

# WAVE Scholarship Invests in CTE Students, Skilled Workforce



The Washington Award for Vocational Excellence (WAVE) scholarship rewards the state's top career and technical education (CTE) students with state-funded education and training to advance their career goals – and address our skilled workforce shortage. But this successful program faces a serious funding shortfall since it was relaunched in 2022. The 2023 scholarship recipients received just half the funds of the 2022 awardees. The 2024 awardees will receive even less money – \$3,700 per year, over two years – if no new money is allocated. This diminishes a scholarship that celebrates hands-on, career-connected learning at a time when skilled workers are in short supply.

## WAVE Challenge: More funding needed to keep pace with cost of tuition

The WAVE Scholarship helps top CTE students pay up to two years of college tuition and other expenses to advance their education and careers. However, WAVE falls far short of the cost of tuition today. And as more students apply, the scholarship is in danger of running low on funds within just a few years of restarting. This merit scholarship was created in 1984 to recognize and support Washington's top CTE students, and support a skilled workforce which is critical to Washington's overall economic success.



As many as 147 WAVE winners are selected each year – three from every legislative district. The Workforce Board's request would replenish the scholarship fund and keep pace with the cost of college. This will ensure students receive \$12,000 per year for two years, the tuition cost of our public four-year universities.

## Scholarship portal needs update to improve access, completion

An aging application portal presents major challenges for students, volunteers and agency staff. We request \$280,000 for a cloud-based solution that accommodates multiple essays and other uploads to improve access and completion rates. This solution would also improve processes and increase efficiency at the Workforce Board.



The 2023 WAVE awardees appeared in 10 newspaper and television stories all over Washington. Read more at [www.wtb.wa.gov/wave](http://www.wtb.wa.gov/wave).

## Impact Highlights

- Two years of college tuition or postsecondary education for Washington's top career and technical education students.
- Up to 147 awardees statewide; three from each legislative district.
- More skilled workers in high demand careers such as nursing, aviation, manufacturing, behavioral health and early childhood education.

## Project Costs

The Workforce board seeks:

- \$2.428 million per year to fully fund the WAVE Scholarship Award Fund (this is in addition to existing funding of \$1.138 million per year, for a total of \$3.528 million per year).
- Scholarship funds managed by Washington Student Achievement Council.
- \$280,000 to create a new, user-friendly WAVE Scholarship application portal.



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