



Opening the Doors to College

Education is the key to opening doors to a successful future. It can lead an individual on a limitless path. The following information can help guide and inform youth, and the adults working with them, of how to best access and pay for the educational opportunities available to them. Taking advantage of the services, programs, and information available here and in the cited resources will help them achieve higher levels of education and training and overall success.

How to prepare

Information Gathering and Initial Planning

The pursuit of higher education may require youth to start to prepare as early as middle school. School counselors in middle and high school are great resources. They can encourage youth to take advantage of programs and resources related to education beyond high school; contact college and university staff for additional information; and help youth maneuver the Internet to locate college information and resources. Once such website is knowhow2gowisconsin.org/, where Wisconsin youth can learn about planning and preparing for college.

Precollege, Precollege, Precollege!

Precollege programs are shown to help students think about, plan for, and enter postsecondary education. Hundreds of precollege programs related to many academic areas are available throughout Wisconsin. For information, contact one of the following:

- Precollege programs and opportunities throughout the University of Wisconsin System, call UW HELP at (800) 442-6459 or use the searchable database of precollege programs at uwhelp.wisconsin.edu/precollege.
- Programs offering Department of Public Instructions (DPI) scholarships, visit dpi.wi.gov/weop/precollege.
- Precollege programs at Wisconsin's private colleges, contact the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU) Student Access Center at (800) 433-4733 ext. 227.
- Precollege programs offered at Wisconsin technical colleges go to wtcsystem.edu/colleges, where you will find a map of the individual colleges.

College Goal Wisconsin

Students are encouraged to take advantage of College Goal Wisconsin, an annual event where students, families, and caregivers can receive professional help completing the FAFSA. Events are held at locations throughout the state and attendees may win scholarship funding just for attending! Visit the College Goal Wisconsin website at collegegoalwi.org/ for more information.

Where to go

Wisconsin Tribal Colleges

Wisconsin is home to the College of the Menominee Nation and Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College. Learn more at www.menominee.edu and www.lco.edu/.

Wisconsin Technical Colleges System

The Wisconsin Technical Colleges System (WTCS) offers more than 400 career education programs at 16 different colleges throughout the state. Many programs can be completed in a year or less and many associate degree programs are able to be completed within two years of full-time study. Check out wistechcolleges.org for information on WTCS and what its 16 colleges have to offer.



Wisconsin Private, Nonprofit Colleges & Universities

WAICU includes 24 of Wisconsin's private, nonprofit colleges and universities that offer hundreds of majors and programs of study. To learn more about Wisconsin's private colleges visit wisconsinsprivatecolleges.org/.

The website also includes free ACT and SAT test prep, career exploration tools, and plenty of helpful advice to plan and prepare for college. WAICU representatives are available to assist at 800-4-DEGREE (800-433-4733 ext.227) or studentaccess@waicu.org.

University of Wisconsin System

The University of Wisconsin System includes 13 four-year campuses, and UW-Extension. The campuses throughout the state offer something for everyone! Visit UW HELP Online at uwhelp.wisconsin.edu for information on planning for college, careers, majors, admission, financial aid, and much more. Speak with educational advisors about UW campuses and college planning by calling UW HELP at (800) 442-6459.

Opening the Doors to College

How to pay

Financial Aid

The only thing more expensive than going to college is not going to college! Financial aid is available at every college, including technical colleges.

Students applying for financial aid must complete the Free Application for Student Aid (FAFSA). Students must register for a Federal Student Aid ID – “FSA ID” – and then complete the FAFSA online at <https://fafsa.ed.gov>. Youth placed in out-of-home care at the age of 13 or after are considered independent for financial aid purposes, regardless of the length of time in care, and should be designated as such when completing the FAFSA. It is important to complete the FAFSA in a timely way in order to access maximum funding.

For additional financial aid information, visit the following resources:

- For information on federal aid, visit Student Aid on the Web at <https://studentaid.ed.gov>.
- Learn about the State of Wisconsin’s financial aid programs (scholarships, grants, and loans), visit the Higher Educational Aids Board website at <http://heab.wi.gov>.
- For information about general scholarship opportunities FastWeb.com at <http://fastweb.com>.
- Conduct a comprehensive search for college scholarships via the College Board Scholarship Search at bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search.

In addition to the above resources, it is advantageous to explore financial aid websites at college and universities of interest. Most colleges and universities will provide campus-based scholarships.

Wisconsin Educational Opportunity Program

The Wisconsin Educational Opportunity Program (WEOP) provides great information about state scholarships, loans, grants, and other aid to students. The WEOP staff located in offices throughout the state are ready, willing, and able to assist students with college planning, college admission applications, and FAFSA completion. Visit the WEOP website at dpi.wi.gov/weop for more on the program and opportunities, as well as local contact information.

DCF Scholarship Fund

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) awards scholarships to youth formerly in out-of-home care. Scholarship funds are available for tuition, room, and board expenses for postsecondary education and training programs. For information about scholarships and to access application materials, visit the website at dcf.wisconsin.gov/youthservices/college.



Created by the Foster Youth to College Advisory Council, Fall 2017

For more information related to this document or about the FYC Advisory Council, please contact DCFILCoordinator@wisconsin.gov.