

3 Ways You Can Support Students to “Aim Higher”

How do students access financial aid? They must complete financial aid forms.

Students in communities across Washington have big goals for their futures. Many of those goals will require students to earn a credential after high school, such as a degree, apprenticeship, or certificate. **The only way to know whether a student is eligible for financial aid to support their post-high school education plans is to fill out the FAFSA – federal financial aid forms.**

Unfortunately, Washington comes in close to last in terms of the rate at which our students complete the FAFSA. In 2017, only 54 percent of Washington seniors finished the form, placing us 47th nationally. **We can work together to change this.**

The Washington College Grant: Why completing FAFSA or WASFA just become even more critical.

Education and training after high school just got a lot more affordable in Washington. Through the **Washington College Grant, more families will be eligible for state aid**, and more programs and types of credentials, including apprenticeships, are covered. **Completing the FAFSA is the first step to accessing these funds.**

Here’s our action plan: Aim Higher Washington.

Aim Higher Washington is an ambitious campaign with the goal that an additional 7,000 high school seniors will fill out the FAFSA or WASFA this year (WASFA is our state’s financial aid application for students who are not eligible for federal aid because of their immigration status). **If we succeed, thousands more students and families will gain access to the Grant and to post-high school education and training opportunities.**

How You Can Help!

[WSAC](#) is leading the effort, with help from the [College Promise Coalition](#), [Washington Education Association](#), colleges, universities, and other partners. It will take a concerted effort to achieve our goal. Join us!

Aim Higher Partners

AFT Washington
College Success Foundation
Community Center for Education
Results
Council of Presidents
Evergreen State College
Greater Spokane Inc
Independent Colleges of Washington
Puget Sound College & Career
Network
United Way of King County
University of Washington
Washington Education Association
Washington State Board for
Community & Technical Colleges
Western Washington University

Here are three ways to get involved:

- 1) **Communications.** Spread the word through your communications channels to students, parents, educators, and community influencers about the importance of filling out the FAFSA or WASFA.
- 2) **Direct assistance.** “Adopt” a district or high school that we are prioritizing for outreach and work directly with schools to assist students and families with FAFSA and WASFA completion. Efforts will include training volunteers to assist parents and families. Aim Higher Washington will provide “train the trainers” opportunities.
- 3) **Recruit more partners.** We are asking educators—teachers, counselors, principals, and administrators—along with colleges, universities, community-based organizations, business organizations, and local elected officials, to help with the campaign.

To sign on and get involved, email AimHigherWa@wsac.wa.gov. To learn more about the Washington College Grant, visit wsac.wa.gov/pathways.