



WHITE PASS GEAR UP NEWSLETTER



High School & Beyond Planning — News & Information

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GET ORGANIZED!

There are six key milestones that your child will accomplish this year:

- Take entrance and placement exams.
- Develop a list of post-high school choices.
- Apply to programs or institutions.
- Apply for financial aid.
- Complete all high school graduation requirements.
- Graduate.

Create a calendar with important dates. Students should:

- Meet with the school counselor to talk about plans for after high school.
- Review transcripts to ensure they are on track to graduate on time. Get help if needed.
- Learn and start the application process for each college or program. Start writing application essays.
- Update résumés with senior year activities. Résumés will be helpful for applications, and students will want to share them with people writing recommendations.
- Ask teachers, counselors, coaches, or employers for letters of recommendation. Give them plenty of time. Students should give them a copy of their résumé, the recommendation form, and a stamped envelope (if needed).
- Write a thank you note to each person who writes a letter of recommendation!

HOW TO APPLY FOR FINANCIAL AID

You must apply to qualify for financial aid. All federal financial aid programs, most programs offered by the State of Washington, and many college programs require you to complete and submit the FAFSA. If you are undocumented, have DACA, or are otherwise ineligible for federal financial aid due to immigration status, you should complete the WASFA instead of the FAFSA for consideration for state aid.

You should aim to complete either the FAFSA or WASFA as close to October 1 as possible because financial aid dollars are limited and often awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.

If you are a U.S. citizen, permanent resident, or a FAFSA-eligible non-citizen, you should complete the FAFSA for federal and state aid consideration.

If you are an undocumented student in Washington State or not eligible for the FAFSA due to immigration status, you may qualify for some state financial aid. Make sure you visit the official WASFA web page. It is FREE to file the WASFA! You should file the WASFA for every year you end school. You and your parents will report income from two years before the current year.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- *National GEAR UP Week:
September 22-26*

*After School Tutoring begins
Tuesday 7th and will be held
Tuesdays and Thursdays 3-
4:30pm with transportation
and snack available:*



DID YOU KNOW?

Is your teen applying to college? They should apply to at least three colleges, one from within each of these three categories:

- **Reach** - You might not get in, but it's worth applying because you want to go.
- **Solid** - You're a competitive applicant and will likely be accepted.
- **Safety** - You'll get accepted, and it's a backup in case the others don't work out.

TYPES OF AID

Very few students get all their financial aid for college from one source. When searching for financial aid, consider various options and apply to as many programs as possible.

Grants

Grants do not have to be repaid if you successfully complete the courses you were enrolled in. They are given to students who have high financial need. Most grants come from the federal and state governments.

Scholarships

Scholarships do not have to be repaid if you successfully complete your coursework. Most scholarships come from organizations and colleges for good grades, cultural or religious background, sports, or unique talents.

Work Study

Work study helps you earn money to pay for your education by working a part-time job offered through college. There are federal, state, and institutional work study programs.

Loans

Loans for students have lower interest rates than most other types of loans. Unlike grants or scholarships, loans must be repaid with interest when you finish college, even if you do not graduate. Banks, colleges, and other institutions offer student loans. Completing the FAFSA takes about 30 minutes and is available in Spanish.

STUDENT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Meet with your counselor to make sure you are on track to graduate.
- ☐ Contact the admission and financial aid offices at the colleges you are interested in attending. What are the admissions requirements? When are the deadlines? Are there fees? What forms do the financial aid offices require?
- ☐ If necessary, register for the October/November SAT, ACT, and SAT Subject Tests™ needed by your chosen schools.
- ☐ Prepare and submit your applications on time if you want to apply for early action or early admission. Work with your school counselor to get your official transcript to each college.
- ☐ Ask your teachers/mentors to begin writing recommendation letters. Also, keep copies of all forms you mail.
- ☐ Take your SAT or ACTs as early as possible so you can re-take them if necessary. Ask your counselor if you qualify for a test fee waiver. Have your scores sent to the schools on your final list.
- ☐ Get an FSA ID if filing the FAFSA. An FSA ID is a username and password you'll use to sign the FAFSA.
- ☐ Submit your FAFSA or WASFA as soon as possible after October 1.

FAMILY CHECKLIST

- ☐ Help your child get organized. Create a calendar with your child.
- ☐ Help your child decide about applying early. Early applications are usually due in November.
- ☐ Encourage your child to take your SAT or ACT as early as possible. Remember: Test fee waivers may be available. Ask the school counselor about this.
- ☐ If your child applied for early action or decision, encourage them to contact the admissions office to ensure all the paperwork and forms have been received. Check with the financial aid office, too.
- ☐ Find out if your child's school or a community organization is offering any assistance to help students complete college applications.
- ☐ Help your child to complete and submit all required parts of each college application online.
- ☐ Work together to apply for financial aid. The earlier you apply, the better.
- ☐ If filing the FAFSA, get an FSA ID. An FSA ID is a username and password you'll use to sign the FAFSA.

MYTHBUSTER

MYTH: Because of the cost of higher education, students should only apply to inexpensive schools.

REALITY: Students do not know how much college will cost out of pocket until they apply, are accepted, and receive a financial aid package. This means they should apply to colleges that seem like a good fit, regardless of cost.

For example, private schools often have a higher sticker price than public schools but also tend to offer more financial aid. Larger financial aid packages may lower the total cost for students to less than that of a public school.

With the availability of financial aid, students have many school options. While it's important to consider costs as criteria for choosing which college best suits them, they should not be the determining factor.

