Wisconsin Covenant Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Wisconsin Covenant?

The Wisconsin Covenant is a State of Wisconsin program created to inspire young people to plan early for a successful high school career that will lead to higher education. Students signed a pledge in the eighth grade (or by the early deadline in the freshman year of high school) making a commitment to plan and prepare for college and be a good citizen. In return for meeting the goals and keeping the pledge, a Wisconsin Covenant Student will earn recognition as a Wisconsin Covenant Scholar, earn a place in an eligible Wisconsin college or university, and receive a financial aid package, based on family financial need, to help make college affordable.

What does the Wisconsin Covenant Pledge require?

Students who sign the Wisconsin Covenant pledge, commit to the following:

- Successful completion of high school coursework to prepare for higher education.
- Maintain a “B” grade point average in high school.
- Demonstrate good citizenship and participate in the community.
- Graduate from a Wisconsin high school.
- Take the necessary steps to gain admission to an eligible college or university.
- Apply for financial aid in a timely way. (Deadline for submission of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is April 1 of the senior year in high school).

How do I sign the Wisconsin Covenant Pledge?

The Wisconsin Covenant was sunset in 2011. This means that no new students can sign the Wisconsin Covenant Pledge. The last students eligible to sign the pledge were in 8th grade in 2011 (and began high school in fall 2011). It is anticipated that the Wisconsin Covenant will continue for those who are already designated as Wisconsin Covenant Students or Wisconsin Covenant Scholars.

What is the difference between a Wisconsin Covenant Student and a Wisconsin Covenant Scholar?

A Wisconsin Covenant Student is a student who signed the pledge and is working to meet pledge requirements and prepare for postsecondary education. A Wisconsin Covenant Scholar is a student who signed the pledge and has met the requirements of the pledge in order to earn recognition as a Wisconsin Covenant Scholar. A Wisconsin Covenant Scholar receives the benefits of meeting pledge requirements. (Note: Wisconsin Covenant Students must apply for Wisconsin Covenant Scholar status in the senior year of high school.)

What are the benefits of meeting Wisconsin Covenant Pledge requirements?

Wisconsin Covenant Students who signed the pledge and meet pledge requirements will earn recognition as Wisconsin Covenant Scholars. They earn a place at a partner college or university and will be awarded grant funding based on financial need.
There may also be services and activities, created and designed specifically for Wisconsin Covenant Scholars, on some college and university campuses. Be sure to engage in those opportunities once enrolled!

**What should I do to make sure I am on track to meet Wisconsin Covenant Pledge requirements?**

Throughout high school, you should regularly review the pledge to help ensure you stay on track to be confirmed as a Wisconsin Covenant Scholar. Talk with teachers, school counselors, and family about the pledge and your plan to continue your education after high school. It’s important to take the right coursework in high school, maintain a satisfactory grade point average, and contribute to your community through volunteer or service learning opportunities. (See the pledge requirements identified above.) It is also critical that you complete the Senior Confirmation process, by the posted deadline, in order to be confirmed as a Wisconsin Covenant Scholar and reap the benefits.

**How do I earn designation as a Wisconsin Covenant Scholar?**

In order to earn designation as a Wisconsin Covenant Scholar, you will need to meet the requirements of the Wisconsin Covenant Pledge and complete the confirmation process during your senior year of high school.

The confirmation process requires you to complete and submit two verification forms: the Senior Confirmation Form and the Record of Service Form. Both of these forms are sent to all Wisconsin Covenant Students (with a correct mailing address on file) in December of the senior year of high school.

The Record of Service Form also requires the signature(s) of an adult supervisor of your volunteer or service learning activity/activities. (Note: parental signatures are not accepted as valid.) The Senior Confirmation Form also requires the signature from your Wisconsin Covenant school official. Without all required signatures, you cannot be confirmed as a Wisconsin Covenant Scholar so be attentive to making sure both forms are completed correctly and include all required signatures. The confirmation process deadline is a strict deadline and must be completed no later than April 1 of your senior year of high school.

**How do I know if I am taking the right high school coursework to prepare for higher education and meet the requirement of the Wisconsin Covenant Pledge?**

There is not a list of mandatory coursework a Wisconsin Covenant Student must take in high school. A Wisconsin Covenant Student is committed to taking courses that will help prepare for, and lead to, higher education. Talk with your school counselor, teachers, college admissions counselors, and your family to ask for help making sure you are taking all the right coursework for the college or university you hope to attend.

Challenge yourself! Remember, you are not simply preparing for admission to a college or university; you are preparing for success (graduation!) in college. The more challenging courses taken in high school, and the harder you work, will increase the chances of success in college.
Wisconsin Covenant Students are required to maintain a “B” grade point average in high school in order to meet the requirements of the pledge. Does this mean my cumulative grade point average must be a 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) or higher?

Wisconsin Covenant Students are expected to challenge themselves and do their best in high school. Your goal should be to earn a grade point average no lower than a 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale). To earn recognition as a Wisconsin Covenant Scholar you must meet one of the following:

- Earn a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.85 (on a 4.0 scale); or
- Earn a minimum 3.0 grade point average (on a 4.0 scale) for at least 5 semesters and never earn less than a 2.0 grade point average; or
- Earn a minimum 3.25 (on a 4.0 scale) during your senior year and show consistent improvement since the beginning of high school.

What is required to meet the good citizenship and community participation pledge requirement?

One requirement of the Wisconsin Covenant Pledge is that as a Wisconsin Covenant Student you must be a good citizen and make a contribution to your community. We hope you are beginning a lifetime of good citizenship and community/volunteer service!

In order to meet the requirement of the pledge, you must stay out of trouble and not have been convicted of a felony or serious misdemeanor. If you have been suspended from school, you must provide two letters of recommendation from faculty or other community members, which outline substantial personal growth following the suspension. These letters should be included when you complete the confirmation process in your senior year of high school.

In addition to staying out of trouble, you must also engage in activities that support your community. This would include community service, volunteer work, and/or service learning. You must document that you meet one of the following requirements:

- Complete a minimum of 30 hours of volunteer/community service; or
- Complete a service learning experience that meets a high school graduation requirement; or
- Complete a service learning experience that was designed by you, the results of which were shared with your teacher(s).

The Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB) (the State office that administers the Wisconsin Covenant) has identified typical forms of community service that meet the requirement and examples of activities that are not accepted as meeting the pledge requirement.

- Examples of accepted forms of community service include coaching sports for youth, church service that incorporate volunteer activity (such as teaching Sunday school, nursery, mission trips), food pantry, Habitat for Humanity, National Honors Society, Boys and Girls Club, Salvation Army, 4-H, tutoring/mentoring, fundraising, clothes and food drives, working with a homeless shelter or animal shelter.
- Examples of rejected activities, that do not meet the requirement of the pledge, include teacher’s aid, high school club positions, musicals, band, dance (prom committee,
homecoming committee, etc.), school decorating, babysitting, sports, talent shows, or religious activities such as confirmation, ushering, and choir.

If you have questions, please contact the Higher Educational Aids Board for information to make sure the service activity/activities you are involved with will help you meet the pledge requirement.

In your senior year of high school, when you are completing the Wisconsin Covenant confirmation process, you will be required to submit a Record of Service Form (available for printing at wisconsincovenant.wi.gov). This form requires you to document the activities in which you have been engaged, the number of hours you committed to the activity, and the signature of the adult supervisor. (Note: Parent signatures are not accepted.)

We recommend you print the form and have an adult supervisor sign off on the form when you complete your service. This will ensure you need not track down the supervising adult long after you have completed your service. Be sure to keep the form where it will not be lost or misplaced.

**One of the pledge requirements is to graduate from a Wisconsin high school. What if I signed the pledge, but graduate from a high school outside of Wisconsin or I am home schooled?**

The pledge requires you to graduate from a Wisconsin high school. If you graduate from a high school outside of Wisconsin, or you are home schooled, you will not meet this pledge requirement and not be eligible to earn recognition as a Wisconsin Covenant Scholar.

**The Wisconsin Covenant Pledge requires Wisconsin Covenant Students to take the necessary steps to gain admission to a partner college or university. When should I apply for admission?**

It is always a good idea to apply for admission to colleges/universities of interest early in your senior year. Many colleges and universities have application deadlines or priority dates. Some have deadlines for specific programs or academic areas of study. Be sure to review publications and websites for all colleges/universities of interest before your senior year in order to be well informed and ready to apply at an appropriate time.

**Does the Wisconsin Covenant guarantee admission to an eligible college or university?**

The Wisconsin Covenant does not guarantee admission at an eligible college or university. You must meet admission guidelines or requirements and gain admission to the college/university of interest. However, a Wisconsin Covenant Scholar can expect a place in a Wisconsin college or university.

**What colleges and universities are eligible in the Wisconsin Covenant?**

You have many great choices for your Wisconsin postsecondary education! Explore your options to find the right fit for you.

Partner colleges and universities are the 26 two- and four-year colleges and universities in the University of Wisconsin System (on the web at uwhelp.wisconsin.edu), the 23 (private, not-for-profit) colleges and universities in the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and
Universities (on the web at [privatecollegezone.org/home.aspx](http://privatecollegezone.org/home.aspx)), the 16 colleges in the Wisconsin Technical System (on the web at [witechcolleges.org](http://witechcolleges.org)), two Wisconsin Tribal Colleges (on the web at [www.aihec.org/colleges/TCUprofiles.cfm%20](http://www.aihec.org/colleges/TCUprofiles.cfm%20)), and Maranatha Baptist Bible College (on the web at [www.mbbc.edu](http://www.mbbc.edu)).

What is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and why are Wisconsin Covenant Students required to submit it?

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the form all students must submit in order to be considered for financial aid. It is the first step you take in the financial aid process, regardless of where you plan to go to college. The FAFSA calculates your Expected Family Contribution (EFC) which measures your family’s financial strength and is used to determine your eligibility for federal and state loans, grants, and work-study. When you complete the FAFSA, you will designate which colleges/universities should receive the information. Each college/university you have identified will determine a financial aid award based on eligibility for specific aid programs. (Note: You must also have been admitted to a college/university in order for it to determine an aid award.)

As a Wisconsin Covenant Student you are required to submit the FAFSA no later than April 1 of your senior year in high school. If you earn recognition as a Wisconsin Covenant Scholar, the results of the FAFSA will determine the amount of your Wisconsin Covenant Scholars Grant (and, if eligible, the Wisconsin Covenant Foundation Grant).

If you are determined eligible for Wisconsin Covenant grant funding, the college or university you attend will include Wisconsin Covenant grant funding in your aid award.

After you are confirmed as a Wisconsin Covenant Scholar, and enroll at an eligible college/university, you will be required to complete the FAFSA annually to continue to be awarded Wisconsin Covenant grant funding.

Is there anywhere I can access help with the FAFSA and the financial aid process?

The financial aid process can be daunting for some students and families, but there is lots of help! Take advantage of opportunities to learn about financial aid and the financial aid process. Some of the places to access information and help are as follows:

- A good place to start is the U.S. Department of Education financial aid website ([fafsa.ed.gov](http://fafsa.ed.gov)). There is a wealth of information about financial aid and the aid process. You can also access the FAFSA from this site.
- Many high schools host financial aid night programs. Your school counselor will keep you informed of the time and date. Plan to attend with your parents or guardians. In most cases, a local financial aid expert will be invited to talk with students and families.
- Visit the financial aid website of any college or university of interest. Talk with the financial aid officers at the college/university you plan to attend. Financial aid officers are great resources!
- College Goal Wisconsin ([collegegoalwi.org](http://collegegoalwi.org)) is an annual event that provides an opportunity for students and families to get help completing the FAFSA at sites throughout Wisconsin.
College Goal Wisconsin events are typically scheduled in February every year. (If you attend one of these events, and submit the FAFSA, you will be ahead of the April 1 Wisconsin Covenant deadline!)

When can I begin the Wisconsin Covenant confirmation process?

After January 1, and before April 1 of your senior year in high school, you must complete the Wisconsin Covenant confirmation process in order to be confirmed as a Wisconsin Covenant Scholar. There are two forms that must be completed to verify you have met all pledge requirements: the Senior Confirmation Form and the Record of Service Form. The Senior Confirmation Form will require both the student and the school official to complete a section. The Record of Service Form requires the student to identify a minimum of 30 hours of community service (volunteer/service learning) and a supervising adult to sign off on each activity. Both forms will be mailed to Wisconsin Covenant Students in December of the senior year. The forms will also be accessible on the Wisconsin Covenant website at wisconsincovenant.wi.gov. Both forms must be sent (no later than April 1) to the Wisconsin Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB). Be sure to send the forms to HEAB! If they are misdirected and sent to the wrong place, you will not be confirmed as a Wisconsin Covenant Scholar if the forms arrive at HEAB after April 1.

What is the deadline for completing the Wisconsin Covenant confirmation process?

The April 1 deadline is strict; make sure the forms are in the mail before April 1 of your senior year in high school! Forms postmarked after the April 1 deadline will not be considered for Wisconsin Covenant Scholar status.

How much grant funding will I be awarded if I am confirmed as a Wisconsin Covenant Scholar?

There are two Wisconsin Covenant grants. One grant is state-funded and awarded to every confirmed Wisconsin Covenant Scholar, based on financial need as determined by the Expected Family Contribution (EFC). An EFC is calculated based on family financial information included on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The second grant is privately-funded by the Wisconsin Covenant Foundation. This grant is awarded only to confirmed Wisconsin Covenant Scholars with the highest financial need. All grant funding is subject to change annually. For current Wisconsin Covenant grant funding awards, please see the chart below.
### Academic Year

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<th>Expected Family Contribution (EFC)</th>
<th>Wisconsin Covenant Scholars Grant (publicly funded)</th>
<th>Wisconsin Covenant Foundation Grant (privately funded)</th>
<th>Annual Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>Full time Enrollment (12 semester credits or more)</td>
<td>Part time Enrollment (6-11 semester credits)</td>
<td>Full time Enrollment (12 semester credits or more)</td>
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Each Wisconsin Covenant Scholar is eligible for 8 semesters of funding over a five year period as long as the student is enrolled at a Wisconsin (not-for-profit) college/university, submits the FAFSA annually, and maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP).

If you are enrolled on a part-time basis, the amount of funding does not increase the number of semesters for which you will receive grant funding.

**When will the Wisconsin Covenant end?**

The last class eligible for the Wisconsin Covenant signed the pledge in 2011. The opportunity to become a Wisconsin Covenant Student no longer exists.

For current Wisconsin Covenant Students (those who signed the pledge before fall 2011), the program is anticipated to continue through a final grant awarding in the 2020-2021 academic year.

**What if I plan to delay college enrollment?**

Once you are confirmed as a Wisconsin Covenant Scholar, you are eligible for 8 semesters of grant funding over a five year period. As a result, if college enrollment is delayed for one year, and you have been confirmed as a Wisconsin Covenant Scholar you will be awarded grant funding when you begin enrollment at a partner college or university. If this is the plan, there are three important factors to keep in mind: 1) All Wisconsin Covenant Students must be confirmed as Wisconsin Covenant Scholars in the senior year of high school; 2) You must enroll at a partner college or
university within one year of high school graduation; and 3) If delayed enrollment at a college or university exceeds one year (after high school), grant funding is permanently lost. The exception to delayed enrollment may be a military career. If you plan to enter the military, you should still complete the confirmation process and you must communicate with the Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB) (heab.wi.gov).

What if I plan to attend an out-of-state or a college/university not included in the Wisconsin Covenant partnership?

If a Wisconsin Covenant Student plans to attend an out-of-state college or university, or plans to enroll at a college or university that is not eligible in the Wisconsin Covenant, no grant funding will be awarded. Wisconsin Covenant Scholars must enroll at a University of Wisconsin System (UWS), Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS), Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU), Wisconsin Tribal College Institution, or Maranatha Baptist College in order to be awarded Wisconsin Covenant grant funding.

Sometimes students change their minds about where they will go to college. Or, sometimes students enroll elsewhere and then decide to transfer to a UWS, WTCS, WAICU, or Tribal institution after one year. If you are a Wisconsin Covenant Student, it is recommended that you complete the Wisconsin Covenant Scholar confirmation process, regardless of where you plan to enroll. If you change your mind about enrolling in an out-of-state college or university, or you decide to transfer to a Wisconsin Covenant eligible institution within one year after high school graduation, you will be eligible for Wisconsin Covenant grant funding if you were confirmed as a Wisconsin Covenant Scholar during your senior year of high school.

How do I continue to ensure I will receive Wisconsin Covenant grant funding throughout my college career?

Once you are enrolled as a Wisconsin Covenant Scholar, you are eligible for Wisconsin Covenant grant funding for 8 semesters over a five year period. Once you are enrolled, you will continue to be eligible for grant funding if you meet Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) as determined by the financial aid office at the college or university you are attending. If you do not meet SAP, you will lose Wisconsin Covenant grant funding permanently. Check with your campus financial aid office, or check the financial aid office website for a definition of SAP. You must also complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) annually.

What if I am confirmed as a Wisconsin Covenant Scholar, but while enrolled at a college or university, do not meet Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)?

If you are enrolled and you do not meet Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP), as determined by your college or university financial aid office, you will lose Wisconsin Covenant grant funding permanently. You cannot earn Wisconsin Covenant grant funding back.

What if I am a Wisconsin Covenant Student, but plan to enter the military after high school?

If you plan to enter the military after high school, you should still complete the Wisconsin Covenant confirmation process, by the April 1 deadline, in your senior year of high school. In addition, you
should also communicate directly with the Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB) (heab.wi.gov) to discuss your plans and receive advice and directions.

**What if I am a Wisconsin Covenant Student that plans to graduate from high school early?**

If you plan to graduate from high school early, you should communicate your plans to the Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB) (heab.wi.gov). We recommend you communicate with HEAB during the time you are considering early graduation in order to be well informed and factor this into your decision.

**What if I am a Wisconsin Covenant Student, but plan to take a “gap year” between high school and college?**

Wisconsin Covenant Students who earn recognition as Wisconsin Covenant Scholars can be awarded 8 semesters of Wisconsin Covenant grant funding over a five year period. This means that you can take a “gap year” between high school and college and still be awarded 8 semesters of Wisconsin Covenant grant funding as long as you enroll at an eligible college/university within a year after high school graduation. For example, if you graduate in June 2013, you must enroll by the fall semester of 2014 in order to be awarded Wisconsin Covenant grant funding. Be advised that you must have been confirmed as a Wisconsin Covenant Scholar during your senior year of high school.

**What happens if I am a Wisconsin Covenant Scholar and am not in good academic standing?**

If you are a Wisconsin Covenant Scholar, you must meet Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) as determined by the financial aid office at the college or university where you are enrolled. All financial aid offices have a SAP policy that is typically included on the financial aid website. The SAP policy outlines what grade point average you need to maintain, how quickly you need to be making progress toward a degree (for example, the number of credits you must successfully complete annually), how often SAP is evaluated, and other relevant SAP requirements to ensure you are making successful progress to a degree. Failure to meet SAP requirements will result in loss of financial aid. In the case of Wisconsin Covenant grant funding, if you do not meet the SAP requirements at the college or university you are enrolled as, you will permanently lose Wisconsin Covenant grant funding. You cannot earn Wisconsin Covenant grant funding back and cannot be awarded Wisconsin Covenant grant funding at any other college or university.

Remember, you are a Wisconsin Covenant Scholar. Don't lose your Wisconsin Covenant funding! Work hard, do well, and stay out of academic trouble. Seek advice and help before there's a problem.

**What if I am a Wisconsin Covenant Scholar and want to transfer from one college or university to another?**

If you are a confirmed Wisconsin Covenant Scholar and plan to transfer from one Wisconsin eligible college or university to another, you can be awarded Wisconsin Covenant grant funding at the eligible Wisconsin college or university you transfer to. You must have been confirmed as a Wisconsin Covenant Scholar during your senior year of high school, you must have been admitted to the college or university you are planning to transfer to, you must complete the FAFSA annually, and you should identify the college or university you are transferring to on your FAFSA. You must also
be in good academic standing at the college or university you are transferring from. The financial aid office on the campus you are transferring to will include Wisconsin Covenant grant funding in your financial aid award.

**How are University of Wisconsin System campuses engaged with the Wisconsin Covenant?**

Some University of Wisconsin System institutions have Wisconsin Covenant coordinators that provide support and service for both Wisconsin Covenant Students (still enrolled in high school) and Wisconsin Covenant Scholars enrolled on their campus.

**Where can I get more information?**

The State of Wisconsin Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB) is responsible for administering the Wisconsin Covenant. The Wisconsin Covenant website is at [wisconsincovenant.wi.gov](http://wisconsincovenant.wi.gov). The HEAB website is at [heab.wi.gov](http://heab.wi.gov). Other contact information for HEAB is as follows:

Mailing Address: P O Box 7885, Madison, WI 53707-7885
Street Address: 131 W Wilson St., Suite 902, Madison, WI
Telephone: 608.267.2208
Email: HEABmail@wisconsin.gov

**What steps should I take to prepare for the Senior Confirmation Process?**

- Take courses that prepare you for college.
- Maintain at least a “B” average.
- Visit the website(s) and campus (s) that interest you.
- Juniors: take the ACT/SAT in the spring.
- If you have not already done so, develop a plan to complete 30 hours of service by April 1 of your senior year.
- Continue to keep track of your service hours by recording them on the Record of Service form and keep the form in a safe place.
- Seniors: apply to college beginning September 1.
- Seniors: Confirmation forms will be mailed to you in December or download a form from the Wisconsin Covenant website in January.
- Seniors: pay attention to all deadlines and requirements and follow through—make a checklist.
- Seniors: check with your school counselor regarding the school timeline for the confirmation process. Ask for the identification of your school’s Wisconsin Covenant designee.
- Seniors: go online at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov) to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid form (FAFSA) beginning January 1.
- Attend College Goal Wisconsin in February if you need help with the FAFSA. Visit [www.collegegoalwi.org](http://www.collegegoalwi.org) for more information and dates.
- Seniors: Three signatures are required on your confirmations form: yours, your parents, and your high school Wisconsin Covenant designee.

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Created by the University of Wisconsin System Wisconsin Covenant Coordinator.
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