A GUIDE FOR

Next

CLASS OF 2023

TENNESSEE JUNIORS

This guide belongs to: _____

What are your plans for after high school?

- ☐ University
- ☐ Community College-Transfer
- ☐ Community College
- ☐ Technical Institute
- ☐ Military
- ☐ Workforce
- ☐ I don't have any idea

YOUR SUCCESS TEAM:

Many people will be involved in helping you search for colleges and careers. At your school, you may have a GEAR UP TN Site Coordinator, an Advise TN Advisor, and/or a high school counselor helping you through the process. In the space provided, list the information for the primary contact people who will be the most help getting ready for the next chapter in life.

ROLE	NAME	CONTACT
High School Counselor		Ph: Email:
GEAR UP Site Coordinator or Advise TN Advisor		Ph: Email:
Coach/Adult Mentor		Ph: Email:
Military Recruiter		Ph: Email:
Supportive Classroom Teacher		Ph: Email:
TSAC Outreach Specialist		Ph: Email:

Congratulations – You're a Junior!

Stuck midway between the fear of the first year of high school and the excitement of the senior year, the junior year of high school doesn't usually get the respect it deserves. In terms of your future plans, however, it's one of the most important years.

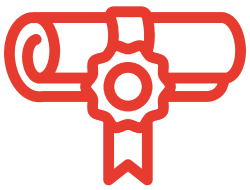
During your junior year you'll make critical decisions about your future—decisions that could affect the rest of your life. The Next Guide is here to provide you with the tools to make the best decisions for you.

- **Attend a four-year college or university to earn a bachelor's degree**
- **Enroll in a community college first, and then transfer to a university after two or three years to earn a bachelor's degree**
- **Obtain an associate degree or certificate at a community college**
- **Obtain a certificate or license from a Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) or other/ technical/vocational school**
- **Enlist in the military, or**
- **Immediately enter the workforce**

In this Guide, you'll find resources and information on everything from financing your college education to writing a resumé. You'll also find helpful information about college, scholarship, and job searches, and pages for recording important information you'll need to access regularly throughout the year.

DON'T FORGET...

Your college/ career counselor is available throughout the year to help you through every step and answer questions.



TO HELP WITH COLLEGE AND CAREER PLANNING, THIS GUIDE HAS AREAS IN WHICH TO RECORD PERSONAL INFORMATION. IF YOU WILL BE CARRYING THE GUIDE FROM PLACE TO PLACE, OR ARE AT RISK OF LOSING IT, PLEASE DO NOT WRITE YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION IN THIS GUIDE

COLLEGE.

YOU CAN GET
THERE FROM HERE.

COLLEGE FOR TN

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SECTION 1

STAYING ON TRACK

Staying on Track

Wherever you plan to go after high school graduation – whether you're headed to college, the workforce, or the military – staying on track to earn your high school diploma and knowing the next steps for your chosen path is extremely important. In this section, you will find checklists that will help you stay organized and on track to reach your goals after graduation.

THERE ARE AS MANY MYTHS ABOUT COLLEGE AS THERE ARE COLLEGES. LOOK FOR THESE "COLLEGE MYTHS" THROUGHOUT THIS GUIDE TO LEARN THE REAL STORY.

MYTH:

Only your senior grades matter.

REALITY:

While all the years of high school are important, junior year may be the most important. This is the last full year of grades colleges will see before making a decision on your admission. You may also be taking tougher courses this year and moving into leadership roles in extracurricular clubs and organizations. You definitely don't want to slack off this year. In fact, you should push yourself even harder!

Begin with a Plan

Junior year will be busy. Here's a monthly planning calendar to help you plan your year.

AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
• Meet with your school counselor to confirm your courses for your junior and senior years will help you apply to competitive colleges. • Explore AP and dual-enrollment classes offered at your school. • Begin keeping track of your community service activities and hours. • Start collecting materials for your portfolio and begin identifying accomplishments and achievements you will list on your resumé.	• If you have not already done so, be sure to register for the October ACT. Ask your school counselor if the PSAT will be offered locally and sign up. • Step up your involvement in one or two organizations. It's not the number of organizations you belong to, but that you have leadership experience that matters the most. • Enroll in an ACT/SAT prep class if available. • Start researching colleges, visit campuses, attend college fairs, and open houses.	• Take ACT/SAT at your high school. • Get involved in extracurricular activities, volunteer, and sign up for community service. • Talk with teachers, family members, and other adults you respect about the colleges they attended. • Begin the career exploration process with career assessment tests. • Visit local colleges to get an idea of what you're looking for. • Remain focused on your academics.	• Register for the NCAA Clearinghouse if you're a student athlete. • Keep your focus on your grades. You'll want your grades for the entire junior year to be as strong as possible. • Continue your research into potential colleges and careers. • Continue gathering materials for your resumé and portfolio. • Look up target ACT/SAT scores for schools on your list. • Explore AP and dual enrollment courses offered at your school.	• Meet with your school counselor to discuss spring classes. • Begin discussing the college application process with parents/guardians if you have not already done so. • Once you receive your ACT/SAT/PSAT scores, make plans for how to maximize the good and plan to improve the rest. • Look ahead to the spring and summer and begin mapping out the dates for your other standardized tests such as AP Placement Exams. • Stay focused on grades.

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY
• Research/Apply to Scholarships (look for ones that allow juniors to apply). • Look at typical college essay topics and pick three topics you feel best suit you. • Continue your research on potential colleges and careers. • Consider asking to job shadow one or more people you know to learn more about those careers firsthand. • Stay focused on grades. • Enroll in ACT/SAT prep classes if available.	• Take college visit days to visit nearby college campuses if your school allows and research scholarships. • Apply for summer programs and jobs. • Begin working on your college essay and resumé. • Schedule a meeting with your school counselor to discuss possible college choices. • Begin to focus on the key 10 to 15 colleges that are a good fit (based on your academics and career choice). • Stay focused on grades.	• Work on your college essay & resumé. • Visit prospective colleges during spring break. • Attend college planning nights, open houses and college fairs. • Develop (if you haven't already) a file for each of the schools on your list. • Start learning about scholarships and grants. • Brainstorm and research rewarding summer jobs, internships, or scholarship opportunities.	• Continue to build your resumé. • Research/Apply to Scholarships (look for ones that allow juniors to apply). • Create a strong schedule for your senior year with dual enrollment classes at your local TCAT, university, or community college. • Consider visiting some of the colleges on your list. • Begin identifying teachers who may be willing to write recommendation letters for you. • Continue reviewing for ACT/SAT retakes.	• Prepare for final exams. • Create a realistic college list you feel good about. • Draft a college essay. • Take AP exams if you have taken AP courses. • Firm up your summer plans, including visits to other colleges on your list. • Push yourself hard to end the year with solid grades.

SUMMER	
• Continue contemplating various careers and colleges. • Ask for summer reading lists. • Build your resumé (extracurricular activities, volunteer, community service).	• SAT/ACT prep. • Apply for scholarships. • Continue to work on your college essay. • Visit college campuses with your family.

Where do I start?

Think about the courses you have already taken or will take in the future. You may need to refer to your school or district's website to find your required courses for graduation. Write in the courses you have completed or those in which you are currently enrolled.

Are you on track to graduate?

TENNESSEE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS				
Subject	**Total Credits Required**	**Course Names**	**Year Taken**	**Grade**
Math	____ **Credits**			
English	____ **Credits**			
Science	____ **Credits**			
Social Studies	____ **Credits**			
Physical Education and Wellness	____ **Credits**			
Personal Finance	____ **Credits**			
Foreign Language May be waived for additional elective focus.	____ **Credits**			
Fine Arts May be waived for additional elective focus.	____ **Credits**			
Elective Focus	____ **Credits**			

Get a Head Start

Early postsecondary opportunities (EPSOs) include a course and/or exam that give students a chance to obtain postsecondary (college) credit while still in high school. They ensure that students are ready to take full advantage of the Tennessee Promise and succeed in education and training after high school. Research has shown that students who participate in early postsecondary courses are more likely to enroll and stay enrolled in college. Early postsecondary opportunities will allow you to:

- **earn postsecondary credits while in high school.**
- **become familiar with postsecondary rigor and expectations.**
- **develop confidence and skills for success in postsecondary learning.**
- **make informed postsecondary and career decisions.**
- **decrease the time and cost of completing a certificate or degree.**

What types of early postsecondary opportunities are available?

Advanced Placement

The College Board's Advanced Placement (AP) Program provides an opportunity for high school students to experience postsecondary-level coursework across multiple subjects. Each course is aligned to a subject-specific AP exam, which provides students the potential to earn credit for postsecondary coursework in that subject.

Cambridge International

A division within the University of Cambridge, Cambridge International Examination provides internationally recognized academic programs for students age 5 to 19. The high school A and AS Level courses, available only through approved Cambridge International Schools, provide students the opportunity to earn postsecondary credit that is accepted by colleges in the U.S. and abroad.

Participating schools design their own Cambridge curriculum based on the needs of their students; some schools may base their whole curriculum on Cambridge qualifications, while others may combine Cambridge with other learning programs.

College Level Examination Program

Developed by the College Board, College Level Examination Program (CLEP) exams can be taken by students and adults to assess mastery of postsecondary-level material acquired in a variety of ways, including through general academic instructions, significant independent study or extracurricular work. Students can earn credit for postsecondary coursework in a specific subject. Examinations are currently offered in 33 subjects at test centers across the state.

Dual Enrollment

Dual enrollment (DE) is a postsecondary course, taught either at the postsecondary institution or at the high school, by postsecondary faculty or credentialed adjunct faculty. Dual enrollment instructors must meet postsecondary requirements, but do not have to meet specific TN teacher licensure or endorsement requirements.

Dual enrollment courses can be taught at the postsecondary campus, the high school, or online. The location of the course does not affect its status as a dual enrollment course.

Students are enrolled at the postsecondary institution and earn postsecondary credit upon completion of the course. High school credit is awarded based on local policy.

International Baccalaureate

The International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program, available only through an approved IB World School, provides high school students the opportunity to take a rigorous, pre-university course of studies. IB courses are aligned to internationally benchmarked exams which provide opportunities for students to earn postsecondary credit while still in high school.

The IB Diploma Program is available to any student aged 16-19 at participating schools.

Dual Credit

Local dual credit is a high school course aligned to a local postsecondary institution's course and exam. Students who pass the exam earn credits that are accepted and/or recognized by the local postsecondary institution. Courses are taught by licensed high school teachers or certified college instructors approved by the school system and the postsecondary institution.

Student Industry Certification

Industry certifications (IC) are earned through secondary and postsecondary career and technical education programs and courses. High school students are encouraged to focus their elective credits on robust, career-aligned learning pathways. Robust learning pathways should culminate with the achievement of nationally recognized industry certifications, meaningful work-based learning experiences, and/or attainment of postsecondary credit hours through early postsecondary opportunities. As it pertains to industry certifications, all certifications approved by the Tennessee Department of Education are aligned with postsecondary and employment opportunities and with the competencies and skills that students should have acquired through their chosen programs of study.

Early postsecondary offerings vary widely by school district. What EPSOs are available at your school?

Of the EPSOs your school offers, which will you take this year and next?

Which semester is the best fit for you with your other commitments (sports, work, and other academic classes)?

The **WHY** is important because this will help you stay motivated in the course and keep your eye on the prize.

EPSO	SEMESTER	WHY WILL THIS HELP MY CAREER PATHWAY?
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

What Do You Value?

As you begin your career search, you should first think about what matters to you. Values are an important part in the career decision-making process. It is important to select career options which best fit your values. The list below will help you to identify those values that you think will be important to you in your work. Your work values may change as work situations change. It is important to evaluate your work values often.

Read each value and decide if it is **always important** to you, **sort of important** or **not important** to you. Place an "X" in the appropriate box. The definition is there to help you think about the value. If your definition is different, use your own definition when rating the value.

1. The core values that are important to me in my life are:	Always Important	Sort of Important	Not Important
Achievement: Being able to meet your goals.			
Balance: Time for family, work and play.			
Independence: Control of your own destiny.			
Influence: Able to have an impact on others.			
Integrity: Stand up for your beliefs.			
Honesty: Telling the truth and knowing that others are telling the truth.			
Power: Control over others.			
Respect: Care and trust of self and others.			
Spirituality: Believing in your core beliefs.			
Status: Having influence and power over others.			

2. I value work environments that are:	Always Important	Sort of Important	Not Important
Fast Paced: Work that has many things happening at one time.			
Flexible: Work that is not set to a specific time schedule.			
High Earnings: Work that has the potential to make a lot of money.			
Learning: Work that is intellectually challenging to you.			
Predictable: Work where you know what is going to happen day after day.			
Quiet: Work where there are few disruptions throughout the day.			
Relaxed: Work where there are few pressures to get things done.			
Structured: Work where it is organized and has a specific set time.			
Time Freedom: Work where you set your own schedule and plan how and when you do your work.			

3. I value work interactions with co-workers who support:	Always Important	Sort of Important	Not Important
Competition: Work where you compete with others.	☐	☒	☐
Diversity: Work where there are people with different ethnic backgrounds.	☐	☐	☐
Friendships: Work where you socialize with your coworkers.	☐	☐	☐
Leadership: Work where there are good leaders managing the organization.	☐	☐	☐
Management: Work where there is strong management.	☐	☐	☐
Open Communication: Work where information is not held back from employees.	☐	☐	☐
Recognition: Work where you are acknowledged for your work and contribution.	☐	☐	☐
Support: Work where you help and support each other.	☐	☐	☐
Teamwork: Work where working together is important.	☐	☐	☐
Trust: Work where you can count on each other.	☐	☐	☐

4. I value work activities that are:	Always Important	Sort of Important	Not Important
Analytical: Work that requires interpretation of data and information.	☒	☐	☐
Challenging: Work that is mentally or physically challenging.	☐	☐	☐
Creative: Work that uses imagination and creative talents to produce results.	☐	☐	☐
Helping: Work that is helping people.	☐	☐	☐
Leading Edge: Work on new and innovative products or projects.	☐	☐	☐
Physical: Work that has a lot of physical activity.	☐	☐	☐
Public Contact: Work that has daily interaction with the public.	☐	☐	☐
Research: Work that searches for new information.	☐	☐	☐
Risk Taking: Work that may be dangerous or risky.	☐	☐	☐
Variety: Work where many different tasks are done during the day.	☐	☐	☐

Your Work Values Profile

Review the "Always Important" values and choose your top five values. Write the values on the lines below with the most important value first. Check the line which indicates the section the value is from.

My Top 5 Always Important Values:	1	2	3	4
1. _____	____	____	____	____
2. _____	____	____	____	____
3. _____	____	____	____	____
4. _____	____	____	____	____
5. _____	____	____	____	____

My Values Work Story

Write a paragraph describing how you see your top five values in your work.

Source: University of California Humanities Research Institute

DID YOU KNOW THAT TENNESSEE OFFERS A WORK ETHIC DIPLOMA?

Intended to promote the importance of work ethic among high school students, the Work Ethic Diploma is awarded to those who successfully demonstrate a number of standards. Recognizing the value of these standards, participating employers agree to grant an interview to any qualified applicant who applies for an open position and has successfully completed the Work Ethic Diploma. For more information and to find out if your school participates, visit http://workethicdiploma.com/Home/About

Research the Right Career for You

Do What You Love

When you think about what job or career you might like, titles like teacher, lawyer, professional basketball player, doctor, or veterinarian might come to mind. But there are literally THOUSANDS of careers, and many (perhaps most) you haven't yet explored. So how can you figure out what might be the best career for you if you haven't even heard of it?

First, complete one or more of the inventories below.

CAREER INTEREST INVENTORY TOOL	EXPLANATION
CollegeforTN *CollegeforTN.org*	Visit CollegeforTN.org to complete the Career Interest Inventory.
Road Trip Nation My Road Map *https://roadtripnation.com/roadmap*	What are the most important elements to you in your planning for the future? Arts, creativity, active sports? Place these desires alongside a database of 1,000 professionals and hear how their stories and journeys to a career began.
Color Personality Profile *https://profile.keirsey.com/#/b2c/assessment/start*	Which color are you? Are you quiet and reserved in a group project, or are you the center of attention at everyone's party? Which color you are could impact the careers that bring you the most personal fulfillment and job satisfaction.

- **Next, research the jobs, careers, or career pathways the inventory suggested for you.** Ask your teacher or school counselor for help, or go online to:

  1. **CollegeforTN.org** - A great place to locate jobs and careers that fit your interests.
  2. **Jobs4TN.gov** - A free website that searches real-life jobs that are updated by the minute.
  3. **TNTransferPathway.org** - Learn about the pathways to get you to a great career in Tennessee, through our Tennessee Board of Regents' schools.

Activity

From your research, what career interests you most?

What education is required to attain that career? (Circle the correct answer below.)

Certificate Associate Bachelors Masters or Higher Internship/Apprenticeship

List three colleges, universities, TCATs, or employers that offer education/training.

What do I do next?

- **Talk to your parents, family members, and other adults about their work.**

  Ask them what they like about what they do, what they don't like about what they do, how they prepared for their job, and what kinds of talents and skills are best suited for that line of work. What is unique about your hometown and how does this impact your family and your future career opportunities? Are there guaranteed jobs in advanced manufacturing or nursing right in your own town? Ask the right people to find out the best answers to your career questions.

  Name one adult you will talk to: _____

- **Explore and try it out.**

  Enroll in classes and volunteer or get a part-time or summer job in your area of interest. For example, if you are interested in veterinary medicine, be sure to take challenging science classes and volunteer at a local animal shelter if possible. If you're interested in fashion design, take some art/design "elective" classes in high school, and try to find entry-level work in a related field, perhaps in a local clothing store. Not only will these steps help you to better know if you want to continue down that path, it will also get you closer to your goal if it is the one you decide to stick with.

  Name one place to volunteer or get a summer job: _____

- **Remember that your interests and plans may change over time.**

  As you go through high school you will have the opportunity to take elective classes, join various school and community organizations, and try out different volunteer positions. Take advantage of those opportunities! You may discover something new that you like, are good at, and would love to make a career of. Talk to your high school counselor frequently to be sure that you are taking the classes that keep ALL your postsecondary options open--just in case you change your mind.

  Name one elective course you might take in your area of interest: _____

MYTH:

When I go to college, I have to pick a major right away or I will fall behind.

REALITY:

At some universities, you have until the end of your sophomore year to choose a major. Spend the first two years taking general education classes while trying out a few potential majors. That timeline may be shortened at a community college or TCAT. Still, you should never feel pressured to rush into a decision.

Tennessee Career Forecast

There are lots of jobs and careers out there. Every great college experience is about preparing you for a successful career. Many colleges prepare you for the careers of your own choosing, while others prepare you for the jobs most in demand in your community. Check out this table of some of the top high-demand occupations in our community. Do any of these jobs sound interesting to you? Which ones require a college degree or credential?

Tennessee - Occupations with High Employer Demand and High Entry Level Earnings

SOC Code	Description	2019 Jobs	2028 Job Projections	Annual Openings	Entry Level Earnings	Entry Level Education
15-1256	Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers	12,030	13,941	1,156	$60,039	Bachelor's degree
11-9111	Medical and Health Services Managers	9,820	13,491	1,207	$58,545	Bachelor's degree
13-1111	Management Analysts	8,360	11,070	1,110	$52,191	Bachelor's degree
11-9021	Construction Managers	6,430	10,418	810	$50,110	Bachelor's degree
19-3031	Clinical, Counseling, and School Psychologists	1,700	3,064	242	$49,739	Doctoral or professional degree
19-1042	Medical Scientists, Except Epidemiologists	1,310	2,022	212	$45,149	Doctoral or professional degree
13-1051	Cost Estimators	2,660	3,161	324	$42,872	Bachelor's degree
15-2031	Operations Research Analysts	1,270	1,934	159	$42,708	Bachelor's degree
47-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	10,410	11,822	1,282	$40,520	High school diploma or equivalent
13-1141	Compensation, Benefits, and Job Analysis Specialists	1,560	2,376	240	$39,906	Bachelor's degree
27-3031	Public Relations Specialists	2,090	2,546	278	$38,283	Bachelor's degree
43-6011	Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants	5,840	6,217	638	$38,132	High school diploma or equivalent
31-2021	Physical Therapist Assistants	3,290	4,466	593	$38,055	Associate degree
49-3011	Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians	1,250	1,294	99	$36,876	Postsecondary Certificate
27-2012	Producers and Directors	1,580	2,780	288	$36,744	Bachelor's degree
17-3098	Calibration Technologists and Technicians and Engineering Technologists and Technicians, Except Drafters, All Other	1,500	1,604	161	$36,574	Associate degree
53-1047	First-Line Supervisors of Transportation and Material Moving Workers, Except Aircraft Cargo Handling Supervisors	13,310	Unavailable	Unavailable	$35,825	High school diploma or equivalent
13-1151	Training and Development Specialists	5,460	6,349	719	$35,673	Bachelor's degree
13-2052	Personal Financial Advisors	2,700	4,079	341	$35,663	Bachelor's degree
21-1012	Educational, Guidance, and Career Counselors and Advisors	4,800	5,728	616	$35,403	Master's degree
13-1071	Human Resources Specialists	12,070	14,075	1,482	$35,275	Bachelor's degree
13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	8,970	11,879	1,328	$35,145	Bachelor's degree
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	6,390	8,479	990	$34,521	High school diploma or equivalent
47-2111	Electricians	12,480	15,192	1,828	$34,349	High school diploma or equivalent
49-9043	Maintenance Workers, Machinery	3,020	4,259	403	$33,027	High school diploma or equivalent

MYTH: MONEY BUYS HAPPINESS

Students might believe that if they get a well-paying job, they will be happy. If they don't like the work, they can spend their non-work hours doing what they love.

REALITY:

Even the best paying jobs can be hard to bear if you don't enjoy what you're doing or if you're unhappy in the atmosphere where you spend eight hours a day. You do need enough money to pay the bills and have a lifestyle you enjoy, but a higher salary is not worth it if you wake up dreading your day and then spend eight hours being miserable.

CAREERS.

YOU CAN GET
THERE FROM HERE.

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SECTION 2

COLLEGE KNOWLEDGE

Did you know there are 5,300 colleges and universities in the United States? There are approximately 184 in Tennessee alone. With so many to choose from, it's important that you do research so you can choose the right school for you. This section contains important information about Tennessee postsecondary institutions and tips to help you make the right choice for your future.

Why Go to College

As you now know, regardless of what career you are thinking about pursuing, you are going to need education or training beyond high school to get there. So what are some of the benefits of postsecondary education — beyond helping you to land your dream job?

Do Work You Enjoy

It's true — there are some jobs that require very little postsecondary education. With a high school diploma and a few days or weeks of on-the-job training you may be able to get a job, but it will probably not be one that you like for long and isn't likely to pay well. If you want work that is more diverse and pays more, it is almost a certainty you will need a postsecondary degree or certificate.

Live the Lifestyle You Want

When you started dreaming about your ideal future, you probably pictured a home, a car, money for health care costs, and time and money for leisure activities. This lifestyle is more likely to be achieved with greater education. Careers that require a postsecondary degree or certificate typically offer far greater benefits.

Earn More Money

A person who successfully completes a postsecondary degree generally earns more money than a person without a degree. Check out the illustration at the left to see what a difference it makes!

Make a Difference in the World

Postsecondary education exposes you to knowledge, world views, and ideas, and helps you develop the critical thinking and problem- solving skills that will position you to positively impact other people and the world around you in ways you can't even imagine. Think about the things you care about, whether it's the environment, children, the living conditions in third world countries, social justice, or health and safety. With the right postsecondary degree, you can make a huge difference!

Keep Your Job

In addition to earning more money and having paid benefits, people with postsecondary degrees are also less likely to be unemployed. That's because in tough economic times, employers want to keep their skilled, trained employees, so those without degrees and training are usually the first to be let go.

Personal Development

Besides the practical reasons for getting a college degree, also consider the personal growth you will likely achieve with higher education. Getting a college education requires you to overcome many challenges and obstacles, preparing you not only for the workplace but for the rest of your adult life.

You will also learn other skills like time management, organization, and multitasking. You will show your ability to organize and manage your time effectively and efficiently to accomplish all your work.

Activity

Which of the benefits above is most important to you? Why?

College Lingo

Normally, we put the glossary at the end of a book, however, there are a lot of acronyms and confusing terms on the road to college. We thought it best to introduce you to the college lingo at the beginning of your college search. Here are a few terms you may have heard but aren't quite sure what they mean. If there's a term you don't see listed here, check with your college/career counselor for assistance.

2+2 programs: A postsecondary pathway in which students begin at a community college where they complete general educational requirements over two or three years and then transfer to a university (for the remaining one or two years) to complete a bachelor's degree.

ACT/SAT: Standardized college entrance exams. Many colleges and universities ask for ACT or SAT scores as part of the application process. ACT stands for American College Testing. SAT stands for Scholastic Assessment Test.

Advisor: A college staff member or professor who helps a student plan and complete a course of study at a college or university.

Application: A form that must be filled out to be considered for entry into a university, community college, or technical school; to be considered for a scholarship or grant; and, in many cases, to be considered for a job.

Associate Degree: A degree granted after successful completion of a course of study requiring approximately 60 credits, typically by a community or junior college. Full-time community college students taking 15 credits per semester can generally finish an associate degree in two years (also known as AA, AS, or AAS degree, short for Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, and Associate of Applied Science.)

ASVAB: A test to determine qualification for enlistment in the U.S. Armed Forces. It stands for Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery.

Award Letter: Notice from a school of the amount and type of financial aid that the school is willing and able to provide a student.

Bachelor's Degree: A degree earned for a course of study that normally requires 120 to 130 credits, involving specific classes related to the student's major. Full-time students ideally complete a bachelor's degree in four years, although changing majors, transferring institutions, taking fewer than 15 credit hours per semester, and/or taking courses that don't count toward one's declared major can make it take longer (also known as BA or BS, short for Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science.)

Certificate: An official document attesting to a particular fact or accomplishment. In the postsecondary realm, students complete a series of specified courses, and sometimes an internship, and typically pass a test to obtain certificates in specific trades or areas of expertise required to work in those fields. Examples include welding, medical technology, auto mechanics, massage therapy, and court stenography.

Community College: A public postsecondary institution (Motlow State, for example) that offers courses to residents in the surrounding area. Students may attend community colleges to obtain associate degrees or technical certificates, or may take courses there toward a bachelor's degree before transferring to a four-year university (2+2 pathway). Students can also take courses to enhance their skills in an area, or just for fun.

Cost of Attendance (COA): The total cost of going to college, including tuition, fees, room and board, books, transportation, and personal expenses.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Program: A kind of administrative relief from deportation. This policy allows young children (under the age of 16) who came to the United States without documentation, and have been educated by U.S. school systems, the opportunity to remain in the U.S. by following specific guidelines.

Early Action: When a student applies for admission to a college by an early deadline (before the regular admission deadline) and receives notice of acceptance, denial, or deferment, with no obligation to the university to enroll.

Early Decision: When a student applies for admission to a college by an early deadline (before the regular admission deadline), with the understanding that if accepted, the student must enroll in that school. Students should apply for early decision only to their first choice school.

Fee Waiver: Permission to not pay a fee, based on meeting some requirement or condition. In the postsecondary realm, waivers of college application fees and ACT or SAT fees are often available for students based on financial need.

Full-Time Student: A student who enrolls in at least a minimum number (determined by your college or university) of credit hours or courses.

Grade Point Average (GPA): The average of all of the course grades you have received in high school, or in college, on a four-point scale.

Ivy League: A group of long-established colleges and universities in the eastern U.S. having high academic and social prestige. It includes Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Columbia, Dartmouth, Cornell, Brown, and the University of Pennsylvania.

Letters of Recommendation: Letters of endorsement (often from high school teachers/staff) written on a student's behalf during the college and/or job application process.

Major: A concentration of study focused on a discipline, which requires completion of specific courses.

Minor: A college or university student's declared secondary academic discipline during their undergraduate studies.

Orientation: A meeting/event many colleges offer (hour-long or days-long) where incoming students and parents/guardians receive information about registering for classes, meet their advisor, and learn about school resources and policies.

Placement Test: Colleges and universities may require students to take tests to determine the appropriate level of college math and/or English needed.

Postsecondary Education: The broadest term to describe any education beyond high school, including community college, university, technical school, etc.

Residence Hall: A building primarily providing living/sleeping quarters for large numbers of students. Also known as a dorm or dormitory and often referred to as "on-campus housing."

Resident: A student who lives in and meets the residency requirements for the state where a public university is located. Tuition at public universities often is more expensive for non-residents.

Resumé: A brief account of a person's education, qualifications, and previous work experience, typically sent with a job application.

ROTC: Programs to train college students to become officers in the U.S. Armed Forces. ROTC stands for Reserve Officer Training Corps.

Room & Board: The cost of a room in a residence hall and a dining hall meal plan at a college or university.

Summer Bridge Programs: Programs offered by many universities and some community colleges, which occur in the summer between high school graduation and fall transition to college. They offer students accelerated, focused learning opportunities that can help better prepare them to succeed in college.

Technical School: A general term used for a college that provides mostly employment-preparation skills for trained labor, such as welding and culinary arts. These programs generally take no more than two years to complete. Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCATs) are examples of this kind of school.

Transcript: An official academic record from a specific school which lists when you attended, the courses you have completed, grades, and sometimes test scores. Universities, colleges, and technical schools usually require high school transcripts be submitted as part of the application process.

Tuition: The amount of money charged for instruction/classes at postsecondary institutions (see also cost of attendance.)

Undeclared/Undecided: A term used to describe a student who has not yet selected a major at a college or university. Colleges typically ask students to pick their major by the end of their sophomore year.

University: A postsecondary college/university that offers undergraduate (bachelors) degrees. Many four-year institutions also offer graduate (master's) degrees.

Consider Your Options

Graduation is not an end, it's a beginning. A fork in the road. There are several paths you can follow, and while a traditional college or university might not be your first choice, it's important to pursue some type of education or training after high school. The most common paths to a good career include the following:

Universities

These schools, sometimes called colleges, generally offer bachelor's degrees that take about four years to complete. They also offer master's degrees, doctoral degrees, and professional degrees. University of Tennessee Knoxville, University of Tennessee Martin, University of Tennessee Chattanooga, University of Tennessee Health Science Center, Austin Peay State University, University of Memphis, Tennessee State University, Middle Tennessee State University, East Tennessee State University, and Tennessee Technological University are the public universities in Tennessee and are selective in their admissions, meaning that not all students who apply will earn admission. There are many private colleges and universities in Tennessee, as well.

Community Colleges

These schools offer associate degrees and certificates. They also offer all the general studies courses needed for a bachelor's degree, and the credit for these courses can be transferred to a university. Completing the general studies requirements at a community college and then transferring to a university to complete the courses in a specific major can be a cost-effective way to complete a bachelor's degree. Community Colleges are also open-enrollment colleges, meaning that all who successfully complete an application within the required deadlines will be granted a seat in the upcoming semester. There are 13 community colleges in Tennessee and many more satellite campuses.

Apprenticeships

Registered apprenticeships provide the opportunity to "earn while you learn." Partnerships between trade organizations, employers, state government, and community colleges provide a program that combines classroom training (which may include college credit courses) and paid, supervised on-the-job training, lasting two to five years. After successful completion of an apprenticeship program, students are eligible for certificates of completion, journeyman status, and/or licenses for specific occupations and trades, such as electrician, carpenter, and horse trainer. Some high schools work closely with Work-Based Learning Opportunities, and some students begin these apprenticeships while still in high school. To learn more, check out www.tn.gov/apprenticeshiptn.

Technical Colleges

These schools are colleges that provide mostly employment-preparation skills for trained labor, such as welding and culinary arts. These programs generally take no more than two years to complete. Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCATs) are examples of this kind of school. Depending on the institution and the field of study, the credential awarded may be a certificate or a diploma and, depending on the program, may take several weeks or up to two years to complete. Tennessee has 27 TCATs across the state. Like community colleges, TCATs offer open enrollment to those students who apply and complete the required steps for admission. Certain programs in high demand may require that students be placed on a waiting list until available spots open up. Apply early and ask your local technical school or TCAT representative to help you navigate the process.

Military Service

The five active-duty branches of the U.S. Military, consisting of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard, each offer educational options tied to multi-year commitments of service. Some students enlist immediately after high school graduation, while others elect to serve in the National Guard while enrolled in college coursework. Others pursue ROTC to help pay for university tuition and then serve after they have graduated from college. To learn more visit www.todaysmilitary.com.

COLLEGE FOR TN

START YOUR COLLEGE AND CAREER SEARCH ON COLLEGEFORTN.ORG

CollegeforTN is a web-based career and educational planning system. The tools found in CollegeforTN will help students build meaningful education and career plans and prepare for their postsecondary education.

Degree Types

The exact training and education you need after high school depends on the career path or interest area you have in mind. Successfully completing classes or training beyond high school (called postsecondary education), should lead you to obtain one or more of the academic credentials described below:

POSTSECONDARY ACADEMIC CREDENTIALS	EXAMPLES
Certificate This credential is awarded to individuals who complete a defined set of requirements, coursework, and sometimes fieldwork and/or an apprenticeship in a specific area. Certificates are usually earned in 12-20 months at community colleges and technical institutions like Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology.	Certificate in Automotive Technology Certificate in Practical Nursing
Associate Degree These are awarded by a community college or junior college to individuals who complete a prescribed course of study, usually taking two years Associate degrees are awarded in specific areas (majors) and often built on the Associate of Applied Science (AAS) and Associate of Arts (AA) degrees.	AAS in Early Childhood Education AAS in Accounting AAS in Medical Laboratory Technician AA in University Parallel Studies
Bachelor's Degree These are awarded by a college or university to individuals completing a specified course of study, usually taking four years. Coursework includes general studies and specific concentration classes (majors). These degrees include the Bachelor of Science (BS), Bachelor of Arts (BA) and Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) foundations. (Also called baccalaureate.)	BS in Engineering BA in English Literature BFA in Dance
Graduate Degree These are awarded by a college or university to individuals who have earned a bachelor's degree who wish to further their education with a masters or doctoral degree. It typically takes two-three years to earn a masters and may take anywhere from 2-6 years or more to earn a doctorate. These degrees include the Master of Arts (MA), Master of Science (MS), Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), and Doctor of Education (EdD).	MA in English Literature MS in Counseling PhD in History EdD in Curriculum and Instruction
Professional Degree Professional degrees are pursued after the completion of a bachelor's degree and can take two to six years to complete. The advanced study and work required for a professional degree prepares the holder for a particular profession by emphasizing competency skills along with theory and analysis.	JD- Lawyer MD- Physician DVM- Veterinarian DDS- Dentist

MYTH:
I don't need college to succeed.

REALITY:

While there are some people who are successful without a college degree, by 2025 nearly three out of four Tennessee jobs will require education or training beyond high school.

Transferring from a Community College to a University

A college degree is valuable. So is your time and money. With the Tennessee transfer programs, you can begin your college studies at a community college or similar two-year program while earning an associate degree, and rest assured that your credits will transfer to a bachelor's degree program at any **public** university and many private universities in Tennessee.

How do the Tennessee Transfer Pathways work?

A student who completes all of the courses listed for the selected major of a Transfer Pathway will be able to earn an Associate of Arts (A.A.) or an Associate of Science (A.S.) degree from a community college. When the student transfers to a Tennessee public or participating private college/university, the transcript will certify that the pathway has been followed. The student is guaranteed that all community college courses taken will be accepted at the college/university, and the courses will count toward completion of the particular major. If a community college student transfers to another Tennessee community college, he or she is guaranteed that all courses transfer.*

TNTransferPathway.org

If you are planning to transfer from a community college to a four-year university, it is important to do your research and plan your pathway in advance to make sure you are taking the correct courses for transferring. www.TNTransferPathway.org has a lot of great resources to help you plan for both your future career and for a successful transfer.

Use www.TNTransferPathway.org to answer the following questions:

Spend some time exploring academic focus areas and majors that interest you. List your top three choices of majors (not focus areas) here:

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Of these three majors, which one would be your top choice?

#1 Choice: _____

According to the website, what is the average salary for this major?

_____

What are three possible careers someone who completed this degree could go into?

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

For your selected degree how many hours of each of the following classes are required?

General Education Total: _____

Area of Emphasis Total: _____

Communication: _____

Humanities and/or Fine Arts: _____

History: _____

Natural Sciences: _____

Mathematics: _____

Name three community colleges that offer this degree.

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Name three four-year public universities where you could transfer.

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Name three four-year private universities where you could transfer.

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

**Admission to UT Knoxville is competitive. For UTK, the Pathways do not guarantee admission.*
**Provided that all other admission criteria are met, individual institutions that are a member of the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association (TICUA) may require courses specific to their mission that do not result in additional time spent toward degree completion.*

Excerpted from: www.TNTransferPathway.org

Tennessee Public Universities

Austin Peay State University

601 College Street, Clarksville, TN 37040
www.apsu.edu

- Total Undergraduate Enrollment: 10,033
- Total Graduate Enrollment: 1,093
- Average ACT: 21.3
- NCES Code: 3944
- CEEB Code: 1028

East Tennessee State University

1276 Gilbreath Drive, Johnson City, TN, 37614
www.etsu.edu

- Total Undergraduate Enrollment: 11,219
- Total Graduate Enrollment: 3,054
- Average ACT: 23.2
- NCES Code: 3958
- CEEB Code: 1198

Middle Tennessee State University

1301 East Main Street, Murfreesboro, TN 37132
www.mtsu.edu

- Total Undergraduate Enrollment: 19,557
- Total Graduate Enrollment: 2,269
- Average ACT: 23.0
- NCES Code: 3994
- CEEB Code: 1466

Tennessee State University

3500 John A. Merritt Boulevard, Nashville, TN 37209
www.tnstate.edu

- Total Undergraduate Enrollment: 5,911
- Total Graduate Enrollment: 2,212
- Average ACT: 18.7
- NCES Code: 4010
- CEEB Code: 1803

Tennessee Technological University

1 William L. Jones Drive, Cookeville, TN 38505
www.tntech.edu

- Total Undergraduate Enrollment: 8,997
- Total Graduate Enrollment: 1,190
- Average ACT: 23.5
- NCES Code: 4012
- CEEB Code: 1804

University of Memphis

3720 Alumni Avenue, Memphis, TN 38152
www.memphis.edu

- Total Undergraduate Enrollment: 17,599
- Total Graduate Enrollment: 4,376
- Average ACT: 22.6
- NCES Code: 3992
- CEEB Code: 1459

University of Tennessee Chattanooga

615 McCallie Avenue, Chattanooga, TN 37403
www.utc.edu

- Total Undergraduate Enrollment: 10.224
- Total Graduate Enrollment: 1,352
- Average ACT: 23.4
- NCES Code: 4022
- CEEB Code: 1831

University of Tennessee Health Science Center

920 Madison Avenue, Memphis, Tennessee 38163
www.uthsc.edu

- Total Undergraduate Enrollment: 224
- Total Graduate Enrollment: 2,964
- Average ACT: 21
- NCES Code: 4030
- CEEB Code: N/A

University of Tennessee Knoxville

1300 Volunteer Boulevard, Knoxville, TN 37996
www.utk.edu

- Total Undergraduate Enrollment: 23,393
- Total Graduate Enrollment: 6,149
- Average ACT: 26.8
- NCES Code: 4026
- CEEB Code: 1843

University of Tennessee Martin

554 University Street, Martin, TN 38238
www.utm.edu

- Total Undergraduate Enrollment: 6,755
- Total Graduate Enrollment: 522
- Average ACT: 22.8
- NCES Code: 4032
- CEEB Code: 1844

Source: Tennessee Higher Education Fact Book 2019-2020 (Enrollment and ACT data is only collected for TN public institutions.)

Tennessee Community Colleges

Chattanooga State Community College

4501 Amnicola Highway, Chattanooga, TN 37406
www.chattanoogastate.edu

- Total Undergraduates: 8,148
- Average ACT: 18.8
- NCES Code: 4041
- CEEB Code: 1084

Cleveland State Community College

3535 Adkisson Drive, Cleveland, TN 37312
www.clevelandstatecc.edu

- Total Undergraduates: 3,383
- Average ACT: 19.8
- NCES Code: 3955
- CEEB Code: 2848

Columbia State Community College

1665 Hampshire Pike, Columbia, TN 38401
www.columbiastate.edu

- Total Undergraduates: 6,455
- Average ACT: 20.1
- NCES Code: 3953
- CEEB Code: 1081

Dyersburg State Community College

1510 Lake Road, Dyersburg, TN 38024
www.dscc.edu

- Total Undergraduates: 2,849
- Average ACT: 18.8
- NCES Code: 3969
- CEEB Code: 7323

Jackson State Community College

2046 North Parkway, Jackson, TN 38301
www.jscc.edu

- Total Undergraduates: 4,946
- Average ACT: 18.6
- NCES Code: 3967
- CEEB Code: 2266

Motlow State Community College

6015 Ledford Mill Road, Tullahoma, TN 37388
www.mscc.edu

- Total Undergraduates: 7,023
- Average ACT: 19.0
- NCES Code: 4003
- CEEB Code: 1543

Nashville State Community College

120 White Bridge Road, Nashville, TN 37209
www.nscc.edu

- Total Undergraduates: 8,019
- Average ACT: 17.6
- NCES Code: 3983
- CEEB Code: 0850

Northeast State Community College

2425 Highway 75, Blountville, TN 37748
www.northeaststate.edu

- Total Undergraduates: 6,100
- Average ACT: 19.4
- NCES Code: 4019
- CEEB Code: 0453

Pellissippi State Community College

10915 Hardin Valley Road, Knoxville, TN 38101
www.pstcc.edu

- Total Undergraduates: 10,800
- Average ACT: 20.2
- NCES Code: 4021
- CEEB Code: 0319

Roane State Community College

276 Patton Lane, Harriman, TN 37748
www.roanestate.edu

- Total Undergraduates: 6,016
- Average ACT: 19.8
- NCES Code: 3985
- CEEB Code: 1656

Southwest Tennessee Community College

5983 Macon Cove, Memphis, TN 38134
www.southwest.tn.edu

- Total Undergraduates: 9,653
- Average ACT: 16.9
- NCES Code: 4004
- CEEB Code: 0274

Volunteer State Community College

1480 Nashville Pike, Gallatin, TN 37066
www.volstate.edu

- Total Undergraduates: 9,227
- Average ACT: 19.1
- NCES Code: 4037
- CEEB Code: 1881

Walters State Community College

500 South Davy Crockett Parkway, Morristown, TN 37813
www.ws.edu

- Total Undergraduates: 6,327
- Average ACT: 19.6
- NCES Code: 4028
- CEEB Code: 1893

Source: Tennessee Higher Education Fact Book 2019-2020 (Enrollment and ACT data is only collected for TN public institutions.)

Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCATs)

College of Applied Technology at Athens
http://www.tcatathens.edu/

College of Applied Technology at Chattanooga
http://www.chattanoogastate.edu/

College of Applied Technology at Covington
http://www.tcatcovington.edu/

College of Applied Technology at Crossville
http://www.tcatcrossville.edu/

College of Applied Technology at Crump
http://www.tcatcrump.edu/

College of Applied Technology at Dickson
http://www.tcatdickson.edu/

College of Applied Technology at Elizabethton
http://www.tcatelizabethton.edu/

College of Applied Technology at Harriman
http://www.tcatharriman.edu/

College of Applied Technology at Hartsville
http://www.tcathartsville.edu/

College of Applied Technology at Hohenwald
http://www.tcathohenwald.edu/

College of Applied Technology at Jacksboro
http://www.tcatjacksboro.edu/

College of Applied Technology at Jackson
http://www.tcatjackson.edu/

College of Applied Technology at Knoxville
http://www.tcatknoxville.edu/

College of Applied Technology at Livingston
http://www.tcatlivingston.edu/

College of Applied Technology at McKenzie
http://www.tcatmckenzie.edu/

College of Applied Technology at McMinnville
http://www.tcatmcminnville.edu/

College of Applied Technology at Memphis
http://www.tcatmemphis.edu/

College of Applied Technology at Morristown
http://www.tcatmorristown.edu/

College of Applied Technology at Murfreesboro
http://www.tcatmurfreesboro.edu/

College of Applied Technology at Nashville
http://www.tcatnashville.edu/

College of Applied Technology at Newbern
http://www.tcatnewbern.edu/

College of Applied Technology at Oneida/Huntsville
http://www.tcatoneida.edu/

College of Applied Technology at Paris
http://www.tcatparis.edu/

College of Applied Technology at Pulaski
http://www.tcatpulaski.edu/

College of Applied Technology at Ripley
http://www.tcatripley.edu/

College of Applied Technology at Shelbyville
http://www.tcatshelbyville.edu/

College of Applied Technology at Whiteville
http://www.tcatwhiteville.edu/

Private Institutions Eligible for Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarships

Baptist College of Health Sciences
www.bchs.edu
Memphis

Belmont University
www.belmont.edu
Nashville

Bethel University
www.bethelu.edu
McKenzie

Bryan College
www.bryan.edu
Dayton

Carson-Newman University
www.cn.edu
Jefferson City

Christian Brothers University
www.cbu.edu
Memphis

Cumberland University
www.cumberland.edu
Lebanon

Fisk University
www.fisk.edu
Nashville

Freed-Hardeman University
www.fhu.edu
Henderson

John A. Gupton College
www.guptoncollege.edu
Nashville

Johnson University
www.johnsonu.edu
Jackson

King University
www.king.edu
Bristol

Lane College
www.lanecollege.edu
Jackson

Lee University
www.leeuniversity.edu
Cleveland

LeMoyne-Owen College
www.loc.edu
Memphis

Lincoln Memorial University
www.lmunet.edu
Harrogate

Lipscomb University
www.lipscomb.edu
Nashville

Martin Methodist College
www.martinmethodist.edu
Pulaski

Maryville College
www.maryvillecollege.edu
Maryville

Milligan University
www.milligan.edu
Elizabethton

Rhodes College
www.rhodes.edu
Memphis

Sewanee: The University of the South
www.sewanee.edu
Sewanee

South College
www.south.edu
Knoxville, Nashville

Southern Adventist University
www.southern.edu
Collegedale

Tennessee Wesleyan University
www.tnwesleyan.edu
Athens

Trevecca Nazarene University
www.trevecca.edu
Nashville

Tusculum University
www.tusculum.edu
Greeneville

Union University
www.uu.edu
Jackson

Vanderbilt University
www.vanderbilt.edu
Nashville

Welch College
www.welch.edu
Nashville

For more information about Tennessee colleges and universities, visit CollegeforTN.org

COLLEGE MYTH
DEBUNKED
COLLEGE MYTH

MYTH:
I could never afford to go to a private college.

REALITY:

Private schools seem more expensive but may have more financial aid available in terms of scholarships and grants—so most students don't end up paying the hefty sticker price. Don't let "sticker" price alone determine whether or not a school is right for you. What really matters is what you're actually likely to pay once scholarships and financial aid are taken into account.

What is the Best Fit for Me?

Deciding which college to attend can be a challenge – there are so many factors to consider!

Decide what is most important to you in a college experience, along with your long-term goals and how college will play a part in achieving those goals. By visiting college websites, talking with current and former students, and reading online reviews, try to learn as much as possible about your potential school.

Below are some things you might want to consider as you research. **Circle the ones that are most important to you.**

TYPE OF SCHOOL

- Two-year or four-year
- Public or private
- University/research institution or liberal arts college
- All male, all female, or coed
- Religious or secular

STUDENT LIFE

- On and off campus activities
- Athletics
- Greek life
- Student organizations
- Safety
- Student body diversity

LOCATION

- Urban or rural
- Size of nearest city
- Distance from home
- Geographic setting and weather

AFFORDABILITY

- Cost of Attendance, COA (tuition, fees, transportation, housing)
- Scholarships
- Campus employment

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- Minimum GPA
- Average test scores
- Required high school courses
- Likelihood of being accepted

HOUSING

- Residence halls
- On/off campus housing
- Meal plan
- Parking for residents and for commuters

ACADEMICS

- Programs and majors offered
- Student–faculty ratio
- Accreditation

SIZE

- Physical enrollment
- Average class size
- Physical size of campus

WHAT OTHER CRITERIA ARE IMPORTANT TO YOU?

How do the schools you're interested in measure up? Here's a chart to help you compare the colleges you are interested in, with the criteria that are most important to you.

	EXAMPLE COLLEGE	UNIVERSITY:	COMMUNITY COLLEGE:	TCAT:
NAME	ROCKY TOP VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE			
TYPE OF SCHOOL	2 YEAR, PUBLIC, COMMUNITY COLLEGE			
STUDENT LIFE	INTRAMURALS, 24 HOUR SECURITY			
LOCATION	SMALL TOWN			
AFFORDABILITY	IN STATE TUITION & FEES: $5,258			
ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS	OPEN ENROLLMENT			
HOUSING	NO ON-CAMPUS HOUSING			
ACADEMICS	73 MAJORS. I'M INTERESTED IN FIRE SCIENCE			
SIZE	6,221 STUDENTS			
OTHER	27.1% GRADUATION RATE, 59.5% RETENTION RATE			
OTHER	STUDENT TO FACULTY RATIO: 19:1			
OTHER	ASPEN PRIZE- NAMED AS ONE OF THE TOP 150 COMMUNITY COLLEGES FOR EXCELLENCE			

College Entrance Exams

Most colleges require that you complete some type of college entrance exam in order to be admitted. Pre-tests allow you to become familiar with these tests before you have to sit for the real thing. Below are descriptions of some of the tests you may be asked to complete.

The **PSAT** (Preliminary SAT), also known as the PSAT/NMSQT® (National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test), is a practice version of the SAT exam. You can only take the PSAT once per year, and many students take the test in both 10th and 11th grade. If you earn a high score on the PSAT your junior year, you could qualify to receive a National Merit Scholarship; $180 million dollars in merit scholarships are awarded to students each year. The PSAT is 2 hours and 45 minutes long and tests your skills in Reading, Writing, and Math. Unlike the SAT, the highest score possible on the PSAT is 1520. Check with your school counselor to see if the PSAT is offered at your school and what the cost would be (fee waivers might be available).

The **ACT** and **SAT** are college admissions tests. Many colleges and programs use ACT or SAT scores in their admission decisions, although some do not, and some specifically require one test or the other. So check the requirements for the colleges in which you're interested. Universities also often use your ACT or SAT score in specific subject areas to determine freshman year course placement, particularly for math.

SAT	vs. ACT
SCORES	
The SAT is scored on a scale of 400 –1600.	The ACT is scored on a scale of 1 – 36.
QUESTIONS	
SAT questions require more time to understand and answer.	ACT questions tend to be more straightforward.
READING	
The SAT has five reading passages.	The ACT has four reading passages.
SCIENCE	
There is no science test on the SAT.	The ACT has a science section that tests your critical thinking skills.
MATH	
Both tests now have the SAME advanced math concepts: arithmetic, algebra I & II, geometry, and trigonometry.	
TOOLS	
Some SAT math questions don't allow you to use a calculator.	You may use a calculator for ALL math questions on the ACT.
ESSAY (OPTIONAL)	
The SAT essay section is more comprehension-focused. You have 50 minutes to complete it.	The ACT wants to see how well you can evaluate and analyze complex issues. You have 40 minutes to complete it.
FREE STUDY RESOURCES	
kahnacademy.org/sat; collegeboard.org, Test Prep Review	**actacademy.act.org; Number2.com**; ACT prep class during the school day; and ACT boot camps held periodically throughout the year

Make a plan and set a goal.

Go to ACTStudent.org to learn about the upcoming ACT national test dates and the costs. Visit https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/ register to learn more about the SAT national test dates. Then, in the chart below, write in the date(s) you have chosen and make a plan.

TEST DATE	REGISTRATION DEADLINE	MY TARGET SCORE IS...

ACT Prep Resources

Applications

1. **ACT Pocket Prep**
   by Pocket Prep Inc.

2. **ACT Prep Coach & Practice Test** by Magoosh

3. **ACT Practice Flashcards**
   by Varsity Tutors LLC

4. **ACT Mastery 2017 Prep**
   by gWhiz LLC

5. **ACT Prep by Ready4**
   by Ready4 Inc.

Websites

1. **ACT Academy**
   academyact.org

2. **Get2College**
   get2college.org/act-tips-strategies

3. **Khan Academy**
   khanacademy.org

4. **Prep Factory**
   prepfactory.com

5. **Prep Scholar Blogs**
   blogsprepscholar.com

6. **Varsity Tutors**
   varsitytutors.com
   Note: This is paid online tutoring

Follow ACT on all social media for updates on free workshops and seminars!

College Fair Tips

College fairs are events that bring admissions officers from various colleges and universities to high schools, convention centers, and community spaces to meet with and answer questions from students and parents.

Before the Fair

Ask yourself the following questions:

- Do I want to attend a large, medium, or small school?
- What major do I wish to study?
- Do I want to attend an urban, suburban, or rural school?
- Do I want to attend a two-year, four-year, single-sex, or religiously-affiliated school?
- Do I want to participate in athletics, clubs, fraternities, sororities, or special programs such as study abroad or cooperative education?

Research colleges attending the fair to determine if they meet your search criteria.

Helpful Questions to Ask Colleges During A College Fair

Admission counselors attend college fairs to help you with any questions you may have about their school to see if it is the right college fit for you. Here are a few sample questions to help you uncover key information. Remember to ask anything specific to your needs and interests and prioritize your questions in order of importance.

1. What do students like most about your school? What is the biggest complaint from students?
2. What kinds of students are happiest at your school?
3. Where do students hang out on campus? Do students mostly live on or off campus?
4. What financial aid programs does your college offer?
5. What academic programs are the most popular at your college?
6. Do admission officers make decisions solely on numbers and stats, or do extracurricular activities truly matter at your school?
7. How would you describe the academic pressure and workload?
8. How does your career planning department compare to other colleges/universities?
9. What are the faculty like and how accessible are they outside of class?
10. Are there internships available specific to my major?
11. Is there job placement help for graduates?
12. Are you able to give me the names of a few students that I can talk to about their experience at your school?

At the Fair

Pick up a fair directory and bag for all of the materials you collect.

Visit schools that match or are the closest match to your search criteria. Be adventurous. Don't just talk to the well-known schools.

Ask the college representative to scan your barcode. This will allow the representative to follow up with you directly—and quickly.

Ask the same questions to each college representative you visit.

Take notes. Write down what you find most interesting about each college.

Attend an information session to learn more about the college search process, financial aid, and other topics.

After the Fair

Review college websites, catalogs, and viewbooks to gather more information to help narrow your choices.

Send a thank you note/email to the college representatives you met. This simple gesture can show admission officials you're serious about wanting to attend their college.

Source: Nacacfairs.org

Campus Visits

Visiting multiple schools will allow you to gain perspective on what kind of environment you are looking for. Can you picture yourself living there for the next four years? If not, maybe that isn't the right school for you. Visits also show the school that you are interested in them. That could be important when it comes time to decide admission at a selective school or award scholarships.

While on your campus visit, talk to as many people as you can and get a feel for the atmosphere. Don't pass up a chance to ask questions. Use this campus visit checklist to assist you during your campus tours.

- Visit the school's website to learn how to set up a campus tour. Tours are usually scheduled throughout the day, so your family may wish to plan the day around the tour.
- Schedule interviews with campus officials in admission, academic advising, housing and in your field of study. Ask about the number of classes you should take each semester, meal plans, and parking.
- Read a school newspaper to get an idea of the campus culture. Drop in at the Student Life office to ask about student organizations and student activities.
- Grab any financial aid or application forms you may need. Ask about the school's scholarship and FAFSA deadlines.
- If possible, sit in on a class that interests you.
- Scan bulletin boards to see what activities are available. This is also a good way to get a feel for job opportunities in the area.
- Eat in the cafeteria or around campus to check out the dining options available to you.
- Visit at least one residence hall (dorm) if you plan to live on campus. Ask about dorm security practices and for a list of what you can and can't bring with you to the dorm.
- Talk with current students about campus life and ask questions.
- Ask someone in the health clinic about their hours and the services they provide.
- Talk to coaches or sponsors of activities that interest you.
- Visit the college bookstore to price new and used books.
- Stop by the library and ask about their checkout procedures.
- Do you need childcare? Ask about campus services in the area.

Ask Questions

Questions to ask your tour guide or students you meet on college campuses:

- What are you studying?
- Can you tell me some ways that your professors have made the classroom experience exciting? Examples include guest lecturers, field trips, hands-on learning.
- Have you had an internship? Do you plan on having one or more? Are they easy to get?
- Do you interact with your professors?
- What is the social life like on campus?
- What do students usually do on weekends?
- How would you describe the student body?
- What are the Residence Halls like?
- Can students live on campus for 4 years? Can they live off campus?
- Can students have cars on campus?
- How is the food?
- Why did you choose this school?
- Are you happy here?

Applying to College

Here are answers to a few of the most commonly asked questions about applying to college:

When should I start?

The summer before your senior year is the best time to start. Most students do the majority of their application work in the fall of their senior year.

How do I begin?

Find out what goes into an application and begin collecting the materials you need. Create a folder for each college you are applying to. At the front of each folder, put a checklist of what you'll need for the application and when it's due.

How many colleges should I apply to?

To increase your chances of getting into a selective school—and to account for colleges you may not have considered before—we recommend a balanced list. A balanced list includes at least 3 reach colleges, 2 matches, and 1 safety school. They should all be colleges you'd be happy to attend.

What are reach, realistic, and safety schools?

- **Reach:** Your SAT or ACT score is lower than the average score range of last year's freshman class.
- **Realistic:** Your SAT or ACT score is solidly in the same score range as last year's freshman class.
- **Safety:** Your SAT or ACT score is higher than the average score range of last year's freshman class.

Should I apply early?

It depends. If you are sure about which college you want to attend, early decision or early action might be the best choice for you.

- *Early decision* is for students who only want to apply to their first-choice college. If you apply ED you enter a legally binding plan that means you must attend the school if you're accepted. You also have to withdraw any applications to other schools you applied to. You can only apply to one college early decision and must accept the financial aid package the college offers you. And you need to complete your application early—sometimes as early as November. Colleges often respond quickly to early decision applications, usually in December.
- *Early action* is when a student applies to college early and gets an early admission decision. If you apply early action you enter a non-binding plan that doesn't require you to attend if you're accepted. Often, you can apply early action to more than one school. If you're accepted early action, you can wait until spring to make your decision, which gives you more time to review other offers of admission and financial aid packages.

If you're not sure, keep in mind that some early application plans require you to commit early. You may want to keep your options open.

Should I use an online or a paper application?

Check with the college to see which is preferred. Most colleges prefer online applications because they are easier to review and process—some even offer a discount in the application fee if you apply online. Applying online can also be more convenient for you—it's easier to enter information and correct mistakes. Whichever method you choose, be sure to tell your school counselor where you have applied so your school transcript can be sent to the right colleges

Should I send additional material?

It's best if you can express everything about your qualifications and qualities in the materials requested. Colleges spend a great deal of time creating their applications to make sure they get all the information they need about each applicant. If you feel it's absolutely necessary to send additional material, talk to your counselor about it. Some arts programs may require portfolios or videos of performances. Check with the college to find out the best way to submit examples of your work. Most colleges charge application fees. Ask your school counselor about possible fee waivers.

What are the Coalition, Common, and Universal College Applications?

These are examples of college application services that provide standardized applications which allow you to apply to multiple schools with a single application. Instead of filling out eight different applications, you can simply fill out one and submit it to each college.

The Coalition Application is accepted by more than 90 institutions.

The Common Application is a standardized application used by nearly 700 colleges. Each year, nearly a million students use the Common Application to submit over 4 million applications.

The Universal College Application is accepted by more than 30 colleges and universities. You can register as an applicant in order to start applying.

Be aware that you may need to submit additional or separate documents to some colleges. You also still need to pay individual application fees for each college.

Should I apply to colleges if my admission-test scores or grades are below their published ranges?

Yes. The admission scores and grades that colleges show on their websites are averages or ranges—not cutoffs. There are students at every college who scored lower (and higher) than the numbers shown.

Remember that colleges consider many factors to get a more complete picture of you. For example, they look at the types of classes you take, your activities, recommendation letters, your essay and your overall character. Colleges are looking for all kinds of students with different talents, abilities, and backgrounds. Admission test scores and grades are just two parts of that complete picture.

Should I even bother applying to colleges I don't think I can afford?

Absolutely. Remember that after financial aid packages are determined, most students will pay far less than the "sticker price" listed on the college website. You don't know if you can afford a college until after you apply and find out how much aid that college will offer you (if you're accepted). Fill out the FAFSA as early as possible after October 1 of your senior year to qualify for the most aid. Even if the aid package the college offers is not enough, you have options. Many colleges are willing to work with students they have chosen for admission to ensure that those students can afford to attend.

Source: bigfuture.collegeboard.org

Collecting Personal Information

Take a few minutes to fill out this form. Leave areas blank if they do not apply to you, then with your high school transcript in hand, you'll have everything you need to complete most college applications next year. You might need to work with your parent or family members to get all of the details. When it comes time to apply, many universities charge a fee –$25 or $50 application fees are common. If you are unable to pay the required fee, talk to the college's admissions office and your college/career counselor to ask about fee waivers.

CONTACT INFORMATION	
Full Name (first, middle, last)	
Street Address	
PO Box	
City, State, Zip Code	
Home Phone Number	
Mobile Phone Number	
Email Address (not your high school email address)	
Social Security Number	
Driver's License Number and Date Issued	
Date of Birth	
SCHOOL INFORMATION	
Name of Current High School	
Street Address, City, State, Zip Code	
Telephone Number	
Expected Graduation Date	
Name of Previous High School Attended	
Street Address, City, State, Zip Code	
Telephone Number	
Dates Attended	
COLLEGES ATTENDED/COLLEGE CREDITS EARNED (List any college from which you expect to receive credit - including dual enrollment or concurrent enrollment)	
College Name	
Street Address, City, State, Zip Code	
Dates Attended	
Course Name/Number of Credits	
Course Name/Number of Credits	
Potential College Major	

TESTING (ACT AND SAT)

SAT TEST SCORE (IF APPLICABLE)

Date (Month/Year)	Comp Score

ACT TEST SCORE: 1ST ATTEMPT

Date 1 (Month/Year)				Comp Score			
Subscore English		Subscore Math		Subscore Reading		Subscore Science	

ACT TEST SCORE: 2ND ATTEMPT

Date 2 (Month/Year)				Comp Score			
Subscore English		Subscore Math		Subscore Reading		Subscore Science	

ACT TEST SCORE: 3RD ATTEMPT

Date 3 (Month/Year)				Comp Score			
Subscore English		Subscore Math		Subscore Reading		Subscore Science	

ATHLETICS, CLUBS, AND ORGANIZATIONS

LIST YOUR ROLE/POSITION EACH YEAR

List Name of Club/ Sports Team	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior

HONORS & AWARDS		
NAME AND DATE OF AWARD	REASON FOR AWARD/HONOR	SPONSOR

COMMUNITY SERVICE			
NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION/CONTACT	DESCRIPTION OF VOLUNTEER SERVICE	NUMBER OF HOURS OF SERVICE	DATE(S) OF SERVICE

Family Information and Other Personal Information

Student's Status: ☐ US Citizen ☐ Permanent US Resident ☐ Refugee ☐ Asylee ☐ DACA

☐ Other: _____

State of Residence: _____

Have either of your parents earned a bachelor's degree or higher? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are your parents affiliated with the U.S. military? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Emergency Contact

Name/Relationship: _____

Phone Number: _____

Address: _____

_____

Writing a Personal Statement

Many college and scholarship applications require an essay or personal statement, but it can be hard to know where to start. Here are some do's and don'ts for writing a memorable personal statement:

Choose a topic that will highlight you

- **DON'T focus on the great aspects of a particular college, the amount of dedication it takes to be a doctor, or the number of extracurricular activities you took part in during high school.**
- **DO share your personal story and thoughts. Take a creative approach and highlight areas that aren't covered in other parts of the application, like your high school records.**
- **DON'T try to cover too many topics. This will make the essay sound like a resumé that doesn't provide any insight into your personality.**
- **DO focus on one aspect of yourself so the readers can learn more about who you are. Remember that the readers must be able to find your main idea and follow it from beginning to end. Ask a parent or teacher to read just your introduction and tell you what he or she thinks your essay is about.**

Show, don't tell

- **DON'T simply state a fact to get an idea across, such as "I like to surround myself with people with a variety of backgrounds and interests."**
- **DO include specific details, examples, and reasons to develop your ideas. For the example above, describe a situation when you were surrounded by various types of people. What were you doing? With whom did you talk? What did you take away from the experience?**

Use your own voice

- **DON'T rely on phrases or ideas that people have used many times before. These could include statements like, "There is so much suffering in the world that I feel I have to help people." Avoid overly formal or business-like language, and don't use unnecessary words.**
- **DO write in your own voice. For the above example, you could write about a real experience that made you feel you had to take action.**
- **DON'T plagiarize. Admissions officers will be able to tell.**

Ask a teacher or parent to proofread

- **DON'T turn your essay in without proofreading it, and don't rely only on your computer's spell check to catch mistakes. Even the best spell check programs aren't error free.**
- **DO ask a teacher or parent to proofread your essay to catch mistakes. You should also ask the person who proofreads your essay if the writing sounds like you.**

Adapted from: www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org

Writing a Standout Essay

Scholarship applications often require applicants to write a short (one to two page) essay in response to specific prompts. Examples include the following:

- **If you had the authority to change your school in a positive way, what specific changes would you make?**
- **Describe how you have demonstrated leadership ability both in and out of school.**
- **Pick an experience from your own life and explain how it has influenced your development.**

The tips below can help you get started on a standout essay. Don't forget your English teacher is a great resource.

Introduction (first paragraph)

Tip: Provide an overview of what you are going to talk about in the essay; be sure it is responsive to the essay prompt. If the essay is about you, give a brief description of your experiences, aspirations, family background, etc. Touch on why you want the scholarship.

Body (paragraph two to three)

Tip: Go into more detail on one of the topics listed in the first paragraph. For example, elaborate on your previous experiences, family and financial situation, volunteer work, employment, academic career, future goals, college plans, etc.

Conclusion (last paragraph)

Tip: Close your essay with a wrap-up of why you should be considered for the scholarship and how your goals match those of the organization. Avoid stating, "In conclusion..." and don't regurgitate what you wrote in earlier paragraphs.

Keep in mind that all scholarship and college admission applications are different, so you will have to craft your essay to meet specific requirements and the expectations of the scholarship awarding organization. Look closely at the question or prompt on the application and research the organization giving the scholarship so that you can tailor your essay.

MYTH:
College essays don't matter.

REALITY:
Your essay reveals something important about you that your grades and test scores can't—your personality. It can give admissions officers a sense of who you are, as well as showcasing your writing ability.

Letters of Recommendation

Many of your applications – to schools, for scholarships and jobs – will require that you provide letters of recommendation. A teacher, counselor, coach, supervisor, or any other adult who will be able to share with the selection committee why you deserve to be chosen may write these letters.

Consider someone who can discuss your personal character, strengths and challenges; someone who knows you and has experience interacting with you. If you need more than one letter for the same application, select individuals familiar with different aspects of your life to write them (e.g., one teacher, your supervisor at work, and your soccer coach.)

Who might you ask for a letter of recommendation?

Reference Name	Email	Phone Number

Always ask the individual ahead of time if they would be able to write a recommendation letter for you. You do not want to miss an application deadline because the person writing your letter was too busy. Give them at least two weeks' notice (three to four is even better.)

Provide the individual with a list of your honors, awards, athletic involvement, community service, and academic record as well as any other pertinent information you would like included in the letter. Giving the individual a copy of your resumé is an efficient way to provide that information. If a specific form or format is required for the letter of recommendation, include that information in your request. (See the next page for a sample request form.)

Provide the individual(s) with the necessary forms, addresses, and/or stamped, addressed envelopes.

Follow up with the individual to ensure they don't need any additional information from you.

Always write a thank you note to anyone who writes a letter for you. Letters of recommendation take time, and people put a lot of thought and effort into them. You do not want to take them for granted.

Recommendation Request Form

Student name: _____

How to contact me: _____
(phone number and/or email address)

THE LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION IS DUE BY: _____

This recommendation is needed for (purpose): _____

Please address the letter of recommendation to the following name and address:

Name of organization: _____

To the attention of: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

My resumé is attached. Additionally, the information below may be useful in your preparation of this letter of recommendation for me.

The subjects I enjoy most are/because:

The subject that has given me the most difficulty is/because:

I handled the (above) difficult situation by:

Looking back at the past four years, I'm most proud of:

☐ Please call or email me when the letter is ready for pick up.

☐ Please mail the letter in the stamped/addressed envelope that I provided.

Thank you in advance for your time and agreeing to recommend me.

Creating an Activity Resume

The **activity résumé** is a great opportunity for you to explain important activities and accomplishments to admissions committees. By offering concrete information about yourself in a concise form, you seem more real and more interesting to the committees. Here are some tips to help you make the most of your résumé.

Tip 1: Write only about high school accomplishments

Some people get tempted to include winning the spelling bee in junior high school. As with your grades, colleges and universities are only interested in what you have been doing within the last three to four years.

Tip 2: Organize your thoughts and follow the pattern of the résumé

You don't want your readers to get lost in the résumé. Activities and interest should be organized by categories. Bolding and underlining should be consistent throughout.

Tip 3: Use clear terminology that your audience will understand

Admissions committees may not automatically understand abbreviations or special terminology that your schools (or even yourself) use in everyday vocabulary. Spell out abbreviations and describe activities so that anyone can understand at first glance.

Tip 4: Be clear and concise

Beware: you can overdo your résumé. In some cases, people tend to ramble on about every activity or put in every accomplishment. Try to adhere to this rule of thumb when describing your activities:

- Describe the activity (in one sentence)
- Describe your personal involvement (in one sentence)
- Describe any awards or honors associated (in one sentence)

Tip 5: Remember that résumés do not replace activity sections on applications

Some applicants think that because they completed a résumé, they do not need to fill out the activity or employment sections on the applications. That is not true. Unless the application says that you can attach a résumé in place of filling out the section, then you must do both. If you do both, make a note on the bottom of the activity section and state "please see attached résumé."

Tip 6: Don't repeat your essay

Both your activity résumé and your essay give you a chance to highlight your accomplishments. Try not to repeat information. If you spend a lot of time talking about one of your activities in your essay, there is no need to go into great detail about it in your résumé, and vice versa. It's ok to mention something in both places, but there is no need to go into great detail more than once.

If you follow these simple tips, you will have added a strong component to your application.

What to Include in Your Activity Résumé

Aside from your contact information, which should be clearly visible at the top of the document, you will want to provide whatever is applicable of the following information:

- The name of your high school and anticipated graduation date
- Cumulative, weighted GPA
- Academic awards, publications, honors, or recognitions
- Class rank (if it is available and will add value to your application)
- Summer programs, internships, or college courses not otherwise listed in your transcript
- Extracurricular activities—clubs, sports organizations, and any leadership positions you may have held
- Community service
- Job experience
- Special skills (proficiency in American Sign Language, Adobe Photoshop, etc.)

SECTION 3

PAYING FOR COLLEGE

Paying for College

If you're concerned about how you're going to pay for your college or university experience, consider this:

- In Tennessee, every legal resident has the opportunity to attend a public community college or technical college tuition-free.
- College might not cost as much as you think. In fact, most families overestimate the price tag.
- There is help available. Financial aid can make paying for school realistic.
- Your education is a long-term investment. On average, college graduates earn twice as much as those with high school diplomas.
- Using the Net Price Calculator, you can find out the cost of any college or university. https://collegecost.ed.gov/net-price

What is Financial Aid?

Financial aid is money to help you pay for college. It may be in the form of grants, scholarships, loans, work-study programs, or a combination. The aid comes from federal and state governments, colleges and universities, banks, and private organizations.

Applying to receive financial aid is a separate process from applying for admission to a college; you have to do both. For all government aid, and much private and institutional aid, you apply using the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA (see the following pages in this section for more details).

PRIMARY SOURCES OF FINANCIAL AID	
Grants	Grants are free money – they don't have to be repaid. Grants come from the state and federal government as well as from colleges. Generally, grants are based on financial need, which means that they are awarded based on your family's size and financial circumstances. One example of a grant is the Pell Grant from the federal government. For 2021-2022, the maximum grant, which is available to students with the most financial need, was $6,495.* To earn a Pell Grant, you must be a U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen and must complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid).
Scholarships	Scholarships are also free money and don't need to be repaid. Scholarships can come from a variety of places, from state and federal governments to colleges and private companies. Scholarships may be awarded based on your financial need, academic achievement, community service, athletic talent, and many other factors.
Loans	Loans are money that you borrow from a bank, government, or private lending company. A loan must be repaid with interest. Loans offered by the government often have lower interest rates and can be repaid over an extended period of time. Visit **www.studentaid.gov** for more information.
Work-Study	Work-Study allows you to receive funds through part-time employment while you are enrolled in college and can help you pay part of your college costs. Unlike other campus jobs, students apply for Work-Study by submitting the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

**This amount may change every year.*

Sources of Financial Aid

Very few students get all of their financial aid for college from one source. When you are searching for financial aid, consider a wide variety of options and apply to as many programs as possible. Here are some common types of organizations that offer financial aid:

- **Your College:** Colleges and universities offer financial aid programs for their students. Visit the financial aid webpages of every college you are considering and apply for all of the scholarships you think you might be eligible to receive.

- **The Community:** Nonprofit organizations, foundations, and businesses often provide scholarships as a community service. To find these programs, talk to your school counselor.

- **The Government:** The Federal Government offers over $150 billion in aid each year. Likewise, Tennessee offers millions of dollars to its students. On the next pages, you will find a description of some of the scholarships available from the State of Tennessee.

Tennessee Financial Aid

To qualify for these scholarships and grants, a student must **complete the FAFSA**, be a U.S. citizen, or an eligible non-citizen (with some exceptions) and be a Tennessee resident one year prior to the application deadline. In Tennessee, to be eligible for the most amount of scholarship money and financial aid, every senior must complete the FAFSA before February 1.

Tennessee HOPE Scholarship

The HOPE Scholarship is worth up to $1,750 per semester for four-year institutions and two-year institutions that offer on-campus housing; up to $1,500 per semester for two-year institutions.

Requirements:

- Minimum 21 ACT composite (or concordant equivalent on the SAT) on a national or state test date OR
- Final cumulative 3.0 GPA* for entering freshmen graduating from eligible public or category 1, 2, or 3 private high schools

Aspire Award

The Aspire Award provides up to $750 per semester at four-year institutions and up to $250 per semester at two-year institutions as a SUPPLEMENT to the Tennessee HOPE Scholarship.

Requirements:

- Meet Tennessee HOPE Scholarship requirements AND
- Parents' or independent student's (and spouse's) adjusted gross income must be $36,000 or less on tax form
- Students may receive ASPIRE or GAMS (see below), but not BOTH

General Assembly Merit Scholarship (GAMS)

The award amount is up to $500 per semester as a SUPPLEMENT to the Tennessee HOPE Scholarship

Requirements:

- At least a final cumulative 3.75 GPA* AND 29+ ACT composite (or concordant equivalent on the SAT) on a national test date or state test date

Wilder-Naifeh Technical Skills Grant

The award amount is up to $2,000 per academic year.

Requirements:

- Available to anyone who enrolls in a certificate or diploma program at a Tennessee College of Applied Technology and meets residency requirements

Tennessee Promise

The Tennessee Promise is a scholarship and mentoring program that allows students in Tennessee to attend a community or technical college tuition-free. It provides students a last-dollar scholarship, meaning the scholarship will cover the cost of tuition and mandatory fees not covered by the Pell Grant, the HOPE Scholarship, or the Tennessee Student Assistance Award. Students may use the scholarship at any of the state's 13 community colleges, 27 colleges of applied technology, or other eligible institutions offering an associate degree program.

Requirements:**

- Apply for the scholarship
- Complete the FAFSA
- Attend a mandatory mentor meeting
- Complete and report eight hours of community service

Tennessee Student Assistance Award (TSAA)

The amount of the award is based on the institution indicated on the student's FAFSA. Award amounts for an academic year are: four-year/two-year private - $4,000, four-year public/career schools - $2,000, two-year public - $1,300, and Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology - $1,000.

Requirements:

- Expected Family Contribution (EFC) of 3,500 or less on the FAFSA
- Priority for this award is given to U.S. citizens

**GPA is based on a 4.0 scale according to the Uniform Grading Policy adopted by the Tennessee State Board of Education*
***Ensure that all requirements are completed before their deadlines.*

Federal Student Aid

What is federal student aid?

Federal student aid comes from the federal government—specifically, the U.S. Department of Education. It's money that helps a student pay for higher education expenses. Federal student aid covers such expenses as tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, and transportation. There are three main types of federal student aid: grants, work-study, and loans.

Who gets federal student aid?

Every student who meets certain eligibility requirements can get some type of federal aid, regardless of age or family income. Some of the most basic eligibility requirements are that you must:

- **Demonstrate financial need, for most programs.**
- **Be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen.**
- **Have a valid Social Security number.**
- **Register (if you haven't already) with Selective Service if you are a male between ages 18–25.**
- **Be enrolled or accepted for enrollment in an eligible degree or certificate program.**
- **Maintain satisfactory academic progress in college, career or technical school, or graduate school.**

The full list of eligibility requirements is available at **www.StudentAid.gov/eligibility.**

Pre-FAFSA Information

It's important to note that you can't complete the FAFSA until October 1 of your senior year. Before you sit down to file the FAFSA, it is important that you take the time to gather all of the information you will need. Use this checklist to make sure you have everything you need with you when you get ready to file the FAFSA.

Information Needed

- Your email address (not your high school email) and cell phone number
- Parent email address and cell phone number
- If you are a Tennessee resident, the month and year you began living in Tennessee
- If your parents are Tennessee residents, the month and year your parents began living in Tennessee
- Your Social Security Number
- Your parents' Social Security Numbers
- If you are not a U.S. citizen, your permanent resident/green card
- Your parents' dates of birth
- Your driver's license or state ID, if you have one
- The month and year your parents were married, divorced or separated
- The highest level of school your parents completed

Documents

- W-2 forms for you and your parents*
- Federal income tax forms for you and your parents*
- Most current statements from all accounts (checking, savings, investments, etc.)
- Child support paid or received
- Value of investments, farms, or business
- Other prior year benefits (workers comp, military, clergy, veteran amounts)

**The tax forms you and your family submit during your junior year are the ones you will use to complete the FAFSA during your senior year.*

What Types of Federal Student Aid are Available?

The following chart outlines the most common types of federal student aid:

PROGRAM AND TYPE OF AID	PROGRAM INFORMATION	AWARD AMOUNT (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)
Federal Pell Grant *A grant: does not need to be repaid.*	For undergraduates with financial need who have not earned a bachelor's or professional degree. **StudentAid.gov/pell-grant**	Amounts can change annually. For 2021-2022, the maximum award amount was $6,495
Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG) *A grant: does not need to be repaid.*	For undergraduates with exceptional financial need; federal Pell Grant recipients take priority; funds depend on availability at a school. **StudentAid.gov/fseog**	Up to $4,000
Federal Work-Study *Work-Study: money earned through a job and doesn't have to be repaid.*	For undergraduate students, part-time jobs can be on campus or off-campus. Money is earned while attending school. Your total work-study award depends on: - When you apply - Your level of financial need - Your school's funding level **Student Aid.gov/workstudy**	No annual minimum or maximum amounts
Federal Loans *A loan must be repaid with interest.* *Before you take out a loan, it's important to understand that a loan is a legal obligation that makes you responsible for repaying the amount you borrow with interest. Even though you don't have to begin repaying your federal student loans right away, you shouldn't wait to understand your responsibilities as a borrower.* *To find out what your potential student loan payment might be, visit the loan simulator at: https://studentaid.gov/loan-simulator/borrow-more/wizard/enrollment-info/current-or-future*	**Subsidized Loans:** The U.S. Department of Education generally pays interest while the student is in school; the student must be enrolled at least half-time. **StudentAid.gov/sub-unsub** **Unsubsidized Loans:** The borrower is responsible for interest during all periods, including while the student is enrolled. A student must be enrolled at least part-time. **StudentAid.gov/sub-unsub** **Direct PLUS Loan:** For parents of dependent undergraduate students; the borrower is responsible for interest during all periods, including while the student is enrolled; a student must be enrolled at least half-time; financial need is not required; the borrower must not have adverse credit history. **StudentAid.gov/plus**	**Subsidized Loans:** Up to $5,500 depending on grade level and dependency status. **Unsubsidized Loans:** Up to $20,500 (less any subsidized amounts received for the same period) depending on grade level and dependency status. **Direct Plus Loan:** Maximum amount is the cost of attendance minus any other financial aid received.

**Excerpted from Federal Student Aid at a Glance 2019-2020 Worksheet https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/sites/default/files/aid-glance-2019-20.pdf*

SECTION 4

ENLISTING IN THE MILITARY

Military Websites

- Air Force- www.airforce.com
- Army- www.goarmy.com
- Coast Guard- www.gocoastguard.com
- Marines- www.marines.com
- Navy- www.navy.com
- National Guard- www.nationalguard.com

General Information About Military Enlistment

If you are interested in joining a branch of the U.S. military immediately after high school graduation, this section includes resources that may be helpful as you prepare to enlist. Time in the military can teach you a valuable trade, prepare you for a life-long career serving your country, or simply give you time to decide what you want to do next. It can be a valuable experience with good benefits and structure.

Consider speaking with relatives or friends who have served or are currently serving. Additionally, recruiters can tell you about the different branches and help with answering this question.

Before you become part of the military, there is one test that you'll need to take — the ASVAB. There are websites that can help to prepare you for that. In the coming pages, you'll find references for these and other helpful websites.

Military Recruiters

A military recruiter can help answer questions about service, providing a positive but realistic assessment of opportunities. A recruiter's job is to find qualified candidates for his or her respective service and provide the candidates with information about – and reasons for – joining the military. Students interested in military service are advised to talk with a recruiter for the branch of the military in which they are interested. Your high school college/career counselor can tell you when military recruiters will be at your high school.

Selective Service

According to law, a man must register with Selective Service within 30 days of his 18th birthday. Selective Service accepts late registrations up until a man reaches his 26th birthday.

Failure to register is a felony and non-registrants may be denied the following benefits for life:

- Federal (and some state) student loans and grant programs
- Federal job training under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (formerly Workforce Investment Act)
- Federal (and many state and local) jobs or security clearance as a contractor
- Up to a 5-year delay of U.S. citizenship proceedings for immigrants

Types of Military Service

Active Duty (Full-Time)

"Active-duty service members are full-time members of the Military, living on base or in military housing and immersed in military culture. After attending boot camp, they are stationed at a base either domestically or overseas. Active-duty terms typically last two to six years."

Reserve (Part-Time)

"Each active-duty branch of the Military has a Reserve component under their command, which is available for active-duty deployment in times of war or national emergency. Reservists are part-time service members, which allows them time to pursue a civilian career or college education while simultaneously serving their country. Members of the Reserve attend boot camp and are required to participate in training drills one weekend a month as well as a two-week program each year."

National Guard (Part-Time)

"The National Guard consists of the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard. The Guard's main focus is on homeland security, humanitarian relief, and training drills one weekend a month and two full weeks per year.

National Guard units assist communities in their state during emergencies like storms, floods, fires and other natural disasters. National Guard members are part-time service members, which allows them time to pursue a civilian career or college education while simultaneously serving their country."

Applying to Military Service Academies

Federal military academies provide learners with a complete postsecondary education and leadership training. In return for a four-year degree financially covered by the government, graduates commit to serving in the military after finishing their training. Enrollees also typically receive free room and board during their studies. Typical postgraduate obligations ask for five years of service. Students can choose from five federal military academies, each representing a branch of the armed forces. While graduates tend to enlist with their academy's parent organization, they can also serve other segments of the military. To ensure they enroll only the top candidates, these academies have challenging admission requirements. Enrollees who do not complete their education or their service obligations typically need to repay their tuition to the government.

The five federal military academies vary in their application approaches and admission requirements. In general, applicants need strong academic achievements, physical capabilities, and leadership qualities. Along with academic training, enrollees participate in regular military training and preparation.

Service academies or military colleges require that applicants be nominated by a member of Congress. A congressman will typically select 10 potential candidates, and then use a competitive nomination process to select a single candidate to endorse. The nine runners-up are usually placed on a waiting list, so if the selected candidate decides against a military college, an alternate can be selected. To improve your chances of success, you should apply for nomination from more than one representative or senator.

ROTC Programs - An Alternative to Enlistment

ROTC stands for Reserve Officer Training Corps. It's a college program offered at over 1,700 colleges and universities across the United States that prepares young adults to become officers in the U.S. military. In exchange for a paid college education and a guaranteed post-college career, cadets commit to serve in the military after graduation. Each service branch has its own take on ROTC, and universities that offer ROTC may offer it for one, some, or all of the military branches. More information about ROTC is available on these Websites:

todaysmilitary.com/training/rotc
bestcolleges.com/resources/rotc-programs

Military Career Opportunities

There are literally thousands of jobs in the military. These jobs vary in the type of work as well as level of responsibility, yet each job is essential to accomplishing the overall mission of defending our country. To see military careers that might be a good fit for you, visit www.careersinthemilitary.com/home

Boot Camp Preparation

Going in physically and mentally strong to basic training will provide you with the confidence you need to successfully complete the training. If you wait until the first day of basic training to start preparing, you will fight an uphill battle. The requirements and training for each branch of the military are different. To learn more about the differences and to get tips on how to prepare, check out the sites below:

military.com/military-fitness/workouts/prepare-yourself-for-boot-camp
military.com/military-fitness/army-basic-training/getting-prepared-for-bootcamp

ASVAB

The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) is a multiple-choice test, administered by the United States Military Entrance Processing Command, and used to determine qualification for enlistment in the United States Armed Forces. The ASVAB also qualifies individuals for the mission occupation specialty, job, or career they will pursue in the military in addition to enlistment bonuses.

Just like any other test, it is recommended that students prepare for the ASVAB. Learn more about the ASVAB, and how to prepare for it, by visiting the sites below.

For General Information:
- official-asvab.com

For Online ASVAB Test Prep:
- march2success.com
- asvabtutor.com
- asvabpracticetests.com

2020 ASVAB Cut Scores for Enlistment

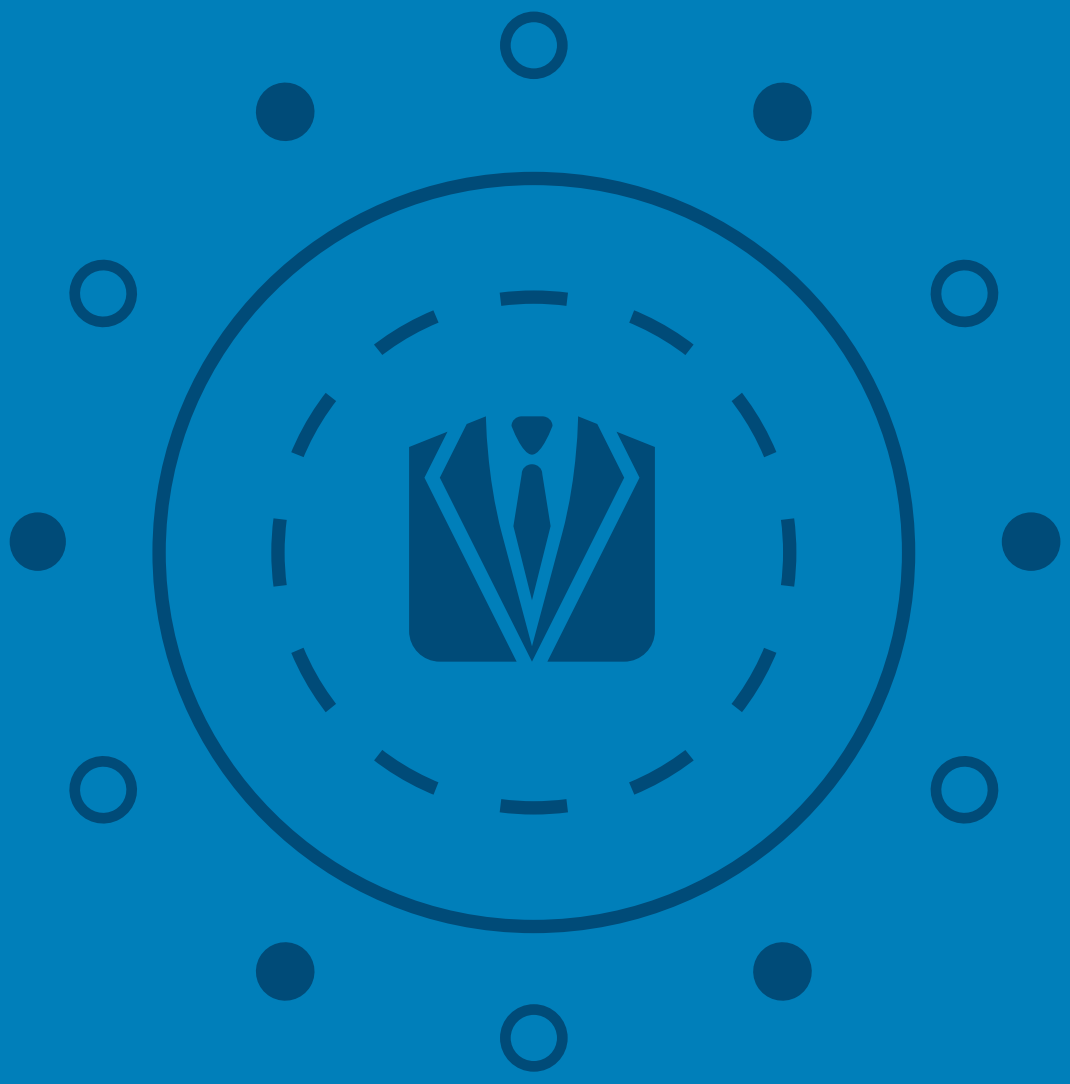
BRANCH	HIGH SCHOOL	GED
Air Force	36	65
Army	31	50
Coast Guard	40	50
Marine Corps	32	50
National Guard	31	50
Navy	35	50

MYTH:
Women have a hard time achieving success in the military.

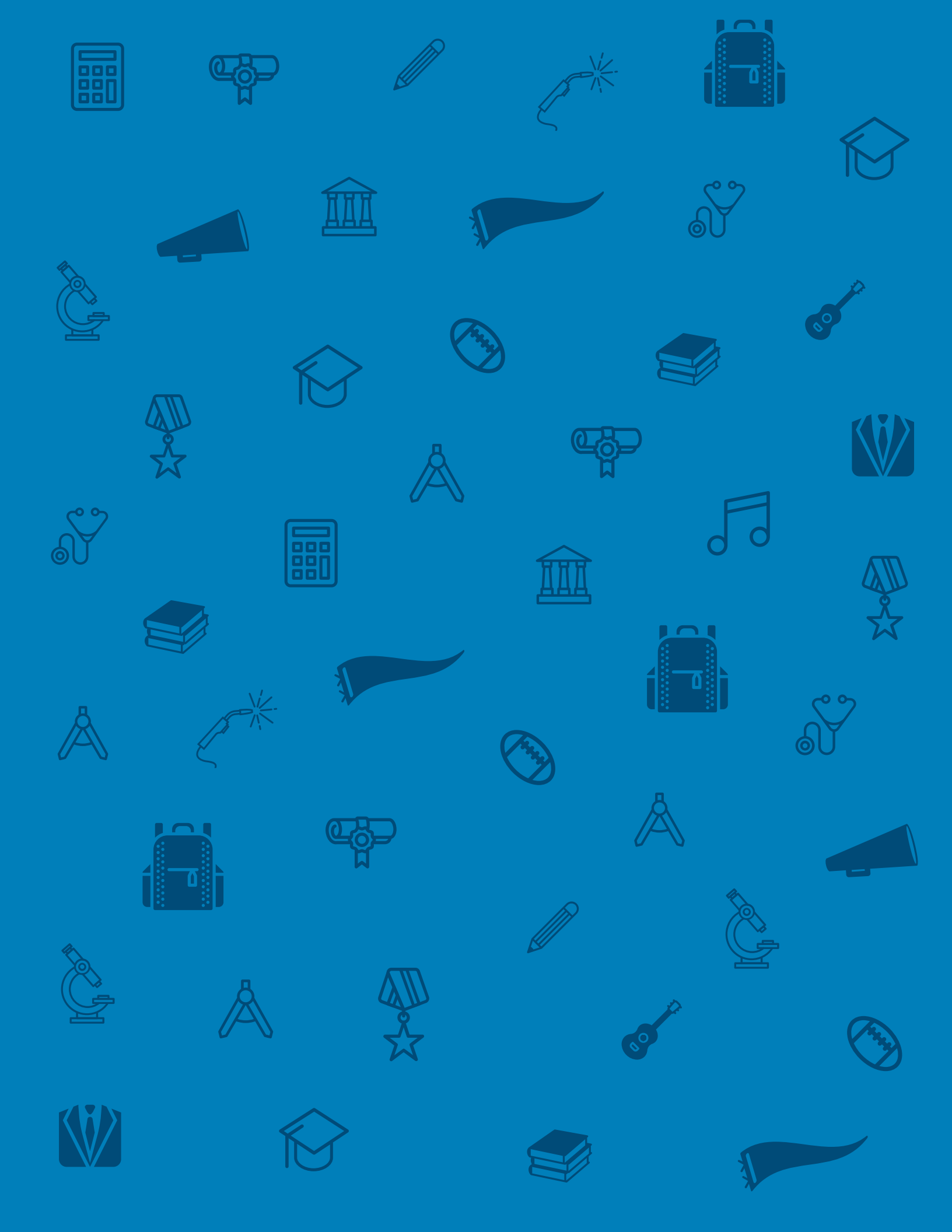
REALITY:

Approximately 95 percent of all jobs in the military are open to women. Women have accounted for the largest increase in enlistments and the percentage of women serving on active duty has doubled since 1978. Women currently account for approximately 15 percent of the entire military force.

SECTION 5



JOINING THE WORKFORCE



Joining the Workforce

If you plan to begin working immediately after graduation, this section will help you get started. It might be a full-time job to give you time to better figure out your long-term plan, or a part-time gig to help you pay for college. Speak to your local community college or technical college so you can learn about free training in advance of entering the workforce.

You may also want to consider opportunities for apprenticeships or internships. As you learned in Section 2, not everyone has to go to a traditional college, but everyone can benefit from some sort of education/training after high school.

Apprenticeships are "on the job," paid training that offer you the chance to learn a skill or trade while working. Apprenticeships can last anywhere from one to four years. **The best way to find an apprenticeship is to reach out to companies you are interested in working for to determine if they offer apprenticeships.** Most labor unions (plumbers, pipefitters, electrical, HVAC, etc.) offer excellent apprenticeship programs. You can also search for apprenticeships by location at **www.apprenticeshiptn.gov.**

Internships give you the opportunity to gain work experience in your field of interest. Most frequently, internships are available to high school or college students. They may be paid or unpaid, and students may have the opportunity to earn class credit for their work. Your college advisor may be able to help you identify internship opportunities in your field.

Whichever option you're headed for, you'll find valuable resources in the coming pages.

Most jobs that you apply for will require either a resumé or application, or perhaps both. Use the form on the next page to help you get organized. In the pages after that, you'll find tips for creating your resumé and cover letter, along with samples of each.

On the last page of this section, you will find a table for tracking your job applications – a helpful tool to ensure nothing falls through the cracks.

If you're not sure what type of job to pursue, here are some websites that might help:

www.CollegeforTN.org — Explore your interests and research the careers that match you.

www.BLS.gov — Provides information on the outlook for various careers, including salary, demand, educational requirements, etc.

www.jobs4tn.gov— Find a job, post a résumé, set up a virtual recruiter, and get hired – with local Tennessee jobs.

MYTH:
High school students don't need a resumé.

REALITY:
You probably won't need a resumé for service-oriented jobs, but if you're looking for an internship or a more professional job, a resumé can impress a potential employer and will make you stand out against other candidates.

Creating a Resumé

Both the content and format of your resumé are important. It doesn't matter how great your work or life history is — if your resumé is poorly formatted, hard to follow, or has typos, you won't be considered for employment. The sample provided on the next page is one clear, well-organized example you can follow.

The Basic Elements of a Resumé

Heading: Include your name, address, email address and phone number. Make it stand out and make an impression by using a large, bold font. Make sure your email is professional (not starwarsfan@hotmail.com or crzychik@aol.com, for example).

Education: List all degrees completed or in progress. As a high school student, include your GPA if it is 3.0 or above, and list courses that reflect your work ethic and high aspirations, such as AP or dual enrollment courses and any courses relevant to the position for which you are applying. After you complete your college degree, do not include your high school information.

Work Experience: Include your job title, the employer, the location (city and state, at minimum), and the dates of employment for each job listed. Include a brief description of your achievements/responsibilities. Ideally, paid work and unpaid work (community service) are listed separately.

Achievements: Optional – List any honors or awards that you have received. Make sure to include the name of the organization that bestowed the honor/award and the date. If including scholarships, only include those based on merit, not financial need.

Activities: Optional – List any activities that you have participated in during high school. (e.g. clubs or organizations, sports, etc.). If you have held any leadership positions, make sure to list those, too!

Personal References: Be sure to get permission from anyone you use as a reference before using their name, and provide them with a copy of your resumé. Do not use relatives as references. References can be on a separate sheet of paper, formatted just like your resumé.

Sample Resumé

JESSICA B. FLETCHER

3328 West Parker Avenue
Mytown, TN 85000
928-555-5555 |
jessica.fletcher@email.com

EDUCATION

May, 2022 High School Diploma with a 3.37 GPA, ABC High School 333 S. School St., Mytown, TN

SPECIAL COURSES

Spanish I–III • Marketing I • AP Chemistry • AP Computer Science • Word Processing

WORK EXPERIENCE

September 2019 – Present **Pharmacy Sales Associate**, Walgreens, 123 Main St., Mytown, TN

Duties include cashiering, customer service in English and Spanish, answering the phone and assisting or transferring callers as needed, generating cleanup and other duties as assigned.

May – August 2019 **Order-Taker/Cashier,** McDonald's, 201 N. Country Drive, Mytown, TN

Duties included accurately taking customer orders in English and Spanish, entering them into electronic order system, handling customer payments including providing correct change and handling credit card transactions.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES & AWARDS

2019 – current **S.A.D.D. (Students Against Drunk Driving) – member**
2019 – 2020 **Club R.I.F (Reading Is Fundamental) – secretary**
2018 – 2020 **Beta Club (student service club) – member**
August 2019 **"I Care" Customer Service Award – McDonald's**

COMMUNITY SERVICE

St. Mary's Food Bank – canned food drive, November 2018, November 2019
Sunday School Teacher – pre-school class, 2017-2020
Service Saturday – ABC High School, April 2020

REFERENCES

Ms. Wonder Woman, History Teacher, ABC High School, (602) 791-4808, wonder.woman@ABC.org

Mr. Ralph Peterson, Manager, McDonald's, (928) 555-1555, r.pete@mcd.com

Creating a Cover Letter

If you have the opportunity to add a cover letter to an employment application, do it! It gives the employer a better sense of your communication skills, as well as a sense of your personality and enthusiasm for the job. Some employers require a cover letter. This section provides tips for writing an excellent cover letter.

The Basic Elements of a Cover Letter

1. **Greeting:** Address your cover letter to the proper person.
2. **Opening:** Write a personable, inviting opening paragraph that highlights how your skills are a perfect fit for the job.
3. **Hook:** Highlight your achievements as they relate to the job for which you're applying.
4. **Skills:** Highlight additional relevant skills, such as computer languages or certifications.
5. **Close:** Briefly recap your strengths as a candidate and include your contact information.

Note - If a cover letter is required to apply for a job and you don't include one, your resumé or application, no matter how good, will not even be considered.

Sample Cover Letter

JESSICA B. FLETCHER

3328 West Parker Ave. • Mytown, TN 85000 • (928) 555-5555 • jessica.fletcher@email.com

May 20, 2022

Ms. Rhonda West
Customer Service Manager
Acme, Inc.
123 Corporate Blvd.
Sometown, TN 85000

Re: Customer Service Representative Opening (Ref. ID: CS300)

Dear Ms. West:

I was excited to see your opening for a customer service representative, and I hope to be invited for an interview.

I recently graduated from high school, where I was a member of the Beta Club for two years. Beta Club members plan and complete at least one service project each month, and through those projects I gained considerable experience working with and for people from all walks of life.

After school and on weekends, for more than two years, I have been working in positions that require exceptional customer service skills. At McDonalds, I was awarded the "I Care" Customer Service Award after just three months in the position. At Walgreens, because of my fluency in Spanish, I am regularly called upon to assist Spanish-speaking customers. Based upon the posting for this position, I believe you will find my skills in this area very useful to your company.

Although I have not been out of high school long, in the part-time positions I have held, as my supervisors will attest, I have already demonstrated the ability to resolve a variety of issues (such as billing disputes and dissatisfied or angry customers), and I consistently met all goals set by my employers. I have also demonstrated a strong sense of responsibility and maturity as evidenced by my successful completion of rigorous AP courses, leadership roles in extracurricular activities, and my high GPA (3.37).

In addition to my work experience, I gained considerable customer service and communication skills during my tenure as secretary of the Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) Club at my high school. In that role, I regularly contacted elementary schools and nonprofit, after school programs for youth to discuss possibilities for collaboration. After identifying ways in which our goals overlapped and how working together could be mutually beneficial to our organizations, I worked with the RIF sponsor and other officers to work out the important details to ensure success.

I also bring to the table strong computer proficiencies in Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Access. I am confident my comfort with computers and various database operations will allow me to quickly learn any proprietary software your company may use. Please see the accompanying resumé for details of my experience and education.

I am confident that I can offer you the customer service, communication, and problem-solving skills you are seeking. I will follow up with you in a few days to answer any preliminary questions you may have. In the meantime, you may reach me at (928) 555-5555 to schedule an interview. Thank you for your time— I look forward to learning more about this opportunity!

Sincerely,

Jessica Fletcher

FINANCIAL AID.

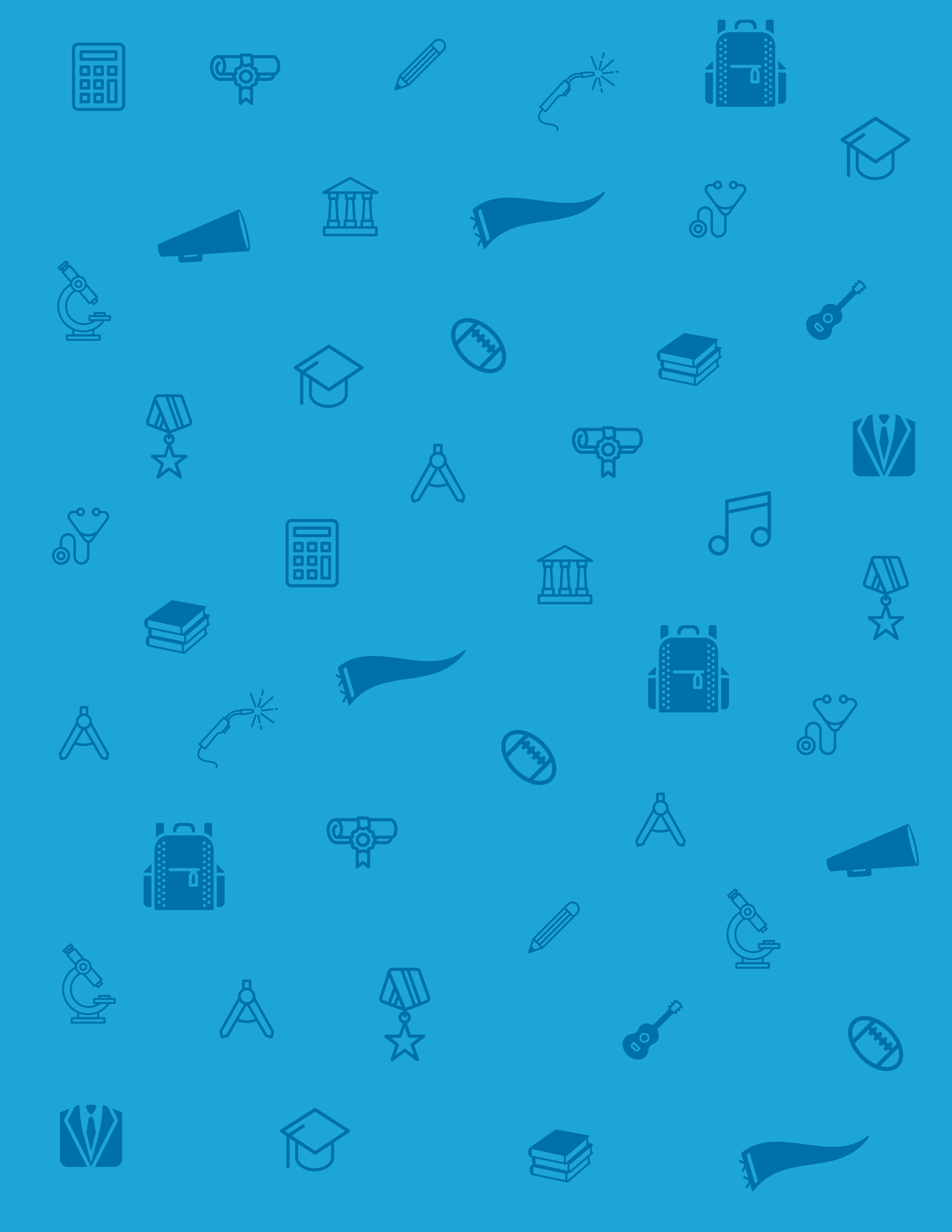
YOU CAN GET
THERE FROM HERE.

COLLEGE
FOR TN

COLLEGEFORTN.ORG

SECTION 6

WHAT'S NEXT?



11th Grade Milestones

Activity

Check all that you have accomplished so far.

Actions

- ☐ Continue to visit college and career-related campuses or events
- ☐ Volunteer in your community or school regularly
- ☐ Attend THEC "Path to College" College Planning Nights
- ☐ Prepare to take the ACT or SAT (e.g., take a preparation course, take a practice test, use free resources online, etc.)
- ☐ Do a practice job interview with a family member, adult mentor, or a professional in your field of interest
- ☐ Continue to participate in school and student organizations and take on leadership roles and/or increased responsibility
- ☐ Organize and lead volunteer activities
- ☐ Update your resume to include your work, volunteer experiences, honors, or skills that you've acquired since last school year
- ☐ Schedule a meeting with your school counselor to discuss details of the postsecondary application process, how to choose a program of study, and how to identify postsecondary institutions that could be a "fit"
- ☐ Continue to have conversations with trusted teachers, family members, or other adult mentors to talk through your college and career interests
- ☐ Cultivate relationships with teachers who may write letters of recommendation for postsecondary, sharing with them your aspirations and asking them for feedback on how to ensure that you are best prepared for postsecondary
- ☐ Complete and pass early postsecondary opportunities (dual credit, dual enrollment, AP, IB, Cambridge)
- ☐ Research and apply for postsecondary scholarship opportunities
- ☐ Develop a list of postsecondary opportunities according to your academic and career interests
- ☐ Take the ACT or SAT
- ☐ Participate in a meaningful summer experience such as employment, an internship, or postsecondary preparation (e.g., pre-college summer camp, computer coding camp, job related to your CTE concentration)
- ☐ Write a draft of a college essay, personal statement, or cover letter, and get feedback from a teacher, counselor, or college access professional
- ☐ Identify two or three teachers who you think would write you a letter of recommendation for postsecondary and talk to them before the end of the school year

Knowledge

- ☐ I understand the major components of the postsecondary application process including admission, financial aid, and choosing a major, concentration, or certification
- ☐ I understand the difference between scholarships, loans, and grant aid
- ☐ I understand the importance of rigorous coursework in preparing me for success in postsecondary
- ☐ I know where the counselor posts scholarship opportunities
- ☐ I know how to request a transcript for a summer program, job, internship, or scholarship applications
- ☐ I understand the importance of the ACT or SAT and that I can retake either exam in my senior year
- ☐ I understand this is an important summer to get a job or internship, apply for a summer academic program, or explore a passion or interest related to my college and career interests before applying to postsecondary

Are You Ready for What's Next?

Congratulations on all of the hard work that you have done during your junior year in planning for your next step after high school! Senior year will be a whirlwind of activities from start to finish. Use your time wisely to get a head start on your plans for after high school.

Summer

- Take a look at some college applications and consider all of the different pieces of information you will need to compile.
- Make a list of teachers, counselors, employers, and other adults you might ask to write letters of recommendation for your college applications
- Continue investigating colleges.
- Begin thinking about your applications. Generally, colleges will have their applications online by the beginning of August. Work on the essay before you return to school.

Congratulations - You're a Senior!

August/September

- Register for the SAT and/or ACT if you didn't take it as a junior, or if you aren't satisfied with your score and want to take it again. (Your counselor can help you with fee waivers).
- Take a look at some college applications and consider all of the different pieces of information you will need to compile.
- The SAT test date most popular with high school seniors is this month.
- Visit with your school counselor to make sure you are on track to graduate and fulfill college admission requirements. If you're ahead of schedule, consider taking courses at a local university or community college to get a jumpstart on college credit.
- Take every opportunity to get to know colleges: meeting with college representatives who visit your high school during the fall, attending local college fairs, visiting campuses (if possible). Ask your counselor if they know of special campus visitation programs.
- Narrow down your list of colleges and begin to consider "safety," "reach," and "realistic" schools.
- Make sure you have the application and financial aid information for each school. Find out if you qualify for any scholarships at these schools.
- Create a checklist and calendar to chart:
    - Standardized test dates, registration deadlines, and fees
    - College application due dates
    - Financial aid application forms and deadlines
    - Other materials you'll need for college applications (recommendations, transcripts, essays, etc.)
    - Your high school's application processing deadlines
- Some schools require the CSS/Financial Aid Profile. Ask the colleges to which you are applying for their deadlines. Register as early as September. See your school counselor about fee waivers.

October

- Some colleges will have deadlines as early as this month. These would include Rolling Admission, Early Decision and Early Action deadlines.
- If you cannot afford the application fees that many colleges charge, ask your counselor to help you request a fee waiver.
- The FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) will be available on October 1. Visit www.fafsa.gov to complete this form.
- Finalize your college essay. Many schools will require that you submit at least one essay with your application.
- Request personal recommendations from teachers, school counselors or employers. Follow the process required by your high school or provide a stamped, addressed envelope, the appropriate college forms, and an outline of your academic record and extracurricular activities to each person writing you a recommendation.
- Research possibilities of scholarships. Ask your counselor, colleges and religious and civic groups about scholarship opportunities. There are also some good scholarship websites, including FastWeb (www.fastweb.com) and The College Board (http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search).
- You should NEVER pay for scholarship information.

November

- Complete the TN Promise scholarship application no later than November 2nd.
- Finalize and send any early decision or early action applications due this month. Have a parent, teacher, counselor, or other adult review the application before it is submitted.
- Every college will require a copy of your transcript from your high school. Follow your school's procedure for sending transcripts.
- Make sure testing companies (ACT or SAT) have sent your scores directly to the colleges to which you are applying.

December

- Begin to organize regular decision applications and financial aid forms, which will be due in January and/or February.
- Register for the January SAT (If needed). It is the last one colleges will be able to consider for a senior.

January

- Many popular and selective colleges will have application deadlines as early as January 1. Others have deadlines later in January and February. Keep track of and observe deadlines for sending in all required fees and paperwork.
- If necessary, register for the February ACT (some colleges will be able consider it).
- Ask your school counseling office in January to send first semester transcripts to schools where you applied. At the end of the school year, they will need to send final transcripts to the college you will attend.
- It is time to file the FAFSA (no later than Feb 1). The sooner you complete it, the sooner you will have an idea of your financial aid options. Watch the mail for your Student Aid Report (SAR)—it should arrive four weeks after the FAFSA is filed or watch your email if you filed electronically.

February/March/April

- While most of your applications are complete and you are waiting to receive admission decisions, don't slack in the classroom. The college that you do attend will want to see your second semester transcript. No Senioritis!
- Acceptance letters and financial aid offers will start to arrive. Review your acceptances, compare financial aid packages, and visit your final choices, especially if you haven't already.

May

- May 1 is the date when many colleges require a commitment and deposit. When you've made your college decision, notify your counselor and the colleges. Send in your deposit by the postmark date of May 1. If you've been offered financial aid, accept the offer and follow the instructions given. Also notify schools you will not attend of your decision.
- Make sure that you have requested that your final transcript be sent to the school you will be attending.
- If you are "wait listed" by a college you really want to attend, visit, call and write the admission office to make your interest clear. Ask how you can strengthen your application.

Summer

- It's been a long journey through high school and to college. Enjoy your summer.
- Summer jobs can help pay some of your college expenses and give you great career preparation.
- Make a list of what you will need to take with you for your dorm room. The suggested list of items, room and furniture dimensions and many other questions can usually be answered by visiting your college's website and searching under "Housing" or "Residence Life" for further information.
- You will most likely get a roommate assignment from your college. Call, write or email to get acquainted in advance. In your conversations and communication, you should be able to figure out who will bring what for your room.
- Some colleges will offer a summer orientation/registration. Make sure to attend to meet fellow students and other important people on campus and to familiarize yourself with your new school. This is often the time you sign up for your fall courses.

Source: National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC)

This Guide was created by GEAR UP Tennessee at the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, with support from the U.S. Department of Education.

Content and inspiration for this Guide came from:

Arizona Launch Guide, Arizona GEAR UP at Northern Arizona University

Create Your Next, Arizona GEAR UP at Northern Arizona University, Expect More Arizona

Senior Next Guide, Tennessee Higher Education Commission

The federal government does not endorse this Guide, nor do its contents necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education

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