



# Central Arizona Valley Institute of Technology

## YOUR GUIDE TO **FUTURE DESTINATIONS**

***COMMUNITY COLLEGE • UNIVERSITY • CAREER  
MILITARY • SCHOLARSHIPS • FAFSA***

# You are a Senior!

## It's time to plan your future

You've been preparing for years about what you'll do after you graduate, now is the time to develop a plan if you haven't already and put it into action.

The checklist for each plan provides timelines for completing each action, but you'll need to pay attention to specific deadlines and due dates, since they vary.

You'll find resources and information on everything from financing your college education to writing a resume.

We know you're excited to graduate. But it's important, this year, that you stay focused on your classes.

- Attend a four-year college or **university** to earn a bachelor's degree
- Enroll in a **community college** first, then **transfer** to a university after 2 or 3 years to earn a bachelor's degree
- Obtain an associate's degree or certificate at a **community college**
- Obtain a certificate or license in a skilled trade at a **technical institute**
- Enlist in the **military**
- Immediately enter the **workforce**



# Checklists & Timelines

Do you already know your destination for the fall (after high school graduation)? If so, it's probably one of these:

- ☐ University
- ☐ Community College/Transfer
- ☐ Technical Institute/School
- ☐ Workforce/Apprenticeship
- ☐ Military

If you are still unsure about your destination, use the tools and resources to help you decide.

Wherever you plan to go after high school graduation – whether you're headed to college, the workforce or the military – the checklists in this section will help you stay organized and on track to reach your goal. Each checklist outlines specific action steps that act as a guide to your postsecondary plan. Find the information and resources you need to successfully complete each step on your checklist.

Review the entire checklist for your postsecondary plan before you begin, because it is helpful to see the complete picture of everything that needs to happen before you begin to tackle each step. If you're unsure about something, your School Counselor can help.



## If you plan to...

Attend **university** next year

Enroll in a **community college** first and then **transfer** to a university

Enroll in a **community college** to earn an **associate's degree** or **certificate**

Attend a **technical institute** next year

Enter the **workforce** or an **apprenticeship** after graduation

Enlist in the **military**

# Four-Year University

If your plan is to attend a four-year college or university and earn a bachelor's degree (including ROTC programs and military academies) this checklist is for you.

My top three schools of choice:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

List the majors you are considering here:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

	Action Steps	Recommended Timeline	My Date	Notes
Do these for every school where you will apply	Obtain college application fee waiver(s)	Aug - Sept		
	Complete college app(s), inc. fee or using fee waiver (usually online)	Aug - Sept		
	Request/mail transcripts (& CLEP test scores if applicable)	Within 1 week of completing college app		
	Register to take or re-take ACT/SAT	Prep- July - Oct Retake- Nov - Dec		
	Ensure ACT/SAT scores are reported to schools	Aug - Dec		
	Explore ROTC or officer programs	Aug - Dec		
	Obtain FSA ID (student & parent)	July - Sept		
	Complete FAFSA	Oct - Dec		
	Review SAR	Oct - Dec		
	Complete scholarship applications	Aug - May		
	Review admission letters and financial awards	Oct - Apr		
	Check your college account to see if FAFSA verification needs to be completed	Oct - June		
Do these for the college where you will go	Accept admission at school of choice	As early as you know. By May		
	Pay or defer enrollment deposit to selected school	After accepting admission. Spring		
	Register for orientation	After accepting admission. Spring		
	Apply for housing	After accepting admission. Spring		
	Learn about college bridge programs & apply	After accepting admission. Spring		



# Community College (transfer, associate's, or certificate)

If you want to earn a bachelors degree by starting at a community college and then transferring to a 4-year university - or if you want to attend a community college to earn an associate's degree or a certificate - then this checklist is for you.

My top schools of choice are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

The degree I'm pursuing (circle one):

- Transfer (2 or 3 years at the community college, then 2 or 1 at a university)
- Associate's degree (2 years)
- Certificate (i.e. dental assisting or fire science)

	Action Steps	Recommended Timeline	My Date	Notes
Do these for every school where you will apply	Obtain college application fee waiver(s)	Aug - Sept		
	Complete college app(s), inc. fee or using fee waiver (usually online)	Aug - Sept		
	Request/mail transcripts (& CLEP test scores)	Within 1 week of completing college app		
	Prep for and take/retake placement tests (e.g., Accuplacer)	Prep - July - Oct Take/ retake- Nov - Dec		
	Obtain FSA ID (student & parent)	July - Sept		
	Complete FAFSA	Oct - Dec		
	Review SAR	Oct - Dec		
	Complete scholarship applications	Aug - May		
	Review admission letters and financial awards	Oct - Apr		
	Check your college account to see if FAFSA verification needs to be completed	Oct - June		
Do these for the college where you will go	Accept admission at school of choice	As early as you know. By May		
	Talk with a community college academic advisor	Mar - May		
	Apply for housing if applicable	After accepting admission. Spring		
	Explore program of study (including transfer programs)	Spring		

# Technical Institute/School

If you want to attend a technical institute/school and obtain a certificate or license in a skilled trade, this checklist is for you! At tech schools, you can train to become a certified professional in a variety of fields, such as Vet Tech, Licensed Practical Nurse LPN, Dental Hygienist.

My top schools of choice are:

I'm interested in pursuing a career in:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Action Steps	Recommended Timeline	My Date	Notes
Check to see if community college has program of study needed; compare cost	Aug - Dec		
Obtain app fee waiver(s)	Aug - Dec		
Complete tech school application(s)	Feb		
Send add'l requirements (transcript, test scores, portfolio, etc)	Aug - Dec		
Obtain FSA ID (student & parent)	Jul - Sept		
Complete FAFSA	Oct - Dec		
Review SAR	Oct - Dec		
Complete scholarship applications	Aug - May		
Review admission letters and financial awards	Oct - Apr		
Check your student account to see if FAFSA verification needs to be completed	Oct - June		
Accept admission at school of choice	As early as you know. By May		
Explore career outlook	Mar - May		
Apply for housing if applicable	After accepting admission. Spring		

# Workforce/Apprenticeship

If you plan to enter the workforce immediately after high school graduation, then this checklist is for you.

My job prospects include:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



Action Steps	Recommended Timeline	My Date	Notes
Research training required for field of interest	Fall / Winter		
Research community college options/programs	Fall / Winter		
Ask people to serve as references	Spring		
Create/update resume	Winter/Spring		
Research job openings	Spring		
Gather documents needed for completing job applications.	Winter/Spring		
Apply for jobs	Spring		
Request letters of recommendation	as required for application		

# Military Enlistment

If you plan to enlist in the military immediately after high school, then this checklist is for you.

I plan to join the:

- ☐ Army
- ☐ Navy
- ☐ Air Force
- ☐ Marines
- ☐ Coast Guard
- ☐ Air National Guard
- ☐ Other

Action Steps	Recommended Timeline	My Date	Notes
Schedule appointment with Military Recruiter	Fall		
Take or re-take ASVAB	Fall		
Discuss Delayed Entry Program with recruiter	Fall		
Complete Physical Examination with Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS)	As directed by recruiter (Fall/Winter)		
Review ASVAB scores	Spring		
Research potential careers for service	Spring		
Meet with Enlistment Specialist to determine career prospects	As directed by recruiter		
Take the Oath of Enlistment	As directed by recruiter		
Prepare for Boot Camp	Spring		
Other:			



# The College Application Process

Take a few minutes to fill out this form. Then with your high school transcript, you'll need to complete college applications. You might need to work with your parent or family members to get all the details.

When it comes time to apply, many universities charge a fee—\$50 or \$100 application fees are common. However, it is likely that you can get this fee waived. Contact your School Counselor to find out how.

Leave areas blank if they don't apply to you.

Contact Information	
Full Name (first, middle, last)	
Street Address	
PO Box	
City, State, Zip Code	
Parent Phone Number	
Cell Phone Number	
E-Mail 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	
College Name	
Street Address, City, State, Zip Code	
Dates Attended	
Course Name/Number of Credits	
Course Name/Number of Credits	

# Collecting Personal Information

GPA and Testing (ACT, SAT, AP, CLEP & placement test)							
Weighted GPA:				Unweighted GPA:			
SAT Date (month/year)				Comp Score			
ACT Date (month/year)				Comp Score			
AP Subject:		Score		AP Subject		Score	
AP Subject:		Score		AP Subject		Score	
CLEP Subject		Score		CLEP Subject		Score	
College Placement Exam Name		Date(s)		Subject/Score			

Athletics, Clubs and Organizations				
List name of club/sports team	List your role/position each year			
	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior
CTE Classes				
CAVIT Programs & Certifications				

Honors & Awards		
Name and Date of Award	Reason for Award/Honor	Awarded by Whom?

Community Service					
Name of the organization	Description of volunteer service	Dates of Service	Number of hours of service	Take-aways: What you learned, enjoyed, experienced	Name of contact and contact information (email, phone, website, &/or address)

### Family Information and Other Personal Information

Student's status:

☐ US Citizen
 ☐ Permanent US Resident
 ☐ Refugee
 ☐ Asylee

State of residence: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Are your parents affiliated with the US military? ☐ Yes ☐ No

# 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.

How would you rank order what is most important to you?

<b>Type of School</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2 year or 4 year</li><li>• Public or private</li><li>• University/ research institution or liberal arts college</li><li>• Religious or secular</li></ul>	<b>Student Life</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• On and off campus activities</li><li>• Athletics</li><li>• Greek life</li><li>• Student organizations</li><li>• Safety</li><li>• Student body diversity</li></ul>	<b>Location</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Urban or rural</li><li>• Size of nearest city</li><li>• Distance from home</li><li>• Geographic setting and weather</li></ul>
<b>Affordability</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cost of Attendance (tuition, fees, transportation, housing)</li><li>• Scholarships</li><li>• Campus employment opportunities</li></ul>	<b>Admission Requirements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Minimum GPA</li><li>• Average test scores</li><li>• Required high school courses</li><li>• Likelihood of being accepted</li></ul>	<b>Housing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Residence halls</li><li>• On/off campus housing</li><li>• Meal plan</li><li>• Parking for residents and for commuters</li></ul>
<b>Academics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Programs and majors offered</li><li>• Student-faculty ratio</li><li>• Accreditation</li></ul>	<b>Size</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Online only or hybrid classes</li><li>• Average class size</li><li>• Physical size of campus</li></ul>	<b>Other criteria important to you</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>



# ACT vs. SAT

ACT	SAT
<b>Total Time</b>	
2 hours, 55 minutes (without writing) 3 hours, 35 minutes (with writing)	3 hours (without essay) 3 hours, 55 minutes (with essay)
<b>Subjects and Time (in order they appear on test)</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. English: 45 mins, 75 questions</li> <li>2. Math: 60 mins, 60 questions</li> <li>3. Reading: 35 mins, 40 questions</li> <li>4. Science: 35 mins, 40 questions</li> <li>5. Writing (optional): 40 mins, 1 essay</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reading: 65 mins, 52 questions</li> <li>2. Writing and Language: 35 mins, 44 questions</li> <li>3. Math: 80 mins, 58 questions</li> <li>4. Essay (optional): 50 mins, 1 essay</li> </ol>
<b>Tools</b>	
You can use a calculator on all math questions.	Some math questions don't allow you to use a calculator.
<b>Essay</b>	
Optional. Essay assesses your writing skills and your ability to compare and contrast different perspectives. For the essay, you will read a short passage about an issue and then analyze the different perspectives on this issue. You'll be asked to give your own opinion on the issue.	Optional. Essay assesses your writing skills and your reading comprehension skills. For the essay, you will read a short passage about an issue. Your essay will analyze the author's argument using evidence and reasoning. In other words, you will not be giving your own opinion.
<b>Score</b>	
<p>Total score range: 1-36</p> <p>Each section uses a scale of 1-36. Your total score is the average of your four section scores.</p> <p>The optional Writing section uses a scale of 2-12 and does not count toward your final score.</p>	<p>Total score range: 400-1600</p> <p>The Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (EBRW) and Math sections each use a scale of 200-800 and are combined for a total score.</p> <p>The optional Essay uses three separate scales of 1-8 and does not count toward your final score.</p>
<b>Accommodations</b>	
Can be requested for students with documented disabilities and English Learners	Can be requested for students with documented disabilities
<b>Registration and Preparation Tools available at:</b>	
<a href="http://act.org">act.org</a>	<a href="http://collegeboard.org/sat">collegeboard.org/sat</a>



# You're Accepted...Now What?

Once you've received your acceptance letters and decided on a school, there are still a few actions you'll need to take to secure your spot. Plus, you'll want to keep track of some key information.

## Check your college email account daily

If you have questions about processes or next steps, check in with your college representative, financial aid counselor or admissions counselor.

The college I am attending next year is: \_\_\_\_\_

My admissions counselor's name: \_\_\_\_\_

email: \_\_\_\_\_ phone: \_\_\_\_\_

My financial aid counselor's name: \_\_\_\_\_

email: \_\_\_\_\_ phone: \_\_\_\_\_

My college username: \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

My college ID #: \_\_\_\_\_



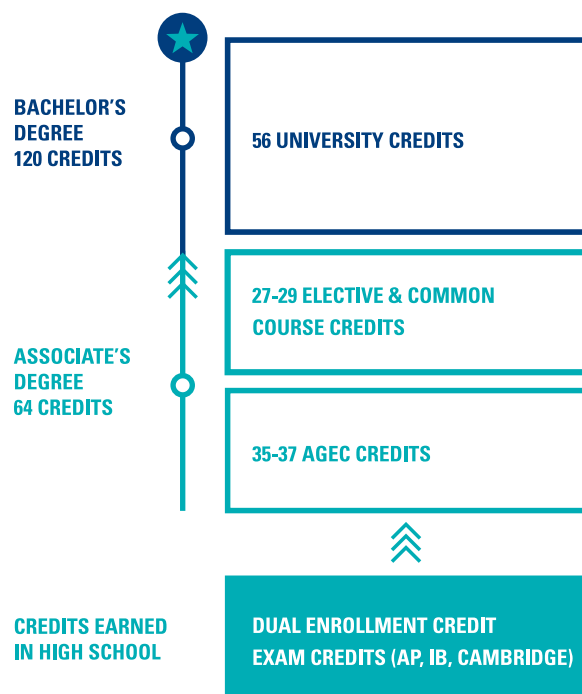
# Transferring from a Community College to a University

If your plan after high school is to attend a community college first and then transfer to a 4-year university, it will be important to learn about specific transfer programs like 2NAU, UA Bridge and ASU TAG. These programs, and other resources, such as AZtransfer.com, will help you ensure that none of your study time is wasted and that as many of your community college courses as possible, will transfer to the university of your choice and apply towards your degree.

Meet with your community college advisor early and often – academic advisors are your key to a smooth transfer. Share your goals with your advisor so that they can help you understand the Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGEC) requirements. Successfully completing these requirements means your courses will transfer from the community college to the Arizona university of your choice.

Better yet, if you complete the AGEC with a 2.5 GPA or better, you are guaranteed admission to ASU, NAU and UA. Your advisor will help you learn about specific transfer programs like MAPPS, TAGs, 2NAU, and UA Bridge, and help you monitor your progress to ensure you are on track to complete your plan.

## Building your Transfer Degree



# 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 the 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.

## Four Primary Sources of Financial Aid

### 1. Pell grants

Money provided by the federal government to college students who demonstrate financial need. Pell grants do not need to be paid back. To earn a Pell grant, you must be a U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen and will need to complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid).

### 2. Work-Study

This federally sponsored program provides students with part-time employment (often on campus) during college. Eligibility is based on financial need; students must complete the FAFSA to be considered.

### 3. Scholarships

Money for college that does not have to be repaid. Scholarships are awarded to all types of students. Some scholarships are for students with an exceptional academic record in high school and others are for students who possess certain characteristics important to the provider (such as hobbies, athletic ability, membership in a particular group, etc.). Most scholarships require an application, and dollar amounts vary.

### 4. Loans

This is borrowed money that must be repaid with interest.





# FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) Facts

Filing the FAFSA is free! Gather the information you will need to complete the FAFSA. The FAFSA is an important part of your journey and it might even mean free money to cover your college costs.

The next few pages provide helpful forms and sample documents to get you through the three major steps to complete the FAFSA:

- 1. Get your FSA ID (you and your parent).**
- 2. Complete the FAFSA with your parent.**
- 3. Review your Student Aid Report (SAR).**



When you file the FAFSA, these are the items to have (for yourself and your parents)

## ☐ Most current documents:

- Statements from all accounts (checking, savings, investments, etc.)
- Value of investments and businesses

## ☐ Documents from two years prior to the school year you will be in college:

- Federal Income Tax Forms (e.g. 1040A, 1040EZ, etc.)
- W2 forms
- Child support paid or received
- Other benefits (workers comp, military, clergy, or veteran amounts)

Note that the FAFSA can automatically transfer information from federal tax returns that you or your parent(s) filed, through the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (IRS DRT). If you are eligible to "Link to IRS" through FAFSA, use that option to have your financial information transferred for you. If you are not able to link to the IRS, you must manually enter the information. The documents listed above may still be needed to answer some financial questions, regardless of your eligibility.

# Pre-FAFSA Information

By filling in this form, you will have, in one convenient place, all the information you need to create your FSA ID online and to complete your FAFSA.

1. Your Email (not your high school email): \_\_\_\_\_ cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Email: \_\_\_\_\_ cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Are you an Arizona resident? ☐ Yes ☐ No  
Month/Year you began living in Arizona: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Are your parents Arizona residents? ☐ Yes ☐ No  
Month/Year your parents began living in Arizona: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Your Social Security number: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_
5. Your parents' Social Security number:  
Parent 1: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Parent 2: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_
6. If you are not a U. S. citizen, what is your permanent resident card A #: \_\_\_\_\_
7. What are your parents' dates of birth? Parent 1 D.O.B. \_\_\_\_\_ Parent 2 D.O.B. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Do you have a driver's license? ☐ Yes ☐ No
9. Your Driver's License #: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_
10. What is the month and year your parents were married, divorced or separated? \_\_\_\_\_
11. What is the highest level of school your parents completed? (circle one for each parent)  
Parent 1: Middle school/Jr .High      High School      College or beyond      Other/unknown  
Parent 2: Middle school/Jr. High      High School      College or beyond      Other/unknown

**You can complete, submit, and track your application at [fafsa.gov](https://fafsa.gov)**

**To learn more about how to complete the FAFSA correctly, visit <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa/filling-out>**



# FSA (Federal Student Aid)

The first step to completing your FAFSA is to create an FSA ID (a username and password). Your FSA ID gives you access to Federal Student Aid's online systems and serves as your legal signature. Only create an FSA ID using your own personal information.

Fill in this form as you create your FSA ID, so you have the information when you need it to log in later. To create an FSA ID, go to **fsaid.ed.gov**.

It's important to provide and verify your email address and cell number because those are the easiest ways to recover a password if you forget.

## Student Information

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Username: \_\_\_\_\_ Password: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security number: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Answer to Challenge Questions (answers are case sensitive):

Challenge Question	Answer

## Parent Information (if applicable)

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Username: \_\_\_\_\_ Password: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security number: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Answer to Challenge Questions (answers are case sensitive):

Challenge Question	Answer

# What Is My Dependency Status?

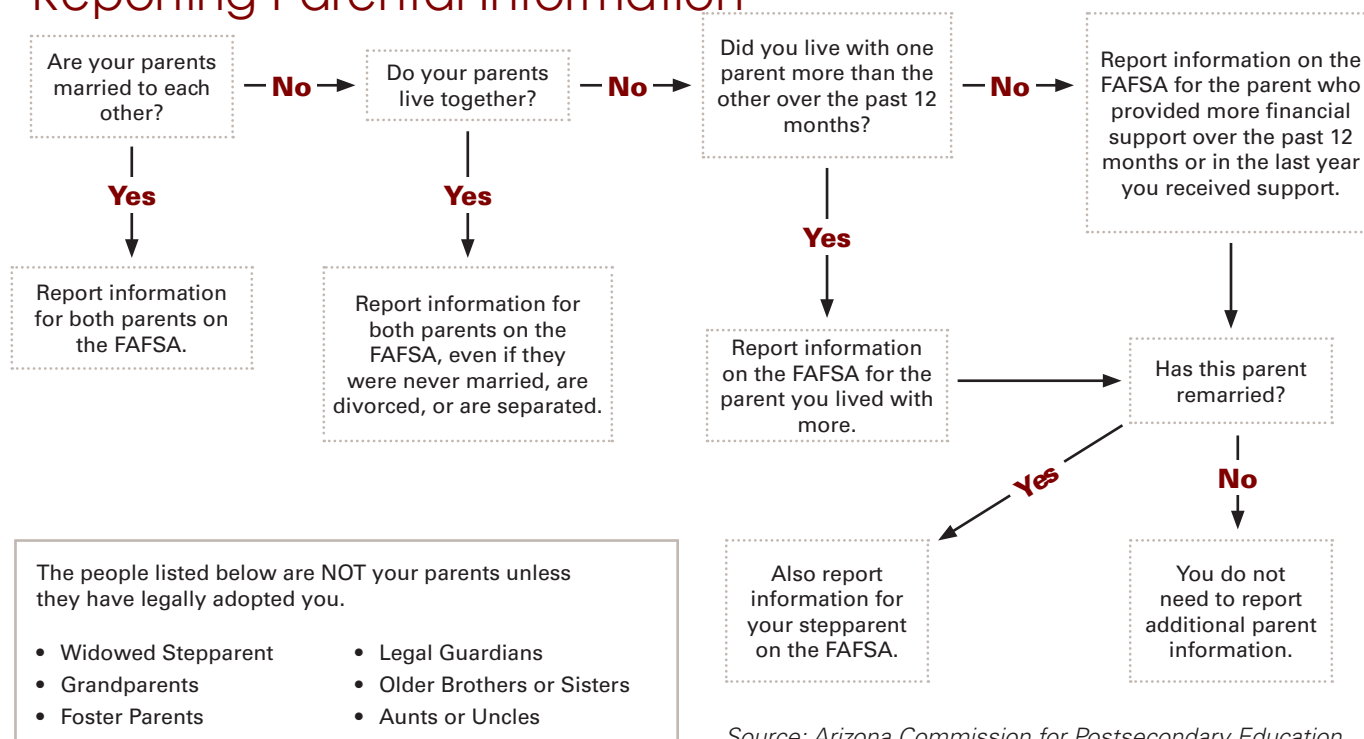
The following statements will determine your dependency status for the FAFSA.

<input type="checkbox"/> I will be 24 or older by Dec. 31 of the school year for which I am applying for aid	<input type="checkbox"/> I am married	<input type="checkbox"/> I will be working on a master's or doctorate program (e.g., MA, MBA, MD, JD, PhD, EdD, graduate certificate)	
<input type="checkbox"/> I am serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces	<input type="checkbox"/> I am a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces	<input type="checkbox"/> I now have or will have children for whom I provide more than half of their support	
<input type="checkbox"/> Since I turned age 13, both of my parents were deceased	<input type="checkbox"/> I was in foster care since turning age 13	<input type="checkbox"/> I have dependents (other than children or my spouse) who live with me and I provide more than half of their support	
<input type="checkbox"/> I was a dependent or ward of the court or State since turning age 13	<input type="checkbox"/> I am homeless or at risk of being homeless	<input type="checkbox"/> I am currently or I was in legal guardianship	<input type="checkbox"/> I am currently or I was an emancipated minor

If you marked any of the statements, you are independent and will not provide parental information on the FAFSA.

If none of the statements are true, you are a dependent student and must provide parental information on the FAFSA. Dependent students are required to include parent information on the FAFSA. Use this guide to figure out which parent's information to include on the FAFSA.

## Reporting Parental Information



Source: Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education



# SAR (Student Aid Report):

What is it, how do I get one and why is it important?

## What is the SAR?

The Student Aid Report (SAR) summarizes the information you submitted on your FAFSA and provides information about financial aid eligibility based on that information.

## How and when will I get my SAR?

After you submit your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), you'll get your personal SAR. (Within three days if you complete the FAFSA online.

You receive your SAR online. If you provide a valid email address, you'll receive an email with instructions on how to access an online copy of your SAR.

If you have an FSA ID (username and password) and your FAFSA has been processed, you can log in at [fafsa.gov](http://fafsa.gov) to view your SAR information regardless of how you filed the FAFSA.

The school(s) you list on your FAFSA will have access to your SAR data electronically within a day after it is processed.

## What information does a SAR contain (and not contain)?

The SAR won't tell you how much financial aid you'll get, but if your application is complete, an Expected Family Contribution (EFC) will display in the upper right-hand corner of your SAR and your estimated Pell grant amount will be provided. If your application is incomplete, your SAR will not include an EFC or Pell amount, but it will tell you what you need to do to resolve any issues.

The SAR also contains a four-digit Data Release Number (DRN), which appears on the first page in the upper right corner of the paper SAR and SAR Acknowledgement. On the electronic SAR, the DRN is located in the box that contains the Application Receipt date, below the EFC. You will need the DRN if you choose to allow your college or technical school to change certain information on your FAFSA.

## What am I supposed to do with my SAR?

When you get your SAR, review it carefully to make sure it's correct and complete. The school(s) you listed on your FAFSA will use SAR information to determine your eligibility for federal – and possibly nonfederal – financial aid. A school may ask you to verify the accuracy of the data you provide on the FAFSA, so you need to be sure the information is correct.

If you don't have any changes to make to the information listed on your SAR, just keep it for your records.



# Financial Aid Offers

After you've applied to your target schools and completed the FAFSA, you'll begin to receive financial aid award offers from each college.

You may receive your award offers in a letter through the mail or email, or online through your college student account. Review these offers carefully to ensure that you understand your potential out-of-pocket expenses. It is also important that your parents/guardians review your award letter(s) to help you make this important decision. The financial aid offers you receive from each school you have been accepted to will vary. Your "net" or out-of-pocket cost to attend each school is likely to be an important factor in deciding which school to attend.

After you decide which school to attend, carefully respond to that school's financial aid offer; you will be asked to "accept or decline" each component of your aid package. You can accept some offers, but decline others, if you won't need it. Always accept "free" money – like scholarships and grants. And accepting work-study. It doesn't obligate you to find and take a work-study job, but accepting it will allow you to go that route, if you want to. Think carefully, and review the terms closely, before you accept any loans offered, as these must be repaid, with interest.



# What Is FAFSA Verification?

FAFSA Verification is the process that the office of Federal Student Aid and colleges/universities follow to ensure that the information that students provided on the FAFSA is accurate. Every year, about 30% of students who file the FAFSA are selected for verification. The verification process typically requires that students and parents submit additional documents to the financial aid office at the college they will attend. The documents that may be requested include:

- tax transcripts or copies of tax returns
- birth or death certificates
- college enrollment forms from family members
- other forms/documents

## How do I know if I was selected for Verification?

There are two ways to find out if you were selected. First, as soon as you submit your FAFSA online and receive your SAR, you can look at the top part of the SAR where your EFC is shown. If there is an asterisk (\*) next to the EFC, you were selected for verification.

The other way to know if you were selected for verification is by logging in to your student account at your college. The financial section will have a notification informing you if you were selected for FAFSA verification. Your college may also send you an email with the same information.

## What do I do if I was selected for verification?

1. Know that the process is routine – and that you were selected not because you did something wrong on the FAFSA, but simply because it's part of the process.
2. Check your college student account and/or college email for information on what additional documents you must turn in to your college and how (either upload them online following a link they provide, or taking the documents in person).
3. Gather the documents you need. This may require you to ask your parents for copies of some documents or for you/your parents to contact the IRS office to request certain paperwork.
4. Submit all your paperwork as soon as you have it. You will not receive any aid if you do not complete this process.

Although this is a routine process, some students do not complete it for a variety of reasons. Some students have a hard time finding the documents requested, some have trouble getting documents from their parents, and some are confused by the names of forms and struggle to even know what to submit. If you get stuck on any part of this step contact the financial aid office at your college for help. They are there to help.

# Scholarships

Simply put, a scholarship is money given to students to help pay for their education. Unlike loans, scholarship money does not need to be paid back. Scholarships are awarded based on many different factors:

- Academic performance (also referred to as merit)
- Financial need
- Athletic performance
- Special talents and affiliations
- And more

Most scholarships require students to submit an application. The application may require an essay, a portfolio, a letter of recommendation or nomination or other additional documents/creations.

## Where do I find scholarships?

Most scholarship opportunities can be found online using powerful search engines based on a personal profile you complete on the site.

Many different entities offer scholarships. Individuals, groups, and organizations, both local and national, offer opportunities that you can apply for. National scholarships sometimes offer larger dollar amounts and are more well-known, but they can be more competitive because students from all over the country can apply. Local scholarships offer opportunities for students from a specific high school, or town, or even neighborhood. Since the number of students who qualify for local scholarships is limited based on location or more specific criteria, the chances of winning local scholarships are often greater than the odds of winning national scholarships. Look for and apply for both to increase your chances of earning scholarships.

When you apply to the three Arizona public universities, your application also serves as a scholarship application for merit-based scholarships at those institutions. Most universities/colleges in Arizona and across the country also administer numerous scholarships that require additional applications.

## How do I avoid scholarship scams?

Unfortunately, there are people who prey on aspiring college students with scholarship scams. Here are some red-flags to watch for:

- Winning a scholarship that you didn't apply for
- Companies that request personal identification information, such as a Social Security number or bank account information
- Scholarships that require a fee to apply





# References and Recommendations

Many of your applications - to schools, for scholarships and jobs - will require that you provide names of people who can recommend you or serve as your reference. You can ask a teacher, counselor, coach, supervisor or any other adult who knows you, to write a letter or be a reference for you. The schools, scholarships, or jobs to which you are applying will give you more details on whether this person needs to write a letter of recommendation, or if they will be contacted to answer questions by phone or online.

- 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 person to serve as a reference for the same application, select individuals familiar with different aspects of your life (e.g., one teacher, your supervisor at work and your soccer coach).
- Always ask the individual ahead of time if they would be able to recommend you. You do not want to miss an application deadline because the person was too busy to complete the recommendation process (such as answering surveys or writing a letter of recommendation). 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. Giving the individual a copy of your resume is an efficient way to provide that information. If a specific form or format is required for a letter of recommendation, include that information in your request.
- Provide the individual(s) with the necessary instructions, forms, addresses.
- 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 recommends you. Recommendations take time, and people put a lot of thought and effort into them. You do not want to take them for granted.



# Creating a Resume

Both the content and format of your resume are important. It doesn't matter how great your work or life history is—if your resume is poorly formatted, hard to follow or has typos, you won't be considered for employment.

## The basic elements of a resume

1. **Heading:** Include your name, address, email address and phone number. Make it stand out and make an impression by using large, bold font. Make sure your email is professional.
2. **Education:** List community college credits or certifications completed or in progress. As a high school student, include your GPA 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.
3. **Experience:** Include your job title, the employer, the location (city and state), 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.
4. **Honors/Awards/Scholarships:** Include the name of the organization that bestowed the honor/award and the date.
5. **Special Skills/Highlights:** Optional – List any unique, relevant or necessary skills not reflected in education or experience (e.g., foreign language fluency, computer program expertise, CTE certifications earned).
6. **References:** Be sure to get permission from anyone you use as a reference. Provide them with a copy of your resume. Do not use relatives as references. References may be included on separate sheet of paper.

# Creating a Cover Letter

Always add a cover letter to an employment application. It gives the employer a better sense of your communication skills, as well as a sense of your personality and enthusiasm for the job.

## The basic elements of a cover letter

1. **Greeting:** Address your cover letter to the proper person or to whom it may concern.
2. **Opening:** Write a personable, inviting opening paragraph that highlights how your skills are a perfect fit to the job.
3. **Hook:** Highlight your achievements as they relate to the job you're applying for.
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.

# Information about joining the Armed Forces



## 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 their respective service branch 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 counselor can tell you when military recruiters will be at your high school.

## 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](http://todaysmilitary.com/training/rotc)
- [bestcolleges.com/resources/rotc-programs](http://bestcolleges.com/resources/rotc-programs)

## 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. 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.

General Information:

- [official-asvab.com](http://official-asvab.com)

ASVAB Test Prep:

- [march2success.com](http://march2success.com)
- [asvabtutor.com](http://asvabtutor.com)
- [asvabpracticetests.com](http://asvabpracticetests.com)

## Delayed Entry Program

The Delayed Entry Program (DEP), also called the Delayed Enlistment Program (or the Future Soldiers Program in the Army), is a program in which individuals who want to enlist in the United States Armed Forces are placed before they ship out to Basic Training or "boot camp." Students who plan to join the military immediately following high school will likely enlist through the DEP.



# General Information about Enlisting and the ROTC Alternative

## Military Career Opportunities

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. Explore the different types of career opportunities available to service members, learn about the compensation they can expect to receive, and find out how to transfer careers to the civilian sector on the website below.

- [todaysmilitary.com/working](https://todaysmilitary.com/working)



## 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, it will be challenging. 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/army-basic-training/getting-prepared-for-bootcamp](https://military.com/military-fitness/army-basic-training/getting-prepared-for-bootcamp)







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