

FOSTERING COLLEGE KNOWLEDGE:

Planning & Paying for Higher Education for Youth in Care

If you have been in foster care at any time after age 13, money and resources are available to help you go to college - including vocational training, 2-, and 4-year options - for most Washington State schools.

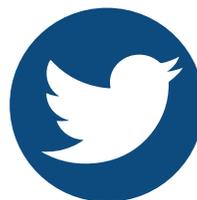
All of the resources listed in this guide are specific to youth who have been in foster care. Use this guide to learn how you can find money and support to pursue education beyond high school! You can also check out www.readysetgrad.com/fostercare for additional information and links.



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READY

SET

GRAD

Get Organized

Create a binder to get prepared and stay organized. Keep information related to admissions, financial aid, scholarships, test scores, and more in your binder. Remember to keep information secure and private.

Grade	Ready <i>Explore</i>	Set <i>Prepare</i>	Grad <i>Pay</i>
06	Think about Your Interests	Do Your Best in School	Start a Savings Account
07	Talk to Adults about College.	Take Challenging Classes to Prepare for High School	Learn about the College Bound Scholarship
08	Create a High School and Beyond Plan	Successfully Complete Pre-Algebra	Learn How to Stay Eligible for the College Bound Scholarship
09	Get Involved In School- or Community-Based Activities	Create a Student Portfolio	Register for theWashBoard.org, a Free Scholarship Service
10	Research College and Career Options	Take Challenging Courses that Meet the Minimum College Admission Standards	Take ACT Aspire or PSAT
11	Participate in College Fairs and Campus Visits	Register and Take a College Admissions Exam (ACT, SAT, ASVAB or ACCUPLACER)	Apply for Scholarships
12	Research Careers and Do a Job Shadow	Apply to 3 or More Postsecondary Schools	Complete the FAFSA or WASFA



The most important things you can do to help yourself prepare for life after high school are attend school regularly, take challenging courses to meet the Minimum College Admission Standards, and talk to your school counselor and other adults about your plans.

College Preparation

High school is an important time. If you want to attend college, you need to start preparing by working hard in high school, taking challenging courses, and getting good grades.

Make It Happen!

Make It Happen! is a FREE three-day, two-night college campus experience for youth who are or ever have been in the Washington state foster care system. The camp is in June on a college campus in Washington.

At Make It Happen! you will spend time attending workshops about applying to college, and learn what life at college is about. High school sophomores, juniors, and seniors (10th, 11th, and 12th graders) can apply to attend this camp.

Many of the counselors, staff, volunteers and inspiring speakers are foster care alums. They will work with you to help you achieve your higher education goals.

For more information, contact College Success Foundation at mih@collegesuccessfoundation.org, by phone at 425-213-5888 or visit <https://collegesuccessfoundation.org/wa/make-it-happen>



Supplemental Education Transition Planning Program (SETuP)

SETuP can provide information to you and your foster family about post-high school education and training opportunities. SETuP providers in your region may be able to help prepare you for college by offering:

- Financial aid application assistance.
- College application coaching and assistance.
- Pre-college testing guidance based on educational goals.
- Connecting you to other support services.

For more information and to find your regional SETuP contact, visit <http://independence.wa.gov/programs/setup/>

Transitioning to College: A Checklist of Activities

Ask the college you will attend these questions to help you prepare for the transition to higher education.



Social

- How can I find a mentor or advocate?
- Are there any foster peer groups that meet on campus?



Finances

- Where can I go for help with finances?
- Where do I go if I need a fee waived?
- How can I get an emergency loan/ financial support if needed?



Healthcare

- Do you offer workshops or support on life skills training, wellness, and self-care?
- What mental health services are available?



Academic

- Do you offer an orientation? Is there help with the cost of transportation?
- Do you offer a summer transition program? Is there help with transportation?

Support Services in College

Successful college students use a variety of available resources such as tutoring, informal student study groups, meeting with professors during office hours, meeting with an academic advisor, and asking for help when they need it. There are many free resources to help you transition to college and get personal, health, financial, and academic support. If you are a foster youth or first-generation student, meaning you are the first person in your family to go to college, colleges may have support programs designed just for you.

Extended Foster Care Program

This program provides an opportunity for you at age 18 to voluntarily agree to continue receiving foster care services, including placement services, while you complete high school or a post-high school academic or vocational program, or participate in a program or activity designed to promote employment. For more information, visit www.independence.wa.gov.

First Year Supportive Programming

When choosing a college, investigate their Equal Opportunity Programs (EOPs), often labeled as First-Year Experience Programs, Summer Bridge Programs, Freshman Seminars, etc. These programs support youth in making a successful transition to college.

Foster Care Alumni Services

Some schools offer services for foster care youth such as housing during holiday breaks. Be sure to find out if the college you want to attend offers services for former foster youth.

Housing

Some colleges have priority housing and year round options. The Independent Youth Housing Program is available in certain parts of the state. It provides rental assistance and case management services to eligible youth who have aged out of the foster care system.

This program may be able to help you find a safe, affordable place to live and help you become independent. Learn more about eligibility and its services at <http://independence.wa.gov/programs/independent-youth-housing-program/>



Transportation

- Is there free or cheap transportation available?



Housing

- Do you provide year-round housing including during winter breaks?
- Can I have my housing fees waived, deferred, or included in my financial aid package?
- Do you offer LGBTQ-safe housing?



On-Campus Support Services

- How do I access tutoring and academic support services?
- Is there a Passport Navigator here?
- Where do I go to register for disability services? What documentation is required?
- How can I apply to be a part of a TRiO SSS program, if available?
- Are there food or clothing banks on campus or nearby?

66 schools accept State Need Grant, College Bound Scholarship, and Passport to College aid. Find a school at www.readysetgrad.org/eligible-institutions.



Independent Living Program (ILP)

This program can provide you with basic life skills and support. It is designed to enhance your ability to live independently by increasing your skills, knowledge, and ability in the following areas:

Educational stability	Post high school education preparation
Employment/vocational readiness	Income maintenance
Housing	Daily living skills
Interpersonal skills	Self-advocacy
Bridging of healthy/supportive relationships	Advocacy and achievement

For more information about Independent Living, email ILSKIDS@dshs.wa.gov, contact your local DCFS office, or visit <http://independence.wa.gov/programs/independent-living-program>.

Medicaid to 26

You may be eligible for continued foster care benefits even if you are no longer in foster care or other eligible out-of-home placement. To find out if you are eligible, call 1-800-562-3022 extension 15480.

TRiO Student Support Services Program (TRiO SSS)

This program is offered at many community colleges and four-year schools. If you are low-income, first-generation, foster youth, and/or have disabilities, this program can be a great support. In TRiO, you can get tutoring, academic counseling, and learn study skills. This program can help you navigate the college system. It also offers social and cultural events to help you build a supportive social network.



Financial Aid

Financial aid is money to help you pay for college. It comes from the federal and state governments, colleges and universities, banks, and organizations. In order to receive financial aid, you must apply.

Applying for financial aid is a separate process from applying for admission to a college. You must do both. To receive financial aid, you must apply for it using the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA (www.fafsa.gov) or the Washington Application for State Financial Aid or WASFA (<http://readysetgrad.org/wasfa>). Colleges use the results of the FAFSA or WASFA to create a financial aid package.

Both applications open October 1. Complete this application as soon as possible to make sure you receive the maximum amount of aid available.

Foster Care-Specific Financial Aid Programs

There are financial resources to help you turn your dreams into degrees. If you have been in foster care any time after turning 13, your classes will likely be paid for at most Washington State colleges.

College Bound Scholarship

The College Bound Scholarship is a state funded program managed by the Washington Student Achievement Council. It is an early promise of state financial aid to help pay for education after high school. The scholarship combines with other state financial aid to cover college tuition at similar public college rates, some fees, and some money for books. If you have been in foster care any time from grade 7 to age 21, you are automatically enrolled into the College Bound Scholarship program.

For more information about the program, scholarship requirements, and about other financial aid options in Washington, visit www.collegebound.wa.gov, email collegebound@wsac.wa.gov, or call 888-535-0747, option 1.

Passport to College Promise Scholarship Program

This scholarship encourages Washington's youth in foster care to prepare for and succeed in college. You can receive scholarships and other forms of financial aid that will help pay tuition and living expenses for up to five years of college at approved schools in Washington.

You will receive guidance from college academic and financial aid counselors, assistance with finding housing during school breaks and over the summer, special consideration for the State Need Grant and State Work Study financial aid programs, and help finding student employment from Passport staff. You may also opt-in for personalized help and support services from the College Success Foundation. For more information, email the Washington Student Achievement Council at passporttocollege@wsac.wa.gov or call 1-888-535-0747, option 3.

Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program

This national program offers financial assistance to eligible youth to attend an approved* college, university, vocational or technical college. You may receive funding for qualified school related expenses, including Running Start. Funding is limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis to eligible students. ETV can help pay for expenses such as tuition, fees, books, housing, food, transportation, and other educational costs. For more information, visit <http://independence.wa.gov/programs/etv-program>, email ETVWASH@dshs.wa.gov, or call 1-877-433-8388.

*For a list of approved schools in Washington State and to view eligibility requirements visit: <http://wsac.wa.gov/colleges-and-institutions-washington>

Washington State Governors' Scholarship for Foster Youth

This scholarship helps youth in foster care continue their education and earn a college degree. Scholarship amounts vary depending on the college you attend, and are available for up to five years. You must be enrolled full time and maintain satisfactory grades in order to renew the scholarship each year.

For more information, visit <http://www.collegesuccessfoundation.org/wa/scholarships/governors>.

