



2026-2027

COUNSELOR PLAYBOOK

FIND YOUR THING

SPONSORED BY **IDAHO
LAUNCH**



Dear College and Career Counselor,

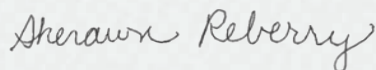
As we begin a new school year, I want to take a moment to recognize you for the heart, commitment, and steady guidance you bring to Idaho's students every single day. Your work creates pathways to opportunity — often opening doors students didn't yet know existed — and the impact reaches far beyond the walls of your school.

With deep appreciation, we are excited to share this year's updated Idaho Counselor Playbook. This resource was created with your daily work in mind, offering clear, accessible, and ready-to-use materials that support students and families as they explore their next steps. From practical training tools to current statewide initiatives, everything included is designed to streamline your efforts and strengthen the conversations you're already having.

This year's updates reflect Idaho's evolving education, training, and workforce landscape. Our goal is to equip you with information that helps students make informed decisions — and inspires them to see the many possibilities ahead, whether in college, career training, or directly entering the workforce.

Thank you for being a constant champion for Idaho's future. Your guidance helps build a stronger talent pipeline for our state and ensures students are prepared to thrive in the communities they call home.

With sincere gratitude,



Sherawn Reberry

Idaho Workforce Development Council
Education & Careers Bureau Chief



WORKING OUT WHAT'S NEXT

Most of us have, at some point in our lives, asked: Who am I, where am I going, and how do I get there? While the journey can feel daunting, there is a wealth of resources to help — it's just a matter of connecting to them. To make that part easier, we created this guide for you; the counselors, educators, and mentors who help Idaho students plan and take their next steps after high school. The big takeaway? There are more options and financial support than many students realize.

THE ROADMAP

GO ON: COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS 06

Explore four of the postsecondary pathways students can take after high school.

WAYS TO PAY: FINANCIAL AID & SCHOLARSHIPS16

Get a breakdown of financial support options to figure out which may be the best fit for each student.

HOW TO GET THERE: TOOLS & RESOURCES 36

Discover tools and resources that make postsecondary planning easier.

PLAN AHEAD: COLLEGE & CAREER ADVISING CALENDAR 50

Reference key dates, content, and events for each quarter.

APPENDIX..... 58

Find more resources to have on hand, from graduation requirements to important contacts.

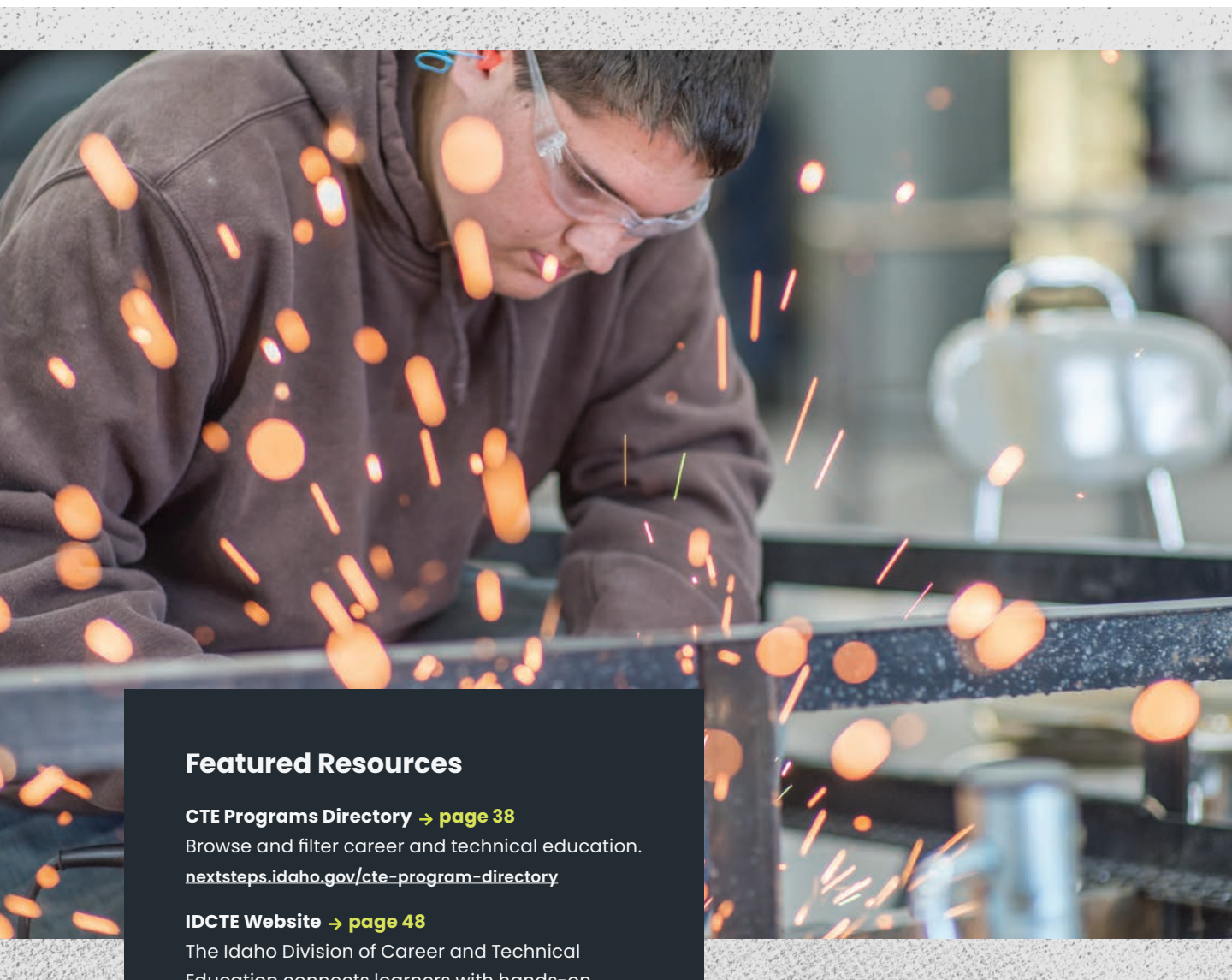


GO ON: COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

MAPPING THE FUTURE

As you help students figure out what's next, this guide details the possibilities. Whether their next step is the workforce, technical training, community college, or a four-year university, we hope you'll use this information to help students understand that the only 'right' path after high school is what's best for them.

*makin' moves
my way*



Featured Resources

CTE Programs Directory → page 38

Browse and filter career and technical education.
nextsteps.idaho.gov/cte-program-directory

IDCTE Website → page 48

The Idaho Division of Career and Technical Education connects learners with hands-on education, training programs, and more.
cte.idaho.gov

Idaho SkillStack® → page 43

Learn and earn badges to get a leg up for training & careers.

Career Technical & Workforce Training

Career Technical Education (CTE) can include trade schools, apprenticeships, and workforce training that prepares students for specialized jobs like welding, electrical work, or technical trades. They are usually much shorter than college or university pathways, so students can go right into the workforce. Some can even be completed within a few months. The Workforce Readiness CTE Diploma allows students to get technical training while they're still in high school (see page 64).

What it can look like: Electrician apprenticeships, lineman college, dental assistant, commercial photography.



WHO IT'S FOR:

Students who enjoy hands-on learning and want to jump into a career quickly after high school with specialized skills and focused training.



WAYS TO PAY:

Students can get up to \$8,000 for postsecondary training with Idaho LAUNCH. Advanced Opportunities can help with training while students are still in high school. In apprenticeships, students usually earn money and benefits while completing their training. Employer-sponsored funding may also be available.



Public and private school students can use the Advanced Opportunities program for funding toward educational and career pathways during high school. See more on page 28.



Featured Resources

College & University Directory → **page 38**

Explore college and university options across the U.S.
nextsteps.idaho.gov/college-and-universities-directory

Apply Idaho → **page 41**

Apply to up to 10 schools with one free application.
nextsteps.idaho.gov/apply-idaho

Postsecondary Education

College & University

From certificates to four-year programs and doctorate degrees, students can pursue their passions at colleges and universities across Idaho and the country. This path offers students the chance to keep learning in an educational setting, pursue advanced degrees, conduct research, and choose areas of specialization.

What it can look like: Bachelor of Arts in film and television at Boise State University; Master of Science in geology at the University of Idaho.



WHO IT'S FOR:

Students who want to keep learning in a traditional educational setting — with opportunities to pursue an advanced degree, conduct research alongside professors (sometimes in the field), and even travel abroad.



WAYS TO PAY:

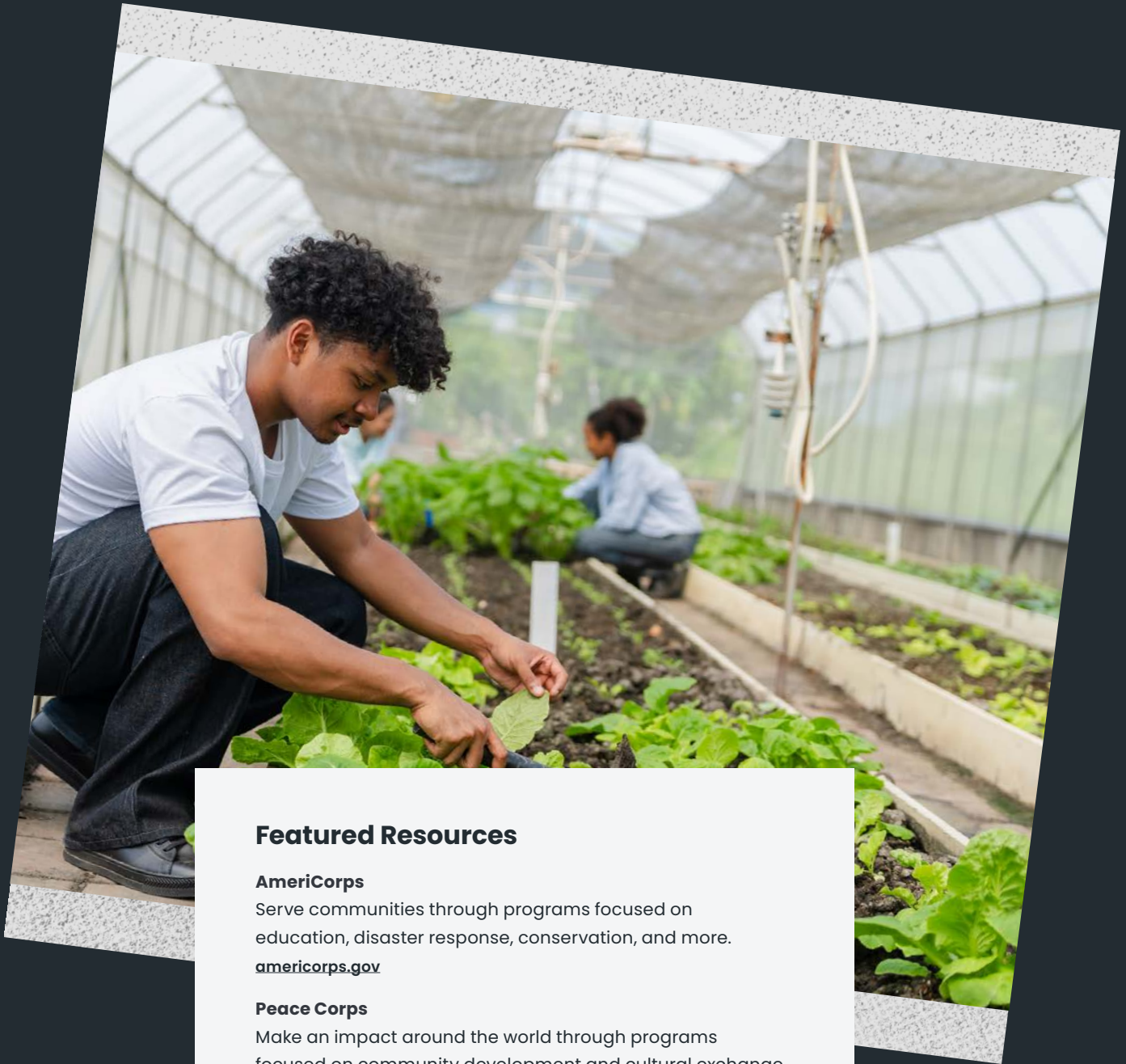
Students can use scholarships, grants, and loans to help pay for college. Many qualify for more than they think. Idaho has funding available for students planning to attend an in-state school. Review Idaho grants and scholarships like Idaho LAUNCH.

What's the difference?

Colleges are usually smaller than universities and offer two- and four-year programs. Universities often offer more research opportunities and continued learning, such as master's and doctorate programs. Both can be public or private. This guide simplifies language to use "college" for both.



Public and private school students can use the Advanced Opportunities program for funding toward educational and career pathways during high school. See more on page 28.



Featured Resources

AmeriCorps

Serve communities through programs focused on education, disaster response, conservation, and more.
americorps.gov

Peace Corps

Make an impact around the world through programs focused on community development and cultural exchange.
peacecorps.gov

Service-Based Learning

After graduation, students can serve communities all over the country and the world while gaining work experience. The length of service can vary depending on the program. AmeriCorps can last a month to a year, while Peace Corps is a two-year commitment. Roles are unpaid, but members receive a living stipend and sometimes an award to use for future education.

What it can look like: *Creating a community garden as an AmeriCorps member; teaching in Thailand as a Peace Corps volunteer.*



WHO IT'S FOR:

Students who want an immersive, hands-on work experience in a community while potentially seeing different parts of the country or world.

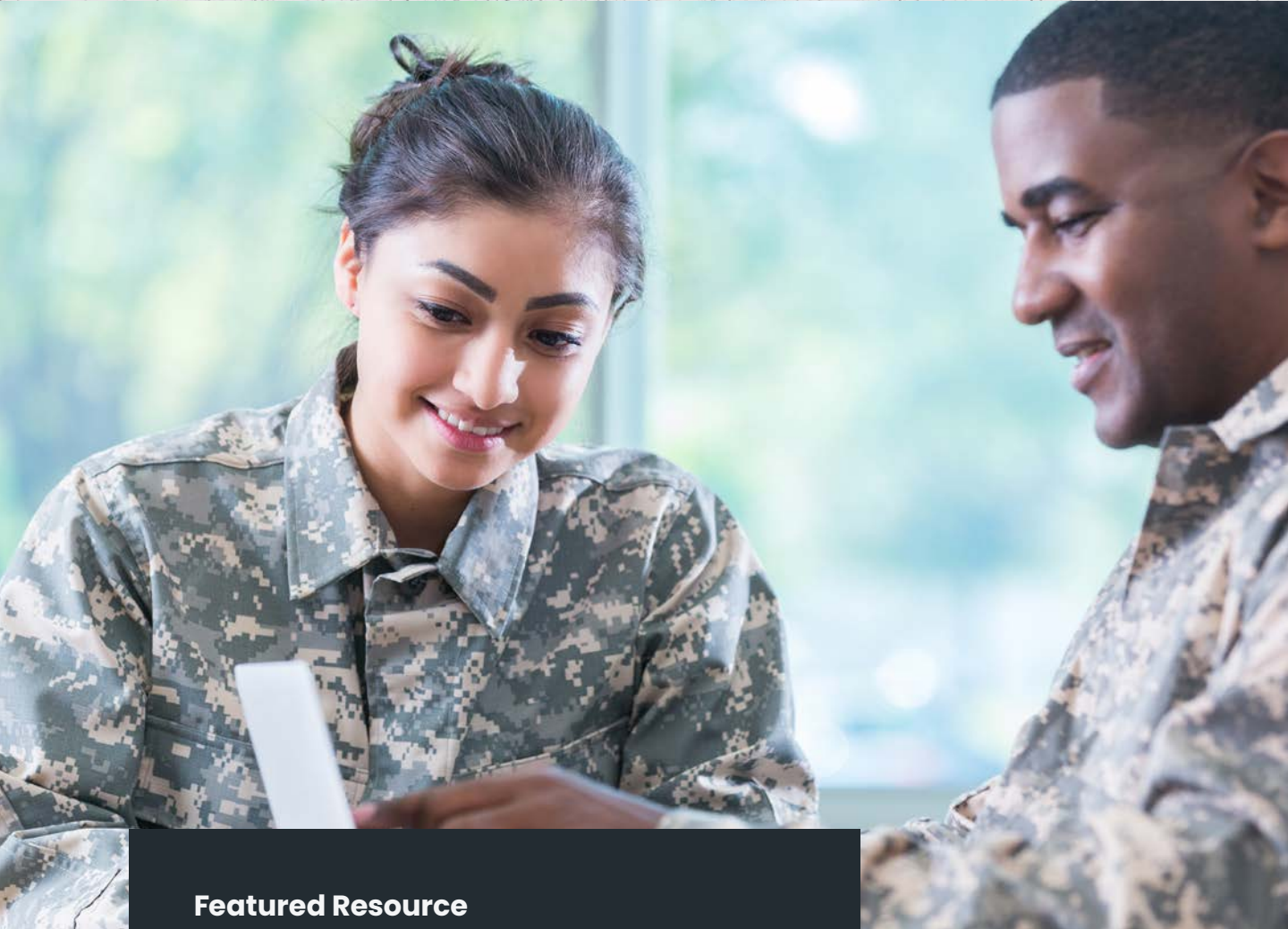


WAYS TO PAY:

Service-based work experiences like AmeriCorps and the Peace Corps are free. You'll earn a living stipend and other benefits during your term of service.



Students entering AmeriCorps or Peace Corps may qualify for an extension on grant funding like Idaho LAUNCH. See page 23 for how to apply for an Idaho LAUNCH extension.



Featured Resource

Military Careers Pathways

Explore branch pathways, job opportunities and requirements, and education benefits.

careersinthemilitary.com

Military Service

Students can get training that provides physical and mental challenges, hands-on learning, and areas of specialization, with the potential to make a lifelong career, gain job skills, travel, and earn money for education. With five military branches, plus two additional service paths, each offers a different role in serving our country. To join, all branches require the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) and a high school diploma or GED. There's also a physical exam and fitness test.

What it can look like: *Earning your college degree as part of the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC); cyber operations specialist with the National Guard; construction supervisor with the Air Force.*



WHO IT'S FOR:

Students who want to challenge themselves physically and mentally, see other parts of the world, and gain real-world experience and job skills while serving their country.



WAYS TO PAY:

There is no cost to enlist in the US military. Students will earn a paycheck or stipend during their service. Students can receive help paying for college through Military Service or ROTC, learn more on page 35.

Career Support for Kids of Military Parents & Veterans

The Idaho Veterans Chamber of Commerce offers free benefits and resources to support the children of those who've served in the armed forces. From college to trade school to an apprenticeship program, this program is designed to help students take their education and career to the next level.

idahoveterans.org | (208) 917-9977 | admin@idahoveterans.org



Students entering the military may qualify for an extension on grant funding like Idaho LAUNCH. See page 23 for how to apply for an Idaho LAUNCH extension.



WAYS TO PAY: FINANCIAL AID & SCHOLARSHIPS

MONEY MOVES

When it comes to money, everyone has a different idea. Many families don't apply for financial aid because they don't think they'll qualify. Thankfully, you're helping students and families understand that financial assistance is in reach. This section covers financial aid and programs to help Idaho students pay for postsecondary education and training.

GRANTS & SCHOLARSHIPS

Free money for students to pursue their dreams! Scholarships and grants do not have to be repaid as long as awardees continue meeting the requirements. Students can earn scholarships based on merit, talent, need, community service, leadership, or other factors.

Idaho LAUNCH	18
Idaho Opportunity Scholarship	24
Advanced Opportunities	28
Other Idaho State Scholarships	30
Workforce Pell — Coming 2027!	

LOANS & WORK STUDY

Each college issues a financial aid package, which may include loans, scholarships, grants, and work study. Loans must be repaid, usually with interest, while work study allows students to earn money by working part-time at their college. Private loans are also available, but tend to have higher interest rates.

MORE FINANCIAL OPTIONS

From accessing federal aid to savings plans and other opportunities, there are more ways to make postsecondary education more affordable.

FAFSA	32
IDeal - Idaho Education Savings Program	34
Military Service	35

It pays to start early.

IDAHO LAUNCH

→ PRIORITY DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 30

→ DEADLINE: APRIL 15

Idaho LAUNCH gives students money for what's next after high school. Trade or technical. Two-year or four-year. It's their call. The program prepares students for Idaho's future workforce needs by paying for 80% of in-state education and training programs up to \$8,000.

How much money is awarded?

Students can receive up to one half (\$4,000) of the initial grant award in the first year of a program. However, for programs that are less than 12 months in length, students can use the full awarded amount (80% of tuition and fees up to \$8,000) in one year. Students must use funds within three years unless granted an extension (See FAQ on page 23 for details).

Approximately **\$75 million** is available annually, enough for almost **10,000 awards**.

Before accepting a final award, students should review program and eligibility details to avoid being required to repay the funds. These are rare, but important to understand. See details on page 20.

Key Dates



APPLYING

- APPLICATION OPENS: OCT 1
- PRIORITY DEADLINE: NOV 30
- FINAL DEADLINE: APR 15



ACCEPTING AWARD

- ACCEPT CONTINGENT AWARD OFFER: DEC-APR (WITHIN 2 WEEKS OF NOTIFICATION)
- ACCEPT FINAL OFFER & SUBMIT DOCUMENTATION: MAY 31
- UPLOAD DIPLOMA OR TRANSCRIPT: BY JUN 30
- ENROLL BY: FALL 2027



Students can be awarded the Idaho LAUNCH grant or Idaho Opportunity Scholarship, but not both. Get help deciding which is right on page 27.



Learn More

nextsteps.idaho.gov/launch



Instructions for Students: How to Apply

01. Make sure you're eligible

- ✓ Be a graduate from the current high school graduating class of an Idaho public school, charter school, private school, home school, or GED program (and under the age of 21 by April 15 of the current year).
- ✓ Be an Idaho resident.
- ✓ Be enrolled in or have applied to an eligible Idaho institution.
- ✓ Begin enrollment by fall semester after graduation.
- ✓ Complete a Career Pathway Plan by May 31 through the Next Steps Idaho dashboard. Talk to your counselor if your school has a different method of selection.

02. Explore career options

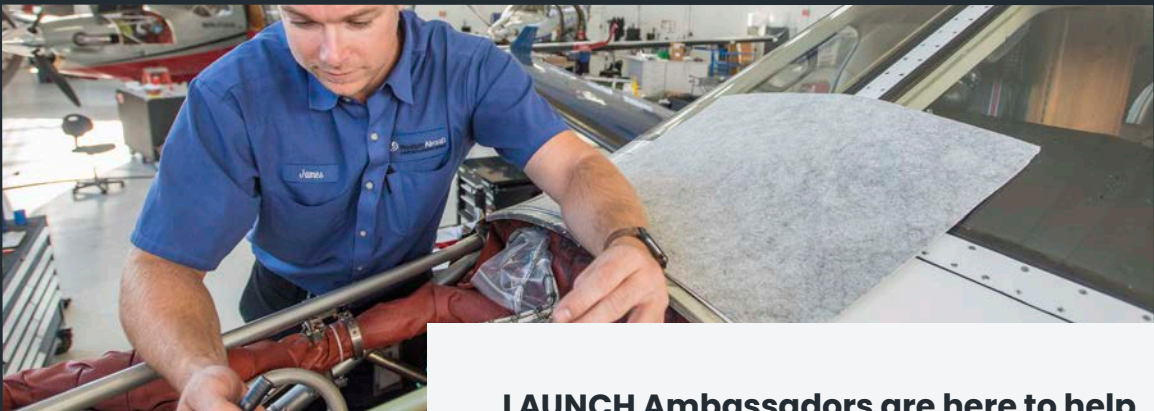
Look over in-demand careers in Idaho or take a quiz to see what job works for you. Visit nextsteps.idaho.gov/browse-careers

03. Find a program and provider

Find an approved Idaho LAUNCH program and training provider that fit where you want to go. Check the updated provider and program list at nextsteps.idaho.gov/launch

04. Apply on Scholarship Idaho

Set up an account and apply at scholarships.idaho.gov. Use your personal email address, not your school email, to make sure you get updates from LAUNCH.



LAUNCH Ambassadors are here to help.

Find your region's contact on page 71.



Instructions for Students: Accepting Your Award

Accepting your offer → CONTINGENT AWARD

You'll receive this if you apply and are on track to meet the eligibility requirements. It's "contingent" because you still have to graduate and verify you've met the requirements before the official award is given.

01. Wait for updates

Watch your inbox for updates, clarifications about your application, and notice of your award status from Scholarship Idaho. Add this email to your safe list (scholarshiphelp@edu.idaho.gov) to make sure you don't miss award emails.

02. Accept offer

Accept the contingent award within two weeks of receiving your notification. If you don't respond, your award may be offered to another candidate.

Accepting your offer → FINAL AWARD

Congratulations! If you still meet the requirements, you'll receive the physical award letter in May, along with an email to your personal email address. It includes important instructions to verify your information and upload the required documentation in the Idaho Grant Management System.

03. Stay on track and watch for your final award letter in May

After April 15, check your email often for your final offer letter and instructions on where and how to accept. Add launchadmin@wdc.idaho.gov to your safe list so you don't miss your final award offer.

04. Accept offer & submit documentation by May 31

Go to the Idaho Grant Management System to upload your final documents (identity, residency, and career pathway plan), and accept your final offer.

05. Upload graduation documents by June 30

Upload your diploma or transcript to the Idaho Grant Management System to show you graduated.

06. Receive your funds

Funding will go directly to the program in which you're enrolled.



Use the Idaho Grant Management System to track your award. This is where you will update information and review your remaining award amount.

Avoid Idaho LAUNCH Grant Repayment

Before accepting a final award, students should review and confirm the institution and program listed on their application. These details will be verified each time an invoice is paid on behalf of the participant.

Changing institutions, providers, or programs may cause participants to lose or have to repay their Idaho LAUNCH Grant. They may also have to repay the grant money if they don't meet certain academic expectations once they arrive. These instances are explained below:

Unsatisfactory Academic Progress: A school or provider reports the participant is not meeting academic requirements or is making unsatisfactory progress.

Expulsion: Defined by individual schools or industry standards. Generally, refers to a case where a participant is asked to leave the institution or program.

Voluntary Drop or No-Show: If a participant fails to start or decides to leave a program before completing their program.

Job Out: Participants who leave training to pursue a job opportunity that is not related to their chosen program or in-demand career. Please note, if participants provide evidence that they left for a job related to their program, they won't be required to repay funds.

Exceptions may exist based on special circumstances, exclusions, and an appeal process. Repayment terms and conditions vary, depending on the situation.



Frequently Asked Questions

Is this just for high school students?

Idaho LAUNCH began as a program for adult learners, and with its success, the state of Idaho created LAUNCH for high school seniors. Learn more about the adult program at launch.idaho.gov

Do students need to go to college to get Idaho LAUNCH?

Nope! There are 1,000+ non-traditional programs available for Idaho LAUNCH.

Is there a GPA requirement?

Nope! But students do need to graduate high school to be eligible (or equivalent home school or GED).

Are students required to fill out a FAFSA?

Nope! The FAFSA is not required for this grant. However, students may choose to complete the FAFSA and apply for other financial aid to pay remaining program costs.

Can students get an extension to use their Idaho LAUNCH grant?

Yes! The following reasons may qualify for an extension: religious service, military service, structured volunteer service with AmeriCorps or Peace Corps, health or medical issues, incarceration, or a program not available in the fall semester. Review details on nextsteps.idaho.gov/LAUNCH — click “Request an Extension.” For all other students, training programs must begin the fall following high school graduation.

What programs can students pay for with LAUNCH?

Idaho community college courses, commercial driver’s license training, apprenticeships, other workforce training programs, and colleges and universities. It just has to be an Idaho approved program on the list. Go to nextsteps.idaho.gov/LAUNCH for the full list of eligible programs.

Example Program Costs

PROGRAM	TOTAL COST	AMOUNT PAID FOR BY LAUNCH	REMAINING AMOUNT TO BE PAID
Workforce Training Program	\$1,800	\$1,440	\$360
Commercial Driver’s License	\$6,000	\$4,800	\$1,200
Community College Course	\$400	\$320	\$80
Community College Degree	\$7,000	\$5,600	\$1,400
Apprenticeship Program (2-year)	\$5,000	\$4,000	\$1,000
Apprenticeship Program (4-year)	\$10,000	\$8,000	\$2,000
Private Trade School Program	\$18,000	\$8,000	\$10,000

Actual costs will depend on the program and institution. These figures are for demonstration only. Idaho LAUNCH covers 80%, or up to \$8,000 of tuition and fees. Students may use other scholarships and grants to cover remaining costs.

Idaho Opportunity Scholarship



→ **DEADLINE: MARCH 1**

Idaho Opportunity Scholarship provides up to \$3,500 per academic year for Idaho students attending an eligible Idaho college. Awards are based on a combination of need (based on the FAFSA) and merit (GPA). Many students receive this scholarship who do not qualify for any other need-based aid, so they should apply even if they are not eligible for the Pell Grant.

How Much Is Awarded

Each student can get up to \$3,500 per academic year, renewable for up to four years, up to \$14,000 total. The number of scholarships offered is based on how much funding is available each year. Award amounts vary because this is a “last dollars” award to assist in filling in the gap in cost of attendance after other scholarships and grants.

Eligible Idaho Colleges

- ✓ College of Eastern Idaho
- ✓ College of Southern Idaho
- ✓ College of Western Idaho
- ✓ Boise State University
- ✓ Brigham Young University – Idaho
- ✓ Idaho State University
- ✓ Lewis-Clark State College
- ✓ Northwest Nazarene University
- ✓ North Idaho College
- ✓ The College of Idaho
- ✓ University of Idaho
- ✓ Western Governors University

Key Dates



APPLYING

- APPLICATION OPENS: OCT 1
- APPLICATION & COMPLETED FAFSA DUE: MAR 1



ACCEPTING AWARD

- FORMAL OFFERS MADE: APR
- ACCEPTANCE DEADLINE: BASED ON OFFER



Learn More

nextsteps.idaho.gov/scholarship-idaho



Students can be awarded the Idaho LAUNCH grant or Idaho Opportunity Scholarship, but not both. Get help deciding which is right on page 27.



Instructions for Students: How to Apply

01. Make sure you're eligible

- ✓ Have or will graduate from an Idaho high school, home school, or equivalent (GED/HSE from Idaho).
- ✓ Be an Idaho resident.
- ✓ Have an unweighted, cumulative GPA of at least 2.7.
- ✓ Begin enrollment by fall semester after graduation.
- ✓ Must pursue a certificate, first associate's degree, or first bachelor's degree.
- ✓ Maintain satisfactory academic standing as specified in program rules.

02. Complete the FAFSA

Complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by March 1. See page 32.

03. Apply on Scholarship Idaho

Set up an account and apply at scholarships.idaho.gov. Use your personal email address, not your school email, to make sure you get updates from Scholarship Idaho.



Instructions for Students: Accepting Your Award

01. Wait for updates

Watch your inbox for updates, clarifications about your application, and notice of your award status from Scholarship Idaho. Add this email to your safe list (scholarshiphelp@edu.idaho.gov) to make sure you don't miss award emails.

02. Accept offer

Accept the award within the timeframe mentioned in your offer. If you don't respond, your award may be offered to another candidate.

03. Stay on track

Graduate and maintain eligibility requirements (like a 2.7+ GPA).

04. Receive your funds

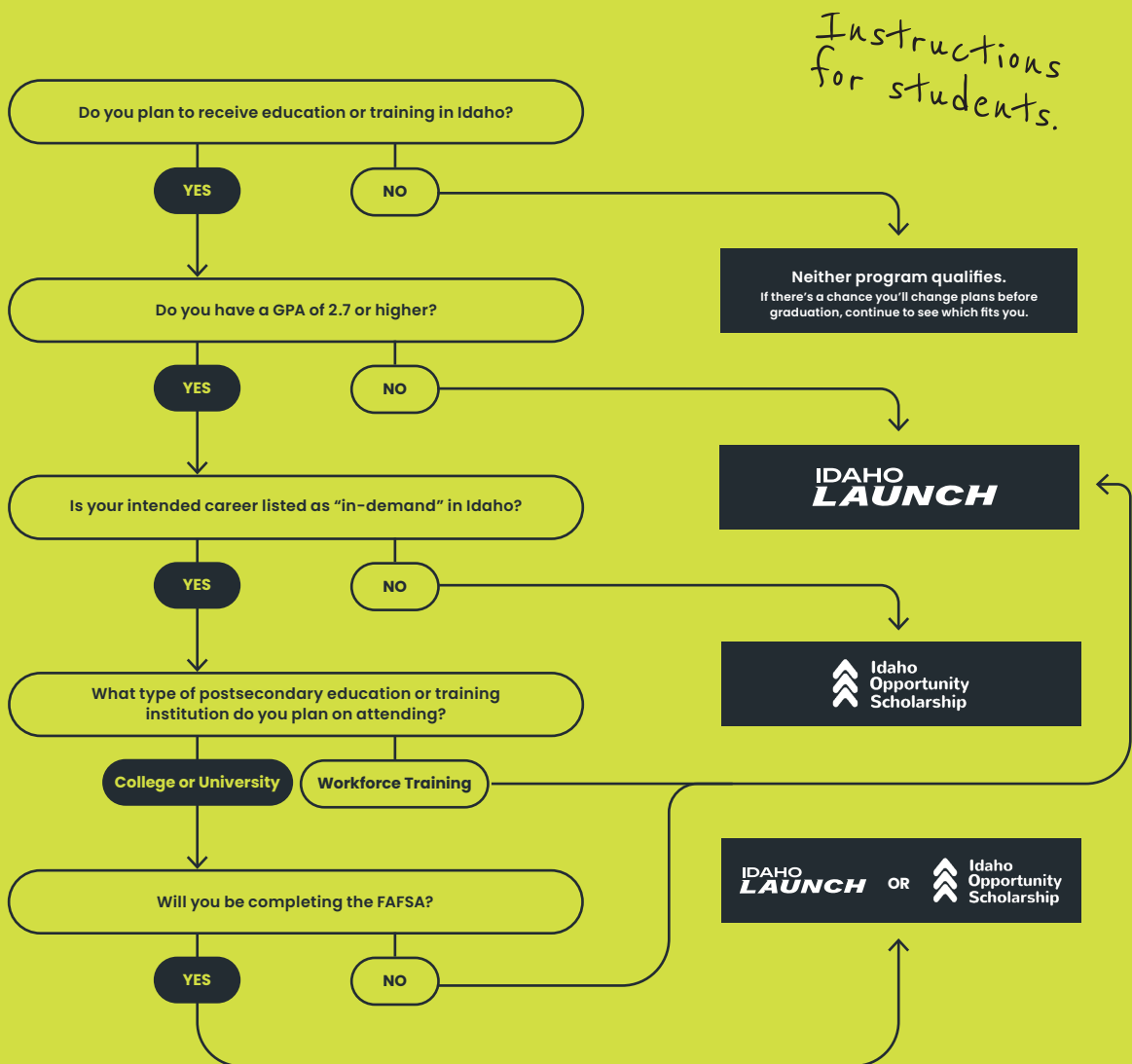
Funding will be awarded by the program or training institution (usually in the summer, but sometimes not until September) in which you're enrolled.



Idaho LAUNCH vs. Idaho Opportunity Scholarship

Which one is right for me?

You can get either the Idaho LAUNCH grant or the Idaho Opportunity Scholarship, but not both. Take this quiz to find out which might be best for you.



Advanced Opportunities



Advanced Opportunities gives middle and high school students a jump start on their future with funds to help pay for overload courses, dual credits, exams, workforce training, or early graduation. Students must be in grades 7–12, attending an Idaho public or private school. Each student can receive up to **\$4,625** over the course of their education. Last year, we awarded over **\$28 million** to help nearly **45,000** students across dual credit (**\$23.8 million**), exams (**\$1.8 million**), overload courses (**\$2.3 million**), and workforce training (**\$162,000**).

What It Pays For

Overload Courses

Courses taken outside of a student's full course load and outside the regular school day. Students can use funds up to \$225 per eligible course.

Dual Credit Courses

College courses taken for both high school and college credit! Students can request funding for up to \$75 per credit. Dual credit resources for families can be found at prtoolkit.org/dual-credit

Workforce Training Courses

Students can use funds for approved courses that directly relate to Idaho's workforce needs.

Exams

Students can use funds to pay for the full cost of many exams, including proctoring fees. This can include: college entrance exams, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), College Level Examination Program (CLEP), and professional certifications.

Early Graduation Scholarship

This scholarship can be awarded for a student's early graduation, which must be at least one year early. Scholarship is estimated at \$2,400.

Key Dates

TERM	FUNDING REQUEST WINDOW*	VERIFICATION DEADLINE	SUBMISSION DEADLINE
Fall 2026 Trimester 1	April 1 – October 9, 2026	November 13, 2026	November 20, 2026
Spring 2027 Trimester 2	November 16 – March 5, 2027	May 7, 2027	Courses: May 21, 2027 Exams: May 28, 2027
Spring 2027 Trimester 3	February 15 – April 2, 2027	May 7, 2027	Courses: May 21, 2027 Exams: May 28, 2027

*Student Access window may vary by district, please contact your school or district office for local dates. All funding requests are to be made by the funding request window deadline.



Learn More

nextsteps.idaho.gov/resources/ao

How to Apply & Use Advanced Opportunities

Create An Account

Staff are assigned an administrator account through the local district IT or by contacting SDE staff. Students should create an Advanced Opportunities account at advancedops.sde.idaho.gov. Creating an account will allow them to request funds and track their account balance. Once an account is created it must be approved by school staff. In some cases, school districts handle the request funding process. This is a local education agency decision.

Participation Form

Students and parents must fill out an Advanced Opportunities participation form that outlines program risks and regulations prior to using funds. This form needs to be turned in at the school and will be kept on file with other student records. The participation form can be found online in the student's account at advancedops.sde.idaho.gov or at the student's school.

Homeschool & Private School Students

According to Idaho code 33-4603, students attending an accredited Idaho private school may be eligible for up to \$2,500 for dual credit courses and exams. Homeschool students must be dually enrolled in an Idaho public or an accredited Idaho private school to be eligible for Advanced Opportunities funding.

Student Responsibilities

The Advanced Opportunities program is an opportunity for students to participate in challenging and rigorous coursework. As students navigate the program, it is their responsibility to meet with their advisor or counselor to create a plan, work hard to successfully complete all courses, and pay attention to important deadlines and registration processes. Students who fail to earn credit for a course paid for by Advanced Opportunities, must then pay for and successfully earn credit or complete one (1) like course before future reimbursement can be made by the Idaho State Department of Education.

Advising

Students who use Advanced Opportunities funds to earn more than 15 dual credits must receive advising on how the credits will translate into their post-high school aspirations and fit into their program of study.

Course & Credit Transferability

How a course is transferred or accepted is determined by the receiving school/college. Student coursework should be taken in mind with the institution from which the student plans to earn a degree. If students are receiving college credit from more than one college, it is important to plan ahead and consider how courses will transfer, and which courses will count toward the degree program. Each college has a transfer guide with information on how credits will be accepted. Visit coursetransfer.idaho.gov for transferability.

Armed Forces & Public Service Officer Dependent Scholarship

→ FALL DEADLINE: JUL 1

→ SPRING DEADLINE: DEC 1

→ SUMMER DEADLINE: APR 15

The Armed Forces and Public Safety Officer Dependent Scholarship is awarded to dependents of fallen or permanently disabled (to the point of unemployable) members of the armed forces or public safety officers. The scholarship provides a waiver of tuition and fees, up to \$750 per semester for books, and on-campus housing and subsistence to qualifying Idaho undergraduate students.

For details, contact the state Scholarships Program Manager, Joy Miller, at jmiller@edu.idaho.gov

GEAR UP Idaho Scholarship

→ DEADLINE: ONGOING

The GEAR UP Idaho Scholarship is awarded to Idaho residents who graduated from an eligible Idaho high school and participated in a GEAR UP Idaho program. See page 44.

There are even more scholarships available.

Don't stop here! There are 100+ scholarships available just for Idaho students and 12,000+ nationwide.

nextsteps.idaho.gov/scholarships-directory

Idaho Governor's Cup Scholarships

→ ACADEMIC DEADLINE: MARCH 1

→ CTE DEADLINE: APRIL 15

These scholarships are open to students who will graduate from an Idaho high school or home school, enrolled at an eligible Idaho college or university. Applicants must meet GPA and other eligibility requirements. High consideration is given to students who show a commitment to public service. There are two eligible categories for awards. The Governor's Cup committee is responsible for reviewing applications and making award decisions. To connect with their staff, please visit idahogovernorscup.org

ACADEMIC

- ✓ Awards up to \$5,000 per academic year.
- ✓ Applicants must have at least a 3.5 GPA.
- ✓ Renewable for up to 4 years.

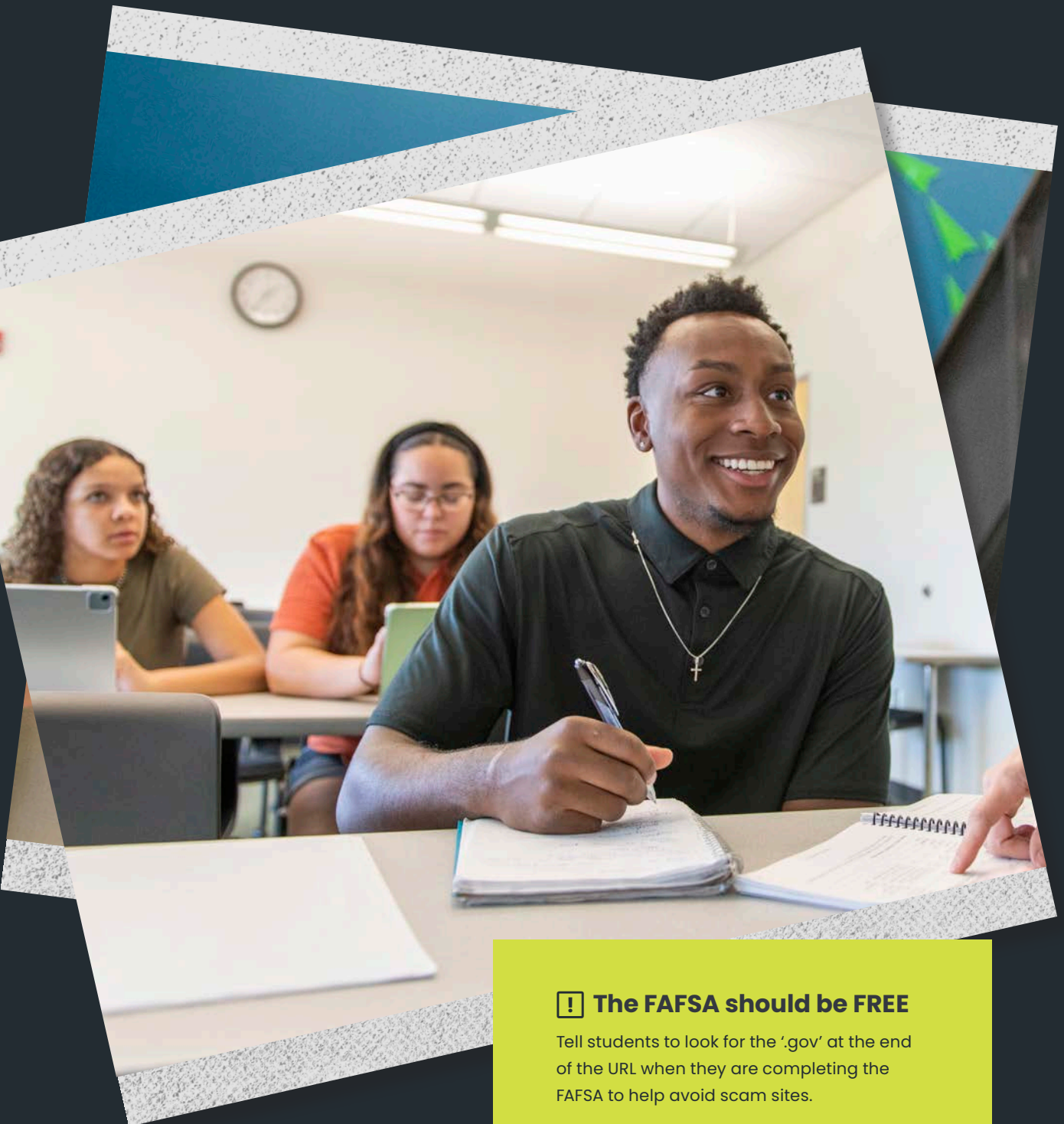
CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE)

- ✓ Awards up to \$3,000 per academic year.
- ✓ Applicants must have at least a 3.0 GPA.
- ✓ Renewable for up to 3 years.



Learn more and apply
nextsteps.idaho.gov/scholarship-idaho





! The FAFSA should be FREE

Tell students to look for the 'gov' at the end of the URL when they are completing the FAFSA to help avoid scam sites.

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)

→ IDAHO DEADLINE: MARCH 1

→ NATIONAL DEADLINE: JUNE 30

College and career training programs use the FAFSA to determine how much financial aid students are eligible to receive, including grants, scholarships, work-study funds, and loans. Students must complete the FAFSA every year, but with the right information in hand, it's easy.

It pays to be early. The earlier a student applies for the FAFSA once the application opens, the more grants and scholarships they may be eligible for, as some have finite amounts. While the national FAFSA deadline is later, Idaho students should adhere to the March deadline to be eligible for Idaho funding opportunities. Students should check with the school they're planning to attend as they may have earlier deadlines.

Who Should Apply

Any student who is thinking about postsecondary education in the coming year. The FAFSA is the only way to qualify for federal grants, student loans, work study, and some scholarships.

How to Apply

- 01.** Create a FSA ID by going to studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/launch
- 02.** Gather your information:
 - Verified account username and password from Step 01
 - Parent or spouse contributor's email address
 - Parent or spouse contributor's name, date of birth, and Social Security Number
 - Income and asset information
- 03.** Complete the FAFSA form at studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa



Families can predict what they'll be eligible for using the financial aid estimator:
studentaid.gov/aid-estimator

IDeal – Idaho Education Savings Program

IDeal is a tax-advantaged 529 account designed specifically to help students and families save and invest for their loved ones' postsecondary education. The Idaho 529 plan is flexible. It can be used to fund most education including:

- ✓ Two or four-year universities nationwide
- ✓ Registered apprenticeships
- ✓ Student loan repayment (up to \$20,000 per beneficiary per lifetime)
- ✓ K-12 tuition and professional certifications
(tuition only at any K-12 public, private or religious school. Limited to \$20,000 per student annually)
- ✓ Skills and career training programs

Tax Advantages

There is a state income tax deduction of up to \$6,000 for single filers per year — or \$12,000 for couples filing jointly. One of the most generous in the country. Any Idaho taxpayer can receive the tax deduction for contributions. They don't have to be the account holder. Plus, tax-deferred earnings and tax-free withdrawals for qualified expenses.

How to Set Up An Account

- 01.** Go to idsaves.org
- 02.** Choose initial contribution amount (as low as \$25) and payment method
- 03.** Choose an investment option

Learn more at idsaves.org



Research shows that children with education savings accounts are about 7x more likely to pursue and complete postsecondary education.

Military Service

By enlisting in any branch of the military, students may be eligible for benefits like the GI Bill that can help pay for postsecondary education. The GI Bill can cover tuition, housing, fees, and books.

Learn more at va.gov/education/about-gi-bill-benefits

ROTC

The Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) is a military scholarship that gives students the chance to take part in military training and education while going to college, then serve as a commissioned officer after graduation. In exchange, the military pays for your education.

Army ROTC: goarmy.com/rotc

Navy ROTC: netc.navy.mil/nrotc

Air Force ROTC: afrotc.com

U.S. Coast Guard

The Coast Guard doesn't have a traditional ROTC program. Students interested in becoming a Coast Guard officer have two options: apply to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, or wait until they're a college junior and apply to CSPI — the College Student Pre-Commissioning Initiative — which offers similar scholarship benefits to ROTC.

Learn more & apply at gocoastguard.com





HOW TO GET THERE: TOOLS & RESOURCES

SUPPORT FOR EVERY PATH

Tools and resources to share with students, developed by Idaho agencies and organizations to make postsecondary planning easier.

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*Now is
the time.*

Next Steps Idaho



A free resource to help students understand their options, make a plan, and take the next step after high school, all in one place. Built by the State Board of Education in partnership with Idaho's employers.

Explore Careers & Training

Discover careers that match a student's interests and values from 600+ options.

nextsteps.idaho.gov/career-and-interest-quizzes

Plan for College

Explore college and university options across the country.

nextsteps.idaho.gov/college-and-universities-directory

Browse CTE Programs

Browse and filter career and technical education programs across the state.

nextsteps.idaho.gov/cte-program-directory

Find Idaho In-Demand Careers

Browse and filter careers by eligibility for Idaho LAUNCH by graduation year.

nextsteps.idaho.gov/launch *Interactive filtering feature launching fall 2026

Get Financial Aid & Scholarships

Find ways to pay for what's next, including FAFSA help and financial aid resources.

nextsteps.idaho.gov/scholarships-directory

Next Steps Idaho Regional Coordinators are here to help.

Find your region's contact on page 71.



Learn More

nextsteps.idaho.gov



*Next Steps Idaho is here to help 24/7.
Get answers to your questions any time
with Rocket, our digital assistant.*

Scholarship Idaho



Scholarship Idaho is the free common application for Idaho scholarships and grant programs. Find and apply for many state-managed scholarships and grants in one place.

How it Works

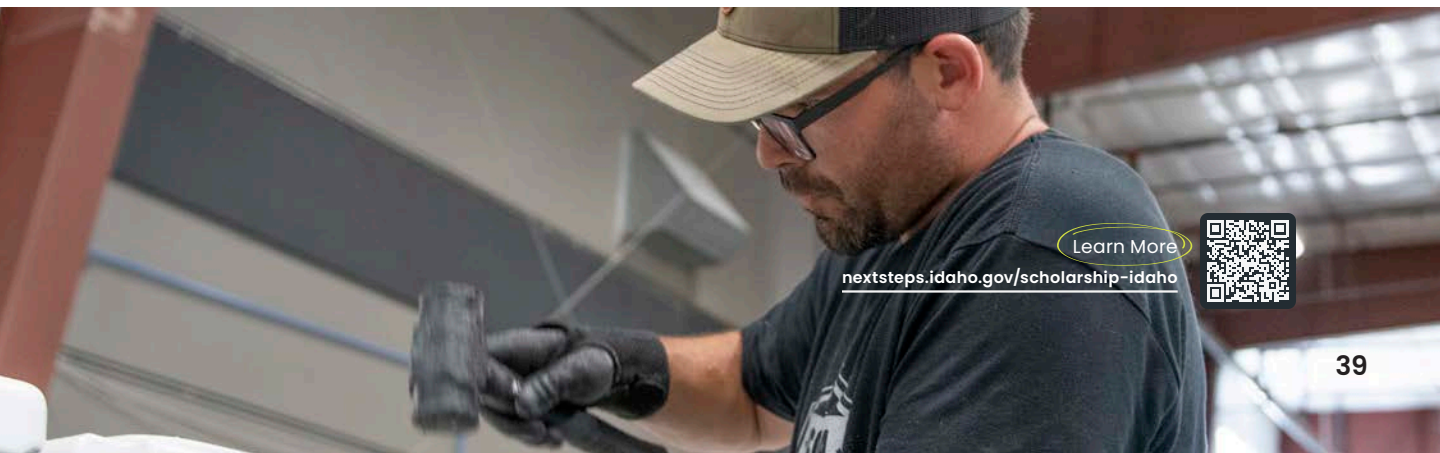
- 01.** Go to the Scholarship Idaho portal at scholarships.idaho.gov. Create an account and see which state-managed scholarships and grants you qualify for.
- 02.** Gather your personal email and social security number. Check the scholarship application guide for more details: nextsteps.idaho.gov/scholarship_application-guide
- 03.** Apply at scholarships.idaho.gov

State Scholarships & Grants

- ✓ Idaho LAUNCH Grant (page 18)
- ✓ Idaho Opportunity Scholarship (page 24)
- ✓ Idaho Governor's Cup Scholarships (page 31)
- ✓ GEAR UP Idaho Scholarship (page 30)
- ✓ Armed Forces & PSO Dependent Scholarship (page 30)
- ✓ Tschudy Family Scholarship
*For graduates of Emmett High School only

Key Dates

- APPLICATIONS OPEN: OCT 1
- DEADLINES VARY. SEE EACH SCHOLARSHIP OR GRANT FOR DATES



Learn More

nextsteps.idaho.gov/scholarship-idaho



Idaho Campus Choice



Idaho's direct admissions program. This removes barriers for applying to college by automatically pre-admitting students to Idaho schools when they meet certain requirements. Additionally, there are resources for special populations, such as those on a 504 or those who have English as a second language.

How it Works

- 01.** Students must meet requirements determined by their junior year unweighted GPA and ISAT scores.
- 02.** Students receive a letter showing which colleges they are pre-admitted to, mailed each fall to seniors.
- 03.** Once they explore schools to see which is the right fit, students can apply in one place with the Apply Idaho application, apply.nextsteps.idaho.gov
- 04.** The rest of the process is similar to any other college application. Students will receive acceptance letters, and will need to accept an offer to their chosen school.

Eligible Idaho Colleges

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| ✓ University of Idaho | ✓ Idaho State University | ✓ College of Western Idaho |
| ✓ Boise State University | ✓ College of Eastern Idaho | ✓ North Idaho College |
| ✓ Lewis Clark State College | ✓ College of Southern Idaho | |

Key Dates

→ **LETTERS ARRIVE: FALL OF SENIOR YEAR**

→ **APPLICATIONS OPEN: OCT 1**



No matter a student's status for this program, they can still apply to any Idaho college or university.



Learn More

nextsteps.idaho.gov/campus-choice

Apply Idaho



Apply Idaho is a free, common application that allows students to apply to up to 10 Idaho colleges and universities with a single application. Only available to current-year graduating Idaho high school seniors.

How it Works

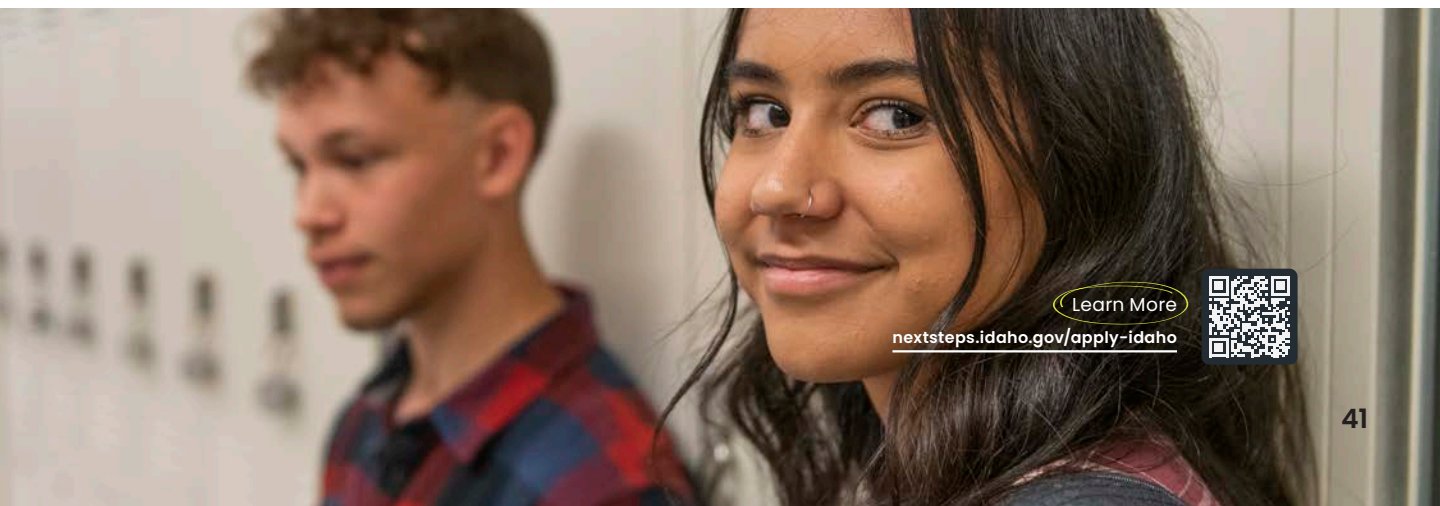
01. Research Idaho colleges using the *Next Steps Idaho College Discovery Center* (nextsteps.idaho.gov/college-and-universities-directory). Sort by "Apply Idaho" in the Admissions Process to see which schools participate.
02. Gather the information you'll need using the Apply Idaho Checklist. Download at nextsteps.idaho.gov/apply-idaho
03. Apply at apply.nextsteps.idaho.gov

Eligible Idaho Colleges

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ✓ University of Idaho | ✓ College of Eastern Idaho | ✓ The College of Idaho |
| ✓ Boise State University | ✓ College of Southern Idaho | ✓ Northwest Nazarene University |
| ✓ Lewis-Clark State College | ✓ College of Western Idaho | |
| ✓ Idaho State University | ✓ North Idaho College | |

Key Dates

- APPLICATION OPENS: OCT 1
- APPLICATION DEADLINE: JUN 30



Learn More

nextsteps.idaho.gov/apply-idaho



Counselor Suite Idaho



Get a clear snapshot of your students' college and career readiness with real-time data, and monitor their progress toward continuing education 'checkpoints.'

How it Works

Counselor Suite Idaho is open to high school counselors, career and college advisors, TRiO advisors, GEAR UP coordinators, and administrative or teaching faculty who are responsible for the career readiness of Idaho grade-12 students.

Get access by emailing info@nextsteps.idaho.gov. You will be provided instructions on working with your district's IT team to set up your account. Educators can use Counselor Suite to view the status of:

- **FAFSA** completion and common errors
- **Idaho Campus Choice** (formerly Direct Admissions) student eligibility for each school
- **Scholarship Idaho** submissions and offer status

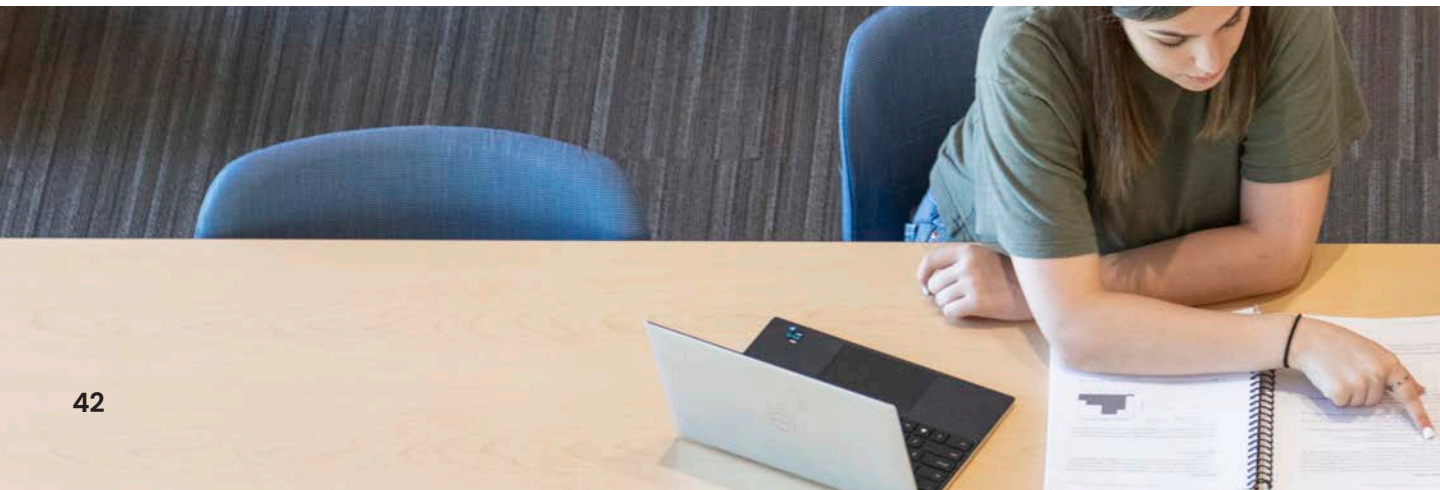
Key Dates

→ **NEW STUDENT COHORTS PUBLISHED: MID-OCTOBER**

→ **DATA UPDATED DAILY**



Counselor Suite Idaho is managed by the Office of the Idaho State Board of Education and hosted via the secure ISEE admin portal of the State Department of Education.



Idaho SkillStack®



Through SkillStack, students can earn digital badges and certifications that demonstrate their career readiness for high-demand jobs in Idaho. The platform allows Idaho's educators to validate the skills in which their learners demonstrate proficiency.

How it Works

SkillStack microcredentials are developed through a collaborative process that engages industry, educators, and other critical stakeholders to ensure they represent the skills learners need to succeed.

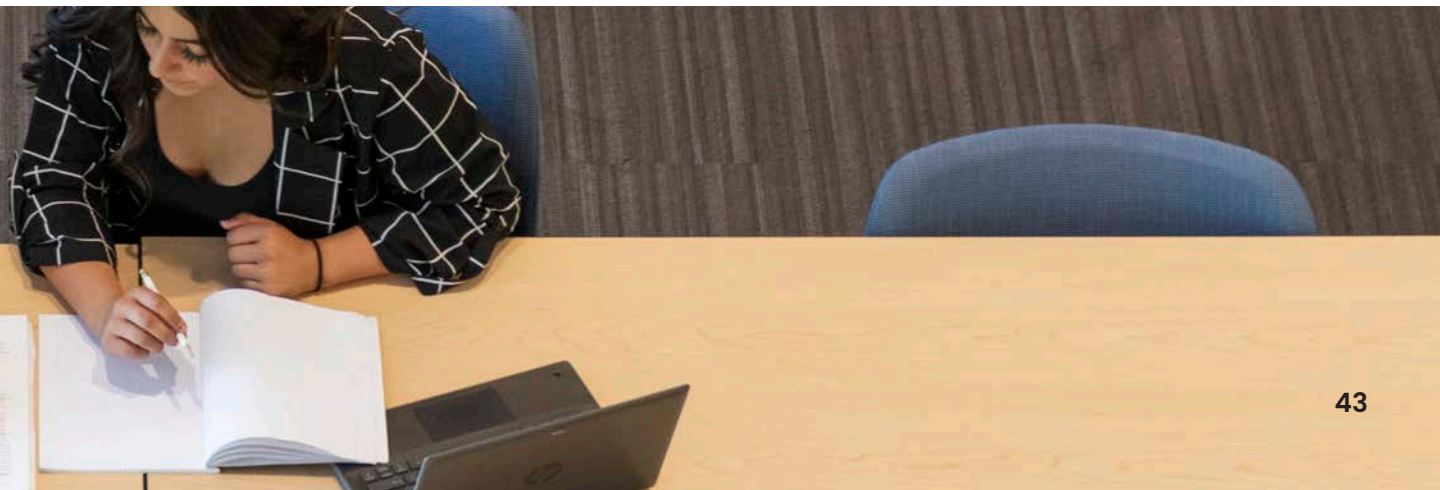
Learners demonstrate skills and earn digital badges. They can use those badges to pursue employment and continuing education opportunities.

Educators can track demonstrated competencies to ensure students are prepared for their next step whether it's college, other training, or employment.

Employers can search for candidates based on the skills they need, and verify who issued the badge, when and where it was earned, and the criteria used to earn it.

Learn more at skillstack.idaho.gov

(208) 429-5508 | skillstack@cte.idaho.gov



GEAR UP Idaho Navigators



Free, online college and career readiness tools with topics for educators, students, and families.

How it Works

Find and download "Navigators" using the link below. Navigators can be printed or used as slides during classroom activities. Event-based Navigators include printable signs, worksheets, and instructions for setting up or adapting events for your school.

Idaho Graduation & Career Readiness Resources

Idaho's updated high school graduation requirements include resources to help schools support students in planning for graduation and life after high school. The Idaho Department of Education provides current graduation requirements, guidance, and ready-to-use templates, including resources for developing Localized Pathways that connect students' coursework, experiences, and opportunities to their future goals.

Counselors can use these resources to help students and families understand graduation requirements while making high school planning more intentional and connected to each student's postsecondary plans.

Resources include:

- Idaho High School Graduation Requirements
- Localized Pathways guidance and templates
- Student Opportunities Directory resources
- Future Readiness Project guidance and templates
- Graduation implementation guidance and additional resources

Learn more and access resources:

sde.idaho.gov/high-school-graduation-requirements

Featured Navigators

Applying For Scholarships

This activity walks students through the process of seeking out and applying for scholarships. Available in English and Spanish.

Career Pathway Plan

A guide for working with students to create a Career Pathway Plan. Available in English and Spanish.

College Budgeting

Takes students and parents through the process of budgeting for college. This Navigator is a great complement to any scholarship presentation. Available in English and Spanish.

Campus Tour Activities

Ideas and activities to use before, during, and after a campus tour, helping students get the most from the visit.

Great Ideas Guide

A collection of “great ideas” and best practices from high school counselors and college and career coordinators from across Idaho.

Hall of Reflection

A guide to creating a Hall of Reflection event designed to help students set goals and reflect on their vision for the future.

Family Wellness Night

An event to help families discuss and set goals for financial, emotional, and physical wellness.

Hands-On Career Fair Toolkit

A resource to make career fair prep, set up, and implementation as easy as possible.

Parent Toolkit

A workbook to help guide parents in supporting students through their first year of college. Accompanied by a facilitator guide to assist school counselors or community leaders in setting up workshops for parents.



Next Steps Idaho Educator Portal

LAUNCHING FALL 2026

The Educator Portal is a new home for the resources, training, and professional learning that school counselors and other college and career professionals need to support Idaho students. Sponsored by the Idaho Department of Education in partnership with the Idaho State Board of Education and the Idaho Workforce Development Council, it brings together materials that are currently scattered across programs, agencies, websites, and events into one place.

Resources

Toolkits, guides, planning tools, event materials, presentations, and other ready-to-use resources from across programs and agencies — searchable, downloadable, and bookmarkable in one place.

On-Demand Training

Training for Next Steps Idaho, Idaho LAUNCH, Advanced Opportunities, GEAR UP, and other initiatives, available whenever it's needed — for onboarding, a refresher, or a new program responsibility.

BOOST Professional Development Modules

Ready-to-facilitate learning modules for school teams, each with a short video, facilitator playbook, and discussion activities on topics like the future of work, AI, and student connection — built to extend college and career readiness beyond the counseling office.



More Resources

Basecamp

Idaho LAUNCH uses Basecamp as a tracking and communication portal where high school counselors, college and career advisors, administrators, and others can ask questions, check information, and access documents and resources. If you are not part of Basecamp, please reach out to Idaho LAUNCH for access.

Get access by emailing: idaholaunch@wdc.idaho.gov

Idaho Digital Skills

Free online learning tools and resources for all Idahoans to level up their digital skills. Whether they want to learn how to type faster or apply for jobs online, Idaho Digital Skills can help.

idahodigitalskills.org

Idaho Division of Career Technical Education (IDCTE)

The Idaho Division of Career and Technical Education connects learners with hands-on education, training programs, and more.

cte.idaho.gov

Idaho LAUNCH Grant Management System

Students are awarded the Idaho LAUNCH grant and accept their contingent award through their Scholarship Idaho account. After graduating high school or completing their GED, they'll use the Idaho Grant Management System to accept, manage, and track their final LAUNCH award. Students receive a letter and email with instructions in May of their senior year.

nextsteps.idaho.gov/launch

Rocket Chatbot

Rocket is your Idaho LAUNCH assistant for quick help with final offers, documents, deadlines, and next steps.

nextsteps.idaho.gov

Learning Blade for STEM/CS/CTE

Interactive online lessons, teacher lesson plans, and printable at-home activities for 5th to 9th graders, where students learn about STEM and computer science careers while reviewing academics.

stem.idaho.gov/apply/learning-blade

Soft Skills Training Modules

Interactive training to help students gain skills that increase their chance of finding a job and advancing their career. Made possible by the Idaho Digital Learning Alliance in partnership with The Workforce Development Council.

wdc.idaho.gov/resource-hub/#outreachmaterials

Ready For Industry

Ready for Industry prepares Idaho learners for high-demand careers and real workforce opportunities by providing free access to self-paced career readiness courses in construction, healthcare, information technology, logistics, and manufacturing. Provided by the Idaho Workforce Development Council.

readyforindustry.com/ID

Engineering by Design

A free, state-funded online resource with engaging, project-based learning experiences to help students think like engineers, solve real problems, and prepare for what's next in STEM.

iteea.org/engineering-bydesign

Jobs Explained on Idaho Public Television:

A web series that helps teens and young adults explore in-demand careers across Idaho. Host Matthew takes viewers inside real workplaces, working alongside employees and interviewing professionals at every career stage, with bonus social videos offering career advice and soft skills tips along the way.

idahoptv.org/shows/idahojobs

Idaho Externship Program:

Educators and career counselors can gain firsthand experience in local industries through a paid, 200-hour summer project. As an extern, you'll collaborate with industry professionals, explore real workplace expectations, and see how durable skills are applied on the job — then bring those insights back to help students see the many pathways available after high school. Applications for the Summer 2027 program open in January 2027.

stem.idaho.gov/stem-externships



PLAN AHEAD: ADVISING CALENDAR

COLLEGE & CAREER ADVISING CALENDAR

The future is mine.



College & Career Advising Calendar

An overview of the year ahead, through a postsecondary planning lens. Check out the latest professional development events and find opportunities for students by visiting the Next Steps Idaho calendar at nextsteps.idaho.gov/calendar

PROGRAM	WHAT HAPPENS	DATE
Idaho LAUNCH Apply Idaho Idaho Opportunity Scholarship	Applications open	October 1
Idaho Campus Choice	Direct admissions letters mailed to graduating seniors	Early Fall
Idaho LAUNCH	Priority application deadline	November 30
Idaho LAUNCH	Contingent offer letters sent on a rolling basis (2-week acceptance window)	December – April
Idaho Opportunity Scholarship	Application deadline (FAFSA required)	March 1
Idaho Opportunity Scholarship	Formal offers made following need & merit ranking	Mid-April
Idaho LAUNCH	Final application deadline	April 15
Idaho LAUNCH	Final offer letters sent via email	Early May
Idaho LAUNCH	Final offer letter acceptance deadline in the Idaho Grant Management System	May 31
Apply Idaho	Applications close	June 30
Idaho Campus Choice	Deadline to complete admission application with chosen institution	June 30
Idaho LAUNCH	Deadline to verify graduation by uploading diploma or transcript	June 30
Counselor Suite	Closes for the summer	June 30



Don't forget to check Basecamp for updates and resources for students.



Tips for Hosting an Event at Your School

Counselors and College & Career Advisors often organize many events each year — parent nights, back-to-school nights, in-class presentations, college fairs, College Application Week — and it's a lot to juggle. Not sure where to begin? Here's a quick checklist to get you started.

Pick the right event format and date

- Choose dates that work for everyone involved, including students and parents
- Double-check for conflicts — assemblies, PSAT testing, field trips, etc.

Loop in school staff early

- Mention it at all-staff meetings
- Send a heads-up email or post a reminder on Basecamp
- Get Admin on board for support

Build your team

- For bigger events, form a committee
- Tap TRIO reps, IACRAO members, or admissions counselors
- Invite state partners — LAUNCH reps, OSBE Regional Outreach Coordinators, CTE reps, or Advanced Opportunities

Communicate early and often

- For parents & students: What's the event, where is it, and how should they prepare?
- For teachers & staff: Why does it matter, and what does it mean for them?

Share your success!

- How many students (and parents) attended your event?
- How many applications were completed during College App Week?
- How many LAUNCH applications were started (or completed!)?

Milestones & Opportunities

August–September

It's back to school time! Program introductions and initial awareness push; senior-year checklists begin.

Opportunities:

- ✓ Back-to-School Night
- ✓ Parent Night
- ✓ Financial Aid Info Night
- ✓ Schedule senior meetings

- ✓ Write welcome letter to families and teachers explaining role
- ✓ Staff meeting presentations:
 - Role
 - Idaho LAUNCH
 - Next Steps Idaho
- ✓ Review and submit Advanced Opportunities summer funding
- ✓ Check Basecamp
- ✓ Update school profile and website

October–November

A big push to get students engaged as we settle into the school year and many applications open.

Milestones:

- ✓ Idaho LAUNCH opens Oct 1
- ✓ Idaho Opportunity Scholarship opens Oct 1
- ✓ Apply Idaho opens Oct 1
- ✓ FAFSA application opens Oct 1
- ✓ Idaho LAUNCH priority deadline Nov 30

Opportunities:

- ✓ College Fair
- ✓ College Application Week/Night
- ✓ Test prep (ACT, SAT, PSAT)
- ✓ Financial aid, scholarship, and FAFSA info sessions
- ✓ Approve Advanced Opportunities fall funding
- ✓ Remind students and parents of scholarship deadlines
- ✓ Provide students and parents with the college application timeline available at nextsteps.idaho.gov
- ✓ Inform students and parents about the common application
- ✓ Graduation planning

December–January

Contingent LAUNCH offer letters begin. Scholarship Idaho profile completion push for 11th and 12th grade.

Milestones:

- ✓ Idaho LAUNCH contingent offer letters sent to students mid-December

Opportunities:

- ✓ Scholarship, financial aid, and FAFSA info sessions
- ✓ Scholarship Idaho info night
- ✓ Idaho LAUNCH info night
- ✓ Senior exit surveys for early grads
- ✓ Graduation planning
- ✓ Remind students and parents of scholarship and grant deadlines

February–March

Idaho Opportunity Scholarship deadline. Apply Idaho and Campus Choice reminders continue. LAUNCH final deadline approaches.

Milestones:

- ✓ Tschudy Family Scholarship (Emmet HS only) – February 15
- ✓ FAFSA deadline for Idaho Opportunity Scholarship – March 1
- ✓ Idaho Governor’s Cup Scholarship (Academic) deadline – March 1
- ✓ Idaho Opportunity Scholarship deadline – March 15

Opportunities:

- ✓ Higher Ed Day
- ✓ Test prep/planning (ACT, SAT, PSAT)
- ✓ Graduation planning
- ✓ Remind students and parents of scholarship and grant deadlines
- ✓ Review/approve Advanced Opportunities spring funding
- ✓ Finalize SAT plans

April–May

LAUNCH final deadline. Final LAUNCH offer letters sent and must be accepted. Campus Choice and Apply Idaho close.

Milestones:

- ✓ Idaho LAUNCH applications close – April 15
- ✓ Idaho Governor’s Cup Scholarship (CTE) deadline – April 15
- ✓ Final LAUNCH offers acceptance deadline (including Career Pathway Plans – May 31)

Opportunities:

- ✓ Senior check-ins + exit surveys (graduation and fall semester enrollment)
- ✓ Idaho LAUNCH offer acceptance info sessions
- ✓ Review financial aid packages with students
- ✓ Graduation planning
- ✓ College prep
- ✓ Remind students and parents of scholarship and grant deadlines
- ✓ Review/Submit Advanced Opportunities funding

June–July

Apply Idaho and Campus Choice close. Bridge communications; prep incoming students.

Milestones:

- ✓ Apply Idaho application closes – June 30
- ✓ Idaho Campus Choice applications due – June 30

Opportunities:

- ✓ Complete the Idaho LAUNCH Feedback Survey
- ✓ Make virtual, college, military, and program visits
- ✓ Prep for upcoming school year



Say less.
I'm in.

APPENDIX

MAKE IT HAPPEN

More information to make it happen, from graduation requirements to key contacts.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS	60
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Idaho State High School Graduation Requirements

State Minimum Credit Requirements

Core Subject Areas.....	30 credits
Electives.....	16 credits
Additional Requirements.....	See Below
School Requirements.....	See Below
Total Credits	46 credits

Core Subject Areas

30 credits

Language Arts

8 credits

Language Arts shall consist of language study, composition, literature, speaking and listening and be aligned to the Idaho English Language Arts Content Standards for the appropriate grade level.

Communication Arts

1 credit

Communication consisting of oral communication and technological applications that includes a course in speech, a course in debate, or a sequence of instructional activities that meet the Idaho Speech Content Standards.

Mathematics

6 credits

Algebra I
(equivalent)
2 credits

Geometry
(equivalent)
2 credits

Student Choice
2 credits

Secondary mathematics includes Integrated Mathematics, Applied Mathematics, Business Mathematics, Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry, Fundamentals of Calculus, Probability and Statistics, Discrete Mathematics, and courses in mathematical problem solving and quantitative reasoning, including mathematics taken through career technical education programs. Engineering and computer science courses aligned to the state standards for grades nine (9) through twelve (12), may be counted as mathematics credit. Students who choose to take computer science or engineering courses may not concurrently count such courses as both a mathematics and science credit for the same course.

Core Subject Areas		30 credits
Science <i>6 credits</i> Lab-based <i>2 credits</i> Student Choice <i>4 credits</i>	Students who choose to take computer science or engineering courses may not concurrently count such courses as both a mathematics and science credit for the same course.	
Fine Arts or World Languages <i>2 credits</i>	Courses include instruction in visual arts, music, theatre, dance, or world languages aligned to Idaho content standards for those subjects. Other courses such as literature, history, philosophy, architecture, or comparative world religions may satisfy the humanities strands if the course is aligned to the Interdisciplinary Humanities Content Standards.	
Health/Wellness <i>1 credit</i>	The course must be aligned to Idaho Health Content Standards and a student should receive a minimum of one training on psychomotor cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) as outlined in the American Heart Association (AHA) Guidelines for CPR, which should include the proper utilization of an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) as part of the Health/Wellness course.	
Digital Literacy <i>1 credit</i>	The course must include instruction that aligns with the Idaho Content Standards associated with leveraging technology, digital citizenship, and computational thinking, that are imbedded in the Information and Communication Technology Content Standards. The course must also include content on leveraging the impacts of computing, algorithms, and programming, which are embedded in the Computer Science Standards. This requirement will apply to any student graduating after January 1, 2028.	
Electives		16 credits
Elective <i>16 credits</i>	Student's choice aligned to Career Pathway Plan.	

Additional Student Requirements

Career Pathway Plan

By the end of 8th grade, each student shall develop a parent-approved career pathway plan for their high school and post-high school options. It must be reviewed annually and may be revised at any time.

District Requirements

The local school district or local education agency (LEA) may establish graduation requirements beyond the state minimum.

Future Readiness Project

The Future Readiness Project is a culminating project that demonstrates a student's application of the Idaho College and Career Readiness Competencies and exploration of potential post-high school options. The project must include an experiential component, such as a work-based, service-based, research-based, or portfolio-based component in which a student demonstrates the acquisition of the Idaho College and Career Readiness Competencies. Experiences including, but not limited to apprenticeships, internships, volunteer work and extracurricular activities related to real-world skills acquisition will count toward this requirement. LEAs must determine how students will demonstrate the acquisition of college and career competencies and may require additional components.

All students beginning with the class of 2028 must complete a Future Readiness Project by the end of grade twelve; students prior to this can complete the previous Senior Project requirements.

Civics Standard

Starting in 2026–27 school year, all secondary students must demonstrate that they have met the state civics and government standard by successfully completing a new revised civics test and participate in a course in United States government and history, or participate in an associated college credit-bearing course or exam. Assessment of standards shall be included as part of the course at the secondary level. The successful completion of this requirement must be reflected on the student's transcript.

Students graduating prior to January 1, 2029, who have satisfied the requirement of the civics exam, prior to the 2026–2027 school year are exempt from the new exam.

School Requirements	
Advanced Opportunities	All high schools shall provide at least one Advanced Opportunity such as Dual Credit, Advanced Placement, micro-credentials, or International Baccalaureate.
Localized Pathways	In order to assist students in structuring their secondary course selection electives, assessment, and supplemental activities, all LEAs shall develop and post publicly two or more localized pathways. Localized pathways are designed to inform students and parents/guardians of local opportunities aligned with postsecondary goals, as identified in the student’s career pathway plan. This provision must be implemented by all LEAs no later than June 30, 2026.
Physical Education	High schools are required to provide instructional offerings in Physical Education (fitness).
Middle School Credits	A student will have met the high school content and credit requirement for any required high school course if: 1. The student completes such courses with a grade C or higher before entering 9th grade. 2. The course meets the same content standards that are required for high school. 3. The course is taught by a properly certified teacher. Parents of middle school students taking a course for high school credit must be notified that the course is available for high school credit and must be given the option as to whether the course is transcribed. Students/ families paying for courses with Advanced Opportunities funds are consenting to the course being transcribed as high school credit.

Special Diplomas

Workforce Readiness & Career Technical Education (CTE) Diploma

Graduates are expected to have more skills than ever before. In addition to strong academics in reading, math, and science, they must also be able to apply these skills in the workplace.

CTE programs are designed to ensure graduates obtain the academic and technical skills that give them multiple pathways to success. To acknowledge that CTE programs enhance students' high school experience and help prepare them for the demands of today's employers, the Idaho State Legislature created the Workforce Readiness CTE Diploma.

Like all high school students, students enrolled in CTE programs must meet academic requirements. In addition, they must also demonstrate their increased level of college and career readiness. This diploma helps:



Students

- ✓ Earn employer-recognized certifications and microcredentials and gain practical, real-world working experience.
- ✓ Earn college credits while still in high school.
- ✓ Develop and articulate in-demand technical and workplace skills.
- ✓ Explore Idaho's high-skill, high-demand occupations.
- ✓ Enter the world after graduation confident in their ability to do a job well.

Employers

- ✓ Find qualified employees for their most hard-to-fill positions.
- ✓ Reduce time and money invested in training new employees.
- ✓ More easily identify candidates who possess the skills necessary to succeed in the workplace.

How it Works

- 01.** Pass the state-approved Technical Skills Assessment (TSA).
- 02.** Pass the state-approved Workplace Readiness Assessment (WRA).
- 03.** Earn all pathway microcredentials within SkillStack® or an approved industry certification.

Learn more: cte.idaho.gov/workforce-readiness-cte-diploma

STEM Diploma



Earning a STEM diploma recognizes that a student has completed a rigorous course load in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, and is ready to take their next steps in STEM.

Through the STEM Diploma, students gain a competitive advantage and signal to industry and higher education leaders that they are qualified for a STEM career path.

Learn more: stem.idaho.gov/stem-diploma





3 ORAL & WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Learners communicate clearly, listen actively, and adapt communication for different audiences.

Expressing Ideas Clearly

Learners communicate ideas clearly and purposefully.

I communicate in a clear and organized manner using verbal, written, and non-verbal skills to achieve intended outcomes.

Listening and Understanding Others

Learners listen and seek to understand perspectives.

I employ active listening and ask appropriate questions to engage in discussions and build on others' ideas to strengthen outcomes.

Learners communicate clearly, listen actively, and adapt communication for different audiences.		Learners work toward shared goals and value different perspectives.		Learners use technology to find, create, and communicate information responsibly.	
Expressing Ideas Clearly Learners communicate ideas clearly and purposefully. <i>I adapt communication styles and methods to support understanding, connection, and collaboration across changing situations and relationships.</i>	Listening and Understanding Others Learners listen and seek to understand perspectives. <i>I actively listen, ask thoughtful questions, and engage with others to strengthen understanding and shared growth.</i>	Contributing to Teams Learners contribute effort and ideas. <i>I build and contribute to collaborative environments that support shared success, connection, and the growth of others.</i>	Shared Responsibility Learners take responsibility for their role. <i>I take responsibility for my contributions while supporting the strong outcomes of others.</i>	Finding and Evaluating Information Learners locate and assess digital information. <i>I use digital tools and emerging technologies to stay informed, connected, and responsive to changing needs and contexts.</i>	Creating and Communicating with Technology Learners use tools to create and share ideas. <i>I adapt how I use technology and new tools to communicate, learn, and engage across changing contexts.</i>
Adapting Communication Learners adjust communication based on audience. <i>I adapt my communication across diverse audiences, contexts, technologies, and life experiences.</i>	Providing and Responding to Feedback Learners use feedback to improve communication. <i>I use and share feedback to strengthen relationships, learning, collaboration, and personal growth.</i>	Respecting Different Perspectives Learners consider and value different viewpoints. <i>I learn from and integrate different perspectives to support understanding, connection, and better outcomes.</i>	Resolving Conflict and Challenges Learners address disagreements constructively. <i>I navigate conflict in ways that support understanding, relationships, and positive outcomes over time.</i>	Responsible Digital Participation Learners use technology ethically. <i>I model responsible, ethical, and mindful use of technology in a variety of settings.</i>	Using Technology to Solve Problems Learners use tech to solve problems. <i>I use technology to support learning, problem solving, and engagement in everyday life.</i>

Featured Resources

Print these competency sets for use in the classroom!



Competencies Overview

sde.idaho.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/IDCCRC-Overview.pdf

Competencies Matrix Map

sde.idaho.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/IDCCRC-Matrix-Map.pdf

Competency Set: Band Levels

sde.idaho.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/IDCCRC-Toolkit-Resources-Bands-Double-Sided.pdf

Idaho Career Readiness Competencies

The Idaho Career Readiness Competencies were updated and reapproved in 2026 to provide a common language for the skills learners need to succeed in education, careers, and life. The framework recognizes that career readiness develops over time, with developmental bands spanning **Elementary, Middle School, High School, Postsecondary/Early Career, and Lifelong Learning**.

Each competency includes specific subskills and developmental indicators that show what growth can look like at different stages. Counselors can use the competencies to support career exploration, individual planning, student reflection, Future Readiness Projects, work-based learning, and conversations that help students recognize and articulate the skills they are developing.

A **User Guide and additional resources** are available on the Idaho Department of Education High School Graduation Requirements webpage.

Future Readiness Project

The Future Readiness Project gives Idaho students an opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned while connecting their high school experiences to their goals beyond graduation. Students may complete a **Work-Based Learning Experience, Project, Portfolio, or Research Project**, providing flexibility for students to pursue an option that aligns with their interests, experiences, and future plans.

Resources are available to help schools implement the Future Readiness Project, including guidance, student-facing templates, examples, and tools that support students through **Pre-Exploration, Project Design, Implementation, and Reflection**.

Counselors can play an important role in helping students identify meaningful project options, connect projects to future pathways, and reflect on the skills and competencies they develop through the experience.

Access Future Readiness Project guidance, templates, and resources:
sde.idaho.gov/high-school-graduation-requirements

01.  Curiosity & Learning Transfer	02.  Critical Thinking & Problem Solving	03.  Oral & Written Communication	04.  Team Work & Collaboration	05.  Digital Literacy
06.  Leadership	07.  Professionalism & Work Ethic	08.  Career Exploration	09.  Citizenship	10.  Financial Literacy

College & Career Readiness Funding

As legislated by Idaho State 33-1212A, each public school in Idaho who serves students in grades eight (8) through twelve (12) shall establish a college and career advising program for their students.

These programs can include advising personnel, near peer/college mentors, students ambassadors, and virtual coaching, among other activities.

Section 33-1002, Educational Support Program

To support these efforts, funds are distributed as follows:

For school districts and public charter schools with one hundred (100) or more students enrolled in grades 8 through 12, a pro rata distribution based on students enrolled in grades 8 through 12 or eighteen thousand dollars (\$18,000), whichever is greater.

For school districts and public charter schools with fewer than one hundred (100) students enrolled in grades eight (8) through twelve (12), one hundred eighty dollars (\$180) per student enrolled in grades eight (8) through twelve (12) or nine thousand dollars (\$9,000), whichever is greater.

Annually the state
legislature allocates

\$9 million

to support college & career readiness
activities across the state.

Funds are distributed to school districts twice per year: half in December and half in spring. Districts have discretion on how to allocate these funds. Contact your district office to learn more about how these funds are being used to support your students.

Section 33-1212A, Idaho Code, governs the use of these funds and requirements.

College & Career Advisors + Student Mentors

01. College and career advising, and student mentoring are essential components of students’ educational experience. Such advising and mentoring provide all students with an early opportunity to identify academic strengths, areas in need of improvement, and areas of interest for the purpose of making informed choices and setting postsecondary education and career goals. The focus of college and career planning is to help students acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve academic success and to be college and career ready upon high school graduation.
02. School districts and charter schools may employ noncertificated staff to serve in the role of college and career advisors and student mentors. Appropriate alternative forms of advising and mentoring shall be research-based and may include the following:

High Contact Programs:

- Near peer or college student mentors; and
- Counselor, teacher, or paraprofessional as advisor or mentor.

Collaborative Programs:

- Student ambassadors; and
- Cooperative agreements with other school districts or postsecondary institutions; and
- Virtual coach or mentor programs.

03. School districts and charter schools shall provide professional development in the area of college and career advising to all staff serving in the role of student mentors or advisors. All individuals providing services in the role of a college and career advisor must have a basic level of training or experience in the area of advising or mentoring to provide such services.
04. School districts and charter schools shall notify parents or guardians of all students in grades eight (8) through twelve (12) of the availability of college and career advising provided by the district and how to access such services.
05. The State Board of Education shall promulgate rules necessary for the administration of this section.

Direct questions to: Jacque Deahl at jdeahl@sde.idaho.gov or (208) 332-6946.



Next Steps Idaho Regional Coordinators and LAUNCH Ambassadors are here to help.
Find your region’s contacts on page 71.

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Idaho Workforce Development Council

For Idaho LAUNCH and STEM programming.

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Notes

This image shows a full page of blank white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a template for writing or drawing. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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THE IMPACT OF IDAHO LAUNCH

LAST YEAR'S NUMBERS:

17%

MORE STUDENTS APPLIED
THAN 2024-25

\$75

MILLION
AWARDED

3,000+

STUDENTS ENROLLED IN
CAREER & TECHNICAL
EDUCATION PROGRAMS

*Thanks for
your support!*



IDAHO **LAUNCH**

nextsteps.idaho.gov/LAUNCH



nextsteps.idaho.gov

For more information, please contact us at
idaholaunch@wdc.idaho.gov