

**2025-2026
High School
Resource Packet
for Home
Schooled
Students**

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I. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to assist and inform parents of home schooled high school students about important high school and college preparatory information they need to know. Sometimes parents don't even they realize they don't know something important until it is too late. This document will hopefully remedy much of that.

II. Recommended High School Classes

Just as employers want workers who have certain skills, most colleges want students who have taken certain courses (and done well in them).

Here are some suggested classes. They are divided in three categories – General High School, General College Prep and Rigorous College Prep. General High School is for students planning to go directly into the workplace. General College Prep is for college-bound students – this plan provides a solid foundation upon which to build. Rigorous College Prep is for those students considering applying to a highly selective college.

A. General High School (not college-bound)

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Suggested Credits</u>	<u>Possible Courses</u>
English	4 credits	Composition, American Lit, British Lit, World Lit, Rhetoric, Creative Writing, Speech/Communication, Journalism (Courses should stress grammar, vocabulary and analyzing literature.)
Math	4 credits	Algebra 1 & 2, Geometry, General Math, Consumer Math, Business Math, Accounting
History	3 credits	World History, American History, American Government
Science	3 credits	Physical Science, General Science, Earth Science, Biology, Chemistry, Physics
Foreign Language	2-3 credits	French, Spanish, Latin, German, Russian, etc. (2 years same language preferred)
Physical Education	1-2 credits	Many options available
Fine Arts	1-2 credits	Art, Music, Drama, Photography, etc.
Electives	3-5 credits	Practical Arts, Life Skills, Home Economics, Bible Computer Skills, etc.
<i>Total Credits:</i>	<i>19-23 credits</i>	

B. General College Prep

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Suggested Credits</u>	<u>Possible Courses</u>
English	4 credits	Composition, American Lit, British Lit, World Lit, Rhetoric, Creative Writing, Speech/Communication, Journalism, Debate; also consider AP courses
Math	4+ credits	Algebra 1 & 2, Geometry, Trigonometry, Pre-Calculus, Calculus, AP Calculus

History	3-4 credits	<i>ESSENTIALS</i> : World History, American History, American Government. <i>CONSIDER</i> : Economics, Geography, Constitutional Law and AP courses
Science	3-4 credits	Physical Science, General Science, Earth Science, Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. <i>CONSIDER</i> : AP courses
Foreign Language	2-4 credits	French, Spanish, Latin, German, Russian, etc. (2 years same language preferred)
Physical Education	1-2 credits	Many options available
Fine Arts	1-2 credits	Art, Music, Drama, Photography, etc.
Electives	5 credits	Practical Arts, Life Skills, Home Economics, Bible, Computer Skills, etc.
<i>Total Credits:</i>	<i>23-27 credits</i>	

C. Rigorous College Prep

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Suggested Credits</u>	<u>Possible Courses</u>
English	4+ credits	Composition, American Lit, British Lit, World Lit, Rhetoric, Creative Writing, Speech/Communication, Journalism, Debate; AP courses strongly recommended
Math	4+ credits	Algebra 1 & 2, Geometry, Trigonometry, Pre-Calculus, Calculus, AP Calculus. <i>CONSIDER</i> : Statistics, Accounting, etc.
History	4+ credits	<i>ESSENTIALS</i> : World History, American History, American Government. <i>CONSIDER</i> : Economics, Geography, Sociology, Political Science, Constitutional Law, etc; AP courses strongly recommended
Science	4+ credits	Physical Science, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Anatomy, Microbiology; AP courses strongly recommended
Foreign Language	3-4 credits	French, Spanish, Latin, German, Russian, etc. (2 years same language preferred)
Physical Education	1-2 credits	Many options available
Fine Arts	1-2 credits	Art, Music, Drama, Photography, etc.
Electives	5 credits	Practical Arts, Life Skills, Home Economics, Bible, Computer Skills, etc.
<i>Total Credits:</i>	<i>26-30 credits</i>	

D. AP Course Designation Requirements

Through AP courses you enter a universe of knowledge that might otherwise remain unexplored in high school; through AP Exams, you have the opportunity to earn credit or advanced standing at most of the nation's colleges and universities. With 38 courses and exams across 22 subject areas, AP offers something for everyone. The cost is \$98 per exam. For more information about the AP program, please visit <https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/1-policies-guidelines/terms-conditions>

Home-schooled students and students whose schools do not offer AP must contact AP coordinators identified by AP Services.

The AP requirements have been modified to require all providers of AP courses (teachers, home school parents, independent learners) to submit a course audit form and syllabus to AP Central for approval in order to designate it on the high school transcript as an AP course. The Education Alliance cannot do this. You must contact AP Central yourself. To create an account for submission of these documents, go to the AP Central website at <http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/Controller.jsp> or call 866-630-9305 for additional information.

E. Determination of Grades

<u>Traditional Grading Symbol</u>	<u>General Meaning</u>	<u>Terms That Can Be Used To Describe Achievement</u>
A	Excellent Outstanding Superior Achievement	<i>Exceptional, thorough, complete mastery, creative use of elements, independent, insightful, total accuracy, discerning, able to instruct others</i>
B	Commendable Good Achievement	Well-prepared, competent, efficient, meritable, qualified, desirable, approved, suitable
C	Acceptable Adequate Achievement	<i>Ordinary, commonplace, sufficient, normal, enough, standard, regular, typical, expected amount, moderate</i>
D	Minimal Poor Achievement	Mediocre, fair, tolerable, passable, barely, smallest amount, least possible, inadequate, inefficient, underachievement
F	Failure Unacceptable Little or No Achievement	<i>Inability to master, elements unlearned, dependent, lacking understanding, ineffective, slow, passive</i>

Although there are no legal requirements to graduate from a home school high school, a complete list of courses taken in grades 9-12 along with semester grades (letter grades not percentages) will be required in order to graduate with many of the support groups state-wide including The Education Alliance and will certainly be required when applying for college. You may also want to begin recording all extra-curricular activities such as clubs, sports, awards, community service, etc., to submit with your transcript to college. Many colleges not only want to see that your child succeeded in academics, but also want to see that your child is well-rounded.

For a donation of any amount, the Education Alliance will prepare a transcript for your child. Please visit our website at www.arkansashomeschool.org for more details. You may also find transcript templates on the Web that you can complete at home. Please note that some colleges require the transcript to come from a third party with a school seal and in an unopened envelope. The Education Alliance can help with that.

F. Determination of High School Credits

Conventional schools assign credits on the basis of the Carnegie unit – a time measurement based on the formula: 36 weeks x 5 sessions of 45-50 minutes per week. School administrators tend to assume that the 135-150 hours of classroom instruction will generate another 65-150 hours in outside preparation (homework, required reading, research, study for tests, etc.) Thus, a Carnegie unit usually entails a minimum of 200 hours of work.

The Carnegie unit formula definitely needs wise implementation and adjustment by the home-schooling parent since tutorial education is so different from the conventional classroom in its time requirements. For example, it may well be that your son/daughter is able to complete the assignments in a geometry textbook in a four-month period even though the book was designed for a year's course in a conventional high school. In this case, you would not total your child's time. You would rather declare the contents of the course the equivalent of the year and assign the Carnegie unit regardless of the time your child spent. One further note – it is extremely rare for a conventional classroom teacher to complete 100% of the text in a given year's course. Therefore, it is safe to assume that 80% coverage of a textbook normally used for a year constitutes the equivalent of a Carnegie unit.

One other rule of thumb should be applied here. Schools usually assign “academic” subjects such as English, math, science, history, etc. one unit of credit per year while they designate “non-academic” subjects like home economics, physical education, music, art, etc., a half unit for the same period of time. The reason for the difference is that the “non-academic” areas, much of the classroom time is devoted to practicing skills rather than receiving additional instruction. The Education Alliance adheres to this rule of thumb when issuing transcripts.

G. ACT/SAT/PSAT (and more) Prep-Classes online - <https://www.prepscholar.com/>

III. Stay on Top of Dates and Deadlines

Without regular announcements from a guidance office, it's up to you to keep track of critical dates and deadlines relating to things like college admission, SAT registration deadlines, ACT registration deadlines, and/or AP exams. Note: Remember to check your NOI box for a free ACT waiver.

The Education Alliance has placed information below we believe to be helpful, but it is in no way a complete list of everything that needs to be done or known.

A. 2025-2026 PSAT Test Dates and Information

High schools may administer the PSAT/NMSQT on October 11 and October 18, 2025. PSAT/NMSQT stands for Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. It's a standardized test that provides firsthand practice for the SAT Reasoning Test. It also gives you a chance to enter National Merit Scholarship Corporation scholarship programs. The test is given during the 10th grade year. The cost to take the test is \$18 and the home school code is 940499. NOTE: Check your NOI for testing in 10th grade.

If you would like to take the PSAT/NMSQT, contact a local public or independent high school counselor or principal to make arrangements find out about registering for the test, paying the test fees and learning the correct date, time and location that your school will give the test in October. Also, contact the guidance office for a copy of the *Official Student Guide to the PSAT/NMSQT* to help you prepare before test day. Your score report is sent directly to your home address.

B. 2025-2026 SAT Test Dates and Registration Deadlines

Test Date	Register by Deadline	Late Registration
August 23, 2025	August 8, 2025	August 12, 2025
September 13, 2025	August 29, 2025	September 2, 2025
October 4, 2025	September 19, 2025	September 23, 2025
November 8, 2025	October 24, 2025	October 28, 2025
December 6, 2025	November 21, 2025	November 25, 2025

March 14, 2026	February 27, 2026	March 3, 2026
May 2, 2026	April 17, 2026	April 21, 2026
June 6, 2026	May 22, 2026	May 26, 2026

The cost to take the test is \$68.00. Home school code is 970000. Late registration is \$38.00. For more information about the SAT, please visit www.collegeboard.org or call 888-728-4867(SAT) or CollegeBoard 866-630-9305. (There are also sample/practice tests available on this site.)

C. 2025-2026 ACT Test Dates and Registration Deadlines

Test Date	Registration Deadline	(Late Fee Required)
September 6, 2025	August 1, 2025	August 19, 2025
October 18, 2025	September 12, 2025	September 30, 2025
December 13, 2025	November 7, 2025	November 24, 2025
February 14, 2026	January 9, 2026	January 23, 2026
April 11, 2026	March 6, 2026	March 24, 2026
June 13, 2026	May 8, 2026	May 29, 2026
July 11, 2026*	June 5, 2026	June 24, 2026

* No test centers are scheduled in California and New York for the July test date.

The cost to take the test is \$68.00 (no writing) and \$93.00 with writing, late fee is \$38.00. The home school code is 969-999. For more information, please visit www.actstudent.org or call 319-337-1270. (There are also sample/practice tests available on this site.)

IV. The CLEP Program

The College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) gives you the opportunity to receive college credit for what you already know by earning qualifying scores on any of 33 examinations. The cost of a CLEP exam is \$97.00 and Proctoring fee \$10.00-\$35.00, a fraction of the tuition and fees for the corresponding course. It allows you to skip general introductory courses and move on to more advanced classes or explore new and challenging academic areas. For more information about the CLEP Program, visit <http://clep.collegeboard.org/>.

V. ACTION PLAN: HIGH SCHOOL FRESHMAN (9th Grade)

A. Plan for the Year Ahead

- Meet with your parents to discuss your college plans. Make sure you schedule challenging classes that will help you prepare for college. See Appendix A for “How to Select Your Courses”.
- Keep your grades up. They qualify you for scholarships as well as admission into college.
- Go to <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search> to find out the required courses and tests of colleges that you might be interested in attending.
- Start a calendar with important dates and deadlines.
- Get more involved with extracurricular activities. Keep a list of all of your activities and volunteer experiences. You’ll need this to compile a resume later.
- Go to college fairs in your area.

B. Learn about Colleges

- Learn about college costs and how financial aid works. See Appendixes B and C.
- Use the College Savings Calculator at <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/get-started/net-price-calculator> to see how much money you’ll need for college, whether you’re on the right track to save enough, and what you need to reach your goal. Talk to your parents about financing college. Create a plan of action and start saving.
- Find out about college firsthand from college friends who are home for the holidays.

C. Stay Focused

- Find out about AP and dual enrollment courses in which you can earn college credit while still in high school. See II D above regarding AP courses. Contact your local community college regarding dual enrollment.
- Study for May AP exams, if that is the route you choose. Get free AP preparation.

D. Arkansas Department of Education – Consent Form

- Many Home School Parents ask for the Public School requirements for graduation. ***THIS IS NOT REQUIRED FOR HOME SCHOOL STUDENTS.*** It is a tool for parents to use. Go to <https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Offices/learning-services/curriculum-support/arkansas-graduation-requirements>

VI. ACTION PLAN: HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORE (10th Grade)

A. Plan for the Year Ahead

- Meet with your parents to discuss your college plans. Review your schedule to make sure you're enrolled in challenging classes that will help you prepare for college. Colleges prefer four years of English, history, math, science and a foreign language.
- Keep your grades up. They qualify you for scholarships as well as admission into college.
- Go to <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search> to find out the required courses and tests of colleges that you might be interested in attending.
- Maintain a calendar with important dates and deadlines.
- Get more involved with extracurricular activities. Keep a list of all of your activities and volunteer experiences. You'll need this to compile a resume later.
- Go to college fairs in your area.
- Start researching potential careers. Talking to people who work in these fields is especially helpful.
- Compile a list of schools that interest you. Consider things like area of study, strength of department, distance from your hometown and campus size.

B. Consider Taking the PSAT/NMSQT

- Sign up for the PSAT/NMSQT (see IIIA above), which is given in October. This is a practice year, but your test scores on the PSAT taken during your junior year can qualify you for a National Merit Scholarship. Get free online practice at <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/about.html>
- If you're taking the PSAT/NMSQT, check 'yes' on the test for the Student Search Service. This is a free information service for students who take the PSAT/NMSQT, SAT Test or AP Program Exams to let colleges, universities and scholarship programs know you are interested in hearing from them and to get educational and financial aid information from colleges, universities and scholarship programs. For more information about this service, please visit <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/about/scholarships.html>

C. Prepare for Tests

- Use the access code on your PSAT/NMSQT score report to sign in to "My College QuickStart" at <https://quickstart.collegeboard.org/posweb/login.jsp> With this personalized planning kit, you can prepare for the SAT using a study plan based on your PSAT/NMSQT results and explore lists of suggested colleges, majors and careers.

D. Learn about Colleges

- Learn about college costs and how financial aid works. See Appendixes B and C.
- Use the College Savings Calculator at http://apps.collegeboard.com/fincalc/college_savings.jsp to see how much money you'll need for college, whether you're on the right track to save enough, and what you need to reach your goal. Talk to your parents about financing college. If you've not already done so, create a plan of action and start saving.
- Find out about college firsthand from college friends who are home for the holidays.
- Request or download a real application from a university so you can get a feel for admission requirements.

E. Stay Focused

- Find out about AP and dual enrollment courses in which you can earn college credit while still in high school. See II D above regarding AP courses. Contact your local community college regarding dual enrollment.
- Study for May AP exams, if that is the route you choose. Get free AP preparation.

VII. ACTION PLAN: HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR (11th Grade)

A. Take the PSAT/NMSQT

- Sign up early for the PSAT/NMSQT, which is given in October. Your test scores on this test can qualify you for a National Merit Scholarship. Get free online practice at <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/prep.html>

B. Start Your College Search

- Start with you: Make lists of your abilities, preferences and personal qualities. List things you may want to study and do in college.
- Jumpstart your college planning by reading about majors and careers at <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges>
- Narrow down your school choices. Start an in-depth school research. Consider majors, housing options, financial aid and scholarship availability, tuition costs and admission requirements.
- Use College Search at <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges> to find colleges with the right characteristics.
- Begin campus visits. Talk to admissions representatives as well as real students.
- Begin making a list of deadlines for things such as financial aid, admissions and scholarships.

C. Start Thinking about Financial Aid

- Begin searching for scholarships and grants. You can search online or call colleges you are interested in attending. See also Appendixes D, E and F.
- Write your scholarship essays and get them critiqued and proofread by an adult.

D. Plan Your Test Schedule

- Use the information in section III to schedule taking the ACT and/or the SAT depending on what college(s) you are interested in attending and which test they require. You may take these tests multiple times.

E. Explore Colleges

- Start visiting local colleges: large, small, public and private. Get a feel for what works for you. Take campus tours and, at colleges you are serious about attending, schedule interviews with admissions counselors. See Appendix G for a Campus Visit Checklist.
- Develop a list of colleges that interest you. Begin narrowing the list to those you are seriously considering.

F. Summer Momentum

- Continue visiting college campuses taking tours and scheduling interviews. See Appendix G for a Campus Visit Checklist.
- Request applications from colleges to which you will apply. Check important dates; some universities have early dates or rolling admissions. Please visit <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/for-parents/parent-action-plan-12th-grade> and <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid> for a basic idea of the applications timeline.
- Find a volunteer position, apprenticeship, internship, part-time job or job-shadowing opportunity in your field of interest.
- Compile a resume. See Appendix H for more information on this.
- Free ACT Voucher for 11th grade students only. Make sure you check the box that you would like to receive a free voucher when you file your Notice of Intent. The voucher will come by email in late October to the email address you used to file your Notice of Intent with the Arkansas Department of Education.

VIII. ACTION PLAN: HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR (12th Grade)

A. Pulling Your Applications Together

- Narrow your list of colleges to between 5 and 10 and review it with your parents. Get an application and financial aid info from each. Visit as many as possible.
- Make a master calendar and note:
 1. Test dates, fees and deadlines
 2. College application due dates
 3. Required financial aid applications and their deadlines
 4. Recommendations, transcripts, and other necessary materials
- Get letters of recommendation the first few weeks of school. Choose teachers outside the home, employers, coaches, anyone who knows your character and your abilities well. No family members or family friends. Give each person your resume, examples of your work, a stamped/addressed white envelope, and any required forms.
- Write application essays and ask relatives and friends to read first drafts. Proofread everything – twice.

B. Applying Early Action or Early Decision?

- November 1: For early admissions, colleges may require test scores and applications in early November. For more information please visit <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/apply/the-application/104.html>
- Ask if your college offers an early estimate of financial aid eligibility.

C. Get Financial Aid Info

- Talk to your parents and research the possibility of doing a CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE. For more information please visit <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/pay/scholarships-and-aid/8374.html> Most regular applications are due between January 1 and February 15. Keep copies of everything you send to colleges.
- Send your transcript to colleges. Either your parents can make one for you or you can request one from the Education Alliance at www.arkansahomeschool.org.
- Contact colleges to make sure they've received all application materials.

D. Financial Aid: Apply Early. Apply Right.

- You and your family should save this year's pay stubs to estimate income on aid forms that you'll file in the spring of your senior year.
- Submit your FAFSA as soon after January 1 as possible. Men 18 or older must register for the selective service to receive federal financial aid.
- Many priority financial aid deadlines fall in February. To get the most attractive award package, apply by the priority date. Keep copies of everything you send.

E. When the Letters Start Rolling In

- You should get acceptance letters and financial aid offers by mid-April.
- Go to <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-awards/compare-aid-calculator> to compare awards from different colleges. Questions? Talk to financial aid officers. Not enough aid? Ask if other financing plans are available.
- If you haven't already, visit your final college before accepting.

F. May 1: Making Your Final Choice

- You must tell every college of your acceptance or rejection of offers of admission or financial aid by May 1. Send a deposit to the college you choose.
- Wait-listed? For more information, please visit <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/making-a-decision/what-to-do-if-youre-wait-listed>.
- Check on housing. Many schools begin housing assignments in May.

G. Next Steps

- Send a final transcript to your college.
- Start preparing for the year ahead!

Appendix A

How to Select Your Courses Create a Solid Academic Portfolio

A course schedule may seem like a random selection of classes to you, but college admissions officers see it as the blueprint of your high school education. They're looking for a solid foundation of learning that you can build on in college.

Take at least five solid academic classes every semester. The following subjects and classes are standard fare for success in high school and beyond, whether you plan to attend a 4-year, 2-year or technical school.

English	Take English every year. Traditional courses, such as American and English Literature, help you improve your writing skills, reading comprehension and vocabulary.
Math	You need algebra and geometry to succeed on college entrance exams, in college math classes, and in most careers. Take them early on and you'll be able to enroll in advanced science and math in high school – and you show colleges you're ready for higher-level work.
Science	Science teaches you to think analytically and apply theories to reality. Laboratory classes let you test what you've learned through hands-on work. Six semesters are recommended.
History	Understand local and world events that are happening now by studying the culture and history that has shaped them. Social sciences round out your core curriculum.
Foreign Languages	Solid foreign language study shows colleges you're willing to stretch beyond the basics. Many colleges require at least two years of foreign language study and some prefer more.
The Arts	Research indicates that students who participate in the arts often do better in school and on standardized tests. The arts help you recognize patterns, discern differences and similarities, and exercise your mind in unique ways, oftentimes outside of a traditional classroom setting.
Computer Science	More and more college courses and jobs require at least a basic knowledge of computers. Computer skills also can help you do research and schoolwork better and faster.

Appendix B

2024-2025 College Prices (Keep Increases in Perspective)

There's no escaping the fact that college prices are rising. College may seem expensive. In reality, though, it's often more affordable than you think. The costs depend on what college you go to and how much financial aid you receive.

But there is good news. There is more than \$168 billion in financial aid available. And, despite all of these college price increases, a college education remains an affordable choice for most families.

Sticker Price vs. Affordability

Although some of the college price tags you hear about can be quite daunting for yearly tuition and fees—most colleges are more affordable than you might think. For example, did you know that about 53 percent of students attend four-year schools with annual tuition and fees below \$9,000? After grants are taken into consideration, the net price the average undergraduate pays for a college education is significantly lower than the published tuition and fees. And remember, other forms of financial aid will further reduce the amount your family will actually pay.

FYI -

- Average College Price in Arkansas during 2024-2025 Public four-year In-State is \$9,750
- Average College Price in Arkansas average during 2024-2025 Living on Campus \$27,146
- Average Public two-year price in Arkansas during 2024-2025 \$4,000 - \$8,000

Appendix C

How Financial Aid Works

Financial aid is intended to make up the difference between what your family can afford to pay and what college costs. Over half of the students currently enrolled in college receive some sort of financial aid to help pay college costs.

Who Decides How Much My Family Is Able to Contribute?

The amount your family is able to contribute is frequently referred to as the Expected Family Contribution or EFC. The figure is determined by whoever is awarding the aid – usually the federal government or individual colleges and universities.

The federal government and financial aid offices use need formulas that analyze your family's financial circumstances (things like income, assets and family size) and compare them proportionally with other families' financial circumstances.

Grants and Scholarships

Also called gift aid, grants don't have to be repaid and you don't need to work to earn them. Grant aid comes from federal and state governments and from individual colleges. Scholarships are usually awarded based on merit.

Loans

Most financial aid comes in the form of loans (aid that must be repaid). Most loans that are awarded based on financial need are low-interest loans sponsored by the federal government. These loans are subsidized by the government so no interest accrues until you begin repayment after you graduate.

Work

Student employment and work-study aid helps students pay for education costs such as books, supplies, and personal expenses. Work-study is a federal program which provides students with part-time employment to help meet their financial needs and gives them work experience while serving their campuses and surrounding communities.

Appendix D

Loan Forgiveness Program

Loan Forgiveness – Is the cancellation of all or some portion of your remaining federal student loan balance. If your loan is forgiven, you are no longer responsible for repaying that remaining portion of the loan. Please visit the following websites:

<https://studentaid.gov/manage-loans/forgiveness-cancellation>

The following website is the State Teacher Education Program (STEP) and is administered by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education

<http://scholarships.adhe.edu/scholarship/detail/state-teacher-education-program-step1>

Appendix E

Scholarships and Grants Can Ease Your Way into College

With the right scholarships and grants, your education can be free, or at least a lot less expensive. With college prices going up, more and more students are applying for free money, which can really stiffen the competition. While the Arkansas Department of Higher Education still wants students to apply for its scholarships, it also suggests that you look for other sources of help, too. With just a little effort, you can be well on the road to a more affordable education.

Academic Challenge Scholarship – This scholarship awards nearly \$14,000 over 4 years in a four-year program and \$4,000 over two years in a two-year program toward earning a bachelor’s degree for graduating high school seniors who complete the college preparatory core curriculum, have the required grade point average in those courses, achieve a 19 on the ACT and demonstrate financial need. For more information, please visit <http://scholarships.adhe.edu/scholarships-and-programs/high-school/>

Arkansas Future (ArFuture), - is the newest state grant program. The purpose of this grant is to increase the education and skills of Arkansas’s workforce in an affordable manner. The grant applies to students enrolled in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) or regional high demand areas of study. The grant will cover tuition and fees for qualifying certificate and Associate degree programs at Arkansas’ public institutions for eligible students. The grant is available on a first come, first serve basis.

<http://scholarships.adhe.edu/scholarships-and-programs/high-school/>

Arkansas Health Education Grant Program – This grant is open to students seeking professional training in chiropractic medicine, dentistry, optometry, osteopathic medicine, podiatric medicine and veterinary medicine to allow them to attend out-of-state institutions. For more information, please visit

<http://scholarships.adhe.edu/scholarships/detail/arkansas-health-education-grant-arheg1>

Governor’s Scholarship Program – This scholarship is for graduating high school seniors based on academic achievement, test scores and leadership. The Governor’s Distinguished Scholarship is available for those who score 32 on the ACT or 1410 on the SAT and have a 3.50 academic grade point average, or for National Merit Finalists or National Achievement Scholars. It pays tuition, mandatory fees, room and board up to \$10,000 per year. For more information, please visit <http://scholarships.adhe.edu/scholarships-and-programs/high-school/>

Law Enforcement Officers’ Dependents Scholarship Program – This scholarship pays tuition, fees, and room at any public college, university or technical institute in Arkansas for dependents of state law enforcement officers,

some Highway and Transportation Department employees, and other public employees who were killed or permanently disabled in the line of duty. For more information, please visit <http://scholarships.adhe.edu/scholarships/detail/law-enforcement-officers-dependents-scholarship-leo>

Military Dependents Scholarship – This scholarship program waives tuition, fees, room and board at any public college, university or technical institute in Arkansas for dependents and spouses of Arkansans who were killed or missing in action, prisoners of war, or meet certain criteria for disability. For more information, please visit <http://scholarships.adhe.edu/scholarships/detail/military-dependents-scholarship-mds>

Higher Education Opportunities Grant (GO! Opportunities Grant) - provides \$1000 grants to full-time and \$500 grants to part-time students based on financial need. Students must have graduated from an Arkansas high school or completed the General Educational Development (GED) Tests in Arkansas. Students also must apply within one year of high school graduation, or successful completion of the GED Tests (GED recipients must be between the ages of 16 to 18 years old). Applicants complete the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#) (<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>)

State Teacher Assistance Resource (STAR) Program - offers forgivable loans OR loan repayment grants to current or future educators teaching in a subject and/or geographic shortage area in an Arkansas public school. STAR Loans are for future teachers seeking an education degree leading to an initial licensure. STAR Repayment Grants are for current teachers who did not receive a STAR Loan. For more information, please visit <http://scholarships.adhe.edu/financial-aid-for-teachers>

Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) Program - designed to allow undergraduate students to conduct in-depth research projects in their specific fields of study with the assistance of faculty mentors. For more information please visit <http://scholarships.adhe.edu/scholarships/detail/student-undergraduate-research-fellowship-surf>

Teacher Opportunity Program – offers forgivable loans OR reimbursement grants to current Arkansas teachers seeking to further their education. TOP Loans provide assistance with educational expenses and require school district nomination and matching funds. TOP Loan recipients must be seeking an additional license in a subject shortage area, as determined by the Arkansas Department of Education. TOP Reimbursement Grants are available for teachers whose school districts do not participate in the TOP Loan program. For more information please visit <http://scholarships.adhe.edu/scholarships/detail/teacher-opportunity-program-top>

R. Preston Woodruff Jr. Scholarship – Awarded to 20 students annually, this scholarship is provided by the Arkansas Student Loan Authority. Though the awards are for one year, one lucky student will get a four-year renewable scholarship. For more information please visit

https://www.petersons.com/scholarship/r-preston-woodruff-jr-scholarship-111_173538.aspx

Appendix F

Online Resources

When you Google “scholarships”, more than 36 million results pop up! Read this first to make your search less hectic.

- Look at the heavy-hitters. Many times, companies and franchises offer major scholarships. Check out Fortune 500 companies too – they want the best and brightest minds to join their teams, and many times that equals paying for their education. Hot companies: Wal-Mart, Coca-Cola and Target, to name a few.
- Do some local legwork. Businesses around your area might have scholarships specifically for graduating high school seniors in your city. When you’re out shopping, stopping by your bank or running errand for Mom, take a few extra minutes and ask if the business provides any scholarship opportunities. Hot spots: banks and car dealerships.
- Go up the family tree. Sometimes the companies that your parents work for offer special scholarships for the children of their employees. Get your mom and dad to ask around the office for you.

- Be wary of websites. When you start looking at listings, make sure you're checking out a reputable source, and remember – real scholarship applications don't have fees attached! Below are some popular sites:

www.fafsa.ed.gov

Definitely show your parents this site. They can apply for federal financial aid online, calculate their Expected Family Contribution and check the status of their application.

www.asla.info

This is the official site of the Arkansas Student Loan Authority. Here you can read about loans, search for scholarships and find helpful links.

www.arcf.org

The Arkansas Community Foundation website has a listing of scholarships that are only available for students graduating from certain Arkansas high schools.

www.fundmyfuture.info

Financial resources to fund critical career needs in Arkansas.

<http://www.finaid.org/students>

The smart student guide to financial aid.

www.fastweb.com

Claims to be the largest and most complete source of scholarships available.

www.careersandcolleges.com

Enter your info into this site, and get an instant list of scholarships that match your qualifications.

www.estudentloan.com

Compare loans, apply online and much more on this website.

www.collegenet.com

This site provides more than 1,500 customized online admissions applications built for college and university programs. When applying to more than one program, you save yourself extra typing because common data automatically travels from form to form.

http://apps.collegeboard.com/cbsearch_ss/welcome.jsp

Complete the brief questionnaire and Scholarship Search will find potential opportunities from our database of more than 2,300 sources of college funding, totaling nearly \$3 BILLION in available aid!

Appendix G

Campus Visit Checklist

Here are things you shouldn't miss while visiting a college. Take a look at this list before planning campus trips to make sure you allow enough time on each campus to get a sense of what the school – and the life of its students – is really like.

- Take a campus tour.
- Have an interview with an admissions officer.
- Get business cards and names of people you meet for future contacts.
- Pick up financial aid forms.
- Participate in a group information session at the admissions office.
- Sit in on a class of a subject that interests you.
- Talk to a professor in your chosen major or in a subject that interests you.
- Talk to coaches of sports in which you might participate.
- Talk to a student or counselor in the career center.
- Spend the night in a dorm.
- Read the student newspaper.
- Try to find other student publications – department newsletters, alternative newspapers, literary reviews.
- Scan bulletin boards to see what day-to-day student life is like.
- Eat in the cafeteria.
- Ask students why they chose the college.
- Wander around the campus by yourself.
- Read for a little while in the library and see what it's like.

- Search for your favorite book in the library.
- Ask students what they hate about the college.
- Ask students what they love about the college.
- Browse in the college bookstore.
- Walk or drive around the community surrounding the campus.
- Ask students what they do on weekends.
- Listen to the college's radio station.
- Try to see a dorm that you didn't see on the tour.
- Imagine yourself attending this college for four years.

Appendix H

Creating an Extra-Ordinary Resume

Whether you're looking for a job or applying for college, you're going to need a resume. Though online templates can create average resumes, truly exceptional ones – those that land jobs and get students into their dream schools – take work, effort and time. To help, we've compiled a low-stress set of guidelines to help you craft a winning resume.

What is a resume, anyway?

In a nutshell, it's a one- to two-page document that outlines your specific skills and talents in an easy-to-read way that exhibits your qualifications. This little piece of paper is your key to opportunity. Your resume can get your application that all-important second look or land you the interview.

Not all resumes are created equal.

The first thing a career coach will tell you is that your resume should be tailored to fit each application and its requirements. What most people don't mention is that there are different resumes for different things. For example, a resume you submit with college or scholarship applications is considerably different than one you would give to a potential employer. Below are some resume writing tips for both types.

Brainstorm

Every good project begins with a plan. Take some time and make a thorough list of your skills, qualification, experience and extracurricular activities.

Start Sleuthing

Find out all you can about your school or company. Get information about the institution as a whole, its history and the type of person it wants to add to its team.

For Colleges: Check out admission requirements, the department you're interested in and notable professors in your field

For Companies: Get details about the open position to become a better candidate.

Building the Framework

Here's where academic and professional resumes begin to really differ. It's important to format your resume in a way that fits the position and exhibits your individual experiences and skills.

For Colleges: Most schools are looking for dedicated, multifaceted students, so categories that demonstrate your leadership experience, community service and other extracurricular activities are going to be more important to include than your employment history. Academic resumes should be no longer than two pages.

For Companies: Listing your previous employment experience is vital, along with computer and other job-specific skills. Limit professional resumes to one page.

The Main Ingredients

1. Personal Information

Include your contact information: your full name, postal and e-mail addresses, and telephone number. Distinguish your name from the rest of your document by bolding it or slightly increasing its size.

2. Objective Statement

This is only necessary when you're looking for a job.

For Companies: This is just a sentence or two explaining your interest in the position you're seeking. Be specific – say “clerical assistant for Acxiom” rather than “secretary for a company” for example.

3. Education

This is very important on any application. List items in reverse chronological order from your highest degree back through high school. Include any special honors you received like scholarships.

For Colleges: Look closely at what your school wants on your resume. Include your GPA if it's above a 3.25, your college entrance exam scores, any awards or honors you've received, and advanced placement classes you've taken – including your scores.

4. Experience

Including experience on an academic resume is optional, but it's absolutely necessary when seeking employment. Begin with your most recent employment. If you have more than one job, put the one you acquired most recently first. List your title, the company name, the location and dates of your employment. Give a brief description of your duties for each job and emphasize specific, relevant skills and achievements. If you don't have much experience yet, try using categories you would find on an academic resume such as “leadership” and “community service”.

5. Community Service and Involvement

Many colleges and companies are interested in compassionate, involved people. Include all your volunteerism and participation in extracurricular activities here.

For Colleges: In order to be competitive for admission, having this category is a must.

6. References

Sources differ on this. Some suggest leaving them off entirely; others say to list the references or state that “references are available upon request”. Check with your parents for a format that works for you.

The Importance of Order

On average, it takes an admissions officer or potential employer 30 seconds to look over a resume. To make your qualifications stand out, list the most important information first so it definitely gets seen.

Consistency is Key

Exceptional resumes look professional and are formatted consistently. No matter how you list your information, follow the same format for every category. Choose one easy-to-read font for the entire document, and keep it either 10-point or 12-point. Avoid page borders and other distracting decorations.