IDAHO · STATE AID REFERENCE

Idaho State Aid Cheat Sheet (2027-2028)

A two-page reference for counselors and families. Free to copy, print, and share.

Idaho runs its state aid through one free portal, Scholarship Idaho (scholarships.idaho.gov), which opens October 1. Five things on older handouts are now wrong: Idaho LAUNCH exists and pays at four-year schools; the Governor's Cup Academic takes a 3.5 GPA and pays $5,000, not a 2.8 and $3,000; community colleges no longer accept new Opportunity Scholarship recipients; renewal is 30 credits a year at a 2.7, not 24 at a 2.5; and GEAR UP Scholarship 3 is closed to the Class of 2027. Verified against the Idaho State Board of Education and Next Steps Idaho, October 2026.

The Programs at a Glance

Program	What it pays and who qualifies
Idaho LAUNCH (grant, no GPA or income test)	80% of tuition and fees up to $8,000 total, max $4,000 in year one for programs over 12 months. Any Idaho resident in the current graduating class (public, charter, private, home school, or GED) enrolling the fall after graduation in a program on the state's in-demand career list, at any eligible Idaho provider including all four community colleges. No FAFSA required. Career Pathway Plan due May 31. Run by the Workforce Development Council. Once in a lifetime.
Opportunity Scholarship (need-based, last-dollar)	Up to $3,500 a year for four years, max $1,750 a semester, paid last after all other grants and scholarships and never more than tuition and fees. Requires a 2.7 unweighted GPA, Idaho residency and diploma, and a FAFSA by March 1. Ranked 70% on the Student Aid Index, 30% on GPA. Eligible only at Boise State, BYU-Idaho, College of Idaho, Idaho State, Lewis-Clark State, Northwest Nazarene, University of Idaho, and WGU. **Cannot be held with LAUNCH; the portal makes students pick one.**
Governor's Cup, Academic (private merit)	Up to $5,000 a year, renewable four years. 3.5 unweighted GPA, full-time enrollment, 500-word essay, two recommendation letters, and documented volunteer and public service. Roughly 25 to 40 awards a year statewide from several thousand applicants. Questions after submission go to idahogovernorscup.org.
Governor's Cup, CTE (private merit)	Up to $3,000 a year, renewable three years, for seniors with a 3.0 GPA entering an approved career-technical program. Same essay, letters, and service record. The award follows the program named on the application; switching without committee review can revoke it.
Armed Forces / PSO Dependent (service families)	Waiver of tuition and fees, up to $750 a semester for books, and on-campus housing and subsistence at Idaho public colleges. For Idaho resident children and spouses of Idaho armed forces members or public safety officers (peace officers, firefighters, paramedics, EMTs) killed or totally and permanently disabled in the line of duty since 1975. Open year-round; request the Board's pre-screening interview first.
Advanced Opportunities (grades 7 to 12)	State funding for dual credit, overload courses, workforce training, and AP, IB, and certification exams for public and charter school students. Applied for through the high school, not Scholarship Idaho. The Postsecondary Credit Scholarship adds money for graduates with 10+ college credits.
Also worth knowing	Opportunity for Adult Learners: 2.5 GPA, 24+ credits, 24-month break, pays part-time on a sliding scale ($875 to $1,750 a semester). Tschudy Family: $2,500 a year for Emmett High seniors, FAFSA by February 15. Idaho LAUNCH for Adults: 80% of training up to $5,000. Idaho Campus Choice: every senior is pre-admitted to 4, 6, or all 8 publics by GPA or ISAT; letters arrive after September 15, Apply Idaho is free from October 1.

Deadlines to Post on Your Wall

Program	Deadline	Where it's submitted
Idaho LAUNCH	**November 30 priority.** Closes April 15. Career Pathway Plan May 31.	Scholarship Idaho. No FAFSA needed.
Opportunity Scholarship	**March 1**, application and FAFSA both, 11:59 p.m. Mountain. Late FAFSAs are not considered.	Scholarship Idaho + FAFSA
Governor's Cup, Academic	March 1 in recent cycles. Confirm in the portal.	Scholarship Idaho
Governor's Cup, CTE	April 15 in recent cycles. Confirm in the portal.	Scholarship Idaho
Tschudy Family	FAFSA by February 15	Scholarship Idaho + FAFSA
Armed Forces / PSO	Open year-round. Start documentation early.	Scholarship Idaho
Opportunity, Adult Learners	FAFSA by Dec 1 (spring), Apr 15 (summer), Jul 1 (fall)	Scholarship Idaho + FAFSA
Advanced Opportunities	Tied to course registration; Postsecondary Credit has no deadline	High school counselor

Say this out loud to every senior: April 15 is the last LAUNCH date, not the real one. The state says funds are limited and November 30 is priority. Boise State closes December 15 for nonresident awards and February 15 for resident ones. Idaho State's honors seats fill by March.

The Rules That Trip Families Up

- **LAUNCH or Opportunity, not both.** The state's application guide says a student can apply for one and change the selection any time before March 1. A family with no financial need that picks Opportunity has applied for a need ranking they will sit at the bottom of, and walked past $8,000.
- **Opportunity is last-dollar.** The college compares all gift aid to its cost of attendance or the state-set $28,061, whichever is lower, and pays only the gap, up to $3,500 and never above tuition and fees. At College of Idaho and Northwest Nazarene it is routinely $0, and the state says so.
- **Offers come by email only, with a hard acceptance date.** The Board's written policy is that a missed offer is an express rejection and is not appealable. LAUNCH contingent offers expire in two weeks. Use a personal email, never the school one, and safe-list scholarshiphelp@edu.idaho.gov.
- **The renewal clock is 30 credits a year, a 2.7 GPA, and a form every March 1.** Twelve and twelve is not thirty. A failed class does not count. Taking a semester off without 30 days' notice to the Board ends the award.
- **No state program requires a test score.** LAUNCH has none, Opportunity is FAFSA and GPA only, and Boise State is test-blind. The ACT matters at Idaho State's awarding index, which does not superscore, and nowhere else in the state.

LAUNCH or Opportunity: Check These Three Things Early

1. Is the major on the LAUNCH in-demand list?

About 155 careers qualify, including nursing, teaching, accounting, engineering, computer science, and the trades, at every public and most privates. Search the college and program at nextsteps.idaho.gov/browse-launch-providers. If it is there, LAUNCH is almost always the pick: $8,000 with no GPA, no income test, no FAFSA, and no renewal rules. If it is not there, Opportunity is the only state money on the table.

2. Is the family Pell-eligible, and where are they going?

Not Pell-eligible: LAUNCH, no contest. Pell-eligible at a public: Opportunity can reach $14,000 over four years but only with four renewals and no crowding out by other aid; LAUNCH pays $8,000 in two years with certainty. Pell-eligible at College of Idaho or NNU: LAUNCH, because the state makes those two calculate Opportunity against the public cost of attendance and their own aid usually zeroes it.

3. Is the right box checked?

The portal pre-selects one. Log in, look, and change it before March 1 if it is wrong. Questions: scholarshiphelp@edu.idaho.gov, (208) 334-2270. LAUNCH questions: idaholaunch@wdc.idaho.gov, 208-488-7575.

Counselor Calendar: What to Tell Students When

When	What has to happen
Sophomore and junior year	Register for Advanced Opportunities dual credit through the school. Credits earned now count toward the 30-credit renewal year. Take the ISAT seriously: a level 3 in math and ELA pre-admits to all eight publics regardless of GPA, and since the Class of 2026 the score also places students out of remedial math and English.
Senior, Sept 15 to Oct 1	Campus Choice letters arrive. Create the FSA ID and the Scholarship Idaho account (SSN, EDUID, personal email, legal name exactly as on school records). Apply Idaho and every state program open October 1.
October to Nov 30	File the FAFSA now in case something breaks. Decide LAUNCH or Opportunity. If LAUNCH, submit by the November 30 priority date.
Dec 15 to Feb 15	December 15: Boise State nonresident, WUE, and nonresident Honors deadline. Idaho State University Honors Program priority (mid-January). Boise State resident merit, True Blue Promise, Honors, and most foundation awards close February 15; the Mosaic event for first-generation seniors is early February. Tschudy FAFSA February 15.
March 1	Opportunity Scholarship and FAFSA, 11:59 p.m. Mountain. Governor's Cup Academic in recent cycles. Last day to switch the LAUNCH/Opportunity selection.
April to May 31	Opportunity Round 1 offers early to mid-April; accept by the date in the email. LAUNCH closes April 15, Governor's Cup CTE in recent cycles. Career Pathway Plan May 31. U of I National Merit package May 31.
June to September	LAUNCH final awards in June; accept in the Idaho Grant Management System with identity, residency, and graduation documents. Idaho State admission July 1 for the awarding index. Confirm every award posted to the bill by the end of September.
Once enrolled	November: check the renew button and request any spring leave 30 days ahead. December: transfer requests. March 1: renewal questionnaire. Report every dropped class to the Board.

Three Mistakes That Cost Idaho Students Money

- **Treating the Campus Choice letter as the finish line.** It pre-admits. It does not enroll, it does not file the FAFSA, and it does not trigger a single scholarship. Write each college's scholarship deadline next to its name on the letter.
- **Assuming the Opportunity Scholarship is $3,500.** It is up to $3,500, paid last. For a Pell-eligible student with a college award, it is often reduced; at the two private colleges it is often $0. Run the math before choosing it over LAUNCH.
- **Chasing the Governor's Cup instead of the college grid.** A few dozen students a year win it. A 3.9 GPA is a guaranteed $7,500 a year at the University of Idaho and $3,000 at Boise State with no essay. A 3.0 is a guaranteed $1,000 at U of I with no deadline; Boise State pays nothing automatic to a resident under 3.7 unless the FAFSA shows need.

The April 15 mirage

April 15 is printed on every LAUNCH flyer, so families pace themselves to it. By April 15 the November 30 priority round is long gone, Boise State's merit deadlines have passed, Idaho State's honors seats are full, and the Opportunity window closed six weeks earlier with the FAFSA. Idaho has one portal and almost no essays, which makes it easy to assume there is nothing to do early. There is: the account, the FAFSA, the LAUNCH selection, and the college deadlines, all before Thanksgiving.

Free Resources: No Account, No Cost, No Data Collection

All Idaho state programs and official rules	nextsteps.idaho.gov/scholarship-idaho
Idaho LAUNCH, provider list, and parent playbook	nextsteps.idaho.gov/launch
Our Idaho state aid guide	collegereadyparent.org/idaho
Scholarships at 400+ colleges, all 50 states	collegereadyparent.org/college-scholarships

Produced by CollegeReadyParent.org, an independent, parent-built resource. No paywall, no accounts, no lead forms, no student data collection. Counselors and educators: you may freely copy, print, and distribute this sheet. Questions or corrections: leo@collegereadyparent.org. Verified against the Idaho State Board of Education, Next Steps Idaho, and the Idaho Workforce Development Council in October 2026. Idaho LAUNCH is funded year to year by the Legislature and the Governor's Cup is a private foundation award, so confirm current details at scholarships.idaho.gov and with the college's financial aid office before applying. College figures come from the CRP scholarship database.