



ALABAMA
Goes to
College

STUDENTS & FAMILIES GUIDEBOOK



What is Alabama Goes to College?



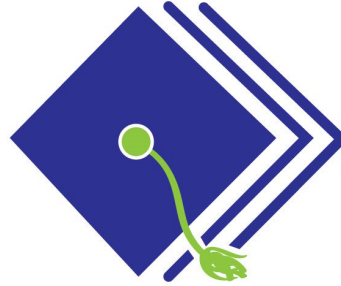
Alabama Goes to College equips Alabamians with tools and connects them to relationships so that every student can **plan** for, **pursue**, and **complete** valuable postsecondary credentials.

Most career pathways require postsecondary credentials, including technical certificates and academic degrees. Alabama Goes to College provides resources for students and families to explore college options, find financial aid opportunities, and successfully transition from high school to college.

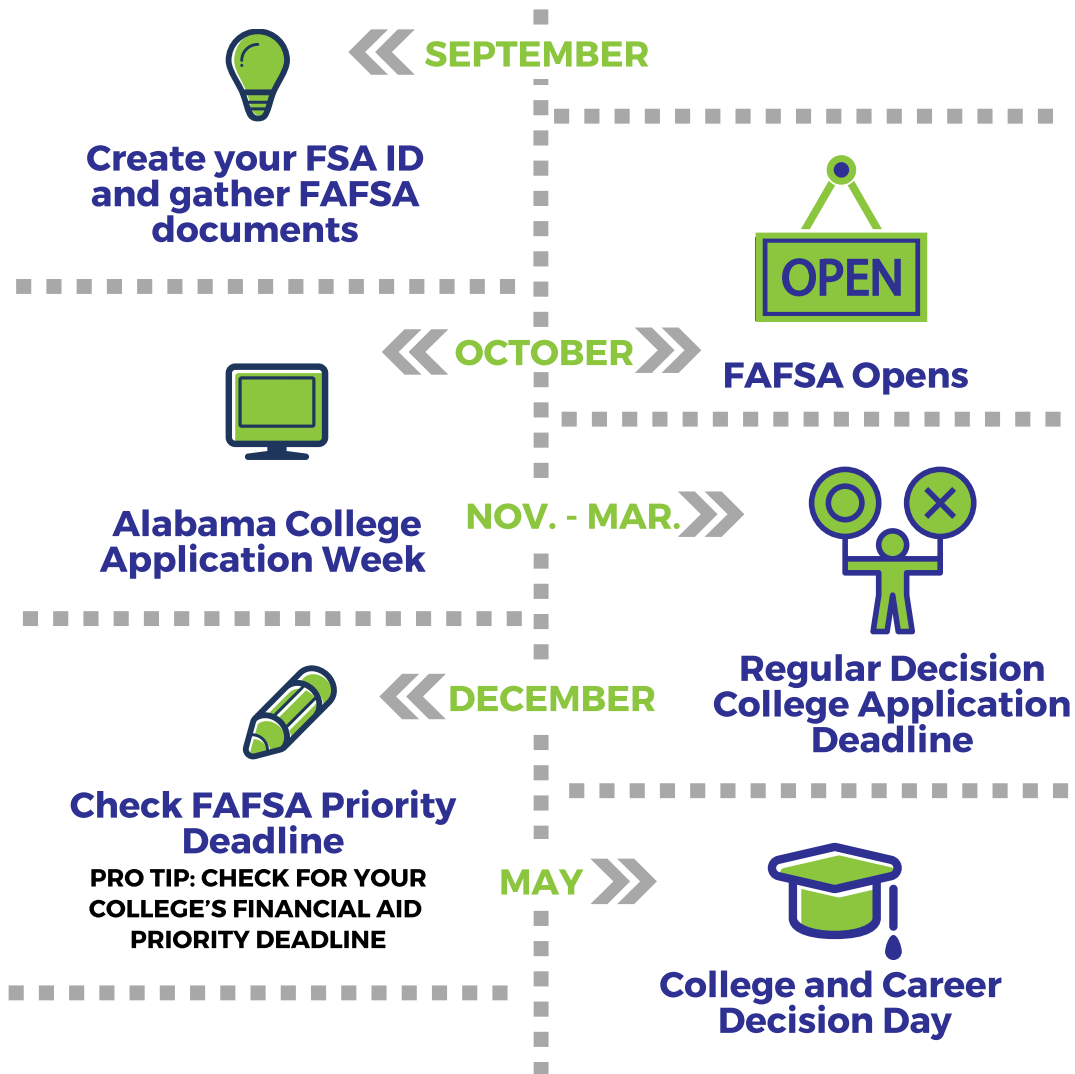
College is education after high school that results in the attainment of valuable postsecondary credentials, including professional/technical certificates and academic degrees.



ALABAMA Goes to College



Senior Year Timeline



alabamagoes2college.org | #ALGoes2College #FAFSA #PellYes

Cash for College



Cash for College's goal is for every graduating senior to complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) before they graduate from high school so that they can access federal, state, and institutional aid to pay for their education after high school.

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid or FAFSA determines the amount of financial assistance the government and colleges can offer you to help pay for educational programs after high school.

HELPFUL HINT

Reach out to a financial aid officer at your college if your financial situation changes or your award does not accurately reflect your financial need. If you need more assistance, you can use platforms such as [FormSwift.com/swift-student](https://formswift.com/swift-student) to help you draft a financial aid appeal letter.



HOW TO FILL OUT THE FAFSA

- 1 Go to fafsa.gov or use the myStudentAid app and log in using your FSA ID.
- 2 Choose which FAFSA you'd like to complete (select the year in which you will be attending college).
- 3 Enter your personal information exactly as it appears on official government documents.
- 4 Choose up to 10 schools. Add any school that you plan on attending.
- 5 Sign and submit with your FSA ID



How can I pay for college?



There are four main types of financial aid:

1 GRANTS. Grants are gift aid because you don't have to pay them back. Grants come from federal and state governments and from colleges. Most grants are need-based, which means that they are usually given based on you or your family's financial circumstances.

2 SCHOLARSHIPS. They also do not have to be paid back. Scholarships come from governments, colleges, or private organizations. They may be awarded for academic or athletic ability, interest in a certain subject, or volunteer work. Some scholarships are given based on membership in an ethnic or religious group. Employers may also give scholarships to children of employees. Students can find a large variety of scholarships by using scholarship databases such as:

- Goingmerry.com
- Cappex.com
- SallieMae.com

3 WORK-STUDY PROGRAMS. You can get a paid part-time job through the federal work-study program to help you cover part of the cost of college. Work-study encourages community service work and work related to students' course of study.

4 LOANS. A loan is money borrowed from the government, a bank, or a lending company. Loans must be paid back with an extra charge called interest. The federal government offers low-interest loans to students with financial need. Other lenders charge more interest.



Alabama College Application Week



Alabama College Application Week is part of a national effort to increase the number of first-generation college students and students from low-income families pursuing a college degree or other higher education credential. The primary purpose of this effort is to help high school seniors navigate the complex college application and admissions process and ensure they apply to at least one postsecondary institution. The effort occurs during the school day, with a focus on students who might not otherwise apply to college. Alabama College Application Campaign (ALCAC) is sponsored by the American College Application Campaign (ACAC), and Alabama State Department of Education, Career and Technical Education & Workforce Development.



COLLEGE APPLICATION CHECKLIST



- ☐ Prepare any required essays
- ☐ Request any letters of recommendation
- ☐ Know your Social Security Number
- ☐ Have payment process ready
- ☐ Submit transcript request

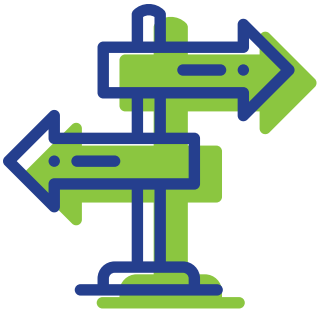
#WHYAPPLY



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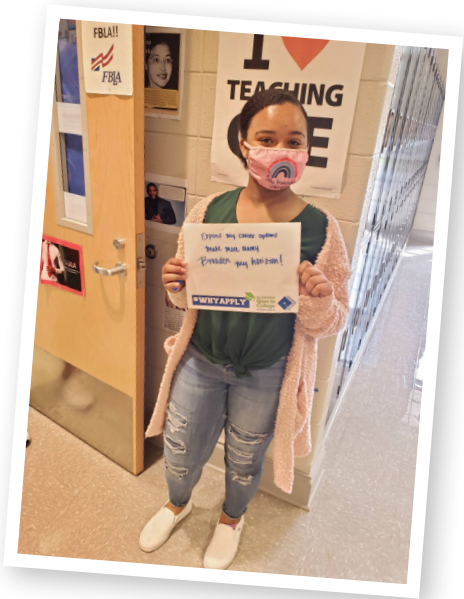
Choosing the Right School



Reach, Match, and Safety Schools

- **REACH SCHOOL:** one where your academic credentials (grades, SAT or ACT scores, and class rank) fall in the lower end, or even below, the school's average range for the cohort of students accepted the previous year.
- **MATCH SCHOOL:** one where your academic credentials fall well within the school's average range for the most recently accepted class.
- **SAFETY SCHOOL:** one where your academic credentials exceed the school's range for the average first-year student.

Source: [myCollegeOptions](#)



School	Location	Average GPA	Average ACT/SAT	Cost Per Year	Deadline

Alabama College and Career Decision Day



College and Career Decision Day celebrates students committing to pursue their education past high school, whether to obtain a two-year degree, a four-year degree, a certificate or industry-recognized credential, entering the military, or pursuing a skilled trade.

Use the chart below to compare your financial aid offers and make your college decision easier!



COA – Grants/Scholarships = Net Cost

College	Cost of Attendance	–	Grants/Scholarships	=	Net Cost
		–		=	
		–		=	
		–		=	
		–		=	

HELPFUL HINT

Got your financial aid package from your school but need to request a change? Check out [FormSwift.com/swift-student](https://formswift.com/swift-student), a tool that helps you draft a financial aid appeal letter.



Why This Matters

- The [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#) is a free tool for applying for many forms of financial aid including federal grants, scholarships, work-study jobs, and loans. Many colleges and universities also use it to award institutional financial aid.
- Approximately [57.4% percent](#) of Alabama's students qualify for Pell Grants. For the 2021-22 award year, the maximum Pell Grant is \$6,495. Pell Grants are "gift aid" meaning they do not need to be paid back and can be used for both academic and technical education at two- and four-year colleges and universities.
- Each year, students and families leave millions of dollars in free grant aid on the table because they do not complete their FAFSA. Alabama's 2020 high school graduates lost out on an estimated \$59 million dollars in Pell Grant by not completing the FAFSA.
- [92 percent](#) of high school seniors who complete the FAFSA attend college directly from high school.
- FAFSA completion narrows the full-time postsecondary enrollment gap between students of a lower socioeconomic status and students of higher socioeconomic status by about [25 percentage points](#).
- Each additional \$1,000 in grant aid students access increases their postsecondary persistence rates by [4 percentage points](#).



57.4% of Alabama's students qualify for Pell Grants

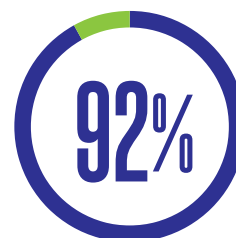
2021-2022
PELL GRANT MAX

\$6,495



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Connect with Alabama Goes to College



► Hashtags

#AlabamaGoes2College	#IApplied
#Cash4College	#ReachHigher
#PellYes	#CollegeSigningDay
#FAFSA	#BetterMakeRoom

Follow us on social media



@algoes2college

► Alabama Possible Resources

- **Alabama Goes to College Help Desk:**
Alabama Possible assists college-going students with college applications, scholarship essays, filling out the FAFSA, and any other college-related process. The free Help Desk is open every weekday and can be reached by texting or calling 334-316-6155, sending a Facebook or Instagram message to @algoes2college, or emailing algoestocollege@alabamapossible.org.



- [College Survival Guide Video](#)

► Alabama Resources

- Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) alsde.edu
- Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) ache.edu
- Alabama Community College System (ACCS) accs.edu

► National Resources

- American College Application Campaign (ACAC) ACT Center for Equity in Learning equityinlearning.act.org/acac
- Federal Student Aid studentaid.gov
- Federal Student Aid Financial Aid Toolkit financialaidtoolkit.ed.gov/tk/resources.jsp
- Better Make Room bettermakeroom.org
- Get Schooled getschooled.com

About Alabama Possible



History

In 1993, a group of concerned citizens, including Auburn University President Wilford Bailey, Auburn History Professor Emeritus Wayne Flynt, Social Work Pioneer Eulene Hawkins, and Alabama Baptist Convention President Earl Potts, came together to form Alabama Possible, then known as the Alabama Poverty Project. They joined with others across the South to study poverty, publicize their findings, teach undergraduates what they had learned, and mobilize public policy to bring about systems change.

Vision

To ensure all Alabamians have the opportunity to lead prosperous lives.

Mission

To break down barriers to prosperity in Alabama through education, collaboration, and advocacy.

Values

- **Equity:** All people have the right to prosperous and meaningful lives.
- **Resiliency:** Communities inherently are strong, capable, and in charge of their own futures.
- **Partnerships:** We work together to maximize limited resources.
- **The Golden Rule:** We build relationships based on reciprocity, respect, and compassion.

Strategies for Change

Advocating for Prosperity. We promote equitable educational attainment to ensure Alabamians can pursue their education without sacrificing their economic futures.

Educating for a Better Future. We build awareness and support for postsecondary attainment, equipping students with tools and relationships to pursue and complete valuable postsecondary credentials.

Breaking Down Barriers. We break down silos, convene partners across the state, and collaborate with stakeholders to foster equitable, inclusive economic opportunity.

Alabama College Attainment Network

The Alabama College Attainment Network breaks down barriers to increase college readiness, access, and completion in Alabama, particularly among low-income students, first-generation college-going students, and students of color. Educators and workforce agencies convened the Alabama College Attainment Network to coordinate community initiatives and accelerate impact. Alabama Possible serves as the backbone agency for Alabama CAN.

Disclaimer: Some photographs used in the Alabama Goes to College Students and Families Guidebook were taken pre-COVID and do not reflect current safety measures taken by Alabama Possible.