ACCESS College Foundation

JUNIOR HANDBOOK

2026-2027

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ACCESS College Foundation

OUR **MISSION**

ACCESS College Foundation exists to provide educational pathways leading to certification or college degree attainment and career opportunities for students, particularly those who may not otherwise have access.

The ACCESS College Foundation will help you go to college by...

- ✓ *Inspiring* hope that you CAN go to college
- ✓ *Supporting* you in meeting requirements
- ✓ *Guiding* you through the paperwork
- ✓ *Assisting* you with finding the money

PRESIDENT & CEO **MESSAGE**

Damon Jiggetts

President and CEO

Dear Students, Parents and Members of the Community:

Now in our 39th school year, ACCESS College Foundation is proud to serve our local public schools in our efforts to make higher education accessible to all. As a nationally recognized not-for-profit college access and career success program, we are proud of the strong partnerships we have forged within our community. Over the past 38 years, we have been able to assist 93,000 students with college attainment.

We are making this comprehensive digital publication available to help our students and their families with every aspect of the college admission and financial aid processes. We see this Junior Handbook as an essential tool that helps thousands of students each year to pursue their dreams of higher education. This is especially true when the Handbook is used to supplement the one-on-one or virtual services of our trained ACCESS Advisors in the 30 public high schools of Norfolk, Portsmouth, Virginia Beach, Chesapeake, Suffolk, and Northampton County.

Now more than ever, education and training beyond high school is fundamentally important for our students, families, and our community. Please communicate with your High School's ACCESS Advisor Advisor who can help make your educational dreams come true.

Have a great year!

Sincerely,

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JUNIOR YEAR **CHECKLIST**

SEPTEMBER

- [ ] Schedule an appointment with your ACCESS Advisor.
- [ ] Complete an ACCESS Services Application and Student Release Form.
- [ ] Review your high school coursework and activity plans to start working on a resume for college applications and scholarships
- [ ] Put together a list of 10 colleges that you are interested in attending. Plan to visit throughout your Junior Year when possible
- [ ] Obtain dates and locations of local college fairs and "parent nights" in your area
- [ ] Register for the PSAT/NMSQT at your school

OCTOBER

- [ ] Study for and take the PSAT/NMSQT
- [ ] Complete your "Admissions Application Organizer" with a list of requirements for your potential schools
- [ ] Connect your College Board account with Khan Academy to begin preparing for your SAT in the Spring
- [ ] Meet with college admissions recruiters when they visit your high school

NOVEMBER

- [ ] Schedule an appointment with your ACCESS Advisor if you haven't met with them yet
- [ ] Register for any AP Exams that you plan to take in the Spring. Make sure to complete the ACCESS Services Application before registering
- [ ] Use college and career search sites to explore potential future careers that interest you and major options

DECEMBER

- [ ] Your PSAT/NMSQT score report should be available. Connect your College Board account with Khan Academy to receive personalized SAT practice
- [ ] Utilize College Board's BigFuture for entries into monthly scholarship drawings
- [ ] Plan to take the ACT and SAT in the Spring. Meet with your ACCESS Advisor to receive help registering
- [ ] Research the colleges you are interested in to understand specific application requirements, including testing requirements
- [ ] Continue meeting with college recruiters when they visit your school and start planning visits if possible for the spring

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JUNIOR YEAR **CHECKLIST**

JANUARY

- [ ] Register for the SAT and ACT during the Spring time to give you time to retake in Senior year if you'd like
  - [ ] Check out **fairtest.org** to see a list of schools that are test optional for admissions
  - [ ] Continue utilizing Khan Academy to prep for the SAT and AP Exams
- [ ] Continue researching colleges and plan for spring time visits to campus
  - [ ] You can also do virtual tours for campuses that you might not be able to visit (https://campustours.com/)

FEBRUARY

- [ ] Research private scholarship organizations and other available scholarships you can apply to. Check out our Scholarship Links to research
- [ ] Keep up with studying using Khan Academy and other resources. Test dates are approaching!
- [ ] Continue developing that resume to use for admissions and scholarship applications

MARCH

- [ ] Make an appointment to meet with your ACCESS Advisor to discuss college and test registrations
- [ ] Continue investigating scholarships, grants, and other student aid programs to help pay for college
- [ ] Register and study for the SAT and/or ACT tests

APRIL

- [ ] Study for upcoming AP Exams
- [ ] Visit the colleges you are interested in and that are local over your Spring Break if possible
- [ ] Look into volunteer and job opportunities for the summer time that will help boost your resume
- [ ] Start compiling a list of teachers, coaches, and mentors that might be willing to write letters of recommendation for you applications

MAY

- [ ] Register for any additional SAT/ACT tests that you plan to take this spring/summer. If you haven't tested yet, ACCESS highly recommends getting at least one test in by the end of your junior year
- [ ] Review your senior year schedule with your counselor and ACCESS Advisor to make sure you are meeting all requirements at your potential colleges

JUNE

- [ ] Continue researching and building lists of scholarships available and the requirements needed to apply
- [ ] Obtain a summer job that is related to your career interests, if possible, and start saving money for college
- [ ] If you take a summer vacation, try to fit in a college visit around where you are vacationing to

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Who Am I?

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WHO AM I?

Colleges and scholarship programs will want to know about your grade point average, school activities, awards and honors, community involvement and employment. This section will help you develop and organize your personal information required for college and scholarship applications.

In this section, you will find:

- ✓ Personal Profile
- ✓ Activity Record
- ✓ Instructions for an Activity Resume and Samples

My Personal Profile

Filling this out will assist you in completing the application process more efficiently. You can also give copies to people writing letters of recommendation for you.

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Counselor Name and Email: _____

GPA: _____ Highest SAT/ACT Scores: _____

List of college(s) you are applying to:

_____

_____

_____

List of school and/or outside activities

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

List of leadership positions held plus responsibilities and/or any awards (academic, extra-curricular, or volunteer work)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

High School Courses (if giving to someone, attach a copy of your high school transcript)

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

PERSONAL INFORMATION: Are you the first member of your family to attend college? Did you have an extraordinary childhood? Do you have an unusual hobby? What makes you stand out in the college applicant pool? What is most interesting about you (besides awards, activities)?

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Activity Record

You can use this table to help organize the various extracurricular activites that you've been involved in throughout high school. This will help organize your thoughts before creating your resume.

Activity	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade	Awards/ Honors	Leadership Position Held

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BUILDING AN ACTIVITY RESUME

The purpose of creating and including an activity resume in your college application is to show the admissions officer that you are a well-rounded student with many talents and interests. The resume should be concise and show whether you held any leadership positions, or how many hours you devoted to the activity. Try to fit everything on one page and use 12-point font.

Athletes should include a section with special skills and statistics:

Example:
Varsity Football: 9, 10, 11, 12
Height: 6'0" **Weight:** 190
Position played: Field goal kicker
- 85% from inside the 30-yard line
- Longest field goal 36 yards
- 70% punts land inside the 20-yard line

Honors and Awards: Co-captain senior year; Nominated for All-District and All-State; named "Best Team Player"

Artists should include a section with special skills and performances or exhibitions.

Example:
Drama student: 9, 10
Governor's Magnet School Theatre Program: 11, 12
Shows:
- Wizard of Oz as Dorothy, 9
- Guys and Dolls, Stage Manager, 10
- West Side Story, Sound Technician, 11
- South Pacific as Nellie, 12

Skills: Certified in stage combat and make-up
Honors and Awards: One-act play competition, 1st place, 9

Example:
Art student: 9, 10
Governor's Magnet School Art Program: 11, 12
Media specialties: Pen and ink, ceramics, metal sculpture
Exhibitions: Olde Towne Gallery, Seawall Art Festival
Honors & Awards: 2nd place Student Gallery, 12

In our resource section, there are sample resumes that you can use as inspiration as you create your own

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Where Am I Going?

4-Year College/University

2-Year/
Community
College

Career and
Technical
Education

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WHAT IS YOUR **PLAN?**

You can't wait too long to decide! Most colleges have admission and financial aid deadlines. This section will cover the various pathways you can explore after graduation, and some important information that will help find your best fit.

In this section, you will find:

- ✓ Common Types of Colleges
- ✓ Quick Reference Guide to Colleges and Universities in Virginia
- ✓ Information about Out-Of-State Options

TYPES OF **COLLEGES**

4-Year College/Univerisity

- Is one institution with numerous schools/departments based on academic programs
- Most often results in a Bachelors of Arts or Bachelors of Science
- Universities also have opportunities for students to pursue graduate studies

Public vs Private

- Public colleges and universities receive funding from the state government and tend to be larger in size, have lower tuition costs, and have more variety in academic and extracurricular offerings
- Private colleges and universities tend to be have a higher cost associated with them, smaller class sizes, and more personalized interactions between students and faculty

Career and Technical Education

- Focuses on a specialized curriculum and aimed at students who want to learn a specific skill and find employment
- Can result in a certificate or Associates degree
- Examples include: automotive technology, cosmetology, culinary arts, HVAC, and welding

2-Year/ Community College

- Offers traditional academic programs, continuing education programs, and technical programs
- Ideal for students who are looking to transfer to a 4-year college or university and wants to save money
- Can result in a career certificate or Associates degree

What's the best option? That's up to YOU! Check out our Quick Reference Guide to see what in-state opportunities are available

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QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE TO COLLEGES AND COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN VIRGINIA

SAT and ACT scores listed are the averages unless otherwise indicated.
The scores are based on the combined Critical Reading and Math scores on the SAT. Be sure to visit the colleges' website for more information.

Admission is based on many factors.

Do not rule out a school if your GPA and Scores are not an exact match.

4-Year Virginia Public Colleges and Universities

Christopher Newport University - www.cnu.edu

- Located in Newport News
- Medium: about 4,500 students
- Medians: 3.5-4.0 GPA, 550-670 SAT (Critical Reading + Math), 24-28 ACT; Test Optional
- Division III athletics
- Admissions deadline: Early Decision (binding): 11/15; Early Action (non-binding): 12/1; Regular Decision: 2/01
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 3/1
- Federal School Code: 003706

George Mason University - www.gmu.edu

- Located in Fairfax, 16 miles west of Washington, DC
- Large: 34,000 total students (22,000 Undergraduates)
- Medians: 3.30-3.90 GPA, 1170-1350 SAT (Critical Reading + Math), 25-30 ACT; Test Optional
- Lots of opportunities for internships/work experience in the DC area
- Committed to Diversity and Inclusion
- Division I athletics
- Admissions deadline: Early Action: 11/01; Scholarship and Honors College: 11/01; Regular Decision: 02/01
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 03/01
- Federal School Code: 003749

James Madison University - www.jmu.edu

- Located in Harrisonburg, about 3-½ hour drive from Norfolk
- Large: about 23,000 students; 17:1 Student Faculty Ratio
- Medians: 3.56 - 4.00 GPA in Core classes, 1210-1370 SAT (Critical Reading + Math), 26-31 ACT; Test Optional
- Unique Major: Integrated Science and Technology (ISAT)
- Division I athletics; Football: Division I-AA
- Admissions deadline: Early Action: 11/01; Regular Decision: 01/15
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 01/01
- Federal School Code: 003721

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Longwood University - www.longwood.edu

- Located in Farmville (South-Central VA)
- Medium: about 4,500 students; residential campus
- Medians: 3.68 GPA, 1030-1210 SAT (Critical Reading + Math); 19-26 ACT, Test Optional
- Division I athletics
- Admissions deadline: Early Action 12/01; School of Nursing 12/01; Priority Scholarship 12/01; Regular Admission 6/01
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 03/01
- Federal School Code: 003719

Norfolk State University - www.nsu.edu

- Located in Norfolk, HBCU*
- Medium: about 5,500 students; mostly commuter students
- Medians: 2.3 GPA, 880 SAT (Critical Reading + Math), 17 ACT
- DNIMAS Scholarship for students interested in studying Physics, Computer Science, Biology, Chemistry and Applied Mathematics – Requires 3.3 GPA, 1200 SAT, 23 ACT, Test Optional
- Division I athletics (MEAC Conference)
- Admissions priority deadline: DNIMAS: 12/15; Scholarship Consideration: 11/01; VCAN: 05/01; 05/01 but has Rolling Admissions after deadline
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: DNIMAS Program: 02/01; 03/15
- Federal School Code: 003765

Old Dominion University - www.odu.edu

- Located in Norfolk
- Large: about 24,000 students
- Medians: 3.45 GPA, 1100 - 1280 SAT (Critical Reading + Math), 24 - 29 ACT, Test Optional
- Division I athletics
- Admissions deadline: Early Action (scholarship consideration): 12/01; Regular Decision: 02/01 then Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 03/01
- Federal School Code: 003728

Radford University - www.radford.edu

- Located in Radford (Southwest VA)
- Medium: about 7,600 students; with about 32% being first generation
- Medians: 3.25 - 3.75 GPA, 930-1170 SAT (Critical Reading + Math), 19 - 26 ACT, Test Optional
- Division I athletics
- Admissions deadline: Early Action: 11/01; Regular Decision: 02/01; Rolling admissions until full
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 03/01
- Federal School Code: 003732

***HBCU = Historical Black College or University**

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University of Mary Washington - www.umw.edu

- Located in Fredericksburg (halfway between Richmond and Washington, DC)
- Medium: about 3,600 students; residential campus
- Medians: 3.80 GPA, 1180-1340 SAT (Critical Reading + Math), 27-31 ACT; Test Optional
- The oldest and most intensive historic preservation program for undergraduate students in the country
- Division III athletics
- Admissions deadline: Early Decision: 11/01; Early Action: 11/15; Regular Decision: 02/01
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 03/01; Online Scholarship Deadline: 05/15
- Federal School Code: 003746

University of Virginia - www.virginia.edu

- Located in Charlottesville (Central VA)
- Medium: about 26,470 students; residential campus
- Holistic approach for admissions
- Medians: 1410-1540 SAT (Critical Reading + Math), 32-35 ACT; Test Optional
- Division I athletics (ACC Conference)
- Admissions deadline: Early Decision & Early Action: 11/15; Regular Decision: 01/05
- Financial Aid Priority Deadlines: Early Action 11/01; Early Decision: 11/01; Regular Decision: 01/05
- Federal School Code: 003745

University of Virginia – College at Wise - www.uvawise.edu

- Located in Wise (Southwest VA)
- Formerly known as Clinch Valley College; branch of UVA
- Small: about 1,900 students; residential campus
- Medians: 2.0 GPA, 915 - 1160 SAT (Critical Reading + Math), 18 - 22 ACT, Test Optional
- Division II athletics
- Admissions deadline: Early Action: 12/01; Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 03/01
- Federal School Code: 003747

Virginia Commonwealth University - www.vcu.edu

- Located in downtown Richmond
- Large: about 28,000 students
- Medians: 3.3 - 3.63 GPA, 1010-1270 SAT (Critical Reading + Math), 22- 30 ACT, Test Optional
- Strong programs in the visual and performing arts, humanities and sciences, health sciences and social work
- Division I athletics
- Admissions deadline: Guaranteed Admission to School of Medicine or Health Sciences Program 11/01; Scholarship Consideration: 11/01; Regular Decision: 01/15
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 02/01
- Federal School Code: 003735

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Virginia Military Institute - www.vmi.edu

- Located in Lexington (Western Central VA)
- Small: about 1,560 students; residential campus
- Medians: 3.59 GPA, 1090 -1270 SAT (Critical Reading + Math), 24 - 31 ACT; Test Optional
- Strong programs in Liberal Arts
- Division I athletics
- Admissions deadline: Early Decision: 11/15; Rolling; Priority Regular Decision: 02/01
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 03/01
- Federal School Code: 003753

Virginia State University - www.vsu.edu

- HBCU located in Petersburg
- Medium: about 5,700 students; 17:1 Student to faculty ratio
- Medians: Average 2.5-2.9 GPA, 920 SAT, 17 - 22 ACT, Test Optional
- Division II athletics
- Admissions deadline: Regular Decision: 05/01
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 03/31
- Federal School Code: 003764

Virginia Tech - www.vt.edu

- Located in Blacksburg (Southwest VA)
- Large: about 38,000 students (30,000 undergraduate)
- Medians: 4.09 GPA, 1280-1450 SAT (Critical Reading + Math), 28-32 ACT, Test Optional
- Division I athletics
- Admissions deadline: Early Action: 11/01; Regular Decision: 01/15
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: If wanting to be considered for scholarships then both scholarship and FAFSA applications need to be completed 01/22; 03/01
- Federal School Code: 003754

William & Mary - www.wm.edu

- Located in Williamsburg
- Medium: about 6,900 students; 6,963 undergraduate
- Medians: Average 4.2 - 4.4 GPA, 1400-1530 SAT (Critical Reading + Math), 32-34 ACT; Test Optional
- William & Mary Promise for VA students from low-income backgrounds
- Division I athletics
- Admissions deadline: Early Decision I: 11/01; Early Decision II and Regular Decision: 01/05
- All students considered for scholarships with application submission
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: ED I: FAFSA and CSS 11/15; ED II: FAFSA and CSS 01/15; Regular: FAFSA and CSS 02/01
- Federal School Code: 003705

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4-Year Virginia Private Colleges and Universities

Averett University - www.averett.edu

- Located in Danville (central VA near VA/NC border)
- Small: about 800 - 900 students; 12:1 Student Faculty Ratio
- Medians: 2.5 GPA, 1050 SAT (Critical Reading + Math), 15 - 28 ACT, Test Optional
- Division III athletics
- Admissions deadline: Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 06/01
- Federal School Code: 003702

Batten University - www.batten.edu

- Located in Virginia Beach
- Small: about 1,600 students
- Medians: 3.35 GPA, Test Optional
- Emphasis on internships and undergraduate research opportunities
- Division III athletics
- Admissions deadline: Early Action 11/15; Regular 02/01: Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 03/01
- Federal School Code: 003767

Bluefield University - www.bluefield.edu

- Located in Bluefield (Southwest VA near VA/WV border)
- Small: about 1,000 - 1,300 students; residential campus
- Minimum 2.0 GPA, Minimum 900-1090 SAT (Critical Reading + Math), Minimum 18 ACT, Test Optional
- NAIA Division I athletics
- Admissions deadline: Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 03/15
- Federal School Code: 003703

Bridgewater College - www.bridgewater.edu

- Located in Bridgewater (Northwest VA, near JMU)
- Small: about 1.600 students
- Medians: Average 3.54 GPA, 1020-1360 SAT (Critical Reading + Math), 20 - 29 ACT (test optional)
- Most popular majors: Biology, Business, Psychology, Education, Health and Exercise Science
- Division III athletics
- Admissions deadline: Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 04/15
- Federal School Code: 003704

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Christendom College - www.christendom.edu

- Located in Front Royal, Virginia
- Catholic, liberal arts college
- Small: about 550 students
- Medians: 3.6 GPA, 1000 SAT (Critical Reading + Math), 19 ACT
- Conducts Mass twice daily
- Admission Deadline: Early Action 12/01; Regular Decision: 03/01
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 03/01

Eastern Mennonite University - www.emu.edu

- Located in Harrisonburg (near JMU & Bridgewater)
- Small: 10:1 student to faculty ratio, about 1,342 undergraduate students
- Medians: 3.52 GPA, Test Blind
- Strong Education, Nursing, Business, Pre-professional health programs
- Museum of Natural History, Arboretum and campus garden exists on campus
- Unique Major: Peacebuilding, Global Development/Studies, Photography and Environmental Science
- Division III athletics (Old Dominion Athletic Conference)
- Admissions deadline: Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 03/01
- Federal School Code: 003708

ECPI University - www.ecpi.edu

- Campus locations in Virginia Beach and Newport News
- Students may be eligible to complete an associate degree in as little as 1.5 years and a bachelor's degree in as little as 2.5 years. Uses year-round, accelerated schedules. Actual completion times depends on program, student's schedule, and any transfer credits
- Admission Requirements Include
  - Completion of Personal Admission Inferview
  - Complete and Submit an application for admission and enrollment agreement
  - Provide high school transcript or GED test scores
  - Achievable acceptable scores on the Admissions Assessment(s)
- Strong Tecnology, Nursing, Health Science, Business & Criminal Justice, and Culinary Arts programs
- Admissions deadline: Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: Rolling/June 30th
- Federal School Code: 010198

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Emory & Henry College - www.ehc.edu

- Located in Emory (Southwest VA)
- Small: about 1,350 students
- Average GPA 3.5, Test Optional
- Unique Major: Equine Studies; Unique Program: Semester-a-Trail
- Division II athletics
- Admissions deadline: Early Action: 11/15 and 01/15; Regular Decision: 07/01 but also rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: Priority given to applicants who file early
- Federal School Code: 003709

Ferrum College - www.ferrum.edu

- Located in Ferrum (Southwest VA)
- Small: about 800 - 850 students; 11:1 Student Faculty Ratio
- Minimum 3.14 GPA, Test Optional-Test scores required for honors program
- Division III athletics
- Admissions deadline: Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 03/01
- Federal School Code: 003711

Hampden-Sydney College - www.hsc.edu

- Located in Hampden-Sydney (Central VA)
- Small: about 930 students
- Medians: 3.42 GPA, Test optional-now 1060-1230 SAT (Critical Reading + Math), 21 - 27 ACT
- All male college
- 10th oldest college
- Division III athletics
- Admissions deadline: Early Action 1: 10/15; Early Decision: 11/03; Early Action 2: 12/01; and Regular Decision: 02/02
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 02/01
- Federal School Code: 003713

Hampton University - www.hamptonu.edu

- HBCU, located in Hampton
- Medium: about 3,300 students
- Medians: 3.3 GPA, 1090 SAT (Critical Read + Math), 22 ACT, Test Optional if unweighted GPA > 3.6
- Division I athletics
- Admissions deadline: Early Action: 11/15; Regular Decision: 03/01
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 02/15
- Federal School Code: 003714

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Hollins University - www.hollins.edu

- Located in Roanoke
- Small: about 700 - 800 students 9/1 ration. average class size 12
- All female college
- Test optional
- Creative Writing program, English, Biology, Art, Political Science, Business
- Division III athletics (including Equestrian Riding)
- Admissions deadline: Early Decision: 10/15; Early Action: 11/15; Regular Decision: 02/15
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 03/15
- Top tier students-full tuition scholarship available
- Federal School Code: 003715

Liberty University - www.liberty.edu

- Located in Lynchburg (Central VA)
- Large: 110,000 students; residential campus
- Medians: 3.25 - 3.75 GPA, 1040 - 1250 SAT (Critical Reading + Math), 21 - 29 ACT- Test Optional
- Christian academic community
- Division I athletics
- Admissions deadline: Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: Priority given to early applicants and those filing FAFSA by early spring
- Federal School Code: 010392

Mary Baldwin University - www.marybaldwin.edu

- Located in Staunton (Western VA)
- Small: about 1,200 to 1,800 students; residential campus
- Minimum 3.57 GPA, Test Optional
- 2017 Co-Ed Programs began
- Division III athletics
- Admissions deadline: Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: No Deadline due to Rolling Admissions
- Federal School Code: 003723

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Marymount University - www.marymount.edu

- Located in Arlington (Northern VA)
- Small: about 4,000 students
- Medians: 3.3 GPA, 100% test blind, no longer requiring test scores
- Division III athletics
- Admissions deadline: 03/01, Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 03/15
- Federal School Code: 003724

Randolph College - www.randolphcollege.edu

- Located in Lynchburg (Central VA)
- Founded as Randolph-Macon Woman's College in 1891
- Small: about 900 - 950 students
- Test Optional
- Writing Requirement in every discipline
- Marine Biology, Criminology
- Division III athletics
- Admissions deadline: Early Action: 11/15; Regular Decision: 03/01
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: Rolling filing status
- Federal School Code: 003734

Randolph-Macon College - www.rmc.edu

- Located in Ashland (North of Richmond)
- Small: about 1,523 students
- Test Optional
- Division III athletics
- Admissions deadline: Early Action: 11/15 and to be considered for highest scholarship amounts; Regular Decision: 03/01
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 02/01
- Federal School Code: 003733

Regent University - www.regent.edu

- Located in Virginia Beach
- Medium: about 11,000 students (Online & On-Campus), residential housing
- Medians: 3.0 GPA, Test Optional
- Top 5 majors include: Psychology, Biblical/Theological Studies, Christian Ministry, Business, and Cybersecurity. Popular majors include Government/Law, Education, and Communication.
- Admissions deadline: Rolling
- NCCAA Division I athletics: basketball, soccer, track, volleyball, and cross country
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: Rolling
- Federal School Code: 030913

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Roanoke College - www.roanoke.edu

- Located in Salem (Southwest VA)
- Medium: about 1,800 students, residential housing available
- Medians: 3.4 GPA, Test Optional
- Community service encouraged
- 19 Division III men's and women's athletics
- Admissions deadline: Early Decision Binding 11/01: Early Action I: 11/01, Early Action II: 12/01; Regular Decision: Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 03/01
- Federal School Code: 003736

Shenandoah University - www.su.edu

- Located in Winchester (Northwest VA)
- Medium: about 4,343 students
- Medians: 3.68 GPA, Test Blind, Test scores no longer needed
- Conservatory of Music, Theater and Dance; Strong Health Professions
- Division III athletics
- Admissions deadline: Early Action 11/04; Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 06/15
- Federal School Code: 003737

University of Lynchburg - www.lynchburg.edu

- Located in Lynchburg (Central VA)
- Small: about 3,000 students
- Medians: 3.4 - 3.5 GPA, Test Optional
- Division III athletics
- Merit Scholarships are available for every applicant
- Top majors: Nursing, business, exercise physiology
- Admissions deadline: Early Action 11/15; Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 03/01
- Federal School Code: 003720

University of Richmond - www.richmond.edu

- Located in Richmond
- Medium: about 3,100 students
- Medians: 3.75 Core GPA, 1410-1530; SAT (Critical Reading + Math), 34 ACT; Test Optional
- Offers Leadership Studies program, the first one of its kind in the country
- Robins School of Business is consistently ranked among the nation's top undergraduate business schools.
- Division I athletics
- Admissions deadline: Early Decision I: 11/01; Early Action 11/01; Early Decision II: 01/01; Regular 01/05
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: Early Action 11/15; Regular Decision 02/01
- Federal School Code: 003744

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Virginia Christian College - www.vcc.edu

- Located in Norfolk
- Open admission policy, requires completion of application with official high school transcript or GED, and letters of recommendation
- Undergraduate Programs that include School of Ministry, School of Business & Leadership, and School of Human Services
- Graduate Program offered: School of Christian Ministry
- Admissions deadline: August 21st
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 06/30

Virginia Union University - www.vuu.edu

- HBCU located in Richmond
- Small: about 1,662 undergraduate students
- Medians: 2.00 GPA, Test Optional
- Criminal Justice Program, Business, Biology, Education, Mass Communications
- Division II athletics
- Admissions deadline: Rolling Admissions
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 03/15
- Federal School Code: 003766

Washington and Lee University - www.wlu.edu

- Located in Lexington (Western VA)
- Small: about 1,880 students
- Medians: Middle 50% of class, 1430 –1540 SAT (Critical Reading + Math); Middle 50% of class, ACT 32-34, Test Optional beginning 2023-2024
- 10% of each class receives full Johnson Scholarship covering tuition, room and board, and additional funding for summer experiences and travel
- Shepherd Program for the Interdisciplinary Study of Poverty and Human Capability integrates academic study and learning through service and reflection
- Internship programs in DC and Manhattan, plus study abroad in over 40 countries
- Division III athletics
- Admissions deadline: Early Decision I: 11/01; Early Decision II: 01/05; Regular: 01/05
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: Early Decision I: 12/01; Early Decision II 01/15; Regular Decision 02/15
- Federal School Code: 003768

Virginia residents who attend a private college/university in Virginia may be eligible for the Virginia Tuition Assistance Grant (VTAG). A separate application is required and is due no later than July 31st each year. See your school's financial aid website for information on how to submit.

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2-Year Virginia Public Colleges

Blue Ridge Community College - www.brcc.edu

- Located in Weyers Cave (in the Central Shenandoah Valley)
- Medium: about 3,800 students
- Any person who has a high school diploma or the equivalent, or who is 18 years of age and able to benefit from a program at the College may be admitted.
- Placement testing or high school transcripts may be used to determine college readiness for specific courses.
- Popular programs include Aviation Maintenance Technology and Veterinary Technology
- Intramural sports available
- Admissions deadline: Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 03/15
- Federal School Code: 006819

Brightpoint Community College - www.brightpoint.edu

- Main campus located in Chester, Virginia and the other campus in Midlothian, Virginia
- Large: Over 12,000 students
- Any person who has a high school diploma or the equivalent, or who is 18 years of age and able to benefit from a program at the College may be admitted.
- Direct Enrollment Survey used for math and English placement
- Popular programs include criminal justice, engineering, and funeral services
- Intramural Sports available
- Admissions Deadline: Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: Rolling
- Federal Code: 004004

Camp Community College - www.pdc.edu

- Located in Franklin, Smithfield, and Suffolk, VA
- Small: about 1,200 to 1,650 students
- Any person who has a high school diploma or the equivalent, or who is 18 years of age and able to benefit from a program at the College, may be admitted.
- Placement Test: Not required
- Career Pathways: Advanced Manufacturing and Skilled Trades; Business; Computer and Information Technology; Education; Healthcare; Public Service and Safety; Science, and College and University Transfer.
- Intercollegiate sports: Baseball, Softball, Men and Women Basketball, Men and Women Soccer, and Esports.
- Admissions deadline: Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 06/01
- Federal School Code: 009159

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Central Virginia Community College - www.centralvirginia.edu

- Located in Lynchburg, VA
- Medium: about 3,000 to 4,000 students
- Any person who as a high school diploma or the equivalent, or who is 18 years of age and able to benefit from a program at the College may be admitted.
- Direct Enrollment Survey Popular programs include Air Conditioning and Refrigeration, Paralegal studies, and Police Science
- Intramural sports available
- Admissions deadline: Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: On-going
- Federal School Code: 004988

Danville Community College - www.danville.edu

- Located in Danville, VA (45 miles from Greensboro, NC)
- Medium: about 2,500 students
- Any person who has a high school diploma or the equivalent, or who is 18 years of age and able to benefit from a program at the College, may be admitted.
- Direct Enrollment Survey
- Popular programs include Business Management & Operations, Allied Health Professions, and Dental Assisting
- No application fee to apply
- Club level baseball (Men only)
- Admissions deadline: Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 06/01
- Federal School Code: 003758

Eastern Shore Community College - es.vccs.edu

- Located in Melfa, VA (on the Eastern Shore, about 60 miles from Norfolk)
- Small: about 650 - 720 students
- Any person who has a high school diploma or the equivalent, or who is 18 years of age and able to benefit from a program at the College, may be admitted.
- Direct Enrollment Survey
- No sports available
- Popular programs include Air Conditioning and Refrigeration, Business Management, and Early Childhood Ed
- No application fee to apply
- Admissions deadline: Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: Priority: 06/01
- Federal School Code: 003748

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Germanna Community College - www.germanna.edu

- Located in Locust Grove, VA (about 30 minutes West of Fredericksburg)
- Medium Sized: about 7,500 - 8,500 students
- Any person who has a high school diploma or the equivalent, or who is 18 years of age and able to benefit from a program at the College, may be admitted.
- Multiple measures and informed self-placement to determine a student's readiness for college level English and Math courses.
- Popular programs include a competitive Nursing program, Accounting, and American Sign Language
- Intramural flag football, soccer, dodgeball, basketball and a variety of other organizations
- Admissions deadline: Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 04/01
- Federal School Code: 008660

Laurel Ridge Community College - www.laurelridge.edu

- Located in Middletown, VA
- Medium: about 5,935 students
- Any person who has a high school diploma or the equivalent, or who is 18 years of age and able to benefit from a program at the College, may be admitted.
- 4 campuses located in Middletown, Luray, and Warrenton, Virginia
- Popular programs include Accounting, Surgical Technology, and Web Design
- Club sports available
- Admissions deadline: Rolling; Regular 05/01
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: Priority: 05/01; Overall Deadline - 06/01
- Federal School Code: 008659

Mountain Empire Community College - www.mecc.edu

- Located in Big Stone Gap, VA
- Small: about 2,100 students
- Any person who has a high school diploma or the equivalent, or who is 18 years of age and able to benefit from a program at the College, may be admitted.
- May be exempt from placement test based on a 480/Reading and Writing, and 530/Math SAT score or a 18/English, 18/Writing, and 22/Math ACT score within the last two years.
- Popular programs include Welding, Respiratory Care Therapy, and Industrial Production Technology
- Intramural sports available (flag football and basketball)
- Admissions deadline: Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: Priority: 05/01
- Federal School Code: 009629

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Mountain Gateway Community College - www.mgcc.edu

- Located in Clifton Forge, VA
- Small: about 600 - 1,000 students
- Any person who has a high school diploma or the equivalent, or who is 18 years of age and able to benefit from a program at the College, may be admitted.
- Placement testing is no longer required. MGCC uses Direct Enrollment to determine appropriate English and Math course placement.
- Guaranteed Admission Agreements to various nursing programs (and other programs)
- No application fee to apply
- Popular programs include Business Management & Operations, and Natural Resources Conservation
- Admissions deadline: Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: Rolling
- Federal School Code: 004996

New River Community College - www.nr.edu

- Located in Dublin, VA
- Medium: about 4,100 students
- Any person who has a high school diploma or the equivalent, or who is 18 years of age and able to benefit from a program at the College, may be admitted.
- Direct Enrollment based on GPA and highest level of Math and English taken in High School Popular programs include Accounting, Business Administration, and Drafting/Design Technologies CAD/CADD
- Intramural sports available
- Admissions deadline: Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 06/01
- Federal School Code: 005223

Northern Virginia Community College - www.nvcc.edu

- Located in Annandale, VA
- Large: about 75,000 students
- Any person who has a high school diploma or the equivalent, or who is 18 years of age and able to benefit from a program at the College, may be admitted.
- 6 campuses in Alexandria, Annandale, Loudoun, Manassas, Springfield (medical education campus), and Woodbridge
- Offers over 100 associate degrees and certificate programs
- Popular programs include Accounting, Biological and Physical Sciences, and Criminal Justice
- Intramural sports
- Admissions deadline: Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 05/01
- Federal School Code: 003727

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Patrick Henry Community College - www.patrickhenry.edu

- Located in Martinsville, VA
- Small: about 1,800 students
- Any person who has a high school diploma or the equivalent, or who is 18 years of age and able to benefit from a program at the College, may be admitted.
- Direct Enrollment Placement
- Free on demand mental health support
- Popular programs include Accounting, Business Administration, Nursing, and General Studies
- Intercollegiate athletics and recreational activities
- Admissions deadline: Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: Priority deadline 06/01
- Federal School Code: 003751

Piedmont Virginia Community College - www.pvcc.edu

- Located in Charlottesville, VA
- Medium: about 5,000 students
- Any person who has a high school diploma or the equivalent, or who is 18 years of age and able to benefit from a program at the College, may be admitted.
- Most PVCC students do not need to take placement tests. If you graduated from High School longer than 6 years ago, then informed self- placement guides are available to help determine your courses.
- Students can participate in guaranteed or direct admission/transfer pathways, depending on eligibility.
- Popular programs include Computer Science, Diagnostic Medical Sonography, and Multimedia Design
- Club sports and recreational activities
- Admissions deadline: Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 03/01
- Federal School Code: 009928

Rappahannock Community College - www.rappahanock.edu

- Located in Glenns, VA
- Medium: about 2,500 students
- RCC has two full-service campuses (Glenns and Warsaw) and several educational centers/sites throughout the region
- Any person who has a high school diploma or the equivalent, or who is 18 years of age and able to benefit from a program at the College, may be admitted.
- May be exempt from placement test based on a 480/Reading and Writing, and 480/Math SAT score or 19 English, 19/Writing, and 19/Math ACT score within the last two years.
- Popular programs include Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement Admin, Electrical Electronics, and Culinary Arts
- Student clubs, activities, wellness, and recreation
- Admissions deadline: Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: Scholarship Deadline - 04/15; 02/15
- Federal School Code: 009160

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Reynolds Community College - www.reynolds.edu

- Located in Richmond, VA
- Medium: about 7,500 students
- 3 main campuses (Downtown, Parham Road, and Goochland) plus additional education centers.
- Any person who has a high school diploma or the equivalent, or who is 18 years of age and able to benefit from a program at the College, may be admitted.
- Popular programs include Automotive Mechanics Technology, Biological and Physical Sciences, and Business Administration. Direct Enrollment with multiple measures and informed self-placement Most students do not take placement tests.
- Student recreation, intramural activities, and campus tournaments
- Admissions deadline: Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 08/15
- Federal School Code: 003759

Richard Bland College - www.rbc.edu

- Located in Petersburg, VA
- Small: about 2,000 students
- Multiple measures for placement and generally does not rely solely on placement testing.
- Applicants are evaluated based on high school courses, grades, and extracurricular activities. High school work should normally include four (4) units of English, three (3) units of mathematics (preferred courses: Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II or advanced math courses), two (2) units of history or government and two (2) units of science. Two (2) units of foreign language. are preferred but not required.
- Transfer agreement with 35+ VA colleges & universities
- NJCAA Division 1 Athletics or II depending on program
- Admissions deadline: Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 3/1
- Federal School Code: 003707

Southside Virginia Community College - www.southside.edu

- Located in Alberta, VA (70 miles South of Richmond)
- Medium Sized: about 3,000 students
- 7 campuses: Alberta, Blackstone, Chase City, Emporia, Keysville, South Boston, and South Hill, Virginia
- Any person who has a high school diploma or the equivalent, or who is 18 years of age and able to benefit from a program at the College, may be admitted.
- Direct Enrollment Survey
- Popular programs include Nursing, Funeral Services, and Agribusiness
- Intercollegiate athletics: Men's Basketball and Women's Fast Pitch Softball
- Admissions deadline: Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 07/01
- Federal School Code: 008661

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Southwest Virginia Community College - www.sw.edu

- Located in Richlands, VA (45 miles from Bluefield and Bristol)
- Small: about 2,200 students
- Any person who has a high school diploma or the equivalent, or who is 18 years of age and able to benefit from a program at the College, may be admitted.
- Direct Enrollment Survey
- No sports; about 20 clubs and organizations
- Popular programs include Allied Health Professions, Emergency Medical Services, and Business Management
- Admissions deadline: Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 05/01
- Federal School Code: 007260

Tidewater Community College - www.tcc.edu

- Four campuses across Hampton Roads (Norfolk, Portsmouth, Virginia Beach, and Chesapeake)
- Large: about 25,000 students
- Any person who has a high school diploma or the equivalent, or who is 18 years of age and able to benefit from a program at the College, may be admitted.
- Multiple measures and informed self-placement to determine a student's readiness for college level English and Math courses.
- Intercollegiate and Club athletics available; Over 40 clubs and organizations
- Popular programs in Nursing, Automotive Analysis & Repair
- On-site childcare
- Admissions deadline: Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 03/01
- Federal School Code: 003712

Virginia Highlands Community College - www.vhcc.edu

- Located in Abingdon, VA
- Small: about 3,000 students
- Any person who has a high school diploma or the equivalent, or who is 18 years of age and able to benefit from a program at the College, may be admitted.
- Multiple measures and informed self-placement to determine a student's readiness for college level English and Math courses.
- Popular programs include Dental Assisting, Diesel Mechanics
- Intramural and club sports available
- Unique facilities include a greenhouse and regional artisan center
- Admissions deadline: Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 07/01
- Federal School Code: 009903

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Virginia Peninsula Community College - www.vpcc.edu

- Located in Hampton, VA
- Medium: about 9,000 students
- Any person who has a high school diploma or the equivalent, or who is 18 years of age and able to benefit from a program at the College, may be admitted.
- Direct Enrollment Survey. Advisors are available to assist anyone not comfortable in choosing their classes. Popular programs include new Dental Hygiene program; SIFE program; Teacher Prep Program; William & Mary Co-Enrollment
- Student activities, clubs, and recreation opportunities
- Admissions deadline: Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: Scholarship Application - 07/01; Priority: 05/01
- Federal School Code: 006871

Virginia Western Community College - www.virginiawestern.edu

- Located in Roanoke, VA
- Medium: about 8,000 students
- Any person who has a high school diploma or the equivalent, or who is 18 years of age and able to benefit from a program at the College, may be admitted.
- Multiple measures and informed self-placement to determine a student's readiness for college level English and Math courses.
- Popular programs include Design & Visual Communications, Dental Hygiene, and Radiation Oncology
- Student clubs, activities, and recreation opportunities
- Admissions deadline: Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 07/01
- Federal School Code: 003760

Wytheville Community College - www.wcc.vccs.edu

- Located in Wytheville, VA (74 miles from Roanoke, VA)
- Medium: about 2,244 students
- Any person who has a high school diploma or the equivalent, or who is 18 years of age and able to benefit from a program at the College, may be admitted.
- Direct Enrollment with multiple measures and informed self-placement
- Intramural and intercollegiate sports available
- Popular programs include Construction Technology, Precision Metal Work, and Residential Design and Estimating
- Admissions deadline: Rolling
- Financial Aid Priority Deadline: 05/01
- Federal School Code: 003761

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WHAT ABOUT OPTIONS OUTSIDE OF VIRGINIA?

Out-of-state colleges are certainly an option to consider, but keep in mind that out-of-state colleges often have higher tuition costs. You may have to pay out-of-state tuition (a higher tuition rate) unless you or your parents have established and maintained residency (domicile) in that state. Out-of-state tuition is most often an issue when you enroll at an out-of- state public college or university. Private colleges do not usually charge higher tuition to out-of- state students. Check the Big Future website at www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org and click on "Find Colleges" to obtain access to college search tools and create a list of colleges that meet your needs.

What are My International Options?

Study abroad is an often-overlooked option. There are international colleges and universities that have costs that are lower than going to colleges and universities in the United States. Federal financial aid grants and loans can be used to attend college abroad at colleges that meet federal qualifications. There are also scholarship opportunities that can help off-set the costs of studying abroad. For more information on special program opportunities and general information on colleges and universities, visit www.petersons.com.

Are there Ways to Pay In-State Tuition at an Out-of-State College?

Yes! There are ways to pay in-state tuition at colleges outside Virginia through the Academic Common Market. The Academic Common Market is an organization of colleges in sixteen states that allows students to attend a public college or university out of their home state and pay in-state tuition rates. There is a catch, however, as you must be studying a subject not available at a college in your home state. For more information about the Academic Common Market, visit the Southern Regional Education Board website at www.sreb.org.

Are there Other Issues to Consider?

There are many issues other than tuition to consider. Those issues include:

- Is my major offered at the college?
- Will transportation to and from home on weekends or breaks take a lot of time or money?
- Will I be comfortable in the culture or that part of the country?
- Am I ready to be that far from home?

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What Tests Do I Take?

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WHAT TEST SHOULD I TAKE?

Deciding what entrance tests you should take can be a difficult question to answer. A lot will depend on your future college/university and what your strengths are as a student. Keep reading to help decide which test is right for you

In this section, you will find:

- ✓ Information about College Entrance Tests
- ✓ College Entrance Testing Schedules
- ✓ Online Registration Instructions

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE ACT AND THE SAT?

	The ACT	The SAT
What is Tested?	The ACT focuses on what you learned in high school and determines your academic readiness for college	The SAT is a reasoning based exam that measures what you learned in high school and what you need to be successful in college
When to Take the Test?	Usually taken for the first time during junior year of high school. The test is offered in February, April, June, July, September, October, and December	Usually taken for the first time during junior year of high school. The test is offered in March, May, June, August, October, November, and December
Test Duration	2 hours, 55 minutes + 40 minutes for optional essay	2 hours, 15 minutes
Major Sections	English, mathematics, reading, science, and an optional writing portion	Reading, writing and language, mathematics
Scoring	Composite score from each section, 1-36	Composite score from each section, 400-1600
Cost*	$68 (no writing) $93 (with writing)	$70

** Students may be eligible for a fee waiver, reach out to your ACCESS Advisor for more information*

Which Test Should I Choose?

- Look at the website for the college(s) you may attend. Note whether they require the SAT or ACT.
- Go on the website for both tests and look at sample questions to determine which test is compatible with your strengths. Your ACCESS Advisor can discuss this with you further.

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2026-2027
SAT TESTING SCHEDULE

Test Date	September 12, 2026	October 3, 2026	November 7, 2026	December 5, 2026	March 6, 2027	May 1, 2027	June 5, 2027
Regular Registration Deadline	August 28, 2026	September 18, 2026	October 23, 2026	November 20, 2026	February 19, 2027	April 16, 2027	May 21, 2027
Late Registration Deadline *	September 1, 2026	September 22, 2026	October 27, 2026	November 24, 2026	February 23, 2027	April 20, 2027	May 25, 2027

Testing locations can vary across high schools and college campuses in our region. You will be able to select your preferred location during registration. Special testing dates may be available at your school, so check with your School Counseling Office for any additional information

SAT Registration	$68
Late Registration	$38*
Test Center Change	$34*
Cancel Registration	$34*
Cancel Late Registration	$44*

** These are in addition to the registration fee*

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REGISTER FOR THE SAT ONLINE

Before registering, make sure to complete an ACCESS Services Application and meet with your ACCESS Advisor!

Create an Online Account

1. Go to http://collegeboard.org
2. Click on **SAT**
3. Click on **Register Now** (If you already have an account, skip to Step 5)
4. Click on **CREATE ACCOUNT** (7 step process)
   a. If you are creating an account, you will be asked to complete your first name, last name, date of birth, e-mail, high school attending, and graduation information. *Parent contact information is an optional input but can be very helpful when it comes to reminders.*
   b. You will need to verify the information you just input on the next screen. Please review and check each item once verified.
   c. Verification will be required through your email. We recommend using your personal email address.
   d. Creating your password and security phrase will be next. Please follow the security guidelines and save your password in a safe place.
   e. Verification is also required through your mobile phone.
   f. Stay connected by text. This is optional, but we recommend to stay up to date and receive reminders incase changes arise.
5. Use your online College Board account to register for the SAT Test.
6. Choose the date, and the test center you want to take the SAT.
7. Select a photo that you would like to have placed on your registration ticket
8. Choose colleges to receive your score reports (the first four reports are free)
9. Enter payment information (if not using a fee waiver) and submit!
10. Print your admission ticket and follow the directions on that ticket for test day.

Once you have an online account, you can:

- View your scores once they become available
- Get help finding, applying, and paying for college
- Receive e-mail reminders

Please be sure to include your High School Code (CEEB Code) when registering. If you do not include this when you register, your scores will not be sent to your high school and will not be included on your high school transcript.

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2026-2027
ACT TESTING SCHEDULE

Test Date	September 19, 2026	October 17, 2026	December 12, 2026	February 27, 2027	April 10, 2027	June 12, 2027	July 10, 2027
Regular Registration Deadline	August 14, 2026	September 11, 2026	November 6, 2026	January 22, 2027	March 5, 2027	May 7, 2027	June 4, 2027
Late Registration Deadline *	September 1, 2026	September 29, 2026	November 29, 2026	February 9, 2027	March 23, 2027	May 25, 2027	June 22, 2027

Testing locations can vary across high schools and college campuses in our region. You will be able to select your preferred location during registration. Special testing dates may be available at your school, so check with your School Counseling Office for any additional information

ACT Registration (no writing)	$70
ACT Registration (with writing)	$95
Test Option Change	$25*
Late Registration	$42*
Change Fee	$49*
Standby Testing	$75*

** These are in addition to the registration fee*

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REGISTER FOR THE ACT ONLINE

Before registering, make sure to complete an ACCESS Services Application and meet with your ACCESS Advisor!

- Go to www.act.org
- Click on Register for the ACT
- Click on OK when prompted to leave the screen
- Click on The ACT Test: Sign in or Create My Account
- You will be asked if you have registered for the ACT previously and you will be asked if you have taken the ACT previously.
- You will be asked to complete your first name, last name, demographic information, phone number e-mail, date of birth and to create a password.
  - Must be 8 letters or more with: Uppercase, Lowercase, Number, Special character (eg !@#$%^&*)
  - You will sign in with your email address, and important test notifications will be sent to it.
  - For ACT testing, the first and last name entered here must match the test-taker's photo ID on test day. Include middle initial if applicable. The name listed here will also appear on all your ACT documents and score reports.
- You must verify through your email or text message
- Follow the instructions to complete your demographic information.
- Find your high school code listed on the opposite page of this handbook or use the search tool.
- Select Register Now.
- You will be prompted to submit a photo of yourself for identification purposes.
- After payment has been made be sure to print out the confirmation and admission ticket

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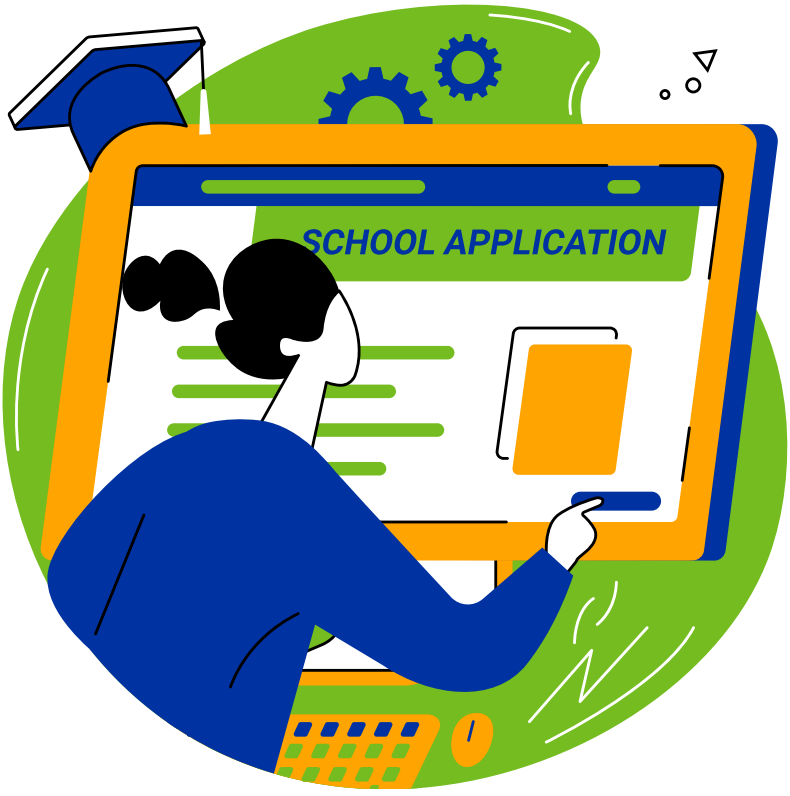
How Do I Apply?



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WHAT DO I NEED TO PREPARE?

The college application process can vary greatly depending on what school you are researching. Keeping track of all the requirements can be difficult, but using your ACCESS Advisor and the following resources will help make the process manageable

In this section, you will find:

- ✓ Application Organizer and Options
- ✓ Tips for the Admissions Essay
- ✓ College Recommendation Request Form and Instructions
- ✓ Questions to Ask when Visiting Campuses

WHERE SHOULD I **APPLY?**

When deciding where you should apply, it is important to understand that every person is different with unique interests, strengths, and backgrounds. Choosing the right school is an incredibly important and personal decision. Make sure to let your personal interests and goals influence your decision on where to apply to.

ACCESS recommends applying to at least three to five colleges. When deciding which schools to apply to, consider the following categories and find schools that fit for you:

THE LONG SHOT

The Reach School. Your grades and test scores put you in the bottom 25th percentile of students in that school. You should not apply to this category of school "just to see if you can get in." Be sure to communicate to an admissions officer or in writing that this school is a perfect fit for you.

THE TARGET SCHOOL

Your Acceptance is Likely. Your grades and scores place you in the middle 50th percentile of the school's students. You are a good match for the majority of students here, and this is one of your favorite colleges you have considered. It is a good idea to let the admissions staff know this is one of your top choices.

THE SAFETY SCHOOL

Your credentials clearly place you in the top 10th percentile of the college's applicant pool. However, you should never have an arrogant attitude with an admissions officer from this school by letting them know this is your "safety." Remember that a safety school may offer you a competitive financial aid or scholarship package or participation in the honors program.

Here are some helpful resources to visit to research various careers, colleges, and majors

Bureau of Labor Statistics - More than 1,500 job descriptions, projected career growth, and possible pay scales

BigFuture - Free, college and career exploration tools. Also potential scholarship opportunities for completing milestones

Virginia Education Wizard - College and career research tools, including resume tips, career assessments, and Virginia college information

Khan Academy - Videos and articles on various career fields

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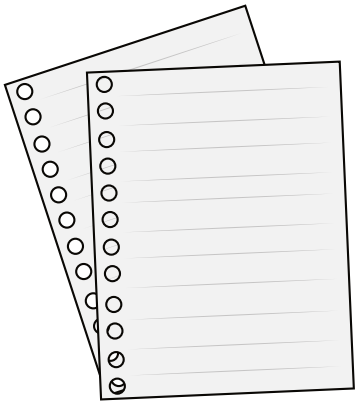
HOW DO I **APPLY?**

Every college has different application requirements and processes to follow in order to submit your application. Make sure to do your research and read the requirements carefully and then use one of the following tools to help organize your applications to ensure that you successfully submit your applications:



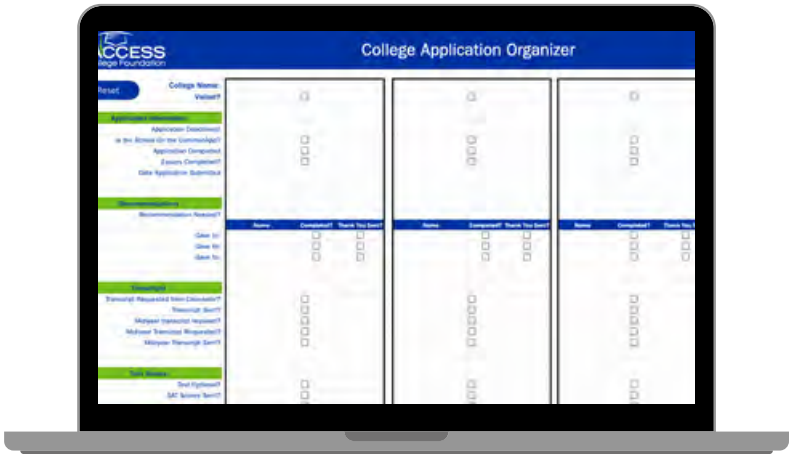
Printable Handout

Check the Resource Section of our Handbook for a printable organizer to keep track of all of your college applications!

Online College Organizer

You can use our free, online spreadsheet to organize the various requirements of the schools you are thinking of applying to

Get your copy!



Pro Tip!

Consider applying using the **Common App**, which more than 1,000 colleges participate in for a one-stop website for college admissions.

There is also a **Common Black College Application** where you can apply to over 60 HBCUs using one application!

Before submitting your application, make sure to complete an ACCESS Services Aplication and meet with your ACCESS Advisor!

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WHEN SHOULD I **APPLY?**

Application deadlines can be confusing as schools often have multiple types of deadlines for submitting an application. Below are the four types of application options. Note that schools might not offer all four. Make sure to carefully check each college's admissions options and deadlines.

01

Regular Decision

This is the most common type. Usually, the application is due between January and March. (To be considered for merit scholarships, however, you should apply by December 1st to most schools.) The Admissions decision is usually sent to students in April, and the enrollment contract is due back by May 1st.

02

Rolling Admissions

There is not a hard and fast deadline for applications to be submitted, and there is no specific date for Admissions decisions to go out. The college accepts and reviews applications on a “rolling, first-come, first-served” basis throughout your senior year.

03

Early Decision

This plan is used by many colleges for students who have a clear-cut first choice. Under Early Decision, a student who applies by the deadline usually between November 1st and December 1st will receive an Admissions decision before Christmas break. When you apply Early Decision, you have to sign a **binding agreement** with the college that if you are accepted, you will attend that school. Due to this, you should only apply to one school Early Decision. ACCESS does not recommend this option unless you are positive that this school is your first choice.

04

Early Action

This plan is similar in timing to Early Decision, but it is not financially “binding.” Many students who are organized and ready with their completed applications in the fall of their senior year may choose Early Action because it allows them to hear back from Admissions before the winter holidays. Usually, the enrollment contract is due back by May 1st.

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DOMICILE STATUS MATTERS

College admissions applications have questions for parents and students to answer that relate to the residency status of students and their parents. Each state has different domicile laws to determine in-state status. It is often true that students who are classified as out-of-state students at a college pay a higher tuition rate than those classified as in-state. When a college considers information regarding residency and tuition, they are making domicile decisions. If you disagree with a domicile decision, it is best to appeal it with your college admissions officer or the office of the registrar.

What Determines Your Domicile Status?

Many factors are considered, such as:

- Where you live.
- Where your parents live.
- Whether your parents claim domicile in a state other than the state in which they live.
- Whether your parents pay state income taxes to the state in which they live.
- Whether your parents pay state income taxes to a state other than the state in which they live.
- Where your parents are registered to vote and licensed to drive.
- Where you are registered to vote and licensed to drive.
- Whether you are self-supporting.

Special Note for Military Families:

To encourage members of the U.S. military to establish Virginia domicile, the one year of continuous domicile is not required for U.S. military members or for dependent spouses and children claiming domicile through the military member. To initiate payment of Virginia income taxes, military members should contact their military pay offices. The spouse of a military member may qualify for in-state tuition by establishing Virginia domicile, by claiming dependency on the military member who has established Virginia domicile, or through the military provision [Section 23-7.4(E) of the Code of Virginia]. Non-resident military members may be considered for a reduced tuition rate. If you, your spouse, or parent is a member of the military, contact the institution you are interested in attending for more information.

Remember: Domicile questions are best answered by staff in the admissions office or registrar's office at the college you wish to attend.

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THE ADMISSIONS ESSAY

Step 1: Brainstorm a Topic

If a topic is not specifically given, try brainstorming to help come up with a topic. Even if an essay is not required, it is a good idea to show the admissions committee another side of you from what you have already put on your application. Consider the following points:

- What are your accomplishments? (The best essay may be on something that seemed trite at the time, but had a big impact on you, like learning to ride a bike!)
- Do you have a skill—big or small—that distinguishes you from the masses?
- Have you ever taken the unpopular stand on an issue? What did you learn?
- What book, movie or work of art opened your eyes to something new?
- What struggle in your life opened your eyes to something new?
- How have you handled success or defeat of a major challenge?
- Of everything in the world, what would you most like to being doing right now?
- Who, of everyone living or dead, would you most like to be with right now?
- How would your friends describe your strongest personality traits?
- What are some little-known things about you?

Step 2: Write the Essay

The most important thing is to write in your own voice. Don’t use vocabulary and style that feels stiff and formal or else it will come off as something other than your voice

- Answer the question
- Be original, but be you
- Avoid clichés
- Use imagery and clear, vivid prose
- Spend the most time on your introduction!
- Use good transitions between paragraphs
- A good conclusion is critical
- Don't exceed the given word/character limit
- Proofread, proofread, proofread
- Give your draft to others to critique and revise as needed

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HOW TO REQUEST A TEACHER RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation letters are very important in college admissions and scholarship processes.An excellent letter of recommendation can help overcome any areas of weakness on your application and help show a more complete picture of you as a student and person. The most effective recommendation is one that will highlight your strengths and abilities.

Who to Ask?

1. Teachers (ask more than one) who know you the best and with whom you have the most positive relationships.
2. Teachers who are willing to write a recommendation for you.
3. Teachers who have known you in high school (do not go as far back as middle school teachers).

What to Ask?

1. Ask your teacher to write a letter of recommendation for you for the specific purpose of the letter (scholarship application, admissions application).
2. Ask your teacher to submit the letter by the due date and tell your teacher if the letter is to be on school letterhead or on a specific form. If the letter is to be on a form, provide the form when you ask for the letter.
3. If you would like to use the letter for multiple applications, ask the teacher to write a “To Whom it May Concern” recommendation for your file.

When to Ask?

1. Ask at least two weeks prior to the due date of a recommendation.
2. Make your requests in April of your junior year or beginning of senior year, if possible.

How to Ask:

1. Ask your teacher if they feel comfortable writing a recommendation for you and if they have time.
2. Be organized. Fill in information first. Clarify which form goes with which recommendation. Provide a résumé and your activity list.
3. Provide information regarding any financial hardships that you have faced so that the teacher can indicate that you are especially deserving of a scholarship.
4. If the teacher must mail the recommendation, provide a stamped, addressed envelope. Ask your teacher to keep the letter on file and to provide a copy to your school counselor and ACCESS advisor.
5. Most Colleges have a recommendation process that you can provide the recommender's email. Please make sure you provide the correct email in the recommender's section.
6. Follow up with a thank you note. Send the thank you note immediately after the teacher agrees to write the letter. The thank you note will serve as a reminder.

We have a request form template in the Resources Section that you can print off to give when you ask for a letter

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How Will I Pay?

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HOW WILL I PAY?

College costs continue to rise, but there are resources available to help pay for college. A college education is an investment, and with ACCESS in your corner, we can help make it more attainable for you.

In this section, you will find:

- ✓ Components of College Cost
- ✓ Scholarship Information
- ✓ Facts about Financial Aid
- ✓ FAFSA Information

COMPONENTS OF **COLLEGE COST**

The cost to attend college is often referred to as Cost of Attendance (COA). The COA is used to determine your eligibility for financial aid, and the COA is for the full academic year. It is important to note that your COA varies depending on what school you are considering and the academic program that you are intending to enroll in. COA has two components direct costs and indirect costs.

Direct costs are fixed costs that are billed directly by the college. These include:

- Tuition
- Fees
- Food and Housing (if living on campus)

Indirect costs are costs that do not appear on your college bill, but they are taken into consideration when looking at the overall cost to attend college. They include:

- Books and Supplies
- Travel Expenses
- Personal Expenses
- Loan Fees
- Food and Housing (if living at home or off-campus)

Tuition and Fees

Tuition and fees charged by a particular college depend on many factors, but the most significant factor is the type of college.

- At public institutions, tuition and fees are generally the lowest because they receive most of their funding from the state.
- Most four-year and two-year public colleges charge higher tuition for nonresidents than for legal residents of the state in which the college is located. This out-of-state tuition often makes the cost of attending a public institution as high as the cost of attending many private institutions.
- Tuition at private colleges usually is much higher than public institutions. However, private institutions often have more financial aid resources that can help you make up the difference between costs and financial aid.
- Tuition at proprietary or for-profit institutions (such as trade and technical colleges) usually set tuition at levels that ensure they recover all their operating costs and make a profit.

The greater your overall expenses, the greater the possibility of your demonstrating need for financial aid. Whether you are looking at public, private, or proprietary colleges, additional fees may be charged for services, such as student activities, technology fees, or the health center.

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Books and Supplies

Every college student must purchase textbooks, and other supplies.

- The amount you spend for books and supplies will vary only slightly by type of institution, but generally is related to the curriculum or courses selected.
- In some academic fields, you will spend more on books than in others.
- Some fields require specific uniforms and equipment that must be purchased.

Housing and Meals

Housing and meals refers to your basic living expenses, including dorm expenses and meal plans.

- Colleges with on-campus housing typically charge you on a semester basis for room and board, excluding holiday and vacation periods.
- The room and board charge is built into your student expense budget.
- Most colleges offer a choice of meal plans for students.

If you plan to live at home, you generally are assumed to have somewhat lower expenses than on-campus students because you do not have to pay for housing. However, you or your parents still will need to factor in the cost of your food and other normal living expenses. These costs are usually built into commuter student expense budgets for financial aid purposes. Take these costs into account in your planning.

Personal Expenses

Regardless of the type of institution you choose to attend, you will have some personal expenses for things such as clothing, laundry, toiletries, recreation, medical insurance and care, and perhaps, incidental furnishings for your dorm room.

Transportation

All students spend money for travel.

- For financial aid purposes, colleges often budget students for two round-trips home per year by the least expensive means of travel possible.
- Commuter students will also have travel expenses, whether using public transportation or a private car to get to and from the college several days a week. These costs are often built into commuter student expense budgets by colleges for financial aid purposes.

Total Student Budget

Add all five components, plus these possible additional costs:

- Allowance for dependent care;
- Loan fees;
- Costs related to disability;
- Allowance for rental/purchase of a personal computer;
- Reasonable cost for eligible study abroad programs.

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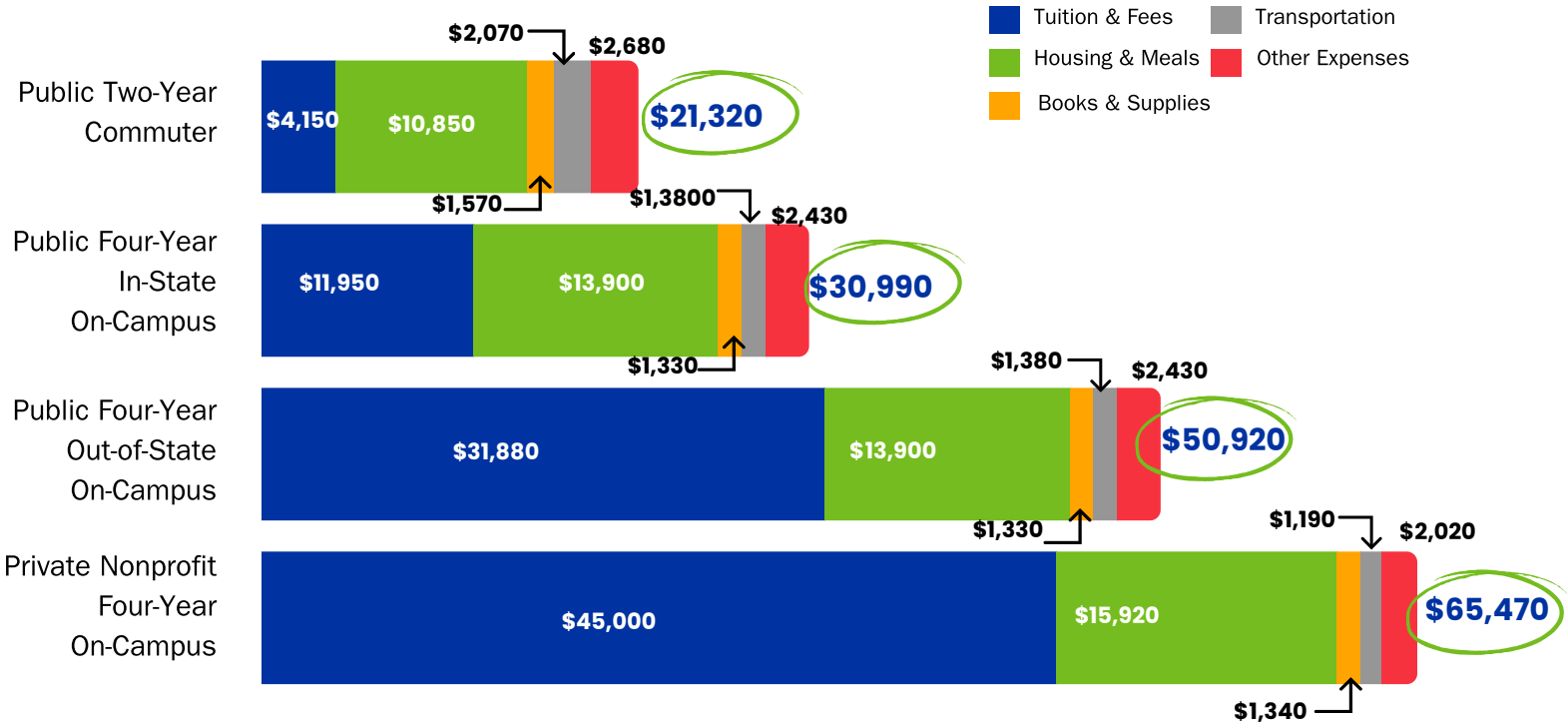
Average Estimated Full-Time Undergraduate Budgets 2023-24



Source: https://research.collegeboard.org/trends/college-pricing/highlights

Tips for Cutting College Costs

- Look into alternate ways to earn college credits. AP and Dual Enrollment courses are great ways to earn college credits while still in high school. You can explore CLEP tests as well to earn credits for introductory courses
- Start at a community college to begin your degree and then transfer to a four-year college to finish. Explore guaranteed admissions programs that local community colleges offer
- Compare meal plan options and only select the one that fits your needs
- Shop around for textbooks beyond the campus bookstore. Amazon and Chegg offer used textbooks and you can even rent them for the semester.
- Seriously consider in-state school options. These are often significantly cheaper and offer more grant opportunities for students
- Compare housing options. Check apartments and houses near your campus available to rent, these may be cheaper than typical dorm housing
- Apply for scholarships!
- Take at least 15 credits per semester to stay on track to graduate on-time

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OVERVIEW OF **FINANCIAL AID**

Create an FSA ID → File the FAFSA → Receive a FSS → Complete Verification → Receive Financial Aid Offer → Compare and Select Your School

01 Create an FSA ID

Before you can file your FAFSA, you have to have an FSA ID. Both student and parent(s) will need an FSA ID to complete the FAFSA.

02 File the FAFSA

Filing your FAFSA online is the easiest and quickest way to file. The form will open in October. Make sure to pay attention to priority filing deadlines of the schools you are applying to.

03 Receive a FAFSA Submission Summary (FSS)

After filing your FAFSA, you should receive a FSS in 3-5 business days. This FSS shows some of the information used to file your FAFSA as well as your Student Aid Index (SAI) which will be used by colleges to prepare your financial aid package. Make sure to read over your FSS for accuracy

04 Complete Verification (if selected)

Some students are selected for verification by colleges to ensure that the information entered on the FAFSA is accurate. Pay attention to your student portal at the colleges you've been accepted to and email for any notifications from the financial aid office.

05 Receive Financial Aid Offer

For every school you were accepted to and that you included on your FAFSA, you should receive a financial aid award offer in the springtime. These may be either mailed or posted in your student portal. If you haven't received one by April, double check that you haven't been selected for verification.

06 Compare and Select Your School

Once you have received all of your financial aid award offers it is time to compare your aid packages. Go through each letter to make sure you are selecting the best financial fit for you. Your ACCESS Advisor can help with this process

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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
ABOUT FINANCIAL AID

There are financial aid programs for every income level. The financial aid application process is complicated. Fortunately, the ACCESS Advisor at your high school will help you complete the financial aid filing process. To have the most painless financial aid experience, it is recommended that you:

- Meet with your ACCESS Advisor in the spring of your Junior year and in the fall of your Senior year
- Attend the Financial Aid Night at your high school in the fall of your Senior year
- Make an appointment to create your FSA ID, you will need one parent and the student to complete this step.
  - If the parents are married and file taxes separately or unmarried biological parents living in the same house, both parents will need to create an FSA ID.
  - It will take one to three days to verify your FSA ID BEFORE you can file the FAFSA.
- Bring the necessary documents to your advisor in October of your Senior year to file your FAFSA
- Share information that you receive from the federal aid process and your college with your ACCESS Advisor for assistance in understanding your financial aid package and the next steps.

KNOW THE FOLLOWING FINANCIAL AID FACTS:

- Parents and students who understand the financial aid process increase their chances of receiving the best financial aid package.
- Apply for aid by completing an electronic FAFSA when it opens in October. The application receipt date has an impact on the amount of aid that you receive.
- In Virginia, if students are not eligible to file the FAFSA they may have the option to file the Virginia Alternative State Aid (VASA) Application. See your ACCESS Advisor to see if you qualify.
- The FAFSA must be completed and signed by the student and one or two parent(s) or guardian(s). Only a student signature is required if a student meets the following criteria:
  - The student is an orphan or ward of the court
  - Graduated from college with a bachelors degree
  - At least 24 years old
  - Active duty military member or married (Reserves do not qualify)
  - Has a child that they fully support financially (you may still need parental information).
- You must apply for financial aid by the priority filing deadline for your college to receive the best offer.

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- Parents and students will use the 2025 taxes when filing the FAFSA for the college year of 2027-2028. The FAFSA will automatically connect to the IRS and load your taxes into the FAFSA. Granting the FAFSA access to your federal tax return information is a new requirement for the 2027-28 aid year. If you do not grant access, you will not be eligible for federal financial aid.
- The verification process is a way for schools to double check the accuracy of what has been entered on your FAFSA and often times the financial aid office will ask for copies of documents such as, taxes, W-2s and bank statements.
- By completing a FAFSA, you are requesting aid that the College Financial Aid Office can award. This may not necessarily apply for all of the scholarships and financial assistance available from the college or university. Consult the website for your college for foundation and departmental scholarships.
- You must list your college on your FAFSA and be accepted to receive an award letter. If you decide to attend a college you did not list on your FAFSA, you must add the college to your FAFSA.
- Financial aid awards are intended to help you pay for college but may not pay all costs. Students with special circumstances can ask for a review of those circumstances.
- Most financial aid award letters contain at least one loan.
- Financial aid awards cannot exceed the estimated cost of attendance at a college.
- Financial aid awards are dependent upon student enrollment level and can change during an academic year.
- Financial aid awards can be cancelled due to poor high school or college grades.
- Shop for financial aid packages. Every college you are accepted to will offer a unique award package to you. Let your ACCESS Advisor review your award offers for the package that best suits your needs and has the least amount of loans.
- The more money that is borrowed, the higher the student loan monthly payment will be when you go into repayment.
- Avoid offers that offer to help you apply for aid for a fee.
- Apply for every scholarship you can. More scholarships means less loan debt. Don't be discouraged by an essay requirement. Once you write the first essay, you will find that many scholarship applications request a similar topic which will allow you to recycle just a few essays for dozens of scholarship applications.
- Your college major, your high school and college grade point average, have an impact on the type of scholarship aid for which you qualify and how much aid you receive.
- College bills are the student's responsibility unless parents agree to be held responsible for student tuition and other charges.
- Student income during the junior year in high school (and beyond) has an impact on the amount of aid for which the student will qualify.

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FILING THE **FAFSA**

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is an important step in being able to afford attending college. The FAFSA determines eligibility for federal financial aid programs including grants, loans, and work study opportunities. Students will need to file the FAFSA each year they plan to enroll in college.

- This year the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) will be available **by October 1st**, so that students and families can have a clearer understanding of their college costs as they are searching for and applying to colleges. Additionally, with the use of "prior-prior" year's income information, all of a student's and family's tax information can be electronically imported into the FAFSA, which cuts the time it takes to complete the FAFSA and increases the accuracy of the information. Every year billions of dollars of federal student aid are left on the table simply because students do not fill out their FAFSA. We encourage you and your students to visit www.studentaid.ed.gov for more information about Federal Student Aid.

- Students are required to complete the FAFSA to determine their eligibility for all federal and state financial aid programs. Also, institutions may require additional forms as part of the application process. Contact each school to find out which forms are required.

- The FAFSA should be completed as early as possible once it opens in the student's Senior year by the student and the parent(s). ACCESS will host a financial aid workshop starting in November at your school to get you ready to file your FAFSA and to make an appointment for assistance in filing the FAFSA.

- Reasons why you should get help from your ACCESS Advisor to file your FAFSA form instead of doing it on your own:
  a. It's free! No gimmicks or scams—we are a 501(c)(3) non-profit foundation and do not charge for our services.
  b. Our Advisors are specially trained on updates and changes to the FAFSA to ensure you are able to file quickly and correctly.
  c. Advisors find common mistakes/omissions/inaccuracies.
  d. Advisors can be a strong advocate for you with financial aid officers.

Schedule An Appointment With An Advisor

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YOU NEED AN FSA ID TO FILE YOUR FAFSA

Anyone who has to enter information into the FAFSA has to have a verified FSA ID before entering into the form. Users should create their FSA ID at least 3 days before planning to file the FAFSA because each FSA ID must be verified through the Social Security Administration before being able to transfer over federal tax information. See our resource section to see a guide on who is considered a parent for FAFSA filing.

Creating an FSA ID Steps

Step 1: Enter your Personal Information

- Provide your legal first and last name
- Date of Birth
- Social Security Number (this will let you know whether or not you already have an FSA ID)

Step 2: Create a Username & Password

- Create a username between 6 and 30 characters to include any combination of letters and numbers (special characters not allowed).
- Use a personal email address that you will have continued access to. **Do not use school emails that you will lose access to in case you get locked out of your account in the future.
- Create a password that is at least 8 characters. Must contain: one uppercase letter, one lowercase letter, and one number.
- Provide four challenge questions and answers. This adds an extra level of security to your FSA ID and allows you to retrieve your username or reset your password should you get locked out of your account.

Step 3: Submit Your FSA ID Application

- You will need to verify either your email or phone number when you submit. **ACCESS recommends using both email and phone number verification, as well as adding multi-factor authentication through the use of a MFA App (DuoMobile and Google Authenticator are potential options).
- Once submitted, it will take 1-3 days for the Social Security Administration to verify your identity. Make sure to pay attention to any email notifications you receive for potential issues.

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DETERMINING **FINANCIAL NEED**

COA - SAI = NEED

COA - This is your Cost of Attendance, which varies based on the school you are applying to.

SAI - This is your Student Aid Index, which is calculated based on the information you entered on the FAFSA. This number is not the amount that you are required to pay for college, but rather the number that college financial aid offices will use to create your financial aid package.

Need - After subtracting your SAI from the COA, your financial need for that particular school is the remaining balance. If your need is greater than zero, you are potentially eligible for need-based aid, which can include both grants and scholarships!

** When determining your financial need, your cost of attendance varies based on the school applying to, your SAI will not change based on school

College	Cost	SAI	Need
A	$17,800	$4,000	$13,800
B	$24,500	$4,000	$20,500
C	$33,400	$4,000	$29,400

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HOW TO APPLY FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarship Links

Step One: Start Early

- If possible, start the research process early in your junior year or beginning of senior year of high school. You will be applying for scholarships about a year before you will actually receive the aid.
- Get good grades – they will help you meet minimum requirements and help make your application more competitive.

Step Two: Prepare Yourself

- Create a separate email account for scholarship search engines. This prevents important college emails from getting lost.
- Often scholarships are awarded to students who are involved in activities both in school and out of school. Well-rounded students have the best chance of receiving scholarships.
- Many clubs and organizations have scholarships associated with them. Doing your research in the beginning may help you obtain more scholarships.

Step Three: Do Research

- Figure out what makes you a special individual. This may include such things as academics, volunteer work, athletics, or your family background. Start organizing these into a resume.
- Consider unique circumstances or conditions that might make you eligible for aid such as being a foster child, having asthma, being a single parent, or having a disability.
- Scholarship opportunities can be found in many places including financial aid offices, libraries, local civic organizations, your (or your parents') employer, local businesses, your high school guidance office, the internet, and your ACCESS Advisor.

Step Four: Organize your Scholarship Timeline

- After you collect all of the information about the scholarships for which you are interested in applying, you will need to organize them in a timeline of completion.
- Gather required documents such as: letters of recommendations, transcript, resume, essays, and a copy of your FAFSA.
- Consider using a spreadsheet to help organize deadlines and requirements.

Step Five: Apply

- Apply for the scholarship.
- Leave yourself enough time to reread your essay and have a teacher or ACCESS Advisor check your application and essay.
- If the scholarship must be physically mailed, leave plenty of time for it to arrive to the organization before the deadline. Don't wait until the deadline to submit your application.
- Remember that the application process takes time, and it could be months before you are notified of any awards. Be aware that the organization may not send any follow-up correspondence if you do not receive the award.

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HOW TO AVOID
SCHOLARSHIP SCAMS

Securing and paying for college can be a great burden and cause stress in families. Some companies prey upon the stress the financial aid search can cause, by offering services for a fee that can be obtained free of charge. ACCESS College Foundation can help you navigate through the warning signs of scams.

Basic Rules of Thumb:

- You should not have to pay money to get money.
- You should never give your credit card number or checking account information to an organization that you do not know.
- Scholarship services do not come with a "money back guarantee."
- Legitimate scholarship foundations do not charge an application fee.
- If it sounds too good to be true, it just might be.

Fees Be wary of anything that has an application fee attached to it even if the fee is a very low one. Do not believe that the fee is used to cover administrative costs or to ensure that serious applicants are considered. Legitimate companies do not require fees. Do not pay for scholarship searches that can easily be accessible from the library or from any of the sites listed in the Resource section of this handbook.

On your behalf You must submit your own applications and supplemental materials. There is no way to avoid doing this. Valid scholarships are looking for students that best meet criteria. No scholarship simply hands out money for just applying; you must do the leg work.

Requests for information You should not give out account information or credit card information. Calling you to request the information or to request additional information such as a Social Security Number is most likely a scam. Hang Up! If you provide this information, they can use it to steal your identity and apply for credit in your name.

Pressure If you feel pressured by having to "respond now" or you are urged to act quickly, it may be a scam. Carefully consider each offer and take your time to research first.

For more information about scholarship scams, visit How To Avoid Scholarship and Financial Aid Scams | Consumer Advice (ftc.gov)

If you are not sure, ask your ACCESS Advisor and they can direct you to safe places to search for scholarships.

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FEDERAL AND STATE FINANCIAL AID

GRANTS

Gift aid that does not have to be paid back

Federal Grants

1. **Pell Grant** - Need-based grant for students who have an SAI less than $6,396. Amount ranged from **$740 - $7,395** for the 2026-27 Academic Year.
2. **Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)** - Need-based grant for students who have the most financial need (Pell-eligible students). Amount varies from **$100 - $4,000**. Exact amount determined by your institution.

State Grants - Virginia

1. **Commonwealth Award** - Amount varies but cannot exceed total cost of tuition and required fees. Need-based grant determined by student's FAFSA or VASA application.
2. **Virginia College Affordability Network (VCAN) Initiative** - Provides free tuition funding to first-year students. Eligible students must live within a certain promixity (45 miles) of Norfolk State University or Virginia State University and be Pell-eligible.
3. **Virginia Guaranteed Assistance Program (VGAP)** - Amount varies but cannot exceed the cost of tuition, required fees, and books. Need-based grant determined by student's FAFSA or VASA application. Students are only eligible to receive VGAP once per grade classification.
4. **Virginia Tuition Assistance Grant (VTAG)** - For any Virginia resident attending a qualifying private college or university in the state of Virginia. Requires a yearly application to determine in-state residency. The award for 2026-27 Academic Year was **$5,250.**

LOANS

Aid that has to be paid back

SUBSIDIZED LOANS

These loans do not accrue interest because the Department of Education pays the interest as long as you are in school and during the first six months after you leave school.

Borrowing Limit:

- **$3,500 Freshman Year**
- **$4,500 Sophomore Year**
- **$5,500 Junior & Senior Year**

UNSUBSIDIZED LOANS

These loans are building interest from the time they are disbursed.

Borrowing Limit:

- **$2,000 for Dependent Students**
- **$6,000 for Independent Students**

FEDERAL WORK STUDY

Based on your FAFSA, you may also be eligible for Federal Work Study. This is typically an on-campus job working 10-15 hours/week. You get paid directly by your school, but the funds are from the federal government. Even if offered, you must still find a work-study eligible job on your college campus.

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SAMPLE AWARD LETTER

SAI: $4,050

ACCESS College Foundation

Estimated Cost of Attendance			$31,686
DIRECT COSTS	*Fall*	*Spring*	**Total**
Tuition	*$5,895*	*$5,895*	**$11,790**
Fees	*$252*	*$252*	**$504**
Food & Housing	*$7,296*	*$7,296*	**$14,592**
INDIRECT COSTS			
Books/Supplies	*$900*	*$900*	**$1,800**
Transportation	*$550*	*$550*	**$1,100**
Personal Expenses	*$950*	*$950*	**$1,900**

Financial Aid			$25,845
GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS	*Fall*	*Spring*	**Total**
University Merit Scholarship	*$2,000*	*$2,000*	**$4,000**
Federal Pell Grant	*$1,673*	*$1,672*	**$3,345**
Federal SEOG	*$500*	*$500*	**$1,000**
VGAP	*$4,500*	*$4,500*	**$9,000**
WORK STUDY	*$1,500*	*$1,500*	**$3,000**
LOANS			
Federal Direct Subsidized Loan	*$1,750*	*$1,750*	**$3,500**
Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan	*$1,000*	*$1,000*	**$2,000**

Total Estimated Balance	$1,791

$31,686 − $4,050 = $27,636

Total COA **SAI** **Financial Need**

$27,636 − $25,485 = $1,791*

Financial Need **Total Aid** **Remaining Need**

****You can use outside scholarships, like the ACCESS Scholarship to cover this remaining balance!***

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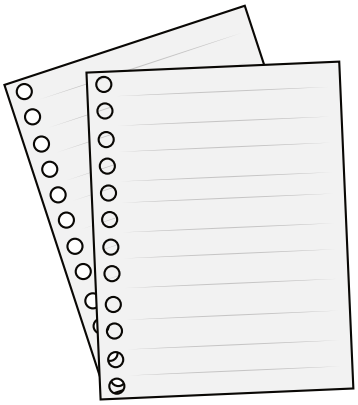
MAKE YOUR **DECISION**

You've done the research, completed applications, and filed your FAFSA on time. After you have been accepted to your dream schools, your financial aid award letters will start arriving in the spring time. It can be overwhelming trying to compare all of your award offers to determine which school might be the best financial fit for you. Use the following resources to help compare costs across multiple schools!



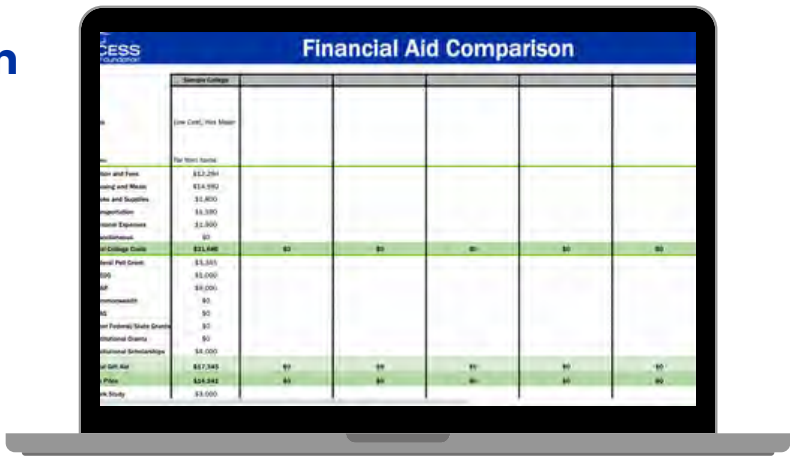
Printable Handout

Check the Resource Section of our Handbook for a printable organizer to keep track of all of your award offers!

Online Financial Aid Comparison

You can use our free, online spreadsheet to compare the financial aid offers of schools you've been accepted to!

Get your copy!



Don't forget, your ACCESS Advisor can help compare different award offers to help you make your college decision!

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Additional Resources

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HELPFUL **WEBSITES**

Interests/Volunteering/Careers/Majors

- https://www.vawizard.org
- https://www.jobs.virginia.gov/home
- https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/
- https://www.volunteerhr.org/
- https://www.volunteermatch.org/

Financial Aid

- https://www.schev.edu
- https://www.vasfaa.com/
- https://studentaid.gov/
- https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/
- https://NASFAA.org

Scholarships

- Search Available Scholarships - Access College Foundation
- Find Scholarships for College for FREE | Fastweb
- www.hamptonroadscf.org
- https://www.vbschools.com/families/student/scholarship-central/search
- https://www.questbridge.org/
- https://www.jkcf.org/our-scholarships/college-scholarship-program/
- https://gmsp.org/
- https://scholarshipamerica.org/
- Scholarships | JLV College Counseling

Military

- About GI Bill Benefits | Veterans Affairs (va.gov)
- U.S. Air Force
- Army ROTC | goarmy.com
- Home Page | United States Coast Guard (gocoastguard.com)
- Marines.com - Request for Information
- United States Navy Recruiting | Navy.com

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IMPORTANT **FORMS**

Use the links below to complete important forms to utilize ACCESS services during your Junior Year! Reach out to your Advisor with any questions you might have

Find Your Advisor

Class of 2028 Profile

Request An Appointment

ACCESS Services Application & ACCESS Release Form

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HIGH SCHOOL
CEEB CODES

Chesapeake

- Deep Creek High School – 411750
- Grassfield High School – 470469
- Great Bridge High School – 471590
- Hickory High School – 470462
- Indian River High School – 470477
- Oscar F. Smith High School – 472125
- Western Branch High School – 470479

Norfolk

- Booker T. Washington High School – 471570
- Granby High School – 471586
- Lake Taylor High School – 471598
- Maury High School – 471600
- Norview High School – 471620

Northampton County

- Northampton High School – 470737

Portsmouth

- Churchland High School – 470620
- I.C. Norcom High School – 471755
- Manor High School – 471758

Suffolk

- Lakeland High School — 472208
- Nansemond River High School – 472211
- Kings Fork High School – 472204

Virginia Beach

- Bayside High School – 472285
- Green Run High School – 472296
- Green Run Collegiate – 472323
- Floyd E. Kellam High School – 472287
- Frank W. Cox High School – 472289
- First Colonial High School – 472290
- Kempsville High School – 472293
- Landstown High School – 472273
- Ocean Lakes High School – 472308
- Princess Anne High School – 471315
- Salem High School – 472306
- Tallwood High School – 472309

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SAMPLE RESUME #1

Personal Information

John Q. Student
123 Education Lane
Schoolhouse, VA 12345

School Activities

French Club: 9, 10, 11
National Honor Society: 10, 11, 12 (President 12)
Varsity Tennis Team: 9, 10, 11, 12 (Co-captain 11, 12)
Chrome: 11, 12

Awards and Honors

Science Fair, 1st Place Environmental Category: 9
Nominated for Boys' State: 11
Outstanding Social Studies Student: 12
Voted "Most Likely to Succeed" by Senior Class

Community Involvement

Church Youth Group:
- Served meals at soup kitchen once a month
- Taught Vacation Bible School every summer
- Participated in church softball team
- Sang in youth choir

Charitable Organization:
- Volunteered 50 hours of labor

Employment

Papa John's delivery, 20 hours/week: 12

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SAMPLE RESUME #2

Jane Student
2061 Edgewater Road, Apt 2B • Norfolk, VA 22222 • PHONE (757) 222-2222
samplestudent@hotmail.com

EDUCATION

2024-2028 City High School Hampton Roads

- Grades 9-12
- College Prep Diploma
- 8 Honors Courses; 3 AP Courses

GPA AND CLASS RANK

- 3.34 GPA through junior year of high school
- Ranked 42 out of 424 graduating seniors

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- List athletics, varsity or intramural
- List clubs, with office held
- List summer camps
- List volunteer work
- List church activites

WORK EXPERIENCE

June-August ‘26 PetSmart Virginia Beach, VA
Cashier

- Customer Service

June-August ‘24 Food Lion Virginia Beach, VA
Grocery Bagger

- Customer Service

AWARDS, SKILLS, AND CERTIFICATIONS

- List computer skills
- List computer software that you've worked with
- List any awards & recognitions
- List certifications like: Red Cross CPR, Swimming, Babysitting

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COLLEGE APPLICATIONS ORGANIZER

College Names:					
Applications					
Application Deadline					
Application Form Completed?					
Essays Completed?					
Date Application Complete					
Recommendations					
Gave to:					
Gave to:					
Gave to:					
Transcripts					
Requested from counselor?					
Mid-year Transcript Needed?					
Mid-Year Transcript Requested?					
Test Scores					
College is Test Optional?					
SAT Scores Sent?					
ACT Scores Sent?					
AP Exam Scores Sent?					
Financial Aid					
FAFSA Priority Deadline					
FAFSA Completed?					
CSS Profile Completed (if required)					
Additional Forms Required					

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College Recommendation Request Form

Dear _____:

I am requesting that you write a letter of recommendation for me. I have provided the information listed below for your use. Please either

_____ return your letter of recommendation to me in a sealed envelope
_____ email the letter to: _____
_____ Other: _____

Name: _____

GPA: _____ Highest SAT/ACT Scores: _____

List of college(s) or scholarships for which this recommendation is to be used:

_____
_____

List of school and/or outside activities

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

List of leadership positions held plus responsibilities and/or any awards (academic, extra-curricular, or volunteer work)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

List of jobs held during high school / length of time at each job / hours worked per week

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Two things about me that make me stand out and that I would want a college admissions officer to know about me…

1. _____
2. _____

My college major and career goals are:

_____
_____

Thank you!

_____
Signature

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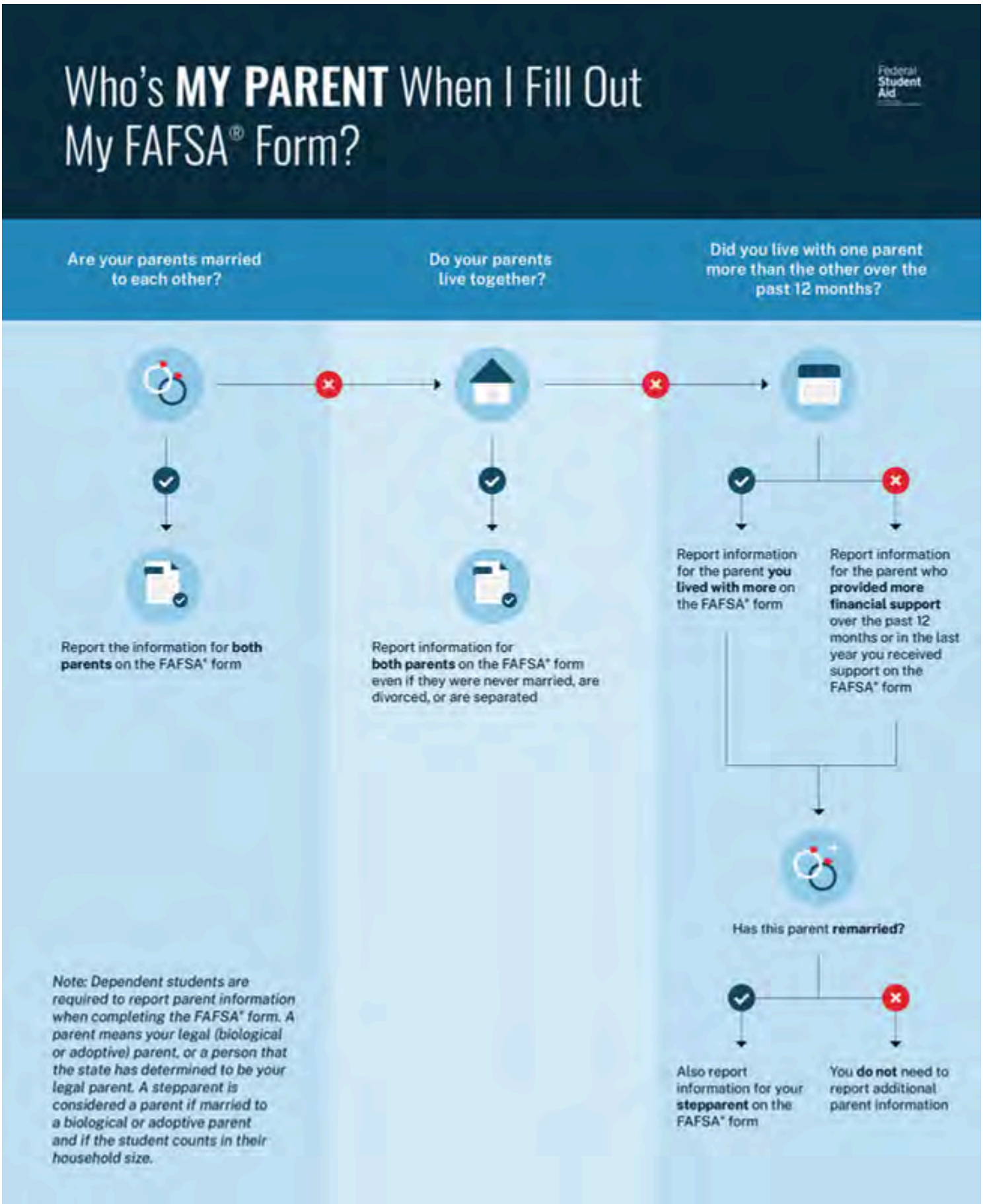
WHO'S MY PARENT AND WHO NEEDS AN FSA ID?



Source: https://studentaid.gov/sites/default/files/who-is-my-parent.jpg