



WASHINGTON SCHOLARSHIP COALITION: *A Partnership to Build an Online Scholarship Marketplace*

Earning a college degree represents an important piece of the American dream.

However, rising costs are making this an almost impossible dream without an equivalent rise in better financing options for students. Federal and state financial aid programs have not kept pace with increased tuition and living costs, making way instead for a boom in private student loans with higher interest rates and greater risks.

Tragically, an estimated \$100 million in scholarship assistance goes untapped each year.

Standing between prospective students and the scholarship money is a complex maze of outdated, inefficient and even predatory practices that fail to make a legitimate scholarship match. The problem is exacerbated by a proliferation of web sites that make grand promises but return little, if any, valid information to the searcher.

*Higher education is expensive.
Not achieving an advanced degree, even more so.*

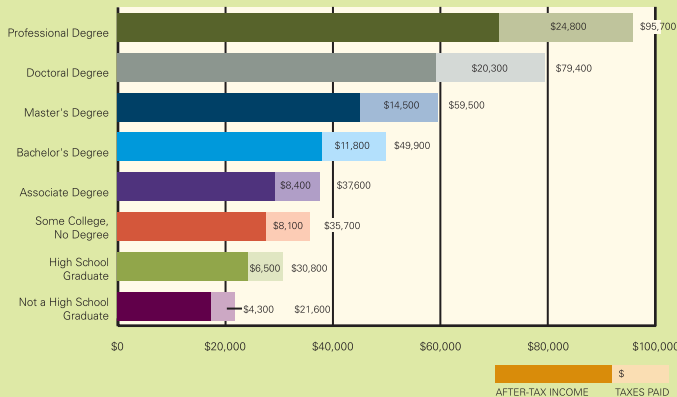
A college degree opens the door to lifelong rewards and opportunities. Higher education often corresponds to decreased dependence on welfare, lower unemployment and poverty levels. On average, unemployment rates are twice higher among those with high school diplomas, who also make about \$20,000 lesser in yearly income than those with bachelor degrees. Earnings – all but only one measure of success – appears strongly linked to educational attainment.

Students simply can't find the scholarships they need.

Meanwhile, donors and policymakers lack the information they need to identify and fill funding gaps.

The reality is that Washington state currently has no way of collecting and storing scholarship data, no easy way for a Washington student to get information on scholarships offered in the state and, for those invested in accelerating college access, no centralized resource.

*Median Earnings and Tax Payments by Level of Education**



*CollegeBoard Education Pays Update, 2005

The Washington Scholarship Coalition is building the solution.

TheWashboard.org is a user-friendly, student-centered web site for efficiently finding, and applying for, scholarship opportunities.

TheWashboard.org will act as a clearinghouse with vetted scholarship information to match those looking for support with those looking to provide it, ultimately helping students, donors and policymakers achieve their goals.

Benefits of TheWashboard.org

- > Matches students with valid scholarship opportunities, increasing the odds they will find the financial support they need for higher education
- > Provides donors with information to understand who is looking for help so they can align their giving to the real needs of today's students
- > Empowers policymakers with real time data to direct funding to Washington students who need the most financial aid
- > Coordinates with other online tools promoting college readiness and planning

Impacts of the Project

Simplifying the scholarship application process and increasing its search-match efficiencies will greatly boost the number of applications and increase access to higher education for all.

- > More students will achieve their educational goals
- > Total education giving will increase in Washington state
- > Community and public leaders will better understand the impact of scholarships in increasing college access
- > Students will be less vulnerable to predatory lending, keeping risk and loan defaults low
- > The 62% of higher education students who do not fit the "traditional" scholarship profile will be better served
- > Approximately 30,000 low-income highschool students will have access to more financial resources

There is strong evidence that increasing the *match* process increases scholarship use: A smaller-scale program in Oregon has quadrupled in the last nine years from 94 scholarships in 1999-00 to more than 400 scholarships in 2008-09. Student applicants have increased from 3,600 to over 8,000.

| Action | Scholarship Name | Required Criteria | Preferred Criteria | Deadline | Amount |
|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Add | Lorem Ipsum Scholarship | 3 of 3 | 1 of 3 | 7/20/2009 | \$1500.00 |
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Development Timeline:

- Completed the feasibility phase
- Committed \$750,00 of project costs – 66% of the total needed
- Launched product design & development
- Secured a permanent home at the Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board
- Launch a pilot version to scholarship providers in late summer 2009
- Launch a pilot version to scholarship seekers in mid-fall 2009

A Call to Action

The Coalition is working hard to build TheWashboard.org, but we still need your help to finalize development and bring it to students' fingertips by Fall 2009. Please contact us to:

- > Learn how your support will impact Washington students
- > Participate in spreading the word to scholarship providers
- > Make sure students in your community learn about TheWashboard.org

contact >
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Washington Scholarship Coalition Partners

College Planning Network . College Spark Washington . The College Success Foundation . Independent Colleges of Washington . Northwest Education Loan Association (NELA) . The Seattle Foundation . Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB)