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Skagit students encouraged to apply for 2018 Washington State Opportunity Scholarships
In 2017, a record 42 Skagit students each received \$22,500; 2018 goal is 100 Skagit student scholarships

SEDRO-WOOLLEY, WA -- Applications are now being accepted for the 2018 The Washington State Opportunity Scholarship (WSOS), which provides college scholarship awards and career-building programs to low- and middle-income students pursuing eligible, high-demand science, technology, engineering, mathematics and health care majors. The application deadline is February 28, 2018.

Last year, a record 42 Skagit students each received \$22,500 towards their in-state bachelor's degrees. A total of \$945,000 in STEM-Focused Scholarship Funding was received by Skagit students. In 2017, Anacortes, Burlington-Edison, La Conner, Mount Vernon, Sedro-Woolley, and Skagit Adventist high school students were selected to receive a WSOS.

The Skagit STEM Network has established a goal of 100 Skagit students receiving scholarships in 2018.

"This is a fantastic opportunity for our Skagit students," said Michelle Judson, Skagit STEM Network Director. "The scholarships will enable our students to earn high-demand degrees, providing them with the technical and critical skills needed to thrive in today's jobs and excel in the jobs of tomorrow."

Details and an application are available at www.WAOpportunityScholarship.org.

WSOS is renewable for up to five years of full-time college attendance at a 2- or 4- year public or private Washington State college or university. First- and second- year scholars receive up to \$2,500 per academic year. When a recipient has attained junior-class standing and been admitted into one of the eligible and approved high-demand majors (e.g., science, technology, engineering and mathematics or specific health care disciplines), the scholarship is increased up to \$5,000. Fourth-year scholars, who have achieved senior class standing receive up to \$7,500; and a fifth year of up to \$5,000 support is available.

WSOS was created in 2011 to address both rising tuition costs and a lack of local STEM talent prepared for industry demands. Per the legislation that governs the program, the State matches private dollars raised by WSOS, including founding partners Microsoft and Boeing. To date, the program has raised nearly \$98 million from the private sector.

More than 8,600 students have received support from WSOS and more than 2,400 have graduated since the program began. Eighty-three percent of graduates are employed or seeking an advanced degree in their field. More than 90 percent took jobs here in Washington.

Last year, WSOS received more than 4,000 applications-with more diversity than 2016's submitted applications. In 2017, 57% percent of the scholarship recipients were female, 64 percent identify as students of color, and 69 percent were the first in their family to attend college.

Washington STEM is the administrator and community partner to WSOS. The Skagit STEM is a Washington STEM network and is the local catalyst for the WSOS program.

"If you are curious, innovative, analytical, and/or resourceful, this is an incredible opportunity to join a community committed to you and the economic development of our region and state," Judson concluded.

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About the Washington State Opportunity Scholarship

The Washington State Opportunity Scholarship was created by the Washington State Legislature in 2011 to help local students from low- and middle-income families earn high-demand degrees and launch their careers in Washington. For more information, go to www.waopportunityscholarship.org.

About Washington STEM

Washington STEM is a statewide nonprofit advancing excellence, equity, and innovation in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education. For more information, go to www.washingtonstem.org

About Skagit STEM Network

The Skagit STEM Network serves as a clearing house for STEM supportive activities to plug into and more effectively leverage efforts across Skagit County, Washington. The Network focuses on preparing future generations for economic success and creating a greater connection between Skagit Valley Students and local industry. For more information, please visit www.skagitstem.com.