



# SUCCESS = POSSIBLE

## FOSTER YOUTH EDUCATION GUIDE

### - 2ND EDITION -

A guide for youth in Arizona foster care ages 14 and older



**ARIZONA**  
DEPARTMENT  
*of* CHILD SAFETY

Permanency & Youth Services  
Statewide Education Specialists

with Special Thanks to the Arizona  
Friends of Foster Children Foundation's  
Keys to Success Program

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	4
CHECKLIST TO SUCCESS .....	5
14 YEAR OLDS: .....	5
15 YEAR OLDS: .....	5
16 YEAR OLDS: .....	6
17 YEAR OLDS: .....	6
18 YEAR OLDS: .....	7
WHAT TYPE OF SCHOOL IS BEST FOR YOU? .....	8
PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL .....	8
CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL .....	8
ONLINE HIGH SCHOOL .....	8
CREDIT RECOVERY .....	8
HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT RECOVERY PROGRAM .....	8
WHAT DO I NEED TO GRADUATE?*	9
CIVICS TEST .....	9
HIGH SCHOOL ASSESSMENTS .....	9
FOREIGN/SECOND LANGUAGE .....	9
MY EDUCATIONAL GOALS .....	10
SETTING ACADEMIC GOALS .....	10
GOAL EXPLORATION .....	11
WHERE DO I GO FOR HELP? .....	12
TEACHERS .....	12
GUIDANCE COUNSELORS .....	12
SCHOOL COUNSELORS .....	12
WHAT SHOULD I ASK MY COUNSELORS? .....	13
WHO ELSE CAN HELP ME WITH SCHOOL? .....	13
YOUR DCS TEAM .....	13
OTHER EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES .....	14
ALL ABOUT THE GED .....	14
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS .....	14
SCORING REQUIREMENTS .....	14
GED TESTING FORMAT .....	14
TYPES OF GED PREP .....	15
FUNDING RESOURCES .....	15
RECOMMENDED STUDY TECHNIQUES TO PREPARE FOR THE GED .....	15
TAKING THE GED TEST .....	15
VOCATIONAL TRAINING .....	16
WHAT IS VOCATIONAL TRAINING/SCHOOL? .....	16
VOCATIONAL AND TRADE SCHOOLS .....	16
COMMUNITY COLLEGES .....	16
CAREER COLLEGES .....	16
JOB CORPS .....	16

CAREER TRAINING CENTERS.....	16
MILITARY TRAINING PROGRAMS.....	16
HIGH SCHOOL VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS.....	17
JTED:.....	17
EVIT:.....	17
EVIT VS. JTED PROGRAM OFFERINGS .....	18
WESTERN MARICOPA EDUCATION CENTER (WEST-MEC) .....	19
OTHER REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMS.....	20
DO VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS COST MONEY?.....	23
MORE GREAT INFO TO HELP YOU NAVIGATE YOUR EDUCATION!.....	24
DUAL ENROLLMENT CLASSES: .....	24
ACT/SAT/ASVAB TESTS:.....	24
CAREER INTEREST ASSESSMENTS:.....	24
DO YOU HAVE AN IEP OR 504 PLAN?.....	25
IEP VS. 504 PLAN .....	25
EMPLOYMENT AND JOB READINESS PROGRAMS.....	26
PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES (PRE-ETS) .....	26
KEYS TO SUCCESS.....	26
JFCS REAL WORLD JOB DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.....	26
Y ACHIEVERS.....	26
COLLEGE PREP PROGRAMS .....	27
TRIO/UPWARD BOUND .....	27
HOOP OF LEARNING PROGRAM .....	27
FIRST STAR ASU ACADEMY.....	27
FLEISCHER SCHOLARS SUMMER PROGRAM .....	27
STEP PROGRAM.....	27
CESAR E. CHAVEZ LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE.....	27
COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY.....	28
HOW TO ENROLL AT A UNIVERSITY .....	28
HOW TO ENROLL IN A COMMUNITY COLLEGE .....	29
PAYING FOR COLLEGE OR VOCATIONAL TRAINING.....	29
FAFSA.....	29
ETV.....	30
ARIZONA TUITION WAIVER.....	30
APPLY FOR SCHOLARSHIPS.....	31
GCU FOSTERING FUTURES .....	31
FINANCIAL AID - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS).....	32
ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND AWARDS LIST.....	34

## INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO YOUR GUIDE TO EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS!

This guide has been put together to help YOU guide your own education, set your goals, and make sure you are on track to be successful. Being in foster care can really affect your education. Changing schools and placements often, not having the right support, or just not getting your questions answered can be tough. Our hope is this guide will help you be in charge of your own educational success, keep your information in one place, and help you set goals and stay on track every step of the way.

Whether your path leads you to college, employment, vocational programs, or the military,  
**YOUR EDUCATION IS IMPORTANT!**

### *Did you know?*

- ! **YOU** have the right to receive an education that fits **YOU** best.
- ! You may earn more \$\$\$ when you have a high school **DIPLOMA OR GED**.
- ! **MOST JOBS** require more than a High School Diploma to get hired.
- ! Even having **SOME** college credits helps you earn **MORE \$\$\$** from work.
- ! You need **GOOD GRADES** to be able to play **SPORTS**.
- ! Did you know having a higher GPA gets you awards, scholarships, and even **DISCOUNTS ON CAR INSURANCE?**



*Let's get started...*

## CHECKLIST TO SUCCESS

These age based checklists are only a guide, and you may need to look ahead to the next age listed depending on what grade you are in at that age.

### 14 YEAR OLDS:

- Build your support system. Do you have supportive people in your life (whether at school, home or in community)? Who are they?
- If you get a good grade on a test, who would be the first person you would want to tell? If you have a question about school, who would you go to? Who are you comfortable talking to about education?
- Start researching and engaging in activities (sports/clubs at school or other groups in the community)
- Start good study habits and get good grades to continue these habits in High School
- Identify any educational barriers to your success:
  - Is your home environment disruptive? Do you need internet access and do not have access? Do you need more study time?
- Maintain educational stability:
  - Have you had to change schools because of changes in placement?

### REMEMBER!!

You should have a State Identification card by age 14. Your DCS specialist and placement can help you get it.

### 15 YEAR OLDS:

- Continue everything you started working on in previous school year (identifying interests, talking with supportive adults, engaging in activities, study habits, identify barriers.)
- Meet with school counselor about your educational goals
- Make sure you are enrolled for all the correct classes/credits (languages, Math, English, etc.)
- Start doing community service and volunteer work (and KEEP TRACK OF IT)
- Start collecting information on your awards, accomplishments, community service, etc. (Look inside for pages you can use for this!)
- Complete Career Interest Assessments (Look at later pages to see info on these.)
- Ask your DCS Specialist for money to pay for programs, clubs, sports, etc. (But remember to ask EARLY, and not at the last minute as funds can be limited and are not guaranteed.)

### REMEMBER!!

You have a **RIGHT** to stay enrolled at **your school of origin**. Talk to your DCS Specialist, placement, caregiver or attorney if you want to remain at your school after you are removed from your home.

### 16 YEAR OLDS:

- Attend career and college fairs
- Think about selecting a school or program for post-secondary education (make a plan for AFTER high school)
- Discuss college requirements with school counselor to make sure you are on track
- Consider AP courses or dual enrollment classes (Look on page 26 for more info!)
- Think about joining college prep programs like TRIO/Upward Bound, Hoop of Learning, etc. (see page 27 for list of different programs)
- Look into vocational training programs like EVIT, JTED, etc., and apply to attend in your Junior year of high school (see page 17 for list of different programs)
- Consider taking PSAT and research ACT/SAT
- Consider participating in academic enrichment programs, summer workshops, and camps with specialties that interest you
- Continue to engage in extracurricular activities and clubs and keep track of achievements, awards, and community service
- Continue requesting funding for programs and activities from DCS Specialist
- Look and sign up for Summer Youth Employment Programs (foster youth often get priority placement in these programs) or get a summer job
- START SAVING MONEY FOR COLLEGE!
- Ensure you have your State ID

### 17 YEAR OLDS:

- Research scholarships and deadlines; make a calendar
- Register to take ACT/SAT in the Spring
- Attend college fairs and gather information
- Identify schools and narrow down list and VISIT colleges/schools
- Learn about Financial Aid options and continue saving money for your future
- Check in with school counselor to ensure you are on track with credits and requirements; if not on track, work on plan to recover credits, change schedule, etc.
- Consider all other opportunities with regard to your goals, including vocational programs, military, trades, employment, as well as college
- Look at opportunities for summer programs on college campuses to get more exposure
- If you have an Individual Education Plan (IEP), be sure your accommodations are appropriate for college level (more time on test vs. modified test)
- If interested in military, talk to a recruiter and schedule to take ASVAB

### REMEMBER!!

You should **get a copy of your transcript** at the end of each semester. Ask your school counselor or front desk for a copy. You should share your school information with your DCS Specialist at each home visit.

## 18 YEAR OLDS:

- Apply for scholarships, have a calendar with deadlines noted, gather all accomplishment information to include in applications
- Check college or program websites for requirements, deadlines, etc.
- Check with counselor to be sure you are on track to graduate on time
- Take or retake ACT/SAT or ASVAB
- Continue to speak with or follow up with recruiter if you are interested in the military
- Work on college and scholarship essays
- Start applying to post-secondary programs (colleges, universities, trade schools, vocational programs)
- Attend a financial aid workshop
- Complete FAFSA in October of Senior year
- Start asking for letters of recommendation
- Create/update a resume
- If you are a student athlete and plan to play in college, register with NCAA clearinghouse
- Start talking to DCS Education Specialist or DCS Specialist about Education & Training Voucher and AZ Tuition Waiver
- Consider taking ACCUPLACER assessment in Spring semester at community college to determine if you will need remedial classes or have opportunity to take test again before you register for classes
- Request GRADUATION ALLOWANCE from DCS Specialist and other Senior Year funds from Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation (AFFCF)
- Check with school counselors about waivers for college application fee

## Did you know?



**Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation (AFFCF.org)** can help you pay for all of the following:

- School Pictures
- Classes/Lessons
- Graduation Expenses
- Tutoring
- Musical Instruments
- Vital Records/State I.D.'s
- Summer School
- CPR / First Aid Classes
- Prom Expenses
- Bicycles/Scooters
- Yearbooks
- Camps
- Sports Equipment & Registration
- School Field Trips
- Dual Enrollment Class Tuition
- GED Testing Fees
- Club/Group Fees
- School Program Fees
- School Supplies

# WHAT TYPE OF SCHOOL IS BEST FOR YOU?

## **PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL**

- Attend the public school that is closest to you, or that you were attending when you were taken into DCS custody; this decision should be made by your whole team including you, your placement, DCS staff, school staff, and your family
- You can earn up to 3.5 credits per semester and 7 credits per academic year (required to earn a total of 22 by your 21st birthday to graduate)
- Public schools offer vocational and/or Advanced Placement classes

## **CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL**

- Charter schools are public schools run by independent groups, usually nonprofits, that have academic freedom to support students
- Some charter schools have a specific focus/target such as: arts, science and technology (STEM) and college preparation
- This link will help you look for charter schools that may interest you: <http://educationevaluator.org/>

## **ONLINE HIGH SCHOOL**

- There are many types of virtual (online) school options; including public schools, private companies, blended programs that are partially online and programs that offer supplemental classes to accelerate graduation.
- It is important to keep in mind there may be specific requirements you need to meet when enrolled in online school.
  - Logging in for a certain amount of time per day or at certain times of the day
  - You will need internet access at home and access to technology such as a laptop, computer or tablet
  - You may also need to have the ability to communicate electronically and/or by phone with your virtual instructors.
- This type of setting requires a lot of discipline, time management, and self-accountability since there will be no teachers or staff present to encourage you to do your work.

## **CREDIT RECOVERY**

Credit recovery is a term used to describe a wide variety of educational strategies and programs that give high school students who have failed a class the opportunity to redo coursework or retake a course and avoid failure and earn academic credit. This may also be a good option for someone who has had a lot of placement changes that resulted in loss of credits that now need to be made up.

- Students may take a credit-recovery course during normal school hours, after school, on vacation breaks or over the summer.
- Credit recovery courses may be available online or in alternative settings and can be scheduled at different times to suit the needs of the student.
- Search online to find the school or program that best fits your needs.

## **HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT RECOVERY PROGRAM**

A drop out recovery program helps students to achieve their high school diploma in an alternative setting. These programs offer different options which include: online, onsite and blended classes.

Some Dropout Recovery programs operating in Arizona:

- Grad Solutions
- Queen Creek Unified District
- Arizona Call-a-Teen Youth Resources, Inc.
- Tucson Youth Development
- Maricopa Unified School District
- Prescott Unified District
- Eastpointe High School, Inc.
- Career Success Schools
- North Star Charter School, Inc.

## WHAT DO I NEED TO GRADUATE?\*

English or English as a Second Language (ESL)	4 credits
Mathematics	4 credits
Science	3 credits
History & Social Science	3 credits
Fine Arts or Career and Technical Education (CTE)	1 credit
Electives/Locally Prescribed Courses	7 credits

\*According to Arizona Department of Education

### CIVICS TEST

Beginning with the graduating class of 2017, high school graduates are required to pass (60/100) a civics test identical to the civics portion of the naturalization test used by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. As a courtesy, the Arizona Department of Education, with help from the Maricopa County Education Service Agency and Arizona educators, has developed a mostly multiple choice version of the required test.

### HIGH SCHOOL ASSESSMENTS

ACT Aspire is the statewide high school achievement test, administered to students in Grade 9.

ACT is the statewide high school achievement test administered to students in Grade 11.

This testing usually occurs in the Spring semester. To get the most up-to-date information on this test and to access resources for test prep, visit the AZ Department of Education website.

## PLANNING TO ATTEND A UNIVERSITY?

### FOREIGN/SECOND LANGUAGE

You will also need 2 credits of a foreign/second language in order to gain admission to a University. Some examples of this can be Spanish, French, German, Italian, or Chinese.

Be aware that not all colleges/universities will accept American Sign Language (ASL) as a qualified foreign/second language.



# MY EDUCATIONAL GOALS

The following tool can be used to write down your goals throughout your educational journey. This can be an activity you can do with your caregiver or your assigned DCS Specialist during a home visit.

**\*\*Ask your caregiver or DCS Specialist to make you extra copies for each of your classes!\*\***

## SETTING ACADEMIC GOALS

Semester:

Class:

Desired Grade in Class for Semester:

Activity / Assignment	% of Final Grade	Due Date	What I Have To Do	Actual Semester Grade
Example: Midterm Exam	50%	10/18	1. Study Group 2. Meet with tutor 3. Flash Cards	

## GOAL EXPLORATION

I am very interested in \_\_\_\_\_

My favorite subjects are \_\_\_\_\_

I want to join these clubs \_\_\_\_\_

I want to play these sports \_\_\_\_\_

I think about doing this when I am older \_\_\_\_\_

A college I might want to go to is \_\_\_\_\_

I want a summer job at \_\_\_\_\_

I want to have a career as a \_\_\_\_\_

I'd like to volunteer at \_\_\_\_\_

I want to have this GPA every year \_\_\_\_\_

I want to go to this high school \_\_\_\_\_

I want to learn this language \_\_\_\_\_

I want to take these elective classes in high school \_\_\_\_\_

As soon as I graduate high school I want to \_\_\_\_\_

My favorite place to study and do homework is \_\_\_\_\_

I want to join these college prep programs \_\_\_\_\_

I want to sign up for these vocational programs while in high school \_\_\_\_\_

I want to apply for these summer workshops/programs \_\_\_\_\_

I want to visit these colleges/universities \_\_\_\_\_

I want to ask these people for letters of recommendation \_\_\_\_\_

I want to have this much money saved before I graduate \_\_\_\_\_

I want to do better in these subjects \_\_\_\_\_

I want to learn more about these types of jobs \_\_\_\_\_

I want to work on these things to do my best in school \_\_\_\_\_

## WHERE DO I GO FOR HELP?

There are people ready to help you on your educational journey. All you have to do is reach out and ask for help. Here are some examples of who can help you:

### TEACHERS

- Approach teachers when you need to talk about any school issues. Teachers are happy to help you.
- A teacher won't think it's strange that you want to talk. **Teachers are actually there to help you.**
- Let your teacher know when you begin to struggle or fall behind. The teacher will be supportive of your needs.
- Let your teacher know the support you are getting at home or your placement. The teacher can help you receive additional academic support during or after school hours through tutoring, mentoring, or partnerships.

### GUIDANCE COUNSELORS

- Guidance counselors are about making your school experience the best it can be. These counselors help students handle any problems that might interfere with learning. They also guide students to productive futures and create a positive school environment.
- Guidance counselors help with reviewing your school/academic records to provide you with a clear path to graduation or getting ready for college, military, or trade school.

### SCHOOL COUNSELORS

- School counselors are different than Guidance Counselors. They will help students overcome behavioral problems, improve their time management and organizational skills, establish academic goals, resolve interpersonal problems with other students or work through personal problems.
- School counselors are available to help you when you need to talk to someone regarding any issues that become overwhelming.
- School counselors are trained teachers/professionals that are qualified to help you figure things out. They will work with you to find a good solution.
- Explore the school's website. It will outline the roles of other school staff members who can help students with problems or school issues. The professional school staff includes school psychologists, school nurses, para-professionals, college or career counselors and academic tutors.
- Use the spaces below to keep track of who your counselors are and how to contact them:

Guidance Counselor: \_\_\_\_\_

School Counselor: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Other staff: \_\_\_\_\_

### REMEMBER!!

Get these numbers  
ASAP and keep  
them handy!

## WHAT SHOULD I ASK MY COUNSELORS?

It is always a good idea to go into an appointment prepared. Here are some suggestions on questions you can ask your counselors when you schedule a meeting:

- What is a GPA and how important is it?
- What are some dual enrollment programs offered at my high school so I can obtain college credits or certifications while I'm attending high school?
- What are some clubs or sports offered? (Tell your advisor about your interests, hobbies or abilities.)
- What if I am struggling in a class, with a teacher or fellow student? How can you help me?
- How often should we meet?
- When should I start considering college or career paths and how can you help me?
- What are some dates I should note? (FAFSA workshops, career days, SAT testing, etc.)
- What are on campus and community opportunities for volunteer work?
- Are there any programs that can assist me because I am involved in the foster care system?
- What are credits and why are they important? How many do I need to graduate?
- What is ACT? What is the Civics Test? What happens if I do not pass them?
- Why is attendance important?
- Who do I speak with if I need to have a schedule change?

## WHO ELSE CAN HELP ME WITH SCHOOL?

### YOUR DCS TEAM

You may have different team members that can help you. These members could be your DCS Specialist, the Unit Case Aide, a STA navigator, a behavioral health case manager, your juvenile court attorney/GAL, mentor/advocate or even the DCS Unit Supervisor. If you are not sure who the people on your team are, be sure and ask your caregiver or DCS Specialist.

It will be important to **make sure your voice is heard** at any monthly child and family team (CFT) meetings or home visits with anyone from your team.

Think ahead about what you want to say or ask. Write down the most important ideas, and consider these topics:

- What barriers are you facing that are preventing you from meeting your educational goals?
- What questions do you have regarding your educational options?
- Do you feel like you have control of your educational plan?
- Do you feel like you have the tools to be successful? If not, why?

Be as clear as you can about what you think, feel, and want. Give details that can help everyone understand your education goals. Your team members can listen better or be more helpful if they understand what's really going on.

Be honest. If you're always honest people will be likely to believe what you say. If you sometimes hide the truth or add drama, they will have a harder time believing what you tell them. If you lie, they will find it hard to trust and support the decisions you want to make about your education plans.

Remember that your team members are here to help you be successful. They can get you the materials and resources you need to do that. Be sure and ask for what you need whether that is funding, materials, information, permission, and anything else that will help you achieve your educational goals.

## OTHER EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

- Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation (AFFCF) will pay for tutoring services for you. You and your caregiver can apply for this support through the website at [www.affcf.org](http://www.affcf.org)
- Other regions may also have programs available for free tutoring. Be sure to reach out to your resources to get more information if you need assistance with tutoring
- Many local libraries offer free tutoring as well
- High schools offer group/individual tutoring before and/or after school. Ask your teacher how to get involved
- If you are in college, all campuses have a tutoring center that you can use at no cost. Ask your professor or academic advisor where to go for this support

## ALL ABOUT THE GED

The General Education Diploma (GED) can be earned by those 16 and older. It is also known as the High School Equivalency (HSE) degree.

Deciding to take the GED instead of earning your HS diploma is a BIG DECISION. It may be great for some, but is not the best plan for everyone. It can affect your future path and goals as well. Some programs, including some branches of the military, do not accept the GED and do not see it as equal to a high school diploma. It is also not always the easiest path as some may think or tell you. It could take you just as long to complete a GED as it would to complete your high school credits. Please keep these things in mind as you make the decisions about your education that could affect your future.

### ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- To be eligible for the GED tests in Arizona, you must be 18 years of age or older and not enrolled in high school OR
- You may also take the test if you are 16 or 17 and meet additional requirements. You must present the two documents listed below and a current government-issued ID to any authorized testing location or to the Arizona State Office
  - Official withdrawal from the last school attended
  - Notarized and dated permission letter from a parent or guardian

### SCORING REQUIREMENTS

- To earn the GED credential in Arizona, you must score at least 145 on each test and have a combined score of at least 580 on all four tests
- If you receive scores of 165-174 on each test you may not need to take placement tests for college entrance
- If you do not pass a GED test in any subject, you may retake the test. However, after three (3) times, there is a 60 day waiting period before retesting. There is no limit on the number of times you can take the exam in any year.

### GED TESTING FORMAT

- The GED test measures an individual's ability to understand and use different kinds of facts and information in five categories of knowledge. These subjects are:
  - Language Arts
  - Mathematics
  - Science
  - Social Studies
  - Civics
- You do not have to take all of the tests at one time.
- GED tests are available in English and Spanish

## TYPES OF GED PREP

- In-Class/in-person
- Online through GED Ready
- Individually

## FUNDING RESOURCES

- GED testing may be free and paid for if you are taking prep classes through a State-funded Adult Education Program.
- GED test can be paid for by DCS or other community partners
- Re-testing can be paid for by Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation (AFFCF)

## RECOMMENDED STUDY TECHNIQUES TO PREPARE FOR THE GED

### In-person/online Classes

State funded Adult Education programs offer classes that are designed to help prepare for the GED test. You must contact the programs directly to obtain information on registration and classes. Find a program by county here: <http://www.azed.gov/adultedservices/program-locations-by-county/> or contact the DCS Education Specialist by emailing [EducationPOC@azdcs.gov](mailto:EducationPOC@azdcs.gov)

There are also community programs that can help you get your GED including at all the community colleges, Goodwill METRO in Tucson, and Real World Job Development through Jewish Family Children's Services in the Phoenix area.

### Study on Your Own

For studying on your own, recommended study materials can be found and purchased at The GED Marketplace. Local public libraries may also have the latest recommended GED study books that are designed to prepare you for the most updated version of the GED test.

### GED Ready Official Practice Test

The most updated GED official practice test is called GED Ready and is available at GED.com. Create and log into your GED account and then click on the Study tab. The practice test is designed to assess how likely you are to pass the test including personal feedback and recommendations to improve your score.

## TAKING THE GED TEST

Register by creating your test-taking profile at: [www.GED.com](http://www.GED.com)

For additional information and to find testing locations go to the Arizona Department of Education website: <http://www.azed.gov/adultedservices/hse/>

## REMEMBER!!

State funded Adult Education programs offer classes that are designed to help prepare for the GED test.

# VOCATIONAL TRAINING

## WHAT IS VOCATIONAL TRAINING/SCHOOL?

Vocational education provides the training necessary to become a qualified professional in a variety of trades. This type of learning, also known as career and technical education (CTE), blends academic and technical instruction to prepare graduates for direct entry into the workforce.

Some vocational programs take less time than traditional post-secondary programs like college/university. Some vocational programs can be free. Others though can be even more expensive than community college or university tuition. If you are really interested in vocational programs as a starting point for your career, be sure to start looking at programs EARLY IN HIGH SCHOOL. There are MANY high school level vocational/CTE programs available. You could graduate from high school with your diploma and a career certificate.

Vocational training can be offered by vocational, technical, and trade schools in addition to public and private community colleges and four-year institutions. But what makes each program different?

## VOCATIONAL AND TRADE SCHOOLS

Vocational schools are traditionally government-recognized and supported and provide a range of training programs lasting between one and two years.

Example: Medical and Technical Institutes, Cosmetology and Beauty Schools

## COMMUNITY COLLEGES

These two-year institutions offer an array of academic credentials such as associate degrees, diplomas and certificates in different vocational tracks.

Example: Phoenix College, Glendale Community College, Pima Community College, Central Arizona College, Arizona Western College, Scottsdale Community College, Cochise College, Yavapai College, Coconino Community College, Tohono O'odham Community College, and many more!

## CAREER COLLEGES

Typically operated by for-profit institutions, career colleges offer a variety of training programs typically completed within 12 months but could be more expensive than community colleges.

## JOB CORPS

Administered by the United States Department of Labor, Job Corp centers provide FREE vocational training to individuals between the ages of 16 and 24.

Example: Phoenix Job Corp Center, Fred G. Acosta Job Corp Center (Tucson)

## CAREER TRAINING CENTERS

Many communities have career training providers or centers for employment that offer vocational preparation in areas such as culinary arts, auto repair, construction, and health care.

Examples: Goodwill Industries, Arizona Center for Youth Resources

## MILITARY TRAINING PROGRAMS

If you are interested in joining the military, a great option for you would be to join the JROTC (Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps) or ROTC program at your school. JROTC teaches young people the kind of self-discipline, self-confidence, and leadership skills that can help them successfully meet the challenges of adulthood. These programs are provided through your high school. ROTC programs are provided through colleges and universities. There are many scholarship opportunities available when you are part of these programs.

## REMEMBER!!

There are programs available to high school students who want to pursue a vocational or training certificate. There will be different programs available depending on your location.

## **HIGH SCHOOL VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

There are programs available to high school students who want to pursue a vocational or training certificate. There will be different programs available depending on your location.

### **Pima Joint Technical Education District (JTED)**

Central Campus opportunities: Contact [counselors@pimajted.org](mailto:counselors@pimajted.org)

High School Campus opportunities: You should speak with your assigned HS counselor.

The Pima JTED Career and Technical Education District offers premier, tuition-free CTE programs to sophomores, juniors and seniors. They serve students from public, private, and charter schools, and students who are home-schooled. Pima JTED also serves students who have not earned a diploma or GED and are under the age of 22. Students may attend Pima JTED classes at one of our Central Campuses, located throughout Pima County, or at one of our satellite locations which are located at all public high schools in Pima County, Santa Cruz Valley, Nogales, and in Mammoth/San Manuel. For a list of all schools and locations, please visit <https://pimajted.org/>

### **EAST VALLEY INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (EVIT)**

EVIT is a public education system of career training options for East Valley high school students and Phoenix area adults: Aviation, Culinary Arts, Health Care, Cosmetology, Fashion Design, Welding & much more! Tuition-FREE for high school students. Tuition-based for adults, with financial aid available to those who qualify.

EVIT is an AdvancED accredited career and technical school serving district, charter and home-schooled high school students who reside in 10 East Valley school districts. Students from Apache Junction, Chandler, Fountain Hills, Gilbert, Mesa, Queen Creek, Scottsdale, Tempe, Higley and J.O. Combs school districts spend a half-day at EVIT in a career preparation program and the other half-day at their home high school. All 11th and 12th grade students can attend tuition-free. Bus transportation is provided to and from EVIT by the school districts for most programs.

EVIT also houses Paul Revere Academy on their campus where students can attend high school and engage in a vocation/trade all in one location. Youth in foster care will have priority access to Paul Revere Academy to ensure this population graduates and is ready to enter the workforce or is prepared for college. <https://www.evit.com/>

## EVIT VS. JTED PROGRAM OFFERINGS

EVIT:	JTED:
3D Animation*	3D Animation/Virtual Reality & Game Design
Aesthetics	Air Transportation/FAA Drone Operator
Automotive Technologies	Automotive Technologies
Aviation	Business Start-Up/Entrepreneurship
Barbering	Community Health
Collision Repair	Computer Aided Design (CAD) / Architectural Drafting
Commercial Baking & Pastry Arts	Computer Numerical Control (CNC) Operator & Machine Inspection (Precision Manufacturing)
Construction	Computer Science/Information Technologies
Cosmetology	Construction Technologies
Criminal Justice	Cosmetology
Culinary Arts	Culinary & Nutritional Arts/Restaurant Management/Pastry
Dental Assistant	Cybersecurity and Artificial Intelligence
Diesel Technologies	Early Childhood Education
Digital Photography	Emergency Medical Technician
Early Childhood Education	Engineering/Mechatronics & Design
Electrical and Power Transmission Installation*	Fire Service
Emergency Medical Technician	Graphic Design
Fashion Design & Merchandising	Health Care Foundations
Fire and Emergency Services	Heavy Equipment Operations
Future Engineers	HVAC-R
Graphic Design	Law, Public Safety & Security
Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration (HVACR)	Licensed Nursing Assistant (LNA)
Hospitality Management	Medical Assistant
Interior Design	Pharmacy Technician
Massage Therapy	Physical Therapy Technician
Medical Assistant	Project SEARCH
Mental and Social Health Technician	Robotics and Manufacturing
Networking Security*	Social & Mental Health Technician
Nursing Assistant	Veterinary Science
Pharmacy Technician	Welding Technologies
Physical Therapy Technician	
Plumbing	
Radio/Audio Production	
Software and App Design*	
Technology Device Maintenance*	
Veterinary Assistant	
Video Production	
Welding	

ADULT ONLY- Practical Nursing, Sterile Processing Technician, Surgical Technologist, and programs marked with \* above

**WESTERN MARICOPA EDUCATION CENTER (WEST-MEC)** is a public school district which provides career training programs for both high school and adult students in Arizona. West-MEC focuses solely on innovative career and technical education programs that prepare students to enter the workforce and pursue continuing education. Every student who completes a program has the opportunity to test for licensure or certification. <https://www.west-mec.edu/>

WEST-MEC CENTRAL PROGRAMS		
WHERE:	WHAT:	WHO:
Agua Fria Union High School District Buckeye Union High School District Cartwright Elementary School District Deer Valley Unified School District Dysart Unified School District Gila Bend Unified School District Glendale Union High School District Littleton Elementary School District Paradise Honors Charter Paradise Valley Unified School District Pendergast Elementary School District Peoria Unified School District Saddle Mountain Unified School District Tolleson Union High School District Western School of Science & Technology Wickenburg Unified School District  West-MEC Central Campus Northeast Campus Northwest Campus Southwest Campus	Aesthetics Air Conditioning Technology Automotive Technology Aviation Maintenance Technology* Biomedical Science Coding Collision Repair and Refinishing* Culinary Arts Drone Technology Electrical Trade Specialty Emergency Medical Technology Energy & Manufacturing Systems Fire Science General Construction Technology Hairstyling IT Security* Law & Public Safety Medical Assisting Medical Laboratory Science Medium/ Heavy Diesel Technology Nursing Services Pharmacy Science Physical Therapy Powersports Technology Precision Machining* Veterinary Science Water Systems Welding Technology* ADULT PROGRAMS: HVAC-R Pharmacy Technician	Current Sophomore, Junior and Senior students (depending on program)  Adult Students - depending on the program  * Programs vary depending on location

**THE CENTRAL ARIZONA VALLEY INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (CAVIT)** is a public school district working in partnership with thirteen area high schools where 11th and 12th grade students can begin preparing for higher wage, in-demand jobs while still attending high school. Career technology education prepares students to enter the workforce immediately after graduation or to pursue further education at a community college or university. <https://www.cavitschools.com/>

CAVIT – CENTRAL AZ VALLEY INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY		
WHERE:	WHAT:	WHO:
Casa Grande Union High School Coolidge High School Florence High School Imagine Prep School Maricopa High School Mission Heights Preparatory High School Poston Butte High School PPEP Tec High School San Tan Foothills High School Santa Cruz Valley Union High School Sequoia Pathway Academy School Villa Oasis High School Vista Grande High School	Automated Industrial Technology Behavioral Health Cosmetology Dental Science Drone Technology Fire Science Law Enforcement Massage Therapy Medical Science Patient Care Pharmacy Science Physical Therapy Veterinary Science	Current Sophomore, Junior and Senior high school students  18- 21 years old  *programs vary depending on location

**COCHISE TECHNOLOGY DISTRICT JTED PROGRAM** connects high school students in Cochise County with quality, collaborative learning experiences in Career and Technical Education programs. Using innovative technology, students are linked virtually and traditionally with opportunities at the high school and community college to gain the technical and leadership skills necessary to be prepared for economic independence and to make informed decisions about their career, continuing education, and community. <https://www.cochisejted.org/en-US>

COCHISE		
WHERE:	WHAT:	WHO:
Benson High School Bisbee High School Bowie High School Buena High School Douglas High School San Simon High School St. David High School Tombstone High School Valley Union High School Willcox High School Patagonia High School	Home Health Aide Certified Nursing Assistant Mental & Social Health Technician Medical Assistant Coding Welding Auto Tech HVAC Law & Public Safety Cloud Computing Construction Tech Construction Technologies	10th, 11th and 12th graders (lower grade participation available depending on program and location)  * Programs vary depending on location

**NORTHERN ARIZONA VOCATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (NAVIT)** provides high school students in 11 host school districts, an opportunity to participate in career and technical education programs. Enhanced programs allow students to earn high school credit while attending NAVIT. Students may also earn community college credit from Northland Pioneer College and Gila Community College in association with Eastern Arizona College. <https://www.navitschool.org/>

NAVIT - NORTHERN AZ VOCATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY			
WHERE:	WHERE:	WHAT:	WHO:
Northland Pioneer College (various locations)  Payson students: Gila Community College- Payson Campus Eastern Arizona College	Satellite Programs at High School Campuses: Blue Ridge Heber-Overgaard Holbrook Joseph City Payson Show Low Snowflake St. Johns Round Valley Whiteriver Winslow	Administration of Justice Allied Health Automotive Certified Nursing Assistant Computer Repair and Maintenance Construction Hairstyling/Cosmetology Fire Science Medical Assistant Personal Training & Rehabilitation Welding Nail Technician Physical Therapy Technician	11th and 12th graders  18-22 years old, but must still be enrolled in High School  Satellite Programs open to all high school students  * Programs vary depending on location

**STEDY IS THE SOUTHWEST TECHNICAL EDUCATION DISTRICT OF YUMA.** STEDY is a career and technical education (CTE) public high school district. The program serves ALL high school students enrolled in public, private, and charter schools by providing them with CTE educational experiences that lead to an industry recognized certification. All courses offered by STEDY are approved by the Career and Technical Education Division (CTE) of the Arizona Department of Education. <https://www.stedycte.org/>

SOUTHWEST TECHNICAL EDUCATION DISTRICT OF YUMA (STEDY)			
WHERE:	WHAT:	WHAT:	WHO:
Cibola High School San Luis High School Gila Ridge High School Vista Alternative High School Kofa High School Yuma High School STEDY Central Campus Vista High School Antelope High School	Business Management Cosmetology - Hairstylist Digital Animation Drafting CAD Technology Electrical Technology HVAC Medical Assisting Manufacturing Technology Network Security Organizational Leadership Accounting* AgriScience* Automotive Technologies* Biomedical Technology* Building Maintenance* Business Management* Cabinet Making* Construction Technologies* Culinary Arts* Digital Photography*	Early Childhood Education* Education Professions* Emergency Medical Services* Engineering* Film & TV Production* Health Aid* Hospitality Management* Law and Public Safety* Marine Corp JROTC* Medical Assisting Services* Mental and Social Health Services* Music and Audio Production* Nursing Services* Software Development* Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation* Stagecraft* sUAS Drones* Welding Technologies*	9th thru 12th grades  *Some programs of study open only to certain grades **Programs available vary depending on location and grade *** Programs vary depending on location ****Open to ALL high school students in Yuma area.

## DO VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS COST MONEY?

Some Vocational Programs will have a cost. But some of the best vocational and certification programs in Arizona are FREE. Here is a breakdown to help you make a decision. Use this information to make the best decision for you regarding vocational vs. certificate programs.

### HOW DO I DECIDE?

<p><b>VOCATIONAL/TRADE SCHOOLS/ CAREER COLLEGES</b></p> <p><b>\$10,000 to \$32,000 or more</b></p> <p>for Tuition, Fees, Books and Living Costs</p>	<p><b>COMMUNITY COLLEGES</b></p> <p><b>\$10,000 or less</b></p> <p>for Tuition, Fees, Books and Living Costs</p>
<p><b>PRIVATE SCHOOLS</b></p> <p>Esthetician = \$15,620 BSN-Nursing = \$100,000 Medical Assistant = \$19,998 Dental Assistant = \$19,180</p>	<p><b>PUBLIC SCHOOLS</b></p> <p>Esthetician = \$9,500 BSN-Nursing = \$30,000 Medical Assistant = \$5,236 Dental Assistant = \$12,025</p>
<p><b>JOB CORP</b></p> <p><b>FREE</b></p> <p>for Tuition, Fees, Books and Living Costs</p>	<p><b>EVIT</b></p> <p><b>Free</b></p> <p>(for 11th and 12th graders) for Tuition, Fees and Books</p>
<p><b>JTED</b></p> <p><b>Free</b></p> <p>(High School only) for Tuition, Fees and Books</p>	<p><b>The choice is yours!</b></p>

## MORE GREAT INFO TO HELP YOU NAVIGATE YOUR EDUCATION!

### **ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) CLASSES:**

Advanced Placement (AP) is a program in the United States and Canada created by the College Board which offers college-level curricula and examinations to high school students. American colleges and universities may grant placement and course credit to students who obtain high scores on the examinations.

Ask your school counselors about enrolling in AP Classes and which are offered at your school.

### **DUAL ENROLLMENT CLASSES:**

Dual enrollment is when high school students (usually juniors and seniors) earn college credits while enrolled in separate courses that are not part of their high school curriculum. This is known as concurrent enrollment. You may also see “early college” as a way to describe dual enrollment.

“Dual credit” refers to students who earn academic credits at two institutions – their high school and a college or university that participates in dual enrollment programs.

The process varies from state-to-state. In general, students should discuss their interest with caregivers and school officials. Multiple states require minimum scores on tests like PSAT, ACT or college placement tests. These states include Arizona. You will be responsible for tuition costs. See info on following pages regarding how to secure funding for college classes.

### **ACT/SAT/ASVAB TESTS:**

The ACT is a standardized test that measures a student’s skills in five core areas: English, math, reading, science, and writing (optional). Students in grades 11 and 12 take the ACT so that they can submit their scores to colleges as part of the college application process. The ACT is so important to universities because admissions officers use it to judge your academic preparedness for college.

The SAT is an entrance exam used by most colleges and universities to make admissions decisions. It is a multiple-choice, pencil-and-paper test administered by the College Board. The SAT is a standardized test meant to show schools how prepared you are for college by measuring key skills like reading comprehension, computational ability, and clarity of expression. Because so many students take the test, it also provides schools with data about how you compare to your peers nationwide.

The ASVAB is a timed multi-aptitude test, which is given at over 14,000 schools and Military Entrance Processing Stations (MEPS) nationwide and is developed and maintained by the Department of Defense. It is a required test for anyone who wants to join the military. Some high schools will give the ASVAB test on campus. Ask a school counselor when it may be offered.

### **CAREER INTEREST ASSESSMENTS:**

An interest assessment can help you identify careers that meet your interests. Interest assessments usually ask you a series of questions about what you like and don’t like to do. Then they match your likes and dislikes to careers.

When you choose a career that matches your overall interests, you’re more likely to enjoy your job. You’re also more likely to be successful.

You can find many different types of Career Interest Assessments online. One online assessment you can use is the Me3: Major and Career Quiz through Arizona State University, <https://yourfuture.asu.edu/me3> .

Some assessments used by AZ schools are the AZCIS, My Future AZ, or ECAP. Check with your school to see if one of these assessments is available to you to help you with planning for your future.

## DO YOU HAVE AN IEP OR 504 PLAN?

Some students need extra help while in school. That might mean you have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or a 504 Plan. It's important for you to know the difference between these plans and to know that you are receiving all the supports and resources you should be receiving.

A 504 Plan and an IEP are both intended to protect a student with a disability to ensure that they are learning in the least restrictive environment. A 504 Plan and an IEP also have unique differences. It is more difficult to qualify for special education services and receive an IEP than it would be to get a 504 Plan.

The IEP creates an opportunity for teachers, parents, school administrators, related services personnel, and students (when appropriate) to work together to improve educational results for children with disabilities. The IEP is the cornerstone of a quality education for each child with a disability.

The 504 Plan is a plan developed to ensure that a child who has a disability identified under the law and is attending an elementary or secondary educational institution (high school) receives accommodations that will ensure their academic success and access to the learning environment.

You may have to have a surrogate parent assigned depending on your placement type and your biological parents' involvement. A surrogate parent is an "educational" parent who help you get all the plans and services you need at school to help you be successful.

### IEP VS. 504 PLAN

IEP	504 Plan
Student must qualify in one of 13 categories of disability, AND disability must affect the child's ability to access education.	Student must have disability AND the disability affects the student's ability to access education.
Requires a written plan.	Does not require a written plan.
Parents are required to be part of the IEP team.	School must get permission from parent to evaluate student. School can create a plan without parent permission.
Students may be given accommodations to make it easier to access their education, may even be modifications to curriculum.	Student may be given accommodations to equal the playing field so they are able to access education.
Student not protected in college. Only 504 protections and accommodations honored.	Students protected in federally funded colleges. College decides what accommodations will be provided to students.

# EMPLOYMENT AND JOB READINESS PROGRAMS

## PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES (PRE-ETS)

The Vocational Rehabilitation program through the Department of Economic Security offers Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). Pre-ETS are specific career exploration and job readiness services that help students with disabilities prepare for future employment. Pre-ETS are provided via workshops that are short in duration and related to the following topic areas:

- Job Exploration Counseling
- Work-Based Learning
- Counseling on Post-Secondary and Training Opportunities
- Work Readiness Training
- Instruction in Self-Advocacy

“Students with disabilities” can receive Pre-ETS. Here in Arizona, a ‘student with a disability’ is an individual who is between 14-22 years of age, participating in an educational program (e.g. public, private or charter schools, home school, vocational programs, college, GED programs, etc.), and has a documented disability (this includes students who qualify for a 504 plan or who have an Individualized Education Plan or IEP). It is important to note that these students do not have to apply for VR services or be clients of the VR program.

Get more information on this program here: <https://des.az.gov/services/employment/rehabilitation-services/vocational-rehabilitation/pre-employment-transition>

## KEYS TO SUCCESS

Keys to Success is a program through Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation (AFFCF). Their goal is to provide a career development service for youths aging out of foster care to help them discover their potential and lead to a path of living wage employment. While participating in the program, youths are able to identify their short or long-term career goals, prepare for and secure employment, identify and complete an educational or training program that aligns with their career plans, develop personal and independent living skills, and connect with partnering organizations that provide similar services. This program is currently available for residents of Maricopa, Pima and Yavapai County. Visit <https://www.affcf.org/keys/> for more eligibility requirements and referral form.

## JFCS REAL WORLD JOB DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

This program was created for teens ages 16 to 24 years old, to help them learn how to apply their knowledge and skills to find gainful employment. Some of the services provided through Real World JDP are GED education and support, paid apprenticeships, employment preparation and referrals, individual and group living skills training, literacy skills, case management, mentorship, and referrals to other services. For more information about the program, call 602-279-0084.

## Y ACHIEVERS

Y Achievers is a workforce program for youth ages 14-21 focusing on increasing basic skills, work readiness, and increasing occupational skills. The case management team can assist families in finding the right education program and even offers some on site for youth. This program is offered in person and online; and includes services such as studying for the GED tests, improving math and technology skills, and volunteer opportunities. For more information about the program, call 602-688-5332, or visit <https://www.nld.org/y-achievers>

## COLLEGE PREP PROGRAMS

College Prep = Programs to Increase College Access. Sometimes the term “college prep” is a way of referring to a set of programs that work to increase college access, especially for students who are least likely to enroll. Some examples of College Prep programs available in AZ are:

### **TRIO/UPWARD BOUND**

This program is designed for freshman or sophomore students attending selected high schools, who meet federal income guidelines, who need academic assistance to graduate high school and whose parents have not graduated from a four-year university. Check with your school to see if they offer a TRIO/Upward Bound program!

### **HOOP OF LEARNING PROGRAM**

The Hoop of Learning Program, located at Phoenix area community colleges, is designed to provide Native American High school students the opportunity to earn college credit while attending high school. The program offers cultural courses, support for academic achievement, community connection, financial assistance and leadership. It is open to high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Check out program eligibility and how to apply here: <https://www.maricopa.edu/students/early-college/hoop-learning-hol>

### **FIRST STAR ASU ACADEMY**

The First Star – Arizona State University Academy is a free, comprehensive four-year college access program that aims to provide foster youth the academic support, enrichment and resources needed to enroll and succeed in college. The program engages a cohort of 30 high school students in a variety of learning opportunities including earning college credit for academic course work, independent study and a four-week residential summer experience. During their time with the academy, students will also be able to participate in cultural and social activities such as field trips, recreational events, service learning and caregiver workshops. Students will also benefit from education advocacy and individualized support during the academic year through monthly Saturday Academies. First Star Academy is open to students interested in attending ANY college and not just ASU. Get more info here: <https://eoss.asu.edu/access/first-star-academy>

### **FLEISCHER SCHOLARS SUMMER PROGRAM**

Fleischer Scholars provides deserving juniors who will be graduating from Arizona high schools a great opportunity to experience college life, entrepreneurship, and business during a week-long residential program. The Fleischer program is tailored for economically disadvantaged Arizona high school students interested in pursuing business as a career. Space to the Fleischer Scholars program is limited! Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis until all seats are filled. Applicants are encouraged to apply early to ensure program availability. The program is completely free for accepted student participants. Housing, meals, and materials are all included. Go to <https://wpcarey.asu.edu/undergraduate-degrees/high-school/fleischer-scholars-summer-program> for application and other program details.

### **STEP PROGRAM**

STEP equips low-income students with the knowledge, confidence, and leadership skills to successfully transition to college and attain a 4-year degree. STEP works with Arizona high school students from low-income households who are motivated to take rigorous courses and do the hard work to excel. A majority of program participants are the first generation in their family to seek a college degree. The two-year program includes monthly workshops, individual advising, standardized test prep, writing skills development, leadership opportunities, and summer programs that expose students to college campuses. Learn more at <https://www.stepexpedition.org/apply>

### **CESAR E. CHAVEZ LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE**

The César E. Chávez Leadership Institute seeks to improve access to higher education for Arizona high school students entering their junior and senior year by providing a variety of enriching experiences emphasizing leadership development and civic engagement, while advocating for the completion of high school and enrollment in college/university. Learn about how to apply and other details here: <https://eoss.asu.edu/access/cesar-e-chavez-leadership-institute>

### HOW? WHERE? HOW MUCH? WHEN? WHICH?

All these questions and more will be answered in the next few pages. There are special programs and funding available for youth that have been in foster care at specific ages. You need to have as much information as possible to make the best decision for you.

Enrolling at a college or university can be a complicated and confusing process. In Arizona, there are three public universities:

- University of Arizona, Tucson or Phoenix
- Arizona State University, Tempe and Phoenix area
- Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff

There are also MANY private colleges and universities as well; however, tuition is often higher at those schools. So, you want to look closely at the cost of a private university versus a public university and consider the amount of debt for which you would be responsible. There are also a ton of schools you can attend outside of Arizona, but remember you will have to pay out-of-state tuition which increases your costs significantly.

This website provides information about all the university options in Arizona by school, and helps you compare costs: <http://www.collegecalc.org/colleges/arizona/> . You will also want to choose the university that offers the program you want to study; as well as where you will want to live for at least four years.

### HOW TO ENROLL AT A UNIVERSITY

#### 1. Complete an application (usually done online)

- You will typically need two letters of reference/recommendation from previous teachers – get those BEFORE you start the application and BEFORE the end of your senior year
- Have your high school and/or college transcripts on hand when doing the application
- Allow at least 30 minutes to complete it
- During the application process you will create an account – hold onto your login information because this will be needed to go through the admissions process
- You may be asked to pay an application fee. You should be able to get this fee deferred by requesting this through the application itself or from your high school college/ guidance counselor.
- Submit official education transcript (high school or other college). Get these before summer break begins.

#### 2. Seek academic advisement with college advisor

- Advisors will help identify courses and create an educational plan to meet your academic goals.
- Schedule an advisement session, check your college for details
- Ask your advisor about college success classes, associate degrees, certificate programs, transfer options, resources and services.

#### 3. Follow through with these next steps

- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form
- Complete applications for scholarships (take note of due dates and deadlines!)
- Pay your enrollment deposit (or request a deferral of the payment)
- Register for an orientation session at the school at which you have been accepted and chosen to attend
- You will need to submit your immunization records
- Sign up for campus housing if that is your plan
- Continue to check your email and log in to your account to get updates and get information about next steps
- Apply for Education and Training Voucher (ETV) and AZ Tuition Waiver

## HOW TO ENROLL IN A COMMUNITY COLLEGE

1. Apply online or in person
  - Create a school account and get a school ID number (DO NOT LOSE YOUR LOGIN INFO!)
  - Submit proof of identification to the college where you have applied (government-issued photo ID)
  - Submit official education transcript (high school or other college). Get these before summer break begins.
2. Complete FAFSA.
  - Be sure to follow up with financial aid to ensure all documentation is turned in to avoid any barriers with tuition getting paid on time
3. Take Placement Tests
  - Placement tests are free (practice tests are available on school websites)
  - If doing in-person testing, you may have to schedule an appointment; check your college for details
  - Bring government-issued photo ID on the day of testing
  - You may also be able to skip the placement tests if you submit your high school transcript for review
4. Seek academic advisement with college advisor
  - Advisors will help identify courses and create an educational plan to meet your academic goals
  - Schedule an advisement session, check your college for details
  - Ask your advisor about college success classes, associate degrees, certificate programs, transfer options, resources and services
5. Attend/Complete New Student Orientation
6. Register for classes
7. Pay tuition and Fees
  - Set up Direct Deposit and update financial account info in student account

## PAYING FOR COLLEGE OR VOCATIONAL TRAINING

**Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form at <https://studentaid.gov/>**

- To apply for federal student aid such as federal grants (Pell), work study and loans, you need to complete the FAFSA. October is when the FAFSA application typically opens for the new school year. It will remain open for the rest of the year, but it will be important to apply as early as possible to maximize your funding.
- It is VERY important that when you complete this application, you ANSWER YES to the question that reads: "At any time since you turned age 13, were both of your parents deceased, were you in foster care or were you a dependent or ward of the court." Answer "Yes" to this question if at any time since age 13:
  - you had no living parent, even if you've since been adopted;
  - you were in foster care, even if you're not in it now; or
  - you were a dependent or ward of the court, even if you aren't now
- If you pass October, complete it as soon as possible after that and BEFORE school starts
- Learn more about the application process and get other helpful tips at <https://studentaid.gov/help-center/answers/landing> or by contacting the DCS State Education Specialist in your area by emailing AZETV@azdcs.gov
- VERIFICATION OF TIME IN FOSTER CARE  
You should anticipate needing to provide a Ward of the Court or Verification of Time in Foster Care letter to show you are a young adult who has experienced foster care so you can receive financial aid for college or vocational school. Contact the Education Specialists at the email listed above to ask for this letter. You should receive this letter when you exit foster care.

## **Complete your application for Arizona Education and Training Voucher (ETV) funds.**

The Arizona Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program is a federally-funded, state-administered program which can provide youth who are or were in U.S. foster care with up to \$5,000 a year for qualified school-related expenses. Funding is limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis to eligible students. Funding is based on need.

### **WHO IS ELIGIBLE?**

- You must be a current or former foster youth who:
  - Was in U.S. foster care on or after your 16th birthday OR
  - Was adopted from U.S. foster care with the adoption finalized after your 16th birthday
- You must be a U.S. citizen or qualified non-citizen
- Your personal assets (bank account, car, home, etc.) cannot be over \$10,000
- If you are in good standing and progressing toward earning a credential, you remain eligible for funding until your 26th birthday or until you have received 5 academic years of funding (whichever comes first)
- You must attend an accredited college, university, technical or vocational school

### **HOW TO APPLY?**

- Create an account to apply here: <https://fosteredservices.org/arizona-etv/>
- Once account is created, you will receive an email to complete the application
- Follow the link provided and complete all sections of the application
- DCS will determine if you are eligible to receive the funding
- Foster Success will reach out to you if they need any additional information
- If you have a remaining balance at your school, funds will be sent directly to the school
- If you do not have a remaining balance at the school and have indicated funds are needed for living expenses, books, transportation, laptop, etc., those funds will be sent directly to the student.

### **REQUIREMENTS TO MAINTAIN FUNDING:**

- Students must submit a transcript to Foster Success after each semester funded
- Students must maintain a grade of C or higher in all classes and maintain a 2.0 GPA
- Students must respond to outreach from Foster Success throughout the school year as is necessary
- Students must meet school attendance requirements (if applicable)

## **ARIZONA TUITION WAIVER**

The Arizona Tuition Waiver is available to youth who have spent time in foster care attending Arizona public community colleges and four-year colleges and universities. The school determines how and when your waiver will be applied. It can only be used for eligible tuition and fees and does not waive any cost for housing, books, etc.

### **WHO IS ELIGIBLE?**

You must be a current or former foster youth who:

- Was in U.S. foster care on or after your 14th birthday OR
- Was adopted from U.S. foster care with the adoption finalized after your 14th birthday AND
- Has not reached your 23rd birthday (must remain in good standing and be progressing toward earning a credential)
- Is a U.S. citizen or qualified non-citizen
- Personal assets (bank account, car, home, etc.) are not over \$10,000
- Has completed a FAFSA application
- Is attending a public AZ college or university (UofA, NAU, ASU, various community colleges)

## TO APPLY FOR ARIZONA TUITION WAIVER

The application for the Arizona Tuition Waiver is part of the ETV application. DCS will determine if you are eligible for the program and your school will decide if they will apply it to your financial aid package.

Apply here: <https://fosteredservices.org/arizona-etv/>

## APPLY FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

There are many different scholarship opportunities available depending on the school you are attending. Be sure to speak with your school's advisor and financial aid office to make sure you are accessing ALL the support for which you are eligible.

- AFFCF offers a scholarship program that provides qualifying students attending a university with \$2,500 per semester (\$5,000 per academic year) and \$1,000 per semester (\$2,000 per academic year) for youth attending community college. Learn more and apply for these opportunities at <https://www.affcf.org/scholarships/>
- Find information about other scholarship programs that you may qualify for at <https://www.affcf.org/resources/>
- You can also get an updated Scholarship Guide from the DCS Education Specialists by emailing and requesting one at EducationPOC@azdcs.gov

Some funding is available specifically for vocational or trade programs that are not covered by traditional scholarships.

- The AFFCF Safety Net Fund is designed to help young people who have aged out of foster care (this means you turned 18 while you were in foster care) overcome emergency expenses that derail their education. These funds are not intended to be used for long-term, on-going expenses. They have a specific funding option to cover vocational and trade programs for up to \$2000 per semester. For more info visit <https://www.affcf.org/safetynetfund/>
- The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) offers some funding for vocational and trade programs. Visit your local DES office to get more info at: <https://des.az.gov/services/employment/workforce-innovation-and-opportunity-act>

The following scholarship is available to those youth who remain open in our Extended Foster Care (EFC) program:

**Grand Canyon University's (GCU) Fostering Futures scholarship** offers students in the foster care system the means to thrive as they enter adulthood. The Fostering Futures scholarship includes the following:

- Full tuition and fees for fall and spring semesters
- \$16,500 per academic year (renewed for up to eight semesters and takes the place of any other GCU scholarships or institutional aid)
- Year-round room and board
- Specialized admissions and student services counselors
- Optional programming that incorporates mentorship, student worker opportunities and life skills
- Tutoring

Eligibility Requirements for the Scholarship Program-

- Must be a U.S. citizen
- Must be an Arizona resident
- Must be in AZ DCS Extended Foster Care Program
- Display a dedication to community service, entrepreneurship and academic excellence
- Complete the FAFSA and Education and Training Voucher applications
- Live on campus at GCU
- Adhere to any additional rules and guidelines specified by GCU and the Arizona Department of Child Safety
- Provide a Student Information Release Form (SIRF) to the State of Arizona's Department of Child Safety

Apply for the Fostering Futures program here: <https://forms.gcu.edu/fostering-futures-scholarship>

## DISCOVER GCU

We highly recommend visiting Grand Canyon University (GCU) to see if it would be a good fit for you. GCU offers day or overnight trips to campus. During this campus visit, students are able to learn about their program of interest, observe and connect with the GCU community, and participate in hands-on academic activities. This is an opportunity to experience life on campus and tour the facilities and classroom buildings. Students can also gain perspective from current GCU students who will be leading the tour. This opportunity is available to high school students and prospective transfer students from different colleges. Learn more about this program here: <https://www.gcu.edu/why-gcu/campus-life/discover>

## FINANCIAL AID - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

### **I WAS IN FOSTER CARE, DO I GO TO COLLEGE FOR FREE?**

Not exactly. If you were in foster care, there may be many options for getting funding for your education. You must apply and prove that you are eligible for each of them.

### **I SUBMITTED MY FAFSA, BUT I WAS SELECTED FOR FAFSA VERIFICATION. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?**

The purpose of the FAFSA is to determine whether you will be considered a dependent or independent student, and how much financial aid you will qualify for based on your need (your income). If you selected “yes” for having been in foster care after the age of 13, you will be considered an independent student and therefore will not have to provide any information about your parents/guardians, even if you returned home before you turned 18. You will most likely qualify for the maximum amount of financial aid that is offered to students, however, you will have to prove that you actually qualify. This can be a tricky process because there are only certain documents your school can accept as proof. Make sure if you do not understand what is being asked of you that you ask for help and keep asking for help until you get it. You will not receive any of your financial aid until you complete the verification process!!

### **I WAS IN FOSTER CARE AFTER THE AGE OF 14, HOW COME I AM NOT GETTING THE FOSTER CARE TUITION WAIVER?**

There are several possible reasons for this:

- 1) The Foster Care Tuition Waiver is applied after all grants and scholarships. This means that the Tuition Waiver will not be applied if a Pell Grant and/or other scholarships have covered all your tuition and mandatory fees. Any tuition left over in your school account after grants and scholarships have been applied will be eligible for the waiver. To learn the difference between mandatory fees and other charges, go to the college or university’s website and search “mandatory fees.”
- 2) The program you are in is not an accredited program.
- 3) You are not meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress.
- 4) You are attending a private college or university, not a public one.

### **WHAT DO I DO AFTER I HAVE APPLIED FOR ALL THIS MONEY?**

In order to get this money, there may be extra steps you must complete. Make sure that you enter an email address that you will actually check regularly. Colleges and universities make plans for giving money and accepting applications much earlier than you may think. If you are not answering your email and providing any additional information they want, you will not receive the money. It is important that you think of applying for financial aid and college like a job and respond quickly.

### **WHAT ARE GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS?**

Grants and scholarships are often called “gift aid” because they are free money—financial aid that doesn’t have to be repaid. Grants are often need-based, while scholarships are usually merit-based. Many scholarships have a set of criteria you must meet to apply and a standard you must continue to meet as a student to keep receiving the money (grades, participation, etc). Grants and scholarships are the best kind of financial aid because you won’t have to pay them back once you have finished school. But understand, if you ever drop out of school or withdraw from a class, you MAY have to pay back some of your grant money. Always check with your financial aid office before making any decisions to change your enrollment status.

### **WHY DO I HAVE LOANS AS A PART OF MY FINANCIAL AID?**

If you apply for financial aid, you may be offered loans as part of your school’s financial aid offer. A loan is money you borrow and must pay back with interest, whether you graduate or not.

If you decide to take out a loan, make sure you understand who is making the loan and the terms and conditions of the loan. Student loans can come from the federal government or from private sources such as a bank or financial institution. Loans made by the federal government, called federal student loans, usually offer borrowers lower interest rates and have more flexible repayment options than loans from banks or other private sources.

**DO I HAVE TO ACCEPT A LOAN IF THEY OFFER IT TO ME?**

No! You do not have to accept a loan. If you take advantage of the many resources available to you because you have a history of foster care, you may be able to get through college with no loans at all. Also, most colleges/universities will let you lower the amount of the loan you receive. This means, if the college offers you \$1500 and you only need \$500 to pay an outstanding balance, then contact the financial aid office to request the smaller amount. Never take out more loans than you need!

**WHO DO I CALL FOR HELP??**

The DCS Statewide Education Specialists are here to assist you with all your needs during your transition to what comes after earning your high school diploma or GED. Please reach out to us to get your questions answered, for verification of your time in foster care, for assistance with applications to schools or financial aid/scholarships, or any issues you may be having with your enrollment process. We work with anyone who has ever spent time in foster care regardless of your age or current status.

Reach out to us at [AZETV@azdcs.gov](mailto:AZETV@azdcs.gov)

Use this page to keep track of all your awards, honors, accomplishments, community service, etc.

Activity / Honor / Accomplishment	Date(s)
Community Service / Volunteering	Date(s)

Use this page to keep track of all your awards, honors, accomplishments, community service, etc.

Activity / Honor / Accomplishment	Date(s)
-----------------------------------	---------

