

COLLEGE KNOWLEDGE

**A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT ACROSS ORGANIZATIONS TO PROVIDE
COMPREHENSIVE COLLEGE READINESS INFORMATION**

DEVELOPED
WITH
**STUDENT
INPUT**



pcccrn
Puget Sound College and Career Network

Road Map
Project 

 WASHINGTON STUDENT
ACHIEVEMENT COUNCIL
EDUCATION · OPPORTUNITY · RESULTS

WCAN WASHINGTON
COLLEGE ACCESS NETWORK

5 APPLYING FOR COLLEGE

IN THIS CHAPTER:

RESEARCHING COLLEGES

PARTS OF A COLLEGE APPLICATION

HOW TO APPLY

Need help with our terms? See the [glossary](#) on our websites:

WCAN.ORG | PCCN.ORG | READYSETGRAD.ORG | ROADMAPPROJECT.ORG

5 APPLYING FOR COLLEGE: RESEARCHING COLLEGES

HOW DO I RESEARCH COLLEGES?

- Visit: wcan.org/resources/college-map for a list of colleges in Washington state
- View college websites
- Sign up for college mailing lists
- Attend **college fairs**
- Tour colleges

College search takes time. Schedule a few hours each week to work on researching colleges.

WHAT SHOULD I CONSIDER?

- Type of college** – technical, 2-year, 4-year
- Location** – distance from home, weather, urban or rural, etc.
- Degrees available** – **associate's, bachelor's, certifications** and **apprenticeships**
- Programs available** – subject areas or **majors** offered
- Public vs. private** – public colleges are partially funded by government funds and private colleges are not directly publicly funded
- Special focus** – colleges that focus on a specific interest or student population such as arts, single-sex, religiously affiliated and specialized-mission colleges
- Diversity** – the types of cultures, languages and demographics represented on campus or in the community
- Size** – number of students, campus size, class size, city population, etc.
- Cost of attendance** – in- or out-of-state **tuition, college fees**, books, transportation and housing
- Selectivity** – measured by the percentage of students who get accepted based on admission requirements
- Graduation rate** – number of students who graduate within 4 or 6 years from that college

***GOOD TO KNOW:** Community colleges offer 2-year degrees with a path to **transfer** to a 4-year school and some offer bachelor degree programs.

*DON'T FORGET:

Consider the admissions requirements and determine if the school is a **reach, solid,** or **safety** for you. It is recommended that you apply to at least one school in each category:

- Reach** – You might not get in, but it's worth applying to because it's your dream school
- Solid** – You're a competitive applicant and will likely get accepted
- Safety** – You'll definitely get accepted, and it's a backup in case the others don't work out

TALK TO:

- Your high school counselor
- College and career center adviser
- College **admissions counselors** or representatives who visit your school
- Family members, teachers, mentors and community members who have been to college

NOV: GRADE 11



5 APPLYING FOR COLLEGE: PARTS OF A COLLEGE APPLICATION

All colleges have an **application**. Typically, you can submit a vocational, technical, 2-year or 4-year college/university application online and sometimes in person, or by mail.

WHAT DO I NEED TO APPLY TO MOST COLLEGES?

Your **official transcripts** from **high school** and college if you have earned college credit

Your **test scores** from the **SAT or ACT**

WHAT ADDITIONAL STEPS MIGHT I NEED TO COMPLETE A 4-YEAR COLLEGE APPLICATION?

Personal Statement – a way for the college to get to know you and why you are interested in the school

Short Answer Responses – additional questions that may focus on specific concepts, such as diversity, culture and examples of persistence/overcoming adversities.

Activity Log/Resumé – a list of **extracurricular activities** that can include clubs, sports, jobs and anything you do outside of school.

Letter of Recommendation – a letter from a teacher, counselor, coach, etc. that can speak to your qualities, characteristics and capabilities.

GOOD TO KNOW:

Some programs like **apprenticeships**, vocational and technical certifications have a unique application process. Check out **lni.wa.gov** for more information on apprenticeships or visit **sbctc.edu** for vocational and technical training programs.

ANYTHING ELSE?

You may need to pay a fee in order to submit a college application.

However, **you may eligible to receive a fee waiver:**

- If you are a College Bound Scholarship student
- If you receive free and reduced price lunch
- If you participate in programs like TRiO, Upward Bound, or GEAR UP
- If you are a youth in foster care
- If you took the SAT or ACT with a fee waiver
- Contact your high school counselor, college admissions office, National Association for College Admission Counseling, or The College Board to inquire about fee waivers.

MAR: GRADE 11
OCT: GRADE 12

* DON'T FORGET:

You could be competing against MANY other applicants. Make sure your answers are a clear and true representation of who you are and how you have prepared yourself!



5 APPLYING FOR COLLEGE: HOW TO APPLY

TIPS FOR APPLYING:

Complete and submit at least three college **applications** in the fall.

Apply for financial aid by completing the **FAFSA** or **WASFA** as early as October 1 to ensure you have options to pay for college.

Use a professional email address with your name. Check your email often, as you will receive important, time-sensitive messages.

Talk to your counselor if you are unable to pay application fees. You may be eligible for **college application fee waivers**.

Keep track of deadlines using a spreadsheet or to-do list.

Proofread, review and revise college essays. Have at least one other person (mentor, counselor, teacher, etc.) look over your finalized application.

Check the status of your college and financial aid apps to make sure they have been received. You typically can do this via the **online college portal**, email or phone.

Be sure to **save all parts of your college application**; you may be able to reuse them for other college or scholarship applications.

After you submit your **application**, you should receive a **confirmation message**. If you do not, contact the college admissions office to find out the status of your application.

4-YEAR COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS:

Submit your FAFSA or WASFA.

Read admission requirements for each specific school.

Create an account for your online application.

Request **letters of recommendation**. Receive a **confirmation email** that your application was successfully submitted.

Request **official transcripts**.

Send SAT or ACT scores.

Write and edit your **personal statement** essay and other **short answer responses**.

Complete and submit your college application.

WHAT IS THE COMMON APPLICATION?

The common application, or common app, is a college admissions **application that is used by over 700 colleges in the U.S.**, including many private colleges in Washington. Once the common app is completed, it can be sent to any number of participating colleges. The common app is used exclusively for eligible 4-year colleges and universities. To start the common application, visit **commonapp.org**.

2-YR COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS:

Apply online, by mail or in person.

Submit the FAFSA or WASFA.

Take a **placement test** at the college. Some colleges also accept transcripts or other info to determine placement.

Schedule an **academic advising** appointment.

NOV: GRADE 12



COLLEGE KNOWLEDGE

GLOSSARY

Academic Advising: Helps you understand the college's academic systems, choose and apply to a major and access campus resources.

Academic Support: Services on campus that support academic success, such as tutoring, advising, etc.

Accreditation: The official certification that a school or course has met standards set by external regulators.

Admissions Counselors: College representatives (sometimes called admissions advisors) who can provide you information about the college and review student applications.

Advanced Placement (AP): A program that allows students to take rigorous college-level courses while still in high school. Students may earn college credit and/or advanced placement into upper-level college courses by taking AP exams. Many colleges and universities recognize AP courses when making admissions decisions.

Application: A form that you must fill out in order to apply for colleges, scholarships, or financial aid.

Apprenticeship: A program that allows you to learn a specific skill while you work in the related field and earn money.

Associate's Degree: This kind of degree indicates the completion of a two-year college program. Many students earn an associate's degree and then transfer to a 4-year college.

Award: An offer from a college or career school that states the type (loans, institutional aid, grants, scholarships and work-study) and amount of financial aid the school is willing to provide if you accept admission and register to take classes at that school.

Bachelor's Degree: This kind of degree indicates the completion of a four-year program.

Benefits: Non-wage payment provided to employees such as health insurance for medical, dental and vision.

Cambridge International: A dual-credit program that gives students the opportunity to earn high school and college credit at the same time.

Campus: Property that is part of the college, such as buildings and land.

Campus Size: This is the number of students enrolled in the college.

Certificate: A certificate is awarded to indicate knowledge of a certain subject or skill.

Class Size: This is the average number of students in a class.

College: A technical, vocational, 2-year or 4-year private or public college or university.

College Budget: The amount of money that you are able to pay for college expenses.

College Expenses: Money used to pay for living on campus, food, books and supplies, personal expenses and transportation.

College Fairs: Events where college and university representatives provide information about their school and answer questions. This is a great opportunity to learn about different college options.

Community and Technical Colleges (CTC): CTCs is the name most commonly used to describe Washington's public 2-year colleges. These schools offer associate's degrees and certificates, as well as prepare students for specific trades. Many students earn an associate's degree and then transfer to a 4-year college. Washington state has 34 public CTCs.

Cost of Attendance (COA): The total amount it will cost you to go to college each year. This can include tuition and fees, on-campus room and board (or a housing and food allowance for off-campus students); books, supplies and transportation.

COLLEGE KNOWLEDGE

GLOSSARY

Credits: You typically earn one credit for the successful completion of a single course in high school. Washington requires students to complete a minimum number of credits to graduate. College credit is measured differently than high school.

CTE Dual Credit: Classes that help students transition from high school into postsecondary professional technical programs and careers.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA): Program announced on June 12, 2012 by President Barack Obama to protect eligible individuals from deportation and access a work permit for 2 years. The individual must have arrived before the age of 16, have a clean record, etc. Deferred Action does not provide a green card or pathway to citizenship.

Degree: A degree indicates the completion of a two- or four-year program at a college or university. The two most common degrees are associate's degree and bachelor's degree.

Diploma: A certificate awarded by a high school to show a student has successfully completed high school.

Disburse: The payment of financial aid to a student.

Eligibility: This will vary by scholarship. Some scholarships focus on specific criteria, such as diversity, creativity and other attributes/skills.

Extracurricular Activities: Any activity that you do outside of the classroom, such as athletics, clubs, community service, etc.

FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid, the standard form students must complete to apply for federal and state need-based assistance/and programs and, in some circumstances, campus-based assistance/aid. Learn more at fafsa.gov

Financial Need: Amount calculated by taking the cost of attendance at a college minus your expected family contribution as calculated by the FAFSA or WASFA.

Federal Loan: A loan is money you borrow and must pay back with interest. Loans made by the federal government, called federal student loans, usually offer borrowers lower interest rates and have more flexible repayment options than loans from banks or other private sources. For more information on the federal loan program: studentaid.ed.gov/sa/types/loans

Fees: Money you pay to access school activities, fitness centers, libraries and student centers. Every college has different fees.

Fee Waiver: If paying an application or testing fee would cause a financial hardship, you can receive a fee waiver to remove payment.

Felony Convictions: (more serious crimes) conviction records are checked, just like all pledge requirements, prior to the awarding of the College Bound Scholarship to you.

Financial Aid: Any grant, scholarship, loan or work-study (paid employment) offered to help you meet your college expenses.

Financial Aid Office: Helps you understand your financial aid award, provides information on additional funding resources, and helps you search and apply for scholarships.

Full-Time Enrollment: To be considered a full-time student, you must enroll in 12 quarter or semester credits each term.

Grade Point Average (GPA): A way to transfer letter grades into a numerical scale. The grades received in classes are averaged together to arrive at one cumulative grade. You can find your GPA on your high school transcript.

Grants: A form of gift aid, usually based on financial need. A grant does not need to be repaid, unless, for example, you withdraw from a school and owe a refund.

COLLEGE KNOWLEDGE

GLOSSARY

High School and Beyond Plan: A tool to help guide you through high school. Plans are personalized and designed to help students think about their future and choose coursework that prepares them for goals after high school. This is also a graduation requirement.

Immigration Status: The legal position of people that live in a country permanently without citizenship.

Income: The total amount of money that you earn per year.

International Baccalaureate (IB): A program that offers challenging, rigorous courses of study. Students who take IB exams have the chance to earn college credit or advanced placement, or both, within upper-level college courses. Many colleges and universities recognize IB courses as they make admissions decisions.

Internship: An opportunity to work at an organization or corporation to develop work experience. Some internships are unpaid, but some are paid.

Job Requirements: Certain jobs require specific education, training, or skills to be qualified for the position.

Job Shadow: An opportunity to accompany a professional to experience what their job is like.

Letter of Recommendation: Letters that can speak to your qualities, characteristics and capabilities. These letters typically come from teachers, counselors, community or faith leaders, employers and other individuals outside your family.

Major: A specific subject that you choose to commit to studying. A large number of classes you take may be related to your major.

Match Email: A communication from the College Bound Scholarship (CBS) program when your FAFSA or WASFA and it matches with your CBS application. This is also when your colleges know you are a College Bound student.

Money Gap: The difference between the cost of a full-year of college and what grants and scholarship you are provided. This may also be referred to as out of pocket expenses which is money the student and their family will be responsible for paying.

Office Hours: Times when professors are available to answer any questions you might have about class.

Official Transcript: Most colleges require your high school transcript, which is a student's academic record that includes a Registrar's signature and the issue date. An official transcript is delivered in a sealed envelope. If you have earned college credit, you will also need to submit your college transcript.

Online College Portal: Some colleges have their own website, which you can use to check admission decisions, financial aid, grades, etc.

On-The-Job Training (OTJ): Job training that completed in actual work field.

Orientation: Most colleges require new students to attend an orientation, where you learn about campus resources and registration process and meet your peers. Some college orientations are in person and others are online. Attend an in-person orientation if you can! Students may also be invited to attend a summer transition program focused on preparing you for your first quarter.

Personal Statement: A way for the college to get to know you and why you are interested in the school.

Placement Test: Some colleges will require you to take a placement test to determine some of the classes you can take. Based on this test, you may need to take an entry-level class before you can take another class required by your program.

Portable: Some scholarships are bound to a specific college. Portable scholarships can be used at the college of your choice and follow you to the school you attend.

COLLEGE KNOWLEDGE

GLOSSARY

Priority Deadlines: A date that you need to file a FAFSA or WASFA in order receive priority consideration in the financial aid awarding process. The deadline determines the type of funding you will be eligible for and when you may be awarded.

Private 2-Year Colleges: These school tend to focused on specific trades or vocations and are not publicly funded.

Private 4-Year Colleges: These schools offer bachelor's and may also offer master's degrees but are independent and are not publicly funded. These colleges or universities often have smaller class sizes.

Professor: The common way to address a teacher in college.

Public 2-Year Colleges: These schools offer associate's degrees and certificates, as well as prepare students for specific trades. Many students earn an associate's degree and then transfer to a 4-year college.

Public 4-Year Comprehensive Colleges: These schools tend to be smaller, are more regionally based and offer bachelor's and master's degrees.

Public 4-Year Research Colleges: These schools engage in extensive research activities and offer bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees.

Reach: A school that you might not be accepted to, but is still worth applying to because it's your dream school.

Renewable: A scholarship that can we received for more than one year as long as all eligibility requirements are met.

Room and Board: The costs associated with living on or off campus, including meal plans.

Running Start: A program that provides you the option of attending certain institutions of higher education while simultaneously earning high school and college/university credit. Students in grade 11 and 12 are allowed to take college courses at Central Washington University, Eastern Washington University, Northwest Indian College and Washington State University. Running Start is one way to earn college credit while in high school. To learn more about this program and other options that may be available at your school, please visit readyssetgrad.org/dual-credit

Safety: A school that you will definitely get accepted, but is a backup in case the others don't work out.

Salary: The amount of money that you earn from work. Some jobs pay a fixed salary and others offer an hourly wage.

SAT or ACT: Entrance exams used by many colleges as a part of the admission decision. You will need to submit your exam scores online through the testing agency's website.

Scholarship: Money awarded to you based on criteria such as academics, athletics, community service or financial need to help pay for education expenses. Scholarships generally do not have to be repaid.

Selectivity: A measure of how difficult it is for you to be accepted into a college. This is measured by percentage of students accepted annually. The lower the acceptance rate, the more selective the school is.

Service Learning: An opportunity to participate in community service activities and then applying the experience to your academic and personal growth.

Short Answer Responses: Additional questions that you may need to write that focuses on specific concepts, such as diversity, culture and examples of persistence/overcoming adversities.

COLLEGE KNOWLEDGE

GLOSSARY

Solid: A school that you will likely be accepted to, because you are a competitive applicant.

State Financial Aid: Financial assistance/aid programs funded and administered by the state to help pay college costs.

State Assessments: English, math and science tests taken in high school to assess your progress in high school.

Trade: A type of school also referred to as vocational, offering specialized training, skills or education for specific fields, such as plumbing, carpentry, etc.

Trade Unions: A labor union that advocates for their rights, but also offer apprenticeship opportunities.

Transfer: A transfer occurs when you switch to a different school. Typically, community colleges offer 2-year degrees with a path to transfer to a 4-year school.

Tuition: The price colleges or universities charge for credits/classes, this pays for things like the instructor and classroom space. Every college has different tuition costs.

Undergraduate: A college student who is working to get an associate's or bachelor's degree.

Vocational: Also referred to as a trade school, these colleges offer specialized training, skills or education for specific fields, such as plumbing, carpentry, etc.

Wage Gap: The difference between how much college-educated and less-educated young professionals earn.

WASFA: Washington Application for State Financial Aid, the application available to eligible undocumented students for the State Need Grant and the College Bound Scholarship. Learn more at readysetgrad.org/WASFA

COLLEGE KNOWLEDGE SOURCES

- Boston Consulting Group, & Washington Roundtable. (2016). *Pathways to Great Jobs in WA*. Seattle. Retrieved from http://www.waroundtable.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/WKWJ_FINAL_Report.pdf
- Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2017). *Usual Weekly Earnings of Wage and Salary Workers (USD-17-10)*. Washington, D.C. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/wkyeng.pdf>
- Carnevale, A. P., Jayasundera, T., & Gulish, A. (2016). *America's Divided Recovery: College Haves and Have-Nots*. Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. Washington, D.C. Retrieved from <https://cew-7632.kxcdn.com/wp-content/uploads/Americas-Divided-Recovery-web.pdf>
- Carnevale, A. P., Smith, N., & Strohl, J. (2013). *Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements Through 2020*. Center on Education and the Workforce. Washington, D.C. Retrieved from https://cew-7632.kxcdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Recovery2020.FR_Web_.pdf
- Carnevale, A. P., Smith, N., & Strohl, J. (2015). *Recovery Job Growth and Education Requirements Through 2020, State Report*. Center on Education and the Workforce. Washington, D.C. Retrieved from https://cew-7632.kxcdn.com/wp-content/uploads/StateProjections_6.1.15_agc_v2.pdf
- Kena, G., Hussar, W., McFarland, J., de Brey, C., Musu-Gillette, L., Wang, X., ... Dunlop Velez, E. (2016). *The Condition of Education 2016 (NCES 2016-144)*. Washington, D.C. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch>
- Khan Academy. (2014). Financial costs and benefits of college. Retrieved August 17, 2017, from <https://www.khanacademy.org/college-careers-more/college-admissions/get-started/importance-of-college/a/financial-costs-and-benefits-of-college>
- Taylor, P., Fry, R., & Oates, R. (2014). *The Rising Cost of Not Going to College*. Washington, D.C. Retrieved from <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2014/02/11/the-rising-cost-of-not-going-to-college/>
- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. (2016). *College Planning and Financial Aid Guide*. Austin. Retrieved from <http://gentx.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/College-Planning-Guide-English-2016.pdf>
- University of Washington Dream Project. (2015). *Dream Project Workbook (Tenth)*. Seattle: Dream Project. Retrieved from <http://www.washington.edu/dreamproject/files/2015/03/Workbook-2015.pdf>
- Washington State Department of Labor and Industries. (2012). *A Parents' Guide to Apprenticeships*. Retrieved from <http://lni.wa.gov/IPUB/100-530-000.pdf>



COLLEGE KNOWLEDGE

**A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT ACROSS ORGANIZATIONS TO PROVIDE
COMPREHENSIVE COLLEGE READINESS INFORMATION**

For more information and to view the **glossary**, check out our websites:

WCAN.ORG | PSCCN.ORG | READYSETGRAD.ORG | ROADMAPPROJECT.ORG

