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**Enrollment opens September 15 for GET Program**  
*State launches 12<sup>th</sup> year of Washington's prepaid college tuition program*

**OLYMPIA** – Families looking for a secure way to save for college can open a GET account today as Washington's Guaranteed Education Tuition (GET) program launches its 12th year of enrollment. The program experienced a 24% surge in new accounts last year as thousands of parents chose a guaranteed way to save for their child's college tuition. The new enrollment year runs through March 31, 2010.

According to Betty Lochner, director of the GET program, more than 106,000 accounts have been opened since the program began in 1998, and already over 13,500 students have used their units at colleges nationwide. The prepaid tuition program, which guarantees that money set aside for college today will keep pace with rising tuition costs, welcomed 15,706 new accounts last year, setting a record for the program.

"We expect another strong year," said Lochner. "With surging tuition costs, GET's guaranteed increase in value presents a very good option for parents of young children." GET's updated Web site at [www.get.wa.gov](http://www.get.wa.gov) offers tips, charts, tools and answers to many questions families may have about the program. Accounts can be opened online, and Customer Service staff is available at (800) 955-2318 to help in any way needed.

The cost this year for one GET unit is \$101, which will remain unchanged until April 30, 2010. Encouraging parents to set money aside for education when their children are young is a key goal of the state program, according to Lochner. "To encourage parents to start early, we are now offering year-round enrollment for children from birth to twelve months of age," she said.

Over the past 10 years, undergraduate tuition has climbed an average of 8 percent annually at the University of Washington and Washington State University, far outpacing inflation and family incomes. A GET account provides a hedge against these tuition increases.

Lochner emphasized that GET accounts can easily be used at nearly any public or private college, university, or vocational school in the country. Already, GET students have used their accounts at colleges in all 50 states and five foreign countries.

The program works on a unit system, with 100 GET units equal to one year of resident undergraduate tuition and required state fees at the most expensive Washington public university (either Washington State University or the University of Washington). The state guarantees that 100 GET units will cover the cost of a year of college tuition when a student is ready for college.

If a student for whom a GET account has been established does not go to college, receives a scholarship, or otherwise does not need college funding, the owner of the account can put it on hold, transfer it to another family member, or request a refund.

The monetary value of the account is the same, whether a child attends an in-state public university or an out-of-state private college. If a student attends a college with higher tuition costs than the benchmark University of Washington or Washington State University tuition, he'll pay the difference. If tuition is less, the student may use extra money to spend on room and board, books, or other qualified higher education costs.

If a student with a GET account chooses not to go to college, receives a scholarship, or otherwise doesn't need college funding, the owner of the account can put it on hold, transfer it to another family member or request a refund.

Because GET is a state-sponsored 529 plan, the money families put into their accounts will grow tax-free and all withdrawals will be tax-free when used for tuition, room and board, books or other qualified higher education expenses.

Anyone – parents, grandparents, or friends – can open a GET account if they meet the following requirement: the student or account owner must be a Washington resident at the time the account is opened. Parents can start their account with a lump sum, or with a payment plan as low as \$44 per month. Once an account is open, anyone can contribute.

To learn more about the GET program, go online at [www.get.wa.gov](http://www.get.wa.gov) or call 1-800-955-2318 (toll-free).

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***Note to Editors:* Local families are available for interviews.**