A GUIDE FOR

Next

TENNESSEE SOPHOMORES

This guide belongs to: _____

and every sophomore in the great state of Tennessee who wants to explore the possibilities that await. The guide serves to support your pathway to a great life through a college pathway and then a great job. **In Tennessee, college means any formal training beyond high school graduation.** Technical colleges, community colleges, and universities are all equal in our eyes because each one serves to create meaningful pathways to a great career. We hope that you will take your 10th grade year seriously and focus on the things you can control. Create plans for the future and use the NEXT Guide to help you get there.

What are your plans after high school?

- ☐ University
- ☐ Community College-Transfer Path
- ☐ Community College
- ☐ Technical College
- ☐ Military
- ☐ Workforce

Many people will be involved in helping you search for and apply to colleges. In the table below, list the information for the primary contacts at your high school for help applying for college and/or planning for a career. We will now refer to this group of support in your life as your Student Success Team. Each member has a different and unique role in helping you realize your dreams, take the next steps, and reach the finish line.

STUDENT SUCCESS TEAM MEMBER	CONTACT
School Counselor:	Phone: Email:
College & Career Counselor:	Phone: Email:
Helpful Teacher:	Phone: Email:
THEC Outreach Specialist	Phone: Email:
Coach/Adult Mentor:	Phone: Email:
Other:	Phone: Email:

Congratulations – You're a Sophomore!

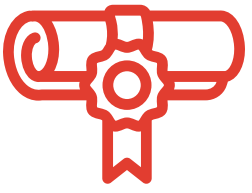
After surviving 9th grade and the new challenges of being a high school student, now is the time to start planning for the future. For many students, that means earning a college degree or certificate. If you think college is too expensive, you'll be pleased to learn that in Tennessee, every high school graduate who is a Tennessee resident or eligible non-resident has the opportunity to be admitted into a community college or Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) of her/his choice and attend tuition-free!

Although the Sophomore Next Guide cannot provide every potential pathway to your future career and college, we want to make sure that we have all the basics covered. So take notes, ask questions, and become engaged in the process, because going to college and preparing for the real world takes time, planning, and a lot of support. DON'T FORGET... Your college/career counselor is available throughout the year to help you through every step and answer questions.

What are your plans for after high school?

- 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
- Immediately enter the workforce
- I have no idea

Sophomore is derived from the roots sophos meaning "wise" and moros meaning "foolish, dull." Yes, sophomore literally means "wise fool."



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.

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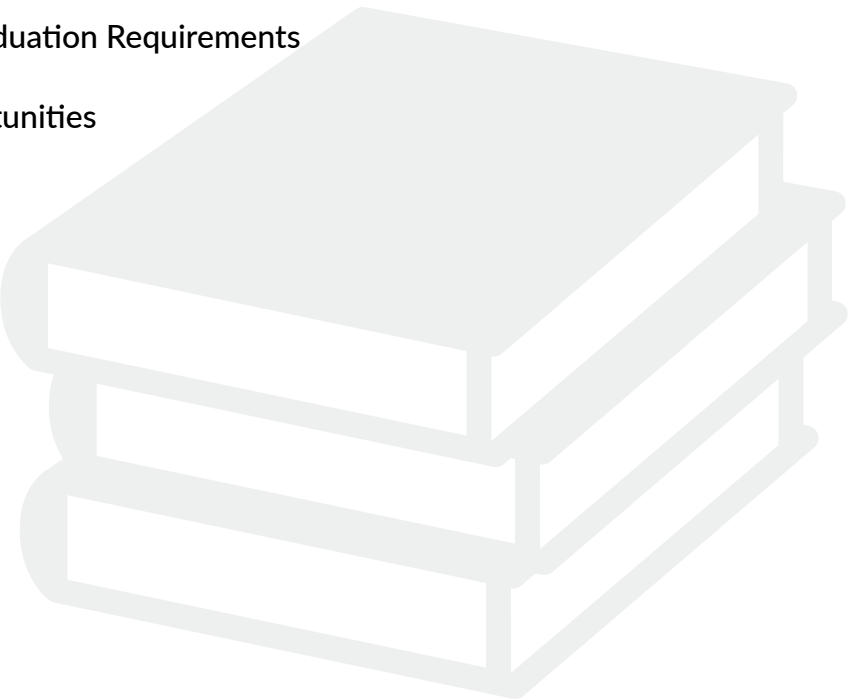
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SECTION 1



DREAM

What is your WHY?

Your why is the reason and the mission behind your future actions and career aspirations. Use the guide to create an action plan, but never forget WHY you are doing these things. Is it to please your grandma? To provide for your family? To live out a dream? Be specific and refine your WHY throughout your high school career, and life!

It's never too early to dream big! In this section, you will learn what makes you unique and what motivates you to do your best.

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, take a career interest inventory. Ask your school counselor for help finding a print or online career interest inventory or visit the sites below:

Career Interest Inventory

Career Interest Inventories are assessments that ask you questions about your interests (what you like to do) and your skills (what do you do well).

CAREER INTEREST INVENTORY TOOL	EXPLANATION
CollegeForTN CollegeForTN.org/interest-profiler	Search careers with keywords or browse careers by industry.
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.
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.

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. **TN.WorkLearnEarn.org** - A free website that allows you to search for hot jobs in your geographic region.
4. **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?

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.

Explore and try it out. Enroll in classes, and when you're old enough, 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.

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.

Check for Understanding

Now that you have explored some of what makes you unique, what career interests and plans are you thinking about? Write down some of your personal and career aspirations in the space provided. Here are some prompts to help you get started...

I am the most alive when I am...

I get excited when I am talking about...

Adulting 101

What does it mean to be an adult? What can I expect when I embark on a new adventure on my own? On the next page you'll begin your career and college search by identifying the kind of lifestyle you might want in your adult life. What home, car, cell phone plan, and other financial costs will you have to prepare for? How will you make ends meet while pursuing other things that matter like family, vacation, and fun?

Let's get started by coming up with a list of realistic expenses and you will begin to see what kind of salary would be needed to provide for the lifestyle you want. Check out the Lifestyle Calculator at CollegeforTN.org; and to research more about careers in your area, check out Jobs4TN.gov.



ADULTING 101 REQUIREMENTS	CHOOSE FROM THE OPTIONS BELOW (*REQUIRED MONTHLY EXPENSE)		TOTAL COSTS $$$
	☐ Live with Parents ☐ 1 BR APT ☐ 2 BR APT ☐ 3 BR APT ☐ House	$0 $775/mo $1,025/mo $1,450/mo $1,275/mo	
PLUGGED IN ENERGY INC.	☐ *Electricity ☐ *Gas ☐ *Water ☐ Cell Phone ☐ Cable TV ☐ Internet	$70/mo $60/mo $30/mo $95/mo $55/mo $40/mo	
	☐ Public Transportation ☐ 2017 Chevrolet Camaro- 17MPG ☐ 2018 Mercedes-Benz E-Class- 20MPG ☐ 2014 Toyota Prius- 46MPG	$64/mo $290/mo $378/mo $199/mo	
SUPERFOODS, SUPERFRESH SUPERMARKET	☐ Single Person ☐ Married ☐ For Each Child	$275/mo $500/mo +$120/mo	
	☐ *Auto Insurance ☐ *Health Insurance ☐ Dental Insurance ☐ Vision Insurance ☐ Homeowner's/Renter's Insurance	$140/mo $150/mo $25/mo $25/mo $20 (Apartment) $80 (House)	
	☐ Associate ☐ Bachelors or Higher *Not all students will have debt and payments will vary based on amount borrowed.*	$93/mo $250/mo	

Total Monthly Expenses (Total of all Rows)	0
Annual Expenses (Multiply Total by 12)	0
Total Salary Needed (Add Personal Expenses, Spending Money, Entertainment, etc.)	

1. What are your total monthly expenses?

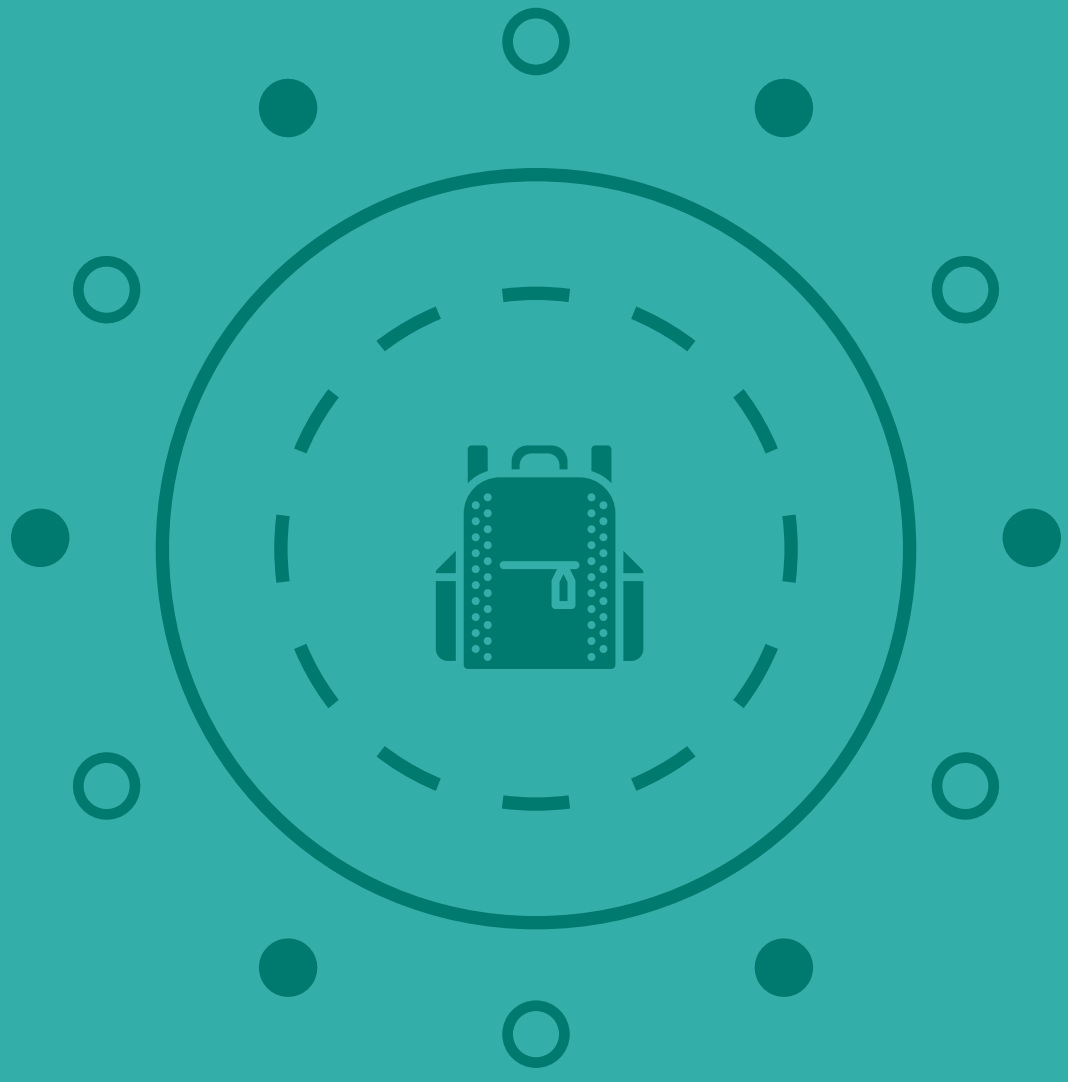
2. How much money will you need to make a year to cover these expenses?

3. Which career that you might like would meet these salary thresholds?

4. How does this exercise motivate you?

5. How does this exercise worry you?

SECTION 2



EXPLORE

After dreaming about the future, you should begin to set a course to attain these dreams. In this section, you will look closer at college types and career pathways in Tennessee, and you will be asked to design an outline of the places and high school courses that will set you on that course.

How do your dreams align with a career pathway? Why do you want to go to college? Or maybe a better question is why would you not go to college?

Benefits of Postsecondary Education

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 may 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.

Check for Understanding

What were the results from your Adulting 101 Lifestyle assessment on p. 9? Why is it important to start with salary numbers and job demand when you are in the 10th grade? Describe your future lifestyle and how your career will make that happen.

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 on page 15 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.

Check for Understanding

What is your WHY? In the section above, you were shown reasons why a college credential will help you along your journey to a rewarding career. What are the reasons that you believe college is the right place for you?

Your Postsecondary Education Options

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:

Credential A qualification, achievement, personal quality, etc., used to indicate suitability for something: "academic credentials". A document or certificate proving a person's identity or qualifications.

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

Credentials are earned by completing courses and other requirements through various postsecondary pathways, as described below:

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 at Chattanooga, University of Tennessee Health Science Center, University of Tennessee Southern, 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

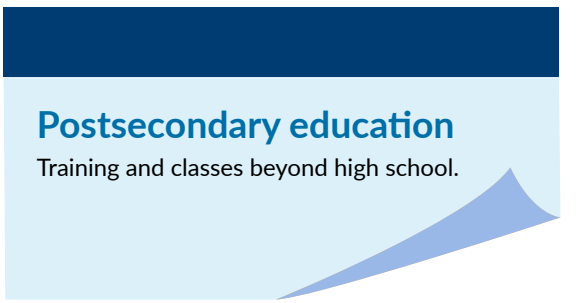
Registered apprenticeships provide the opportunity to "earn while you learn." Partnerships between trade organizations, employers, state government, and community colleges provide a program that combines classroom training (which may include college credit courses) and paid, supervised on-the-job training, 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 22 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

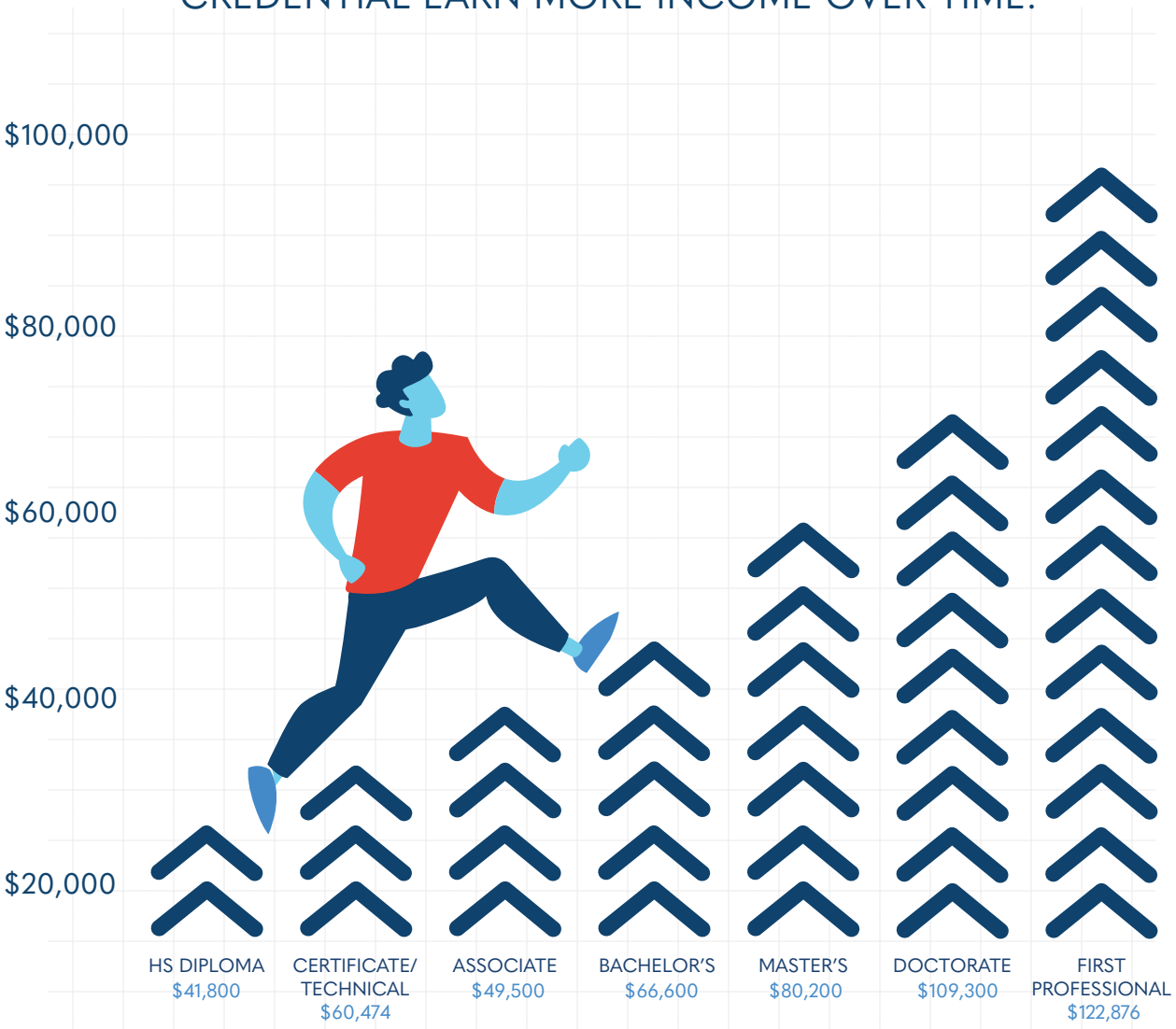
The five active-duty branches of the U.S. Military, consisting of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard, each offer educational options tied to multi-year commitments of service. Some students enlist immediately after high school graduation, while others elect to serve in the National Guard 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.



NEED MORE INFO? Visit www.TNtransferpathway.org to learn how easy it can be to transfer from a Tennessee community college to one of Tennessee's state universities.

COLLEGE = HIGHER INCOME

STUDIES SHOW THAT TENNESSEANS WITH A POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL EARN MORE INCOME OVER TIME.



AVERAGE FULL-TIME INCOME OF TENNESSEE STUDENTS FIVE YEARS AFTER GRADUATION

COLLEGE FOR TN

POWERED BY TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

YOU CAN GET THERE FROM HERE.

COLLEGEFORTN.ORG

THE PATH TO COLLEGE LEADS TO...



JOB OPPORTUNITIES

BY 2025, 55% OF JOBS IN TENNESSEE WILL REQUIRE A POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL.



HIGHER INCOME

STUDIES SHOW THAT THOSE WITH A POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL EARN MORE INCOME OVER TIME.



AND MUCH MORE!

ACCOMPLISH YOUR GOALS
MEET NEW PEOPLE
FIND A MEANINGFUL CAREER
EXPLORE CAREER OPPORTUNITIES
LEARN NEW THINGS
MAKE YOURSELF PROUD
BUILD A NETWORK

COLLEGE FOR TN
POWERED BY THEC

Credential/Education Pathways Worksheet

Activity

Search online for the credentials/education needed for each of the career areas you are interested in, then mark an "X" in the table below to indicate the path that most interests you.

CAREER EXAMPLES	CREDENTIAL NEEDED	WHERE TO OBTAIN ("PATH")	MY PATH
Teacher, Architect, Marketing Manager, Engineer, Registered Nurse, Journalist, Computer Programmer, Software Developer	**Bachelor's Degree** - a credential that is given to a student by a college or university after completing a specified course of study, which takes about four years of full-time enrollment	Four-Year University or College	☐
Web developers, Mechanical/ Industrial Engineering Tech, Occupational Therapy Assistant, Paralegal, Air Traffic Controller	**Associate Degree** - a credential granted by a community or junior college to a student after completing a specified course of study, which takes about two years of full-time enrollment	Community College	☐
Dental Assistant, Motorcycle Mechanic, Electrician, HVAC Tech, Masseuse, Welder, Cosmetologist	**Certificate** – this credential is awarded to individuals who complete a defined set of requirements and coursework	Community College or Technical Institute	☐
Carpenter, Plumber, Machine Operator, Construction Worker, Dog Trainer	**Apprenticeship/Work Experience** - a kind of job training that involves learning from a master of the trade on the job, instead of in school, that provides essential skills and recognized qualifications for the job	Through an employer, either on the job or through a designated apprenticeship program	☐
Lawyer, Doctor, Veterinarian, Dentist, Orthodontist, Pharmacist	**Professional Degree** – a credential awarded to students by specialized postsecondary institutions after completing a rigorous course of study and fulfilling other requirements	Professional School (e.g., Law School, Medical School, Dental School) after completing a bachelor's degree	☐

List of Tennessee Colleges and Universities

Tennessee College of Applied Technology Campuses

TCAT Athens
TCAT Chattanooga
TCAT Crump
TCAT Dickson
TCAT Elizabethton
TCAT Harriman
TCAT Hartsville
TCAT Henry/Carroll
TCAT Hohenwald
TCAT Jacksboro
TCAT Jackson
TCAT Knoxville
TCAT McMinnville TCAT
Memphis
TCAT Morristown TCAT
Murfreesboro TCAT
Nashville
TCAT Northwest
TCAT Oneida/Huntsville
TCAT Pulaski
TCAT Shelbyville
TCAT Upper Cumberland

For more information about colleges in Tennessee, visit CollegeForTN.org!

Tennessee Community Colleges

Chattanooga State Community College
Cleveland State Community College
Columbia State Community College
Dyersburg State Community College
Jackson State Community College
Motlow State Community College
Nashville State Community College
Northeast State Community College
Pellissippi State Community College
Roane State Community College
Southwest Tennessee Community College
Volunteer State Community College
Walters State Community College

Public Universities in Tennessee

Austin Peay State University
East Tennessee State University
Middle Tennessee State University
Tennessee State University
Tennessee Tech University
University of Memphis
University of Tennessee Chattanooga
University of Tennessee Health Science Center
University of Tennessee Knoxville
University of Tennessee Martin
University of Tennessee Southern

Private Institutions Eligible for Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarships

Baptist College of Health Sciences
Belmont University
Bethel University
Bryan College
Carson-Newman University
Christian Brothers University
Cumberland University
Fisk University
Freed-Hardeman University
John A. Gupton College
Johnson University
King University
Lane College
Lee University
LeMoyne-Owen College
Lincoln Memorial University
Lipscomb University
Maryville College
Milligan University
Rhodes College
South College
Southern Adventist University
Tennessee Wesleyan University
Trevecca Nazarene University
Tusculum University
Union University
Sewanee: University of the South
Vanderbilt University
Welch College

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(s).

Check for Understanding

Figure the mileage to the closest university, community college, and TCAT from you.

Nearest University _____ miles

Nearest Community College _____ miles

Nearest TCAT _____ miles

Activity

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



Illuminating the Path

DOES THIS SOUND LIKE YOU?	THEN WATCH...	WHAT STICKS WITH YOU THE MOST? WHY?
I have NO CLUE what I like to do or what my career interests might be.	**Emma Rosen's TED Talk** https://youtu.be/8Swu8iiuFx4	
I have too many interests and don't want to choose a career path at 16 years old.	**Emilie Wapnick's TED Talk** https://youtu.be/4sZdcB6bjI8	
I don't want to go to the typical college. I want to work with my hands and build, not sit in a classroom all day.	**Changing Gears Documentary** www.roadtripnation.com/roadtrip/technicians-documentary	
I am the first in my family to go to college. Why will I be successful when others haven't?	**Why Not Us? Documentary** https://youtu.be/Zidl0jHcZq0	

Career Clusters

When you prepare for college, you need a clear vision of what kinds of things you want to get out of college (TCAT, Community College, University). Now, is the time to narrow down your academic and career interests.

CAREER CLUSTERS			
Advanced Manufacturing	Construction	Financial Services	Marketing & Sales
Agriculture	Digital Technology	Healthcare & Human Services	Supply Chain & Transportation
Arts, Entertainment, &Design	Education	Hospitality & Events	Middle School CTE Courses
Civics, Public Service, and Safety	Energy & Sustainable Resources	Management & Entrepreneurship	CTE Educator Resources

Activity

Visit Tennessee Career Clusters **(https://futureready.tnedu.gov/pillar-3/career-clusters)** to learn the programs of study available within each career cluster. Talk to your counselor about which programs of study are offered in your school or school district. List your top three choices for program of study.

Example **Criminal Science**

Why? *I enjoy dissecting frogs in Biology class, and I like the science behind how CSI technicians on TV learn more about the crimes from the gruesome crime scenes.*

1. _____

Why?

2. _____

Why?

3. _____

Why?

Of these three programs of study, which one would be your top choice?

#1 Choice: _____

What are three possible careers someone who completed this program of study could go into?

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

SECTION 3



PLAN



The PLAN section will help you develop goals and explore the action steps to make college a reality.

Where do I start?

Activity

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 students, under certain circumstances, to allow for additional elective focus.	**____ Credits**			
Fine Arts May be waived for students, under certain circumstances, to allow for additional elective focus.	**____ Credits**			
Elective Focus	**____ Credits**			

College and Career Exams (PSAT, PreACT, ACT, SAT)

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 to take it as a sophomore.

The **PreACT** was designed to help you predict your score on the ACT after an additional year of learning. Your performance on the PreACT will help you make a plan for reaching your goal ACT score. If your school offers the PreACT, it will most likely be during your sophomore year. Unlike the ACT, the highest possible PreACT score is a 35. The PreACT is often administered during the school day, in place of other classes. The test itself takes about 2.5 hours, including break time, and there is an additional 60 minutes of pretest activities. The PreACT tests your skills in English, Math, Reading, and Science.

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	ACT
The SAT is scored on a scale of 400-1600	The ACT is scored on a scale of 1-36
SAT questions require more time to understand and answer	ACT questions tend to be more straightforward
The SAT has five reading passages	The ACT has four reading passages
There is no science test on the SAT	The ACT has an optional science section that tests your critical thinking skills
Both tests now have the SAME advanced math concepts: Arithmetic, Algebra I & II, Geometry and Trigonometry	
Some SAT math questions don't allow you to use a calculator	You may use a calculator for ALL the math questions on the ACT
The optional SAT essay section is more comprehension focused. You have 134 minutes to complete it	The ACT wants to see how well you can evaluate and analyze complex issues. You have 125 minutes to complete it

Early Postsecondary Opportunities (EPSOs)

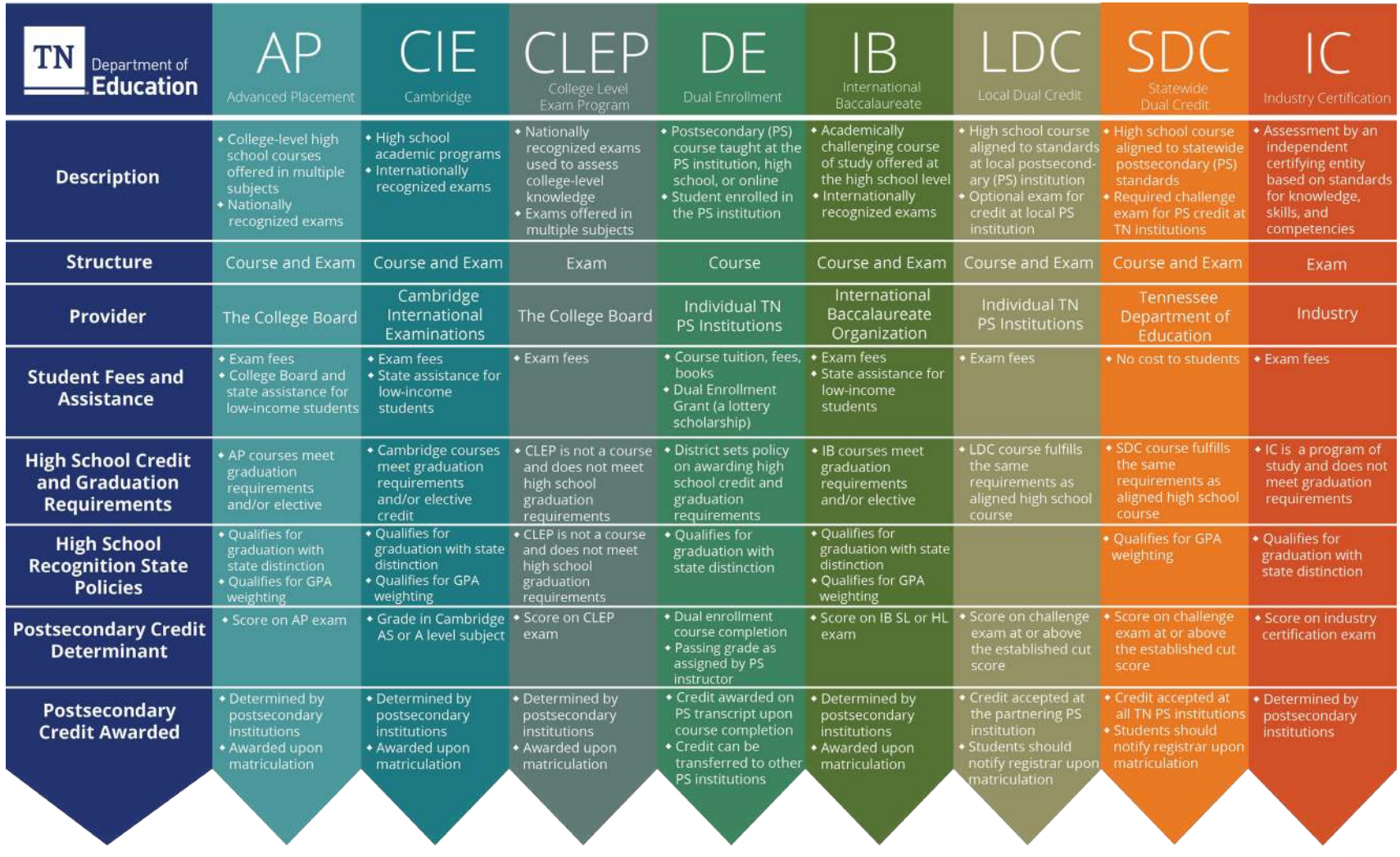
Early postsecondary opportunities (EPSOs) ensure that students are ready to take full advantage of the Tennessee Promise and succeed in education and training after high school. Research has shown that students who participate in early postsecondary courses are more likely to enroll and persist in postsecondary environments. Early postsecondary opportunities allow students 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.

The chart on the next page shows all of the early postsecondary opportunities in the state of Tennessee. All of these may not be available in your school/district.

Activity

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



EARLY POSTSECONDARY OPPORTUNITIES IN TENNESSEE

EPSO	SEMESTER	WHY WILL THIS HELP MY CAREER PATHWAY?
Dual Enrollment-Mechatronics	*Fall: Junior Year*	*My cousin works at Delta Faucet and there are lots of apprenticeships there that pay really well. I want to be prepared for that level of work when I finish high school.*
Advanced Placement Computer Science	*Fall: Senior Year*	*I don't want to take another math course senior year, and I am very interested in Computer Science for a college major.*
CLEP-BIOLOGY	*Spring: Senior Year*	*My school doesn't offer Advanced Placement Biology, but I did really well in Biology class so I want to pay out of my own pocket to save thousands in college tuition. I want to be a vet and I know that ETSU will require Freshman Biology.*

Activity **Now, your turn...what EPSO courses will you take in the remaining two years of high school?**	**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...**
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

Dual Enrollment

Dual Enrollment allows eligible students to work toward both a high school diploma and a college degree at the same time. For each course, students earn honors credit at the high school level and college credit hours at the postsecondary level. Most college credits will transfer to public colleges and universities throughout Tennessee and the United States. Tennessee offers a Dual Enrollment Grant program, funded by the Tennessee Lottery, and administered by the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation. This program provides grants for students to begin working toward a college degree as early as freshman year, while still pursuing a high school diploma

Dual Enrollment Grant Funding at 2-Year and 4-Year Institutions

To qualify for DEG at a two-year or four-year college, students must be a high school junior or senior and satisfy dual enrollment (DE) admissions criteria set by the college. DE students must earn a cumulative 2.00 DE GPA, for all courses attempted while under the grant, each semester to remain eligible for the grant.

Students attending 2-year or 4-year institutions will receive Dual Enrollment Grant funding as outlined below. This chart provides the number of the course being taken and the amount of funding the student will receive. At public community colleges, a Dual Enrollment Grant will cover the tuition for a dual enrollment course. Students should confirm with the community college regarding any additional fees associated with taking a dual enrollment course. For students attending public and private 4-year institutions, students should confirm with the institution regarding any balance in tuition and fees after a Dual Enrollment Grant has been applied. Some institutions will cover the gap between the Dual Enrollment Grant and the cost to take a dual enrollment course.

COURSE	AWARD
1	UP TO $601.65
2	UP TO $601.65
3	UP TO $601.65
4	UP TO $601.65
5	UP TO $601.65
6 - 10	UP TO $100/CREDIT HOUR

Dual Enrollment Grant Funding at Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCATs)

Any high school student (9th – 12th grade) may qualify for DEG at a TN College of Applied Technology (TCAT). Student must meet dual enrollment (DE) admissions criteria set by the TCAT. DEG will pay for up to 1296 clock hours at a TCAT.

Students attending a Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) will receive Dual Enrollment Grant funding as outlined below. This chart provides the number of the course being taken and the amount of funding the student will receive. It is important to note that TCATs operate using clock hours instead of credit hours. Therefore, financial aid is awarded based on the number of clock hours contained within a course. Additionally, TCATs cover the gap between the cost of a course and the funding provided by the Dual Enrollment Grant.

CLOCK HOURS	AWARD
1 - 40	$228.90
41 - 80	$309.75
81 - 135	$₹68.30
136 - 217	$815.85
218 - 340	$1,317.75
341 - 450	$1,₹74.20

APPLY FOR THE DUAL ENROLLMENT GRANT (DEG) AT TN.GOV/THECSTUDENTPORTAL EACH ACADEMIC YEAR & CHECK OUT COLLEGEFORTN.ORG FOR MORE ABOUT TENNESSEE FINANCIAL AID

Paying for College

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

- **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.**

In this section of the guide, you will find information about types of financial aid, how to apply for aid, and how to interpret the financial aid offers you receive.

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 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, which is available to students with the most financial need.

**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.) This amount may change every year. To learn the most updated amount, visit CollegeforTN.org/about-financial-aid*



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 are money that you borrow from a bank, 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.studentloans.gov for more information.



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).

Additional Sources of Financial Aid

Very few students get all 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 plan to apply for all 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 counselor or check out the scholarship finder on www.CollegeforTN.org.



The Government: The Federal Government offers over $150 billion in aid each year. Likewise, Tennessee offers millions of dollars to its students.

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 graduating in 2026 must complete the 2026-2027 FAFSA before April 1, 2026

The **Tennessee HOPE Scholarship** is worth up to $2,250 per semester for freshmen and sophomores; $2,850 per semester for juniors and seniors at four-year -year institutions, and up to $1,600 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

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

The **General Assembly Merit Scholarship (GAMS)** award provides 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

The **Wilder-Naifeh Technical Skills Grant** is available to anyone who enrolls in a certificate or diploma program at a Tennessee College of Applied Technology and meets residency requirements. The award amount is up to $2,000 per academic year.

Tennessee Student Assistance Award (TSAA) amounts are based on the institution indicated on the student's FAFSA. Award amounts for an academic year are: four-year/two-year private - $4,000; and four-year public/two-year public/Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology/career schools - $2,000.

Requirements:

- Student Aid Index (SAI) of 5000 or less on the FAFSA
- Priority for this award is given to U.S. citizens
- Must meet satisfactory academic progress (SAP) standards to maintain award

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, 22 colleges of applied technology, or other eligible institutions offering an associate degree program.

Requirements:**

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

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

Resumé and Job Application Information

Activity

Fill out the form on this page and you'll have all the information you need, in one place, to fill out job applications. You can also use these details as the basis for your resumé, and they will come in handy when you start filling out college and scholarship applications. Remember to keep personal information confidential!

Full legal name: _____ Date of birth: _____

Are you a U.S. citizen?: _____ If not a U.S. citizen, specify country: _____

If you are a permanent resident, refugee, or asylee, date of status approval/issuance: _____

Other Visa type & date: _____ Permanent mailing address: _____

Current address, if different from permanent address: _____

Permanent phone number: _____ Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

High school academic history (If you attended more than one, list most recent)

Name of high school: _____ City, state of high school: _____

Dates attended: _____

Cumulative GPA: _____

ATHLETICS, CLUBS, AND ORGANIZATIONS (LIST YOUR ROLE/POSITION EACH YEAR)		
Name of Club/ Sports Team	Freshman	Sophomore

COMMUNITY SERVICE			
Name of Organization/ Contact	Description of Volunteer Service	Number of Hours of Service	Date(s) of Service

HONORS AND AWARDS

Name and Date of Award	Reason for Award/Honor	Sponsor

WORK EXPERIENCE
(list most recent examples first)

Start and End Date of Employment	Job Title	Company Name	Business Address	Brief Description of Duties

REFERENCES
(Non-relatives who potential employers can contact to explore whether you would be a good hire.
Make sure to ask your references if they are willing to give you a reference before listing their name on a job application.)

Name	Title	Address (Street, City, State, Zip Code)	Phone Number	Email Address

Sample Resumé

JESSICA B. FLETCHER

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

EDUCATION

Expected May 2025 — High School Diploma with a 3.67 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

Sample Cover Letter

JESSICA B. FLETCHER

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

May 20, 2026

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 (3.67).

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

Careers in the Military

Military Websites

U.S. Air Force - www.airforce.com
U.S. Air Force Reserve - www.afreserve.com
U.S. Army - www.goarmy.com
U.S. Army Reserve - www.usar.army.mil/Howtojoin/
U.S. Coast Guard - www.gocoastguard.com
U.S. Coast Guard Reserve - www.gocoastguard.com/reserve-careers/
U.S. Marine Corps and Reserve - www.marines.com
U.S. Navy and Reserve - www.navy.com
U.S. Space Force - www.spaceforce.com
Air National Guard - www.goang.com
Army National Guard - www.nationalguard.com

Military Service

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. 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 in the military. Additionally, recruiters can tell you information about their particular branch of service and help with answering this question about serving in the military and protecting our nation. 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.

Military Career Opportunities

There are literally thousands of careers in the military. Jobs in the military 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.

Applying to Military Service Academics

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.

ROTC Programs

The Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) is a college program offered at more than 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, participants, or cadets, commit to serve in the Military after graduation. Each Service branch has its own take on ROTC. Find colleges and universities that offer ROTC programs by visiting https://myfuture.com/college/rotc-colleges.

SECTION 4



ASSESS



How do I know that I am on the right path to college and a great career? Using milestones and timelines, students can begin to see that key action steps along the way are important to making concrete progress. In this section, you will track your progress and measure your proximity to success through checklists and milestones. Knowing the milestones along the path can help you stay motivated because there is a lot more road to travel.

Am I ready for what's NEXT?

Activity

The Study Skills Assessment below is designed to identify your academic strengths and weaknesses. Completing the assessment is the first step in putting yourself on the path to academic success as you prepare for college and help yourself become a better student!

Study Skills Assessment Questionnaire

Source: University of Houston-Clear Lake Counseling Services, Used with Permission

This questionnaire will help you look at some of your academic skills. Use the scale below to indicate how often each statement applies to you. Place the number corresponding to your choice in the blank provided. At the end of each section, total the column. Pay attention to your highest and lowest scores as they will indicate stronger and weaker areas.

1	2	3	4
Never	Sometimes	Usually	Always

Time Management/Procrastination

> **Procrastination**
> The act or habit of procrastination, or putting off or delaying, especially something requiring immediate attention.

_____ 1. I arrive at classes and other meetings on time.

_____ 2. I devote sufficient study time to each of my courses.

_____ 3. I schedule definite times and outline specific goals for my study time.

_____ 4. I prepare a "to do" list daily.

_____ 5. I avoid activities which tend to interfere with my planned schedule.

_____ 6. I use prime time (when I am most alert) for study.

_____ 7. At the beginning of the term, I make up daily activity and study schedules.

_____ 8. I begin major course assignments well in advance.

0 _____ Total

Concentration/Memory

_____ 1. I have the "study-place habit," that is, merely being at a certain place at a certain time means time to study.

_____ 2. I study in a place free from auditory and visual distractions.

_____ 3. I find that I am able to concentrate—that is, give undivided attention to the task for at least 20 minutes.

_____ 4. I am confident with the level of concentration I am able to maintain.

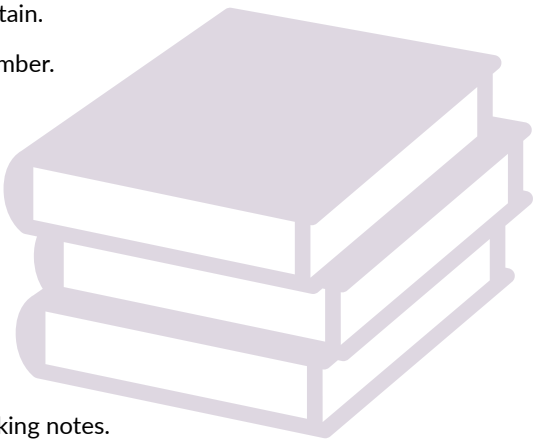
_____ 5. I have an accurate understanding of the material I wish to remember.

_____ 6. I learn with the intention of remembering.

_____ 7. I practice the materials I am learning by reciting out loud.

_____ 8. I recall readily those things which I have studied.

0 _____ Total



Study Aids/Notetaking

_____ 1. While I am taking notes, I think about how I will use them later.

_____ 2. I understand the lecture and classroom discussion while I am taking notes.

_____ 3. I organize my notes in some meaningful manner (such as outline format).

_____ 4. I review and edit my notes systematically.

_____ 5. I take notes on supplementary reading materials.

_____ 6. I have a system for marking textbooks.

_____ 7. When reading, I mark or underline parts I think are important.

_____ 8. I write notes in the book while I read.

0 _____ Total

Test Strategies/Test Anxiety

_____ 1. I try to find out what the exam will cover and how the exam is to be graded.

_____ 2. I feel confident that I am prepared for the exam.

_____ 3. I try to imagine possible test questions during my preparation for an exam.

_____ 4. I take time to understand the exam questions before starting to answer.

_____ 5. I follow directions carefully when taking an exam.

_____ 6. I usually get a good night's rest prior to a scheduled exam.

_____ 7. I am calmly able to recall what I know during an exam.

_____ 8. I understand the structure of different types of tests and am able to prepare for each type.

0 _____ Total

Information Processing

_____ 1. When reading, I can distinguish readily between important and unimportant points.

_____ 2. I break assignments into manageable parts.

_____ 3. I maintain a critical attitude during my study—thinking before accepting or rejecting.

_____ 4. I relate to material learned in one course to materials of other courses.

_____ 5. I try to organize facts in a systematic way.

_____ 6. I use questions to better organize and understand the material I am studying.

_____ 7. I try to find the best method to do a given job.

_____ 8. I solve a problem by focusing on its main point.

0 _____ Total



Motivation/Attitude

_____ 1. I sit near the front of the class if possible.

_____ 2. I am alert in classes.

_____ 3. I ask the instructor questions when clarification is needed.

_____ 4. I volunteer answers to questions posed by instructors in the class.

5. I participate in meaningful class discussions.

6. I attend class regularly.

_____ 7. I take the initiative in group activities.

8. I use a study method which helps me develop an interest in the materials to be studied.

0 _____ Total

Selecting Main Ideas/Self-Testing/Reading

1. I try to find out what the exam will cover and how the exam is to be graded.

2. I follow the writer's organization to increase meaning.

_____ 3. I review reading material several times during a semester.

_____ 4. When learning a unit of material, I summarize it in my own words.

5. I am comfortable with my reading rate.

6. I look up parts I don't understand.

_____ 7. I am satisfied with my reading ability.

_____ 8. I focus on the main point while reading.

0 _____ Total

Writing

1. I find that I am able to express my thoughts well in writing.

_____ 2. I write rough drafts quickly and spontaneously from notes.

_____ 3. I put aside a written assignment for a day or so, then rewrite it.

_____ 4. I review my writing for grammatical errors.

5. I have someone else read my written work and consider their suggestions for improved writing.

6. I am comfortable using library resources for research.

_____ 7. I am able to narrow a topic for an essay, research paper, etc.

_____ 8. I allow sufficient time to collect information, organize material, and write the assignment.

0 _____ Total

What are the two areas with your lowest scores?

Research ways you can improve your study skills in those two areas. List the ideas you will try here:

10th Grade Milestones

Activity

10th Grade Milestones (Check all that you have accomplished so far.)

Milestone

An important event in the development or history of something or in someone's life.

Actions

- [ ] Participate in college and career experiences (e.g., campus visits, hands-on events, college and career fairs, school-based enterprise, industry specific exposure)
- [ ] Participate in a meaningful summer experience such as a job, internship, or early postsecondary preparation (e.g., pre-college summer camp, computer coding camp, apprenticeship related to CTE concentration)
- [ ] Continue involvement with school and student organizations
- [ ] Volunteer in your community or school
- [ ] Update your resume to include your work, volunteer experiences, honors, or skills that you've acquired since last school year
- [ ] Do a practice job interview with a school counselor and have a conversation about your potential eligibility/competitiveness for admission
- [ ] **Update your postsecondary plan with your counselor and have a conversation about your potential eligibility/ competitiveness for admission**
- [ ] Have conversations with a teacher, family member, or other adult mentor to talk about your college and career interests
- [ ] Have a conversation with a counselor and family members about tuition, fees, and other costs of postsecondary, as well as your potential eligibility for need- and merit-based aid
- [ ] Research course offerings for your junior year, including early postsecondary opportunities such as advanced placement, dual enrollment and dual credit, or work-based learning

Knowledge

- [ ] I understand the structure and content of ACT or SAT college readiness exams
- [ ] I understand the different postsecondary options available to me and the criteria required for admission
- [ ] I understand the importance of rigorous coursework and how my current course performance will impact future course opportunities, especially opportunities to earn early postsecondary credit and to qualify for merit-based scholarships (e.g., HOPE Scholarship)
- [ ] I understand that I should revisit my postsecondary plan regularly (i.e., each semester) and discuss my plans with a counselor, teacher, advisor, or family member who can help

What's Next?

Use the following suggestions to make the most of your summer and your junior year.

Summer

- **READ!** Read at least five books not required by your school. Try something you've never read before.
- **Do** your summer homework. Don't put it off until the last minute.
- **Explore.** If you're considering a career or career pathway, learn more about it. Talk to people who hold that job. Set up a job shadow day. Get a job. Take a trip. While there, visit some colleges in the area.
- **Think** about what's next. It's never too early to start prepping for the ACT or SAT. There are excellent practice tests available online. Use them!
- **Help** someone else. Look for organizations in your community that need volunteers: hospitals, nursing homes, food pantries, homeless shelters, and more. It will make you feel good and also looks good on your college applications.

Fall (Congratulations - You're a Junior!)

- **Talk** with your counselor about the year ahead. Confirm that your courses will put you on the right track for college admission.
- **Ask** about test dates for the PSAT, ACT, and SAT. You'll need to register up to six weeks ahead of time.
- **Start** developing a résumé—a record of your accomplishments, activities, and work experience. This will be an important part of your college application.
- **Become** a joiner. If you haven't participated in many activities outside of class, now is the time to sign up. Consider clubs at school, team sports, leadership roles, or involvement in a religious or civic community group.
- **Take** the PSAT. Taking the test as a junior will qualify you for some scholarship consideration and identify you to colleges as a potential applicant.
- **Begin** to prepare for the ACT or SAT. Plan to take at least one of these tests in the spring. Ask your counselor if you qualify for a fee waiver.

Spring

- **Work** with your counselor to set your senior schedule. Enroll in the most challenging courses.
- **Register** for a spring SAT and/or ACT. Ask your counselor whether you should also take a Subject Test.
- **Explore** summer opportunities on college campuses—this is a great way to find out what college life is really like.
- **Continue** researching colleges and universities. Go to college fairs and open houses. Learn as much as you can about colleges online.
- **Begin** planning college visits. If your school offers excused absences for college visits, use them! Try to visit colleges near you over spring break. Include a large, medium size, and small campus.
- **Develop** a preliminary list of colleges that interest you. Go online to request additional information. This is a great way to get on the radar of colleges that interest you.
- **Begin** to look at some college applications. Make note of all the pieces of information you will need to compile. Make a list of teachers, counselors, employers, and other adults who could write letters of recommendation.
- **Consider** lining up a summer job or internship.

Glossary

There are a lot of acronyms and confusing terms on the road to college. Here are a few that you might be wondering about. If there's one 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.

FAFSA: The Free Application for Federal Student Aid is an online form submitted annually by current and prospective college students (undergraduate and graduate) in the United States to determine eligibility for student financial aid. Students who are eligible to file the FAFSA should complete it every year.

Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID: A user name and password used by current and prospective students and their parents to log into U.S. Department of Education Websites including the FAFSA Website. The ID is used to sign documents electronically (it has the same legal status as a written signature.)

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.

Financial Aid Package: The amount and types of federal, state, and college aid that a college/university offers to a student it has accepted for admission, to offset the cost of attendance at their school. This is also referred to as an Award Letter. Depending on the package, sometimes it can be cheaper for a student to attend an expensive school because more aid is offered to offset the cost. This is why it is important to apply to the schools you want to attend, even if you don't think you can afford it. There are different types of aid available including loans, work-study, scholarships, and grants.

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

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.

Pell Grant: Money from the U.S. government to support a student's education that does not have to be paid back. Pell Grants are awarded to U.S. citizens and legal residents based on financial need and timeliness of completing the FAFSA.

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.

Scholarship: Money to support a student's education that does not have to be paid back. Scholarships are awarded based on academic, athletic, artistic, or other types of achievements, affiliations, or competitions.

Student Aid Index (SAI): The portion of a family's financial resources that should be available to pay for college, based on a federal formula using the information on the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid).

Student Aid Report (SAR): The SAR summarizes the information included on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The SAR provides the Student Aid Index (SAI), which is used to determine whether a student is eligible for a federal Pell Grant and other federal aid.

Student Loan: Money a student borrows to help pay for college, which must be paid back. Subsidized loans are offered to students who qualify financially as determined by the FAFSA. The federal government pays the interest while the student is in college. There are also unsubsidized loans where interest begins accruing as soon as the loan is accepted.

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.

THEC: The Tennessee Higher Education Commission was created in 1967 by the Tennessee General Assembly. The Commission develops, implements, evaluates postsecondary education policies and programs in Tennessee while coordinating the state's systems of higher education, and is relentlessly focused on increasing the number of Tennesseans with a postsecondary credential.

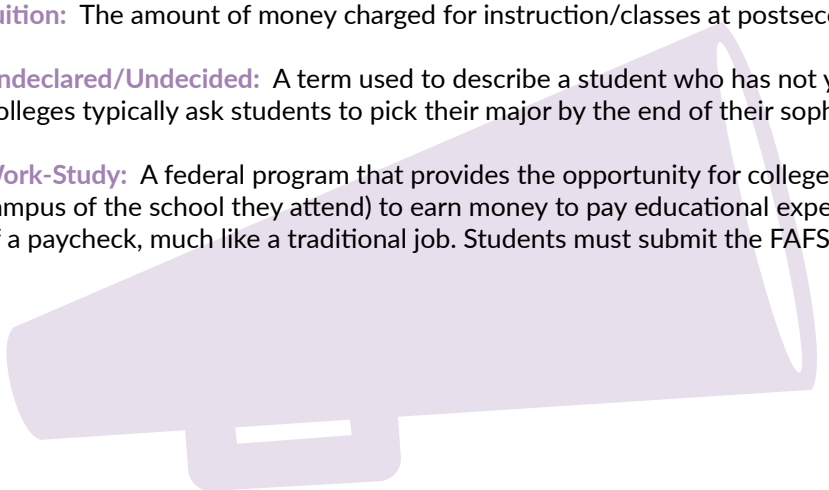
Transcript: An official academic record from a specific school which lists when you attended, the courses you have completed, grades, and sometimes test scores. Universities, colleges, and technical schools usually require high school transcripts be submitted as part of the application process.

TSAC: Created by the Tennessee General Assembly in 1974 as a non-profit corporation with the merging of the Tennessee Educational Loan Corporation and the Tennessee Tuition Grant Program, the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation administers over 20 different state student financial aid programs, including the HOPE scholarship, Tennessee Promise, Tennessee Reconnect, Tennessee Student Assistance Award, and the Dual Enrollment grant.

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.

Work-Study: A federal program that provides the opportunity for college students to work part-time jobs (often on the campus of the school they attend) to earn money to pay educational expenses. Students receive compensation in the form of a paycheck, much like a traditional job. Students must submit the FAFSA to be considered for work-study positions.





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