

21. How should schools communicate with their College Bound students?

The role of each school/district is to notify students, parents, teachers, school counselors, and principals about the Washington College Bound program through existing channels. Methods may include, but are not limited to, regular school district and building communications, online financial aid bulletins, and announcements, notices posted on school walls and bulletin boards, information available in each counselor’s office, and school or district financial aid information sessions.

[College Success Foundation](#) staff lead the Washington College Access Network (WCAN) to raise awareness of the College Bound Program by providing trainings, tools, resources, and technical assistance to school staff and community-based practitioners tailored to fit each individual school, district, and community. They have developed [materials](#) with clear communication and accurate information to help promote thinking about post-high school planning and provide a way to continue the conversation at home with families.

If you need support in these areas, find out who your College Bound Regional Officer (CBRO) is [here](#)!