

# Financial Aid 101



WASHINGTON STUDENT  
ACHIEVEMENT COUNCIL

12th Year Campaign





# About the Washington Student Achievement Council



We advance educational opportunities and attainment in Washington.



# What Will I Learn Today?

What is Financial Aid

Types of Financial Aid

When You Should Apply for Financial Aid

How to Apply for Financial Aid

Scholarships

Help and Resources



# What is Financial Aid?

Financial aid is money to help pay for college or career school. Grants, work-study, loans, and scholarships help make education after high school affordable.



# Financial Aid Is An Umbrella



Grants

- Income-based, federal, state and institutional.

Scholarships

- Merit and income-based, from public, private, and nonprofit sources.

Loans

- Income-based, federal and private.

Work Study

- Income-based, federal, state and institutional.



# Grants

A grant is gift aid that often based on financial need and does not need to be repaid (unless, for example, you withdraw from school and owe a refund).

Washington College Grant

Pell Grant



# Washington College Grant (WA Grant)



Washington State has made a groundbreaking commitment to financial aid for low- and middle-income people of all ages with the **Washington College Grant** (WA Grant). This grant gives eligible people more money for more types of education like certificate programs, job training, apprenticeships, or college.



# Washington College Grant Provides a Unique Opportunity

With the Washington College Grant (WCG), more families are eligible for financial aid than ever before.

| Family Size                                                                                                                  | Full Award                           | Partial Award                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <br><b>Eligible Student</b><br>Family of 1  | <b>Income</b><br>\$41,000<br>or less | <b>Income</b><br>Up to<br>\$68,000 |
| <br><b>Eligible Student</b><br>Family of 4 | \$78,500<br>or less                  | Up to<br>\$131,000                 |

Award amounts vary based on income, family size, and the school or program attended.





# Scholarships

Scholarships are gifts that don't have to be repaid and are designed to help students pay for college. They can be a one-time gift or renewable. One of the largest scholarships in WA is the Washington State Opportunity Scholarship.

You can start your scholarship search by going to [thewashboard.org](http://thewashboard.org)

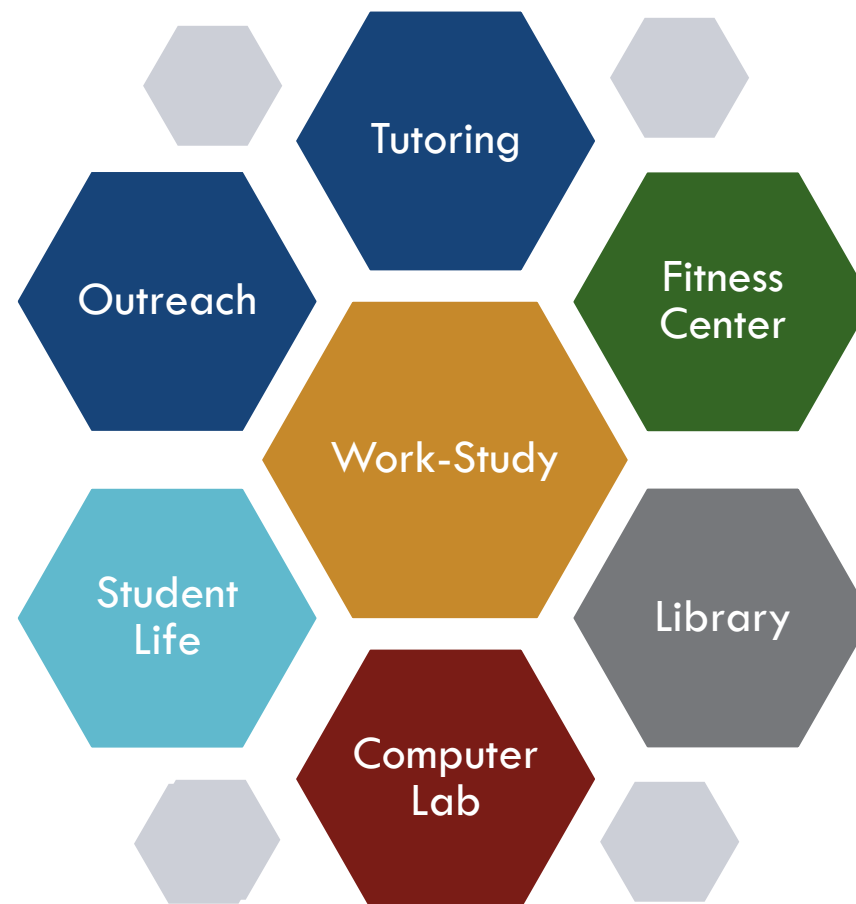


WASHINGTON STATE  
**OPPORTUNITY**  
SCHOLARSHIP



# Work-Study

Work-Study provides part-time jobs for students with financial need, allowing them to earn money to help pay education expenses. These jobs are typically on campus.





# Loans

A student loan is money you borrow for your education, and pay back over time. Unlike grants or work-study you do have to pay back your loans. You do not have to accept all the loans offered to you.

## Unsubsidized Student Loans

- Interest begins accruing as soon as the loan is disbursed, including while you are enrolled in school.

## Subsidized Student Loans

- Interest is paid by while you're enrolled at least half time in college.



# Sources of Financial Aid

## Federal

Typically can be used at most schools in most states.

## State

Typically for residents to attend most colleges in the state.

## College

Offered by a specific school to attend that school.

## Organizations

Offered by non-profits, business, churches, etc.



# Examples of Federal Financial Aid Programs

Pell Grant

Federal Work-Study

Unsubsidized/Subsidized Student Loans

Parent Loans





# Examples of State Financial Aid

Washington College Grant  
(also known as the WA Grant)

College Bound



State Work-Study

Passport to Careers

Opportunity Grant



**WASHINGTON**  
OPPORTUNITY PATHWAYS

**WASFA**  
Washington Application  
for State Financial Aid

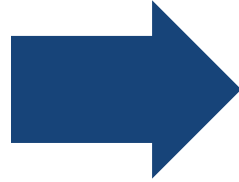




# College Bound Commitment Eligibility and Auto-Enrollment: A Two-Step Process

## *Step One*

- Auto-enrollment for eligible public-school students.
- Eligible for FRPL in 7th, 8th, or newly eligible in 9th grade.
- Foster Youth are auto-enrolled through HS graduation.



## *Step Two*

- Fulfill the College Bound Program Requirements.
- Meet income and residency requirements.
- Be accepted to and attend an eligible college within one year of graduation.
- College Bound award usage is limited to six years following initial enrollment/receipt.



# College Bound Program



**Combines** with other state financial aid to cover the average cost of tuition (at public rates), some fees, and a small book allowance = **commitment**.



Can be used at about 60 two and four-year public and private colleges and universities.



[collegebound@wsac.wa.gov](mailto:collegebound@wsac.wa.gov)



# State Financial Aid Calculator

This tool calculates potential awards from the Washington College Grant and Pell Grant programs.

There may be more aid available to you from other state and federal programs, private scholarships, or directly from the college you attend.

The only way to know for sure how much financial aid you can receive is to complete a FAFSA or WASFA financial aid application

 Financial Aid Calculator

[Show language options](#)

## Financial Aid Calculator

The calculator is currently providing financial aid estimates for the **2025-2026 academic year**.

Many undergraduate students can cover some or all their college or training costs with the **Washington College Grant (WA Grant)** and/or **Federal Pell Grant (Pell Grant)**. This calculator also estimates how much WA Grant you can receive toward a [non-college-based apprenticeship program](#).

WSAC does not collect any data you enter.

Estimate your award →

This tool calculates potential awards from the WA Grant and Pell Grant programs. There may be more aid available to you from other state and federal programs, from [private scholarships](#), or directly from the college you attend.

The only way to know for sure how much financial aid you can receive for college is to [complete a FAFSA or WASFA financial aid application](#). For more information, contact the college financial aid office or apprenticeship program you plan to attend.

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Maintained by the [Washington Student Achievement Council](#).

portal.wsac.wa.gov/a/aid-calculator



# Takeaway: Passport to Careers -

Supporting Former Foster Youth and Unaccompanied Homeless Youth



## Passport to College Promise Scholarship

- Comprehensive supports from high school to higher education

## Passport to Apprenticeship Opportunities

- Career-related training under state approved pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs



# FAFSA/WASFA: Rule of One

## FAFSA

- Free Application for Federal Student Aid
- FAFSA.gov

OR

## WASFA

- Washington Application for State Financial Aid
- [wsac.wa.gov/WASFA](https://wsac.wa.gov/WASFA)

Anyone uncomfortable with submitting a federal FAFSA form can use the WASFA to apply only for state aid.



# Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

FederalStudentAid  
An OFFICE of the U.S. DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION

FAFSA

Loans & Grants

Repayment

Loan Forgiveness



Raya



## 2026–27 FAFSA® Form Now Available!

Use the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA®) form to apply for financial aid for college, career school, or graduate school.

Start a 2026–27  
FAFSA® Form

Start New Form

Edit a 2026–27  
FAFSA® Form

Edit Existing Forms

Accept an Invitation for a  
2026–27 FAFSA® Form

Accept an Invitation



Need the 2025–26 FAFSA Form?

Start New Form

Edit Existing Forms or Accept an Invitation

### Check FAFSA® Deadlines for the State You Live In

Some states and schools use information from the FAFSA® form to determine your eligibility for their grants, scholarships, and loans. Check your state's deadlines [here!](#)

Missing a state deadline doesn't impact your eligibility for federal student aid, so fill out your FAFSA form even if your state deadline has passed.

School Year

State of Residence

Find Deadlines

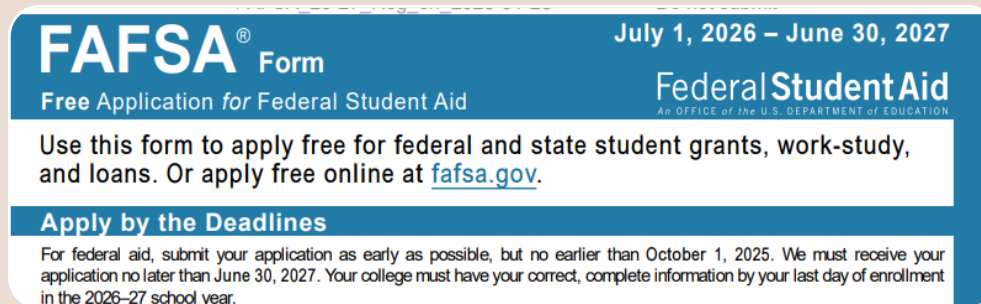
[View All FAFSA Deadlines](#)



# Two Ways to Apply for the FAFSA



Website



Paper  
FAFSA



# FAFSA Website Language Options

FAFSA®: Apply for Aid

## FAFSA®: Apply for Aid

Use the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA®) form to apply for financial aid for college or grad school.

### NEW TO THE FAFSA® PROCESS?

Completing the FAFSA form is free. Fill it out now.

### RETURNING USER?

Correct info • Add a school  
View your *Student Aid Report* (SAR)

Home » FAFSA®: solicitar ayuda económica

## FAFSA®: solicitar ayuda económica

Utilice el formulario *Solicitud Gratuita de Ayuda Federal para Estudiantes* (FAFSA®) para solicitar ayuda económica para pagar la universidad o los estudios de posgrado.

### ¿ES USTED NUEVO PARA EL PROCESO DE LA FAFSA®?

Llenar el formulario FAFSA es gratuito.  
Llénelo ahora mismo.

### ¿ES USTED UN USUARIO QUE REGRESA?

Corregir info • Agregar una institución educativa

# English

# Español



# Studentaid.gov account (FSA ID) – The First Step to the FAFSA

Social Security  
Number  
(if applicable)

Their own mobile  
phone number  
and/or email  
address

## Create an Account

Whether you're a student, parent, or borrower, you'll need to create your own account to apply for, receive, and manage your federal student aid.

Get Started



Already have an account? [Log In](#)

### What You Can Do With Your Account

You must have an account to do the following:

- Fill out the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA®) form online
- Complete other online forms (such as the *Master Promissory Note*) required to receive aid
- Review the federal student aid you've received

### What You'll Need

- Your Social Security number (if applicable)
- Your own email address

## Personal Information

I understand that I'll be required to certify that the information I provide to create an account is true and correct and that I'm the individual I claim to be.

If I'm not the person I claim to be, I understand that I'm not authorized to proceed and that I should exit this form now. If I provide false or misleading information, I understand that I might be subject to a fine, prison time, or both.

First Name

Middle Initial

Last Name

Date of Birth

|                      |                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Month                | Day                  | Year                 |
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |

Social Security Number

[What if I don't have a Social Security number?](#)

If you don't have a Social Security number (SSN) **and** at least one these two statements describes you, you can check the box below to create an account without an SSN:

- I am a citizen of the Freely Associated States who needs to complete the FAFSA® form online.
- I am a parent or spouse of a student who is applying for aid.

☐ **I do not have a Social Security number.**

I am a citizen of the Freely Associated States and I do not have a Social Security number (SSN); OR I am a parent or spouse of a student who is applying for aid and I do not have an SSN.

Cancel

Continue



# Washington Application for State Financial Aid (WASFA)



info@wsac.wa.gov | (360) 753-7800  
917 Lakeridge Way SW | Olympia, WA 98502



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MEETINGS ▾

POLICY ▾

FINANCIAL AID ▾

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OUTREACH & INITIATIVES ▾

NEWS & PUBLICATIONS ▾



[home](#)

## WASFA QUESTIONNAIRE

The Washington Application for State Financial Aid (WASFA) is for people who don't file a federal FAFSA application. People who complete a WASFA are applying for state aid. There are various reasons to complete a WASFA instead of a FAFSA:

- A person may not be eligible for federal aid due to:
  - Citizenship or immigration status, including being undocumented.
  - Defaulted federal student loans.
  - Repayments owed on federal grants.
- A person may choose not to apply for federal aid due to:
  - Family members who do not want to file the FAFSA.
  - Other personal reasons.

After you complete the WASFA, the college(s) or program(s) you choose will determine whether you meet **state residency requirements** and **state financial aid eligibility**. State financial aid could include Washington College Grant, the College Bound Scholarship, Passport to Careers, National Guard Grant, or State Work Study.

The following questions will confirm if the WASFA is the correct application for you.

[Start](#)

<https://wsac.wa.gov/WASFA>



# WASFA Account Creation – The First Step to the WASFA

You will need  
your own email  
address

The WASFA is  
available in  
English and  
Spanish

You will need  
internet access

## Registration Step 1 of 3: Account Creation



### Sign Up

Please fill out the form below to create your account.

All the information you provide is confidential. Once you complete the information, your account will be created and you will be able to access the Student Experience Portal.

Email

 Please ensure that this is a valid, permanent email address that you check regularly.

Confirm Email

Password

 New passwords must be at least 8 characters and meet the following:

- 1 upper case (A-Z) characters
- 1 lower case (a-z) characters
- 1 numeric characters (0-9)
- 1 special characters (e.g. !@#\$%^&\*)
- Not exceed 2 sequential numbers (e.g. 12, 456, 789)
- Not exceed 2 repeating characters or numbers (e.g. AA, bb, 77, &&)
- Do not include common words or names.



# Is a Student Dependent or Independent\*

## Dependent Student

### **Requires Parent Information**

A student who does not meet any of the criteria for an independent student

\*for financial aid purposes

## Independent Student

### **Does Not Require Parent Information**

An independent student is one of the following:

- at least 24 years old
- married
- a graduate or professional student
- a veteran
- a member of the armed forces
- an orphan
- a ward of the court
- someone with legal dependents other than a spouse
- an emancipated minor
- someone who is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and self supporting



# What Do I Need to Apply for Financial Aid

Your driver's license or state ID. (If you have one)

Your income information

- This includes bank statements, a W-2 or pay stub, and a 2024 tax return if applicable.

Your parent most likely will need to provide information, if you are 24 or younger.

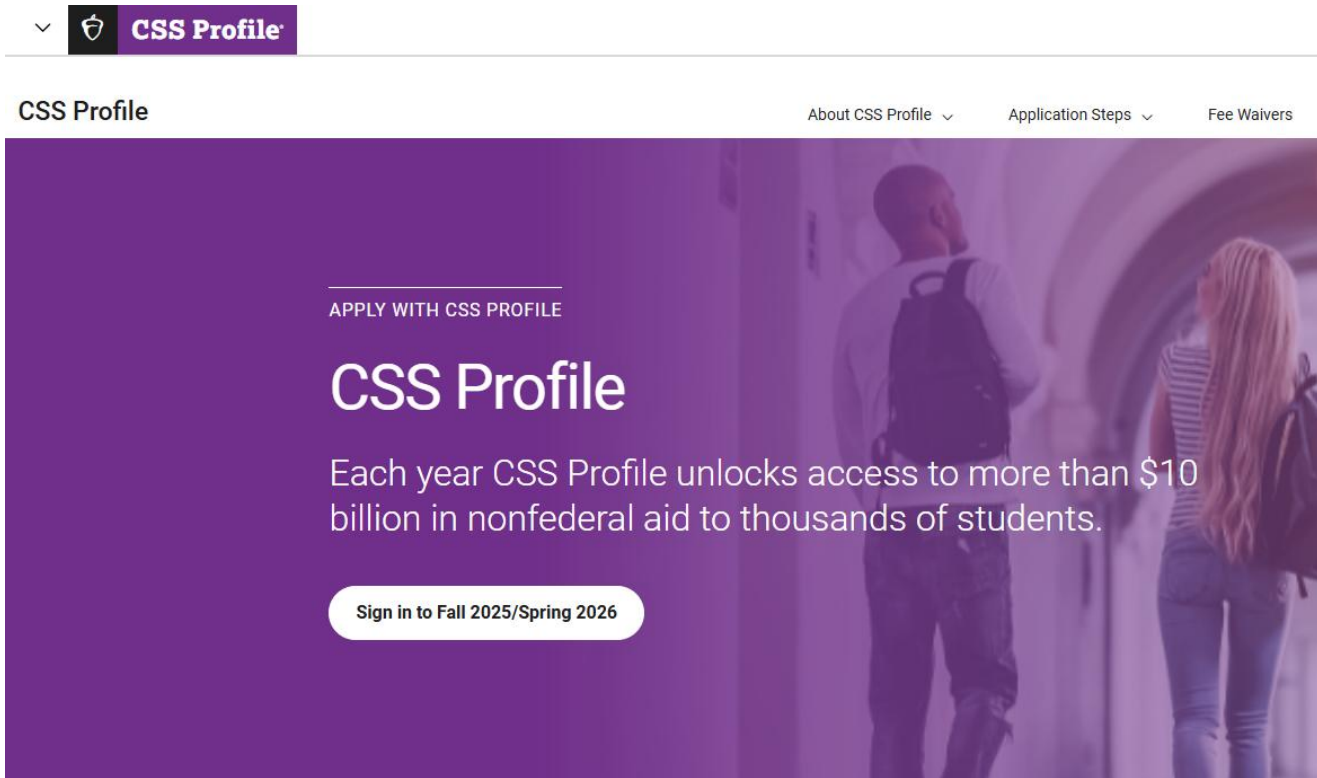
- This includes bank statements, records of child support received, W-2 or pay stubs, and a 2024 tax return if applicable.

FAFSA Filers Should Also Have Access to:

- Your Studentaid.gov account (FSA ID) and your parent(s) will also need to create a Studentaid.gov account (FSA ID)
- Your Social Security Card or green card.
- Parent's Social Security Number (if they have one).



# CSS Profile



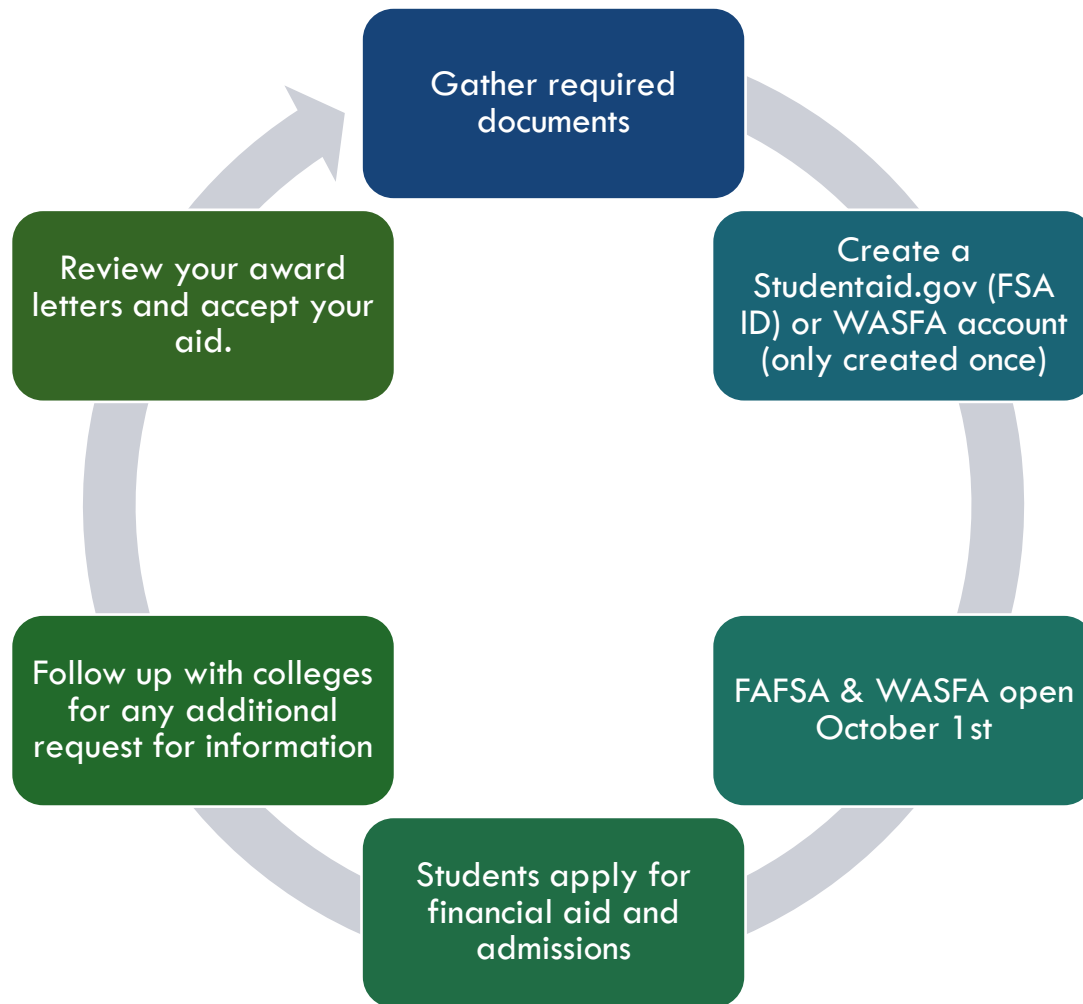
<https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/>

Additional profile that some colleges use to award institutional aid.

The CSS Profile is free for domestic undergraduate students whose family income is up to \$100,000. The fee for the initial application is \$25. Additional reports are \$16.



# Financial Aid Timeline





# Important Information for the Class of 2026

2026-27 FAFSA and  
WASFA will open  
October 1<sup>st</sup> 2025

Class of 2026 will  
complete the 2026-  
27 FAFSA or WASFA  
using 2024 income  
information



Apply Every Year



# Class of 2026 Next Steps

## Explore Your Options

- Explore your post secondary options using your high school and beyond plan.
- Talk to your counselor to make sure you are on track for graduation.

## Determine Which Financial Aid Application To Use

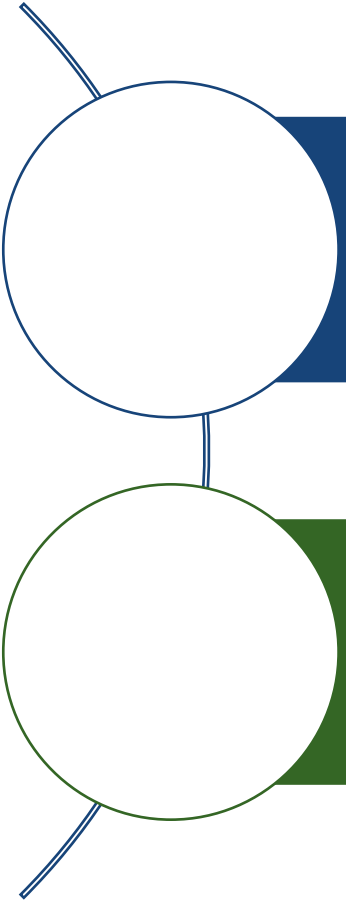
- If you are not sure which application to complete go to <https://wsac.wa.gov/WASFAelig>

## Create a Studentaid.gov (FSA ID) or WASFA Account

- You can create Studentaid.gov (FSA ID) by going to <https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/launch>
- You can create a WASFA account by going to <https://wsac.wa.gov/WASFAelig>
- Complete your 2026-27 application starting October 1<sup>st</sup> 2025

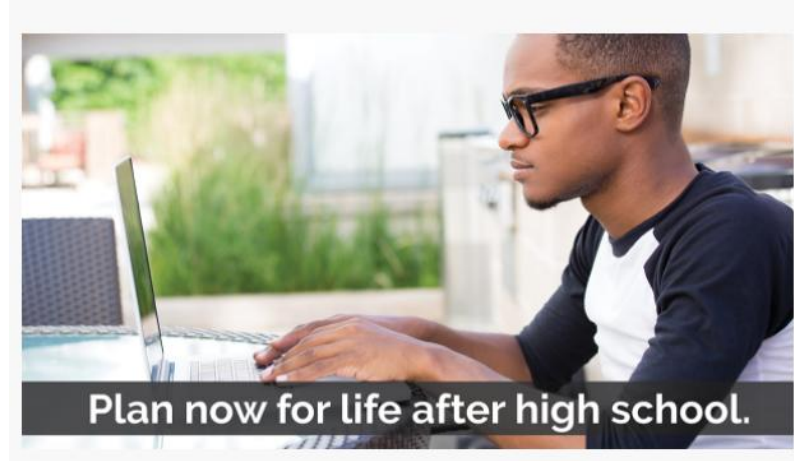


**Resource: [www.wsac.wa.gov/actionplan](http://www.wsac.wa.gov/actionplan)**



One-stop site for juniors and seniors

Career exploration resources to application information





# Resource: 12<sup>th</sup> Year Campaign Resources and Events

Free virtual and in-person financial aid events to help you take the next step!

This calendar is updated with events from around Washington State

## Calendar of upcoming financial aid events

| Today < > June 2025 <span>Month</span> |                        |                                                |                                                  |          |          |          |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| SUN<br>Jun 1                           | MON<br>2               | TUE<br>3                                       | WED<br>4                                         | THU<br>5 | FRI<br>6 | SAT<br>7 |
|                                        | • 1pm Highline College | • 1:30pm WorkSource F<br>• 6pm WSU - Understa  | • 1pm Highline College<br>• 5:30pm Class of 202t |          |          |          |
| 8                                      | • 1pm Highline College | • 1:30pm WorkSource F<br>• 4pm Olympic College | • 1pm Highline College                           | 12       | 13       | 14       |
| 15                                     | • 1pm Highline College | • 1:30pm WorkSource F                          | • 1pm Highline College                           | 19       | 20       | 21       |
| 22                                     | • 1pm Highline College | • 1:30pm WorkSource F                          | • 1pm Highline College                           | 26       | 27       | 28       |
| 29                                     | • 1pm Highline College | Jul 1<br>• 1:30pm WorkSource F                 | 2<br>• 1pm Highline College                      | 3        | 4        | 5        |

Washington State Financial Aid Events  
Events shown in time zone: (GMT-07:00) Pacific Time - Los Angeles  
[Add to Google Calendar](#)

Google Calendar

<https://wsac.wa.gov/actionplan>



# Resource: Financial Aid Padlet For Students

Christina Winstead • 1 • 13d

## Financial Aid Resources for Students

Welcome to the 12th Year Campaign student padlet. These resources will help you with completing financial aid and admissions applications.

### How to Apply For the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®)

**Federal Student Aid Pro Tips for the FAFSA® Form**  
studentaid.gov  
Federal Student Aid  
Use these tips to help you successfully complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) form.

**Step #1 - Create a studentaid.gov (FSA ID) Account**  
studentaid.gov  
Create Account | Federal Student Aid  
This is your first step! Whether

### How to Apply For The Washington Application for State Financial Aid (WASFA)

**Step #1 - Determine WASFA Eligibility With Questionnaire**  
wsac.wa.gov  
WASFA Questionnaire  
You can use this tool to assess yourself for WASFA Eligibility.

**Use This WASFA Account Creation Worksheet to Help You Create an Account**  
wsac.wa.gov  
Take the First Step to Paying for College or Career by Creating Your Account Today for the FAFSA or WASFA.

**Step #2 - Apply for the Washington Application for State Financial Aid (WASFA)**  
wsac.wa.gov

### Stuck or Need Help

**A Step-By-Step Guide To Completing The 2025-2026 FAFSA**  
salliemae.com  
2024-25 FAFSA Guide | How to Complete the New FAFSA Questions  
This is a break down of the 2025-2026 FAFSA, question by question. In this interactive guide (screenshots included), clarifies why each question is asked, and how to best answer each one accurately.

**12th Year Campaign and Partner Events**  
wsac.wa.gov  
Financial aid events  
The 12th Year Campaign can help you with two important steps you need to take to go to college: applying for college and applying for financial aid. The first step is to file a FAFSA or WASFA financial aid

### Other Financial Aid Resources

**2024-25 WA College Financial Aid and Admissions Deadlines**  
portal.wsac.wa.gov  
Financial Aid Calculator | WSAC  
Many undergraduate students can cover some or all their college costs with the Washington College Grant (WCG) and Federal Pell Grant (Pell).  
To get an estimate, you'll need to

**Washington State Financial Aid Calculator**  
portal.wsac.wa.gov

### Next Step: Award Letters/College Financial Aid offers

**Off Campus Financial Aid Offer Worksheet**  
award letter worksheet off campus home fillable pdf 0  
Use this worksheet to help you understand your financial aid offer if you are going to live off campus or at home

**Key Components to Understanding your Award Letter**  
award letter worksheet key components 22

### Financial Aid Informational Videos

**Washington Financial Aid for Education and Training Videos**  
YouTube  
Washington Financial Aid for Education and Training (English)  
A series of 5 short videos about Washington College Grant in 7 languages.



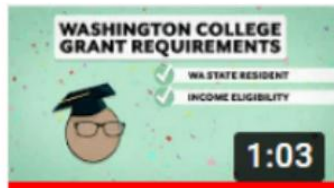
<https://padlet.com/christinaw12/t6jfitu7m8in10xc>



# Washington Financial Aid for Education and Training Videos

Informational videos about education after high school in the following languages:

- English
- Mandarin
- Russian
- Somali
- Spanish
- Tagalog
- Vietnamese





# OtterBot For Students



A free texting service to support all Washington high school students and their parents/guardians. A great source of info about financial aid, college planning, and reminders.

Available 24/7. Get started TODAY!





# OtterBot for Parents



Helps parents/guardians walk alongside their student(s) in the college planning process by explaining their role in the financial aid completion



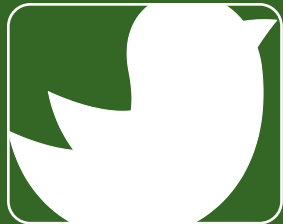


# We Are Here to Help!



## Online:

- [wsac.wa.gov](http://wsac.wa.gov)
- [www.thewashboard.org](http://www.thewashboard.org)
- [wastate529.wa.gov](http://wastate529.wa.gov)



## On Twitter:

- [@WSACouncil](https://twitter.com/WSACouncil)



## On Facebook:

- [www.facebook.com/WSACouncil](http://www.facebook.com/WSACouncil)

