

A GUIDE FOR
CLIMB

Class of 2023
WYOMING SENIORS



GEAR UP
WYOMING

This guide belongs to: _____

My Postsecondary destination:

- ☐ University
- ☐ Community College – Transfer
- ☐ Community College
- ☐ Technical Institute



My Support Team

Many people will be involved in helping you search for and apply to college. At your school, you may have a GEAR UP Wyoming Site Coordinator or Advisor, a high school counselor, or a teacher helping you through the process. In the space provided, list the information for the primary contact people who will be the most helpful in getting ready for the next chapter of your life.

Role	Name	Phone	Email
High School Counselor			
GEAR UP Staff			
College Admissions Office			
Supportive Teacher			
College/Career Counselor			
Other			
Other			

Congratulations – You’re a senior!

You’ve been dreaming for years about what you will do after you graduate, and this is the year you will take many **critical** steps to *Climb* toward your dreams.

Section 1 will help you identify what is most important to you when planning your future. It will also help align your strengths and passions with a fulfilling career and determine the credentials needed for your dream job.

Section 2 of this guide outlines the actions you need to take this year, depending on what you want to do after high school. Sections 3 through 8 provide essential information and resources to help you take those actions.

Beginning with Section 2, look for the checklist that applies to you – based on whether you plan to:

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

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

Beyond Section 2, you’ll find resources and information on everything from financing your college education to writing a resume. You’ll also find helpful tools for tracking the status of your college, scholarship, job applications, and pages for recording important information you’ll need to access regularly throughout the year.

We know you’re excited to graduate, but you must **stay focused** on your class work as well as the crucial actions outlined in this guide.

Don’t forget that your school counselor and GEAR UP advisor are available throughout the year to help you through every step.



It’s a good idea to keep this guide with you so you will have easy access to all this information anytime you need it!

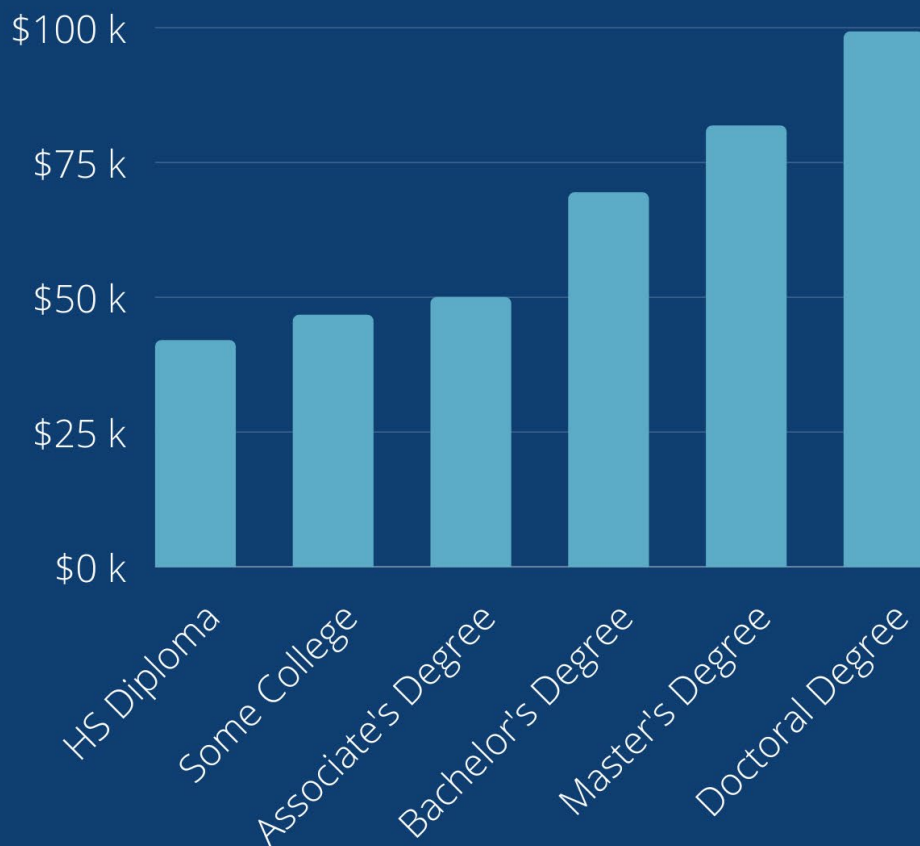
College Leads to...



A Higher Income

Studies show that people with a postsecondary credential earn more income over time.

Median Earnings by Educational Attainment for adults 25+ in the US



Data for 2021 from the Bureau of Labor Statistics

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SECTION 1:

What is Your Path?



What should I do after high school?

It's a lot to think about, and doubts are common – even for students with solid postsecondary plans. Creating a plan won't lock you into one career path forever, but it will guide as you move into your future. Think of it as a roadmap of sorts. YOU may experience a side trip or two, but with a destination in mind, you're more likely to get there.

There are a few main paths that students take after high school.

The paths we'll discuss in this guide are

- University
- Community College
- Community College with Transfer to University
- Technical Program
- Military
- Workforce/Apprenticeship

One last note before we start. Don't worry about having everything figured out. You may know you want to go to a community college but have no idea what you want to study. You may know what career you want, but you are unsure what education you need to pursue. You may just need help figuring out how to pay for your chosen educational path. We'll discuss all those things and more in your *Climb* guide.

How do you decide which option is the best fit for you after high school?

Approach your decision making in stages:

1. **Dream:** envision your ideal life
2. **Explore:** imagine careers that 'fit' your unique talents and values
3. **Plan:** discover the pathway to your desired careers
4. **Assess:** take stock of where you are to refine and decide on the best route forward

Stage 1: Dream

First, we encourage you to dream. How do you envision your ideal life? Consider:

- What kind of lifestyle do you want?
- How do you want to spend your time?
- How might you use your interests and talents in an ideal job?
- What could you do to make the world a better place?
- How do the desire and needs of your family factor into your future?

Give yourself the freedom to dream big about your future.

Considerations

Would you prefer to engage with people in your everyday work life, or do you like to work alone as much as possible?

Is a high salary important? Think about how expensive your hobbies and pastimes are, how many family members you expect to support, and other lifestyle considerations.

What kind of work-life balance do you want?

Would you prefer to work in a climate-controlled environment or outdoors?

Do you prefer being physically active, or would you like a desk job?

Do you like to travel, even if that means being away from loved ones sometimes?

How important is it that your work is meaningful?
Is it important to “make a difference” in the world/your community?

Consider family influences:

Is it important to take over a family business, follow in your parent's footsteps, or pursue a career that your parents want for you?

Do you want to forge your own path regardless of family opinions?

“The best way to predict your future
is to **create** it.”

-Abraham Lincoln

Your Answer	Implications for Career Choice

Stage 2: Explore

In Stage 2, explore who you are and which career path interests you.

First, consider:

- What activities do you like and dislike?
- What are your skills and strengths?
- What are your passions and interests?
- What do you like?

Then think about the world around you. Consider:

- What problems exist in our world that you would like to solve?
- How could you use your talents to help solve these problems?
- What approaches would you take to solve these problems?
- What effect does your family, culture, and background have on you, and how will it influence your pursuits?

The exploration phase is exciting because you get to think about all your strengths and skills and what you want to learn in the future. Think of your current interests as a starting point; remember, you will gain many more interests and skills in your life.

As you think about your career options, consider your interests, passions, and the work environment you prefer. If you lead with this, it will increase your long-term satisfaction. Don't worry too much about a specific job because many future jobs don't even exist yet.

Check out two example students and see how they used their interests, skills, and passion to find their possible career paths.

Pablo

Likes: drama club, reading, soccer, band, following politics, social media, spending time with family

Strengths: energetic, extended vocabulary, English class

Causes he cares about: accessibility of arts (drama/band) in schools, politics/voters' rights, privacy rights on social media platforms

Cultural/personal considerations: Pablo wants to give back to his family and choose a respected career in his community

Possible careers: journalist, speechwriter, teacher (drama or English), policymaker (emphasis on social media or voter's rights), lawyer, politician, analyst

Ann

Likes: animals (actually loves), recycling, nature, spending time with friends

Strengths: public speaking, talking, making friends, math

Causes he cares about: environment/global warming, mistreatment of animals, foods (that come from animals)

Cultural/personal considerations: it's important for her to be independent and have a career that allows her to travel

Possible careers: veterinarian, animal rights activist, environmental scientist, vet tech, animal scientist, nutritional scientist, dietitian, entrepreneur (vegan restaurant/animal care facility), researcher, renewable energy (installer or engineer).

Now fill out **your** profile:

Likes:

Strengths:

Causes you care about:

Cultural/Personal considerations:

Possible careers

Just ten years ago these jobs did not exist: digital marketing specialist, social media manager, blogger, app developer, and many more. That's why it is important to think about broad career choices over choosing one specific job. Your future job may not exist today, so dream big and imagine all the possibilities.

Stage 3: Plan

Stage 3 requires you to make a plan to get the training, experience, or credential needed for the career path of your choice. To assist you, the following pages provide information on:

1. Types of careers, credentials, and paths
2. Earning potential by degree

Credentials/Educational Pathways

Search online for the credentials/education needed for each of the career areas you are interested in, then mark an “x” in the table below to indicate the path that most interests you in getting there.

Career Examples	Credential Needed	Where to obtain (Path)	My Path
Teacher, Architect, Marketing Manager, Engineer, Registered Nurse, Journalist, Computer Programmer, Software Developer	Bachelor's Degree – a credential earned by a college student after a specified course of study, which usually takes four years.	Four-year University or College	
Web Developers, Paralegal, Mechanical/Industrial Engineering Tech, Occupational Therapy Assistant, Air Traffic Controller	Associate degree – a credential granted by a community or junior college to a student after completing a specified course of study, which takes about two years if attending full time	Community College	
Dental Assistant, Motorcycle Mechanic, Electrician, HVAC Tech, Masseuse, Welder, Cosmetologist	Certificate – This credential is awarded to individuals who complete a defined set of requirements and coursework	Community College or Technical Institute	
Carpenter, Plumber, Machine Operator, Construction Worker, Electrical Lineman	Associate degree or certificate program + On-the-Job training from someone in the profession. Often a professional licensure exam is required.	Community College, Technical Institute, or Trade Specific school	
Lawyer, Doctor, Veterinarian, Dentist, Orthodontist, Pharmacist	Professional Degree – a credential awarded to students by specialized postsecondary institutions after completing a rigorous course of study and fulfilling other requirements such as a national exam.	Professional School (e.g., Law School, Medical School, Dental School) after completing a bachelor's degree	

A note on four unique pathways

Graduate Degrees: Some careers require advanced degrees such as a master's or doctorate (for example a lawyer or dentist). Companies may pay higher salaries to those with an advanced degree regardless of whether it's necessary for the job. It's important to remember that you must complete a bachelor's degree before you work toward a master's degree or doctorate.

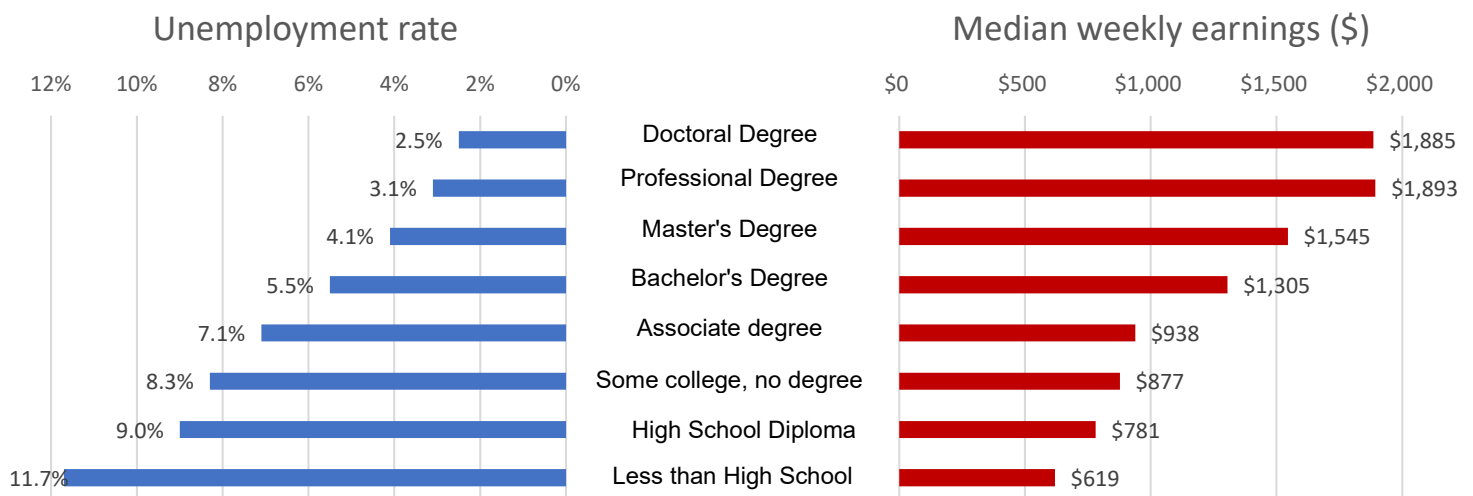
Transfer Programs: You may ultimately want to earn a bachelor's degree, but you want to start at a community college first. In this case, you'll complete 1 to 3 years at the community college and then transfer to a university.

Military: If you plan to serve in the military, explore all the different paths: military academy, officer training, or ROTC. Each program varies greatly, so research is vital.

Licenses: Some careers require licenses to practice (e.g., cosmetologists, electricians, therapists, nurses, and teachers). You'll complete the prerequisite education, pass an exam, and pay a fee. Typically, you'll renew the license following ongoing professional development.

Education Pays

Unemployment Rates and Earnings by Educational Attainment, 2020



Note: Data for persons aged 25 and over. Earnings for full-time wage & salary workers. Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey

Stage 4: Assess

Congratulations! Your preparation has helped you get your plan in place. This will provide direction and set you on a path that is right for you. In Stage 4, you'll learn how well prepared you are, so you can continue your path or make some adjustments. Either way, your plan will help keep you on track.

Pick the Path

On the next page, identify your first choice of pathways (A, B, C, D, E) and then fill out the corresponding questionnaire. If you find you are missing some requirements, meet with your School Counselor to see if you can catch up before you graduate. Don't worry if you can't complete the prerequisites before you graduate. That only means you'll need to take a different first step. You can still reach your ultimate goal – it just may take a little more time. For instance, if you want to earn a bachelor's from a university, but your grades don't meet the minimum qualifications for admission, you may first begin at a community college and then transfer to a university once you've established a strong GPA.

What pathway did you select in Stage 3?

You picked:	Go to the Assessment Marked:
University/Bachelor's Degree (Professional degrees require a bachelor's first)	A
Community College / Associate degree	B
Technical School / Certificate	C
Apprenticeship / Work Experiences	D
The military was not listed, but that's what I want to do	E

A University Readiness Assessment

If you plan to attend a four-year university to pursue a bachelor's degree, this assessment tool is for you! The questionnaire will help you find out if you're ready to go. Don't worry if you check a lot of "no"s. That just means you may want to start at a community college and then transfer to a four-year university to complete your bachelor's degree. We'll give you more info about that route at the end of the assessment.

Graduation Status

I have enough credits to graduate "on-time" ☐ Yes ☐ No

I passed all classes required for graduation ☐ Yes ☐ No

I completed all Hathaway requirements ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered "no", what steps must you take as a high school senior to get to "yes"?

Academic Preparation

I have passed all classes required for university admissions ☐ Yes ☐ No

My GPA meets the admission requirements for my program of choice ☐ Yes ☐ No

My ACT score meets the requirements for my program of choice ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered "no", what steps must you take as a high school senior to get to "yes"?

Admission Requirements for University of Wyoming		
High School Courses	GPA	Other/Testing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 years of English• 4 Years of math• 4 years of science• 3 years of social science• 4 years of additional coursework	3.0 Unweighted GPA	21 ACT Composite There are often subject-specific requirements to avoid remedial classes.
Interested in other universities? Each four-year university sets its own admission requirements, so it's important to research requirements for all universities you're interested in attending to make sure you're on track. Check college websites and contact admission counselors to learn about admission requirements, specific program requirements, any exceptions, and the admission process.		

University Admission

I know the university admission requirements for my selected schools ☐ Yes ☐ No

I know the application deadlines for my selected schools ☐ Yes ☐ No

I know what info (in addition to the application) I'll be required to submit at my selected schools (essays, transcripts, fees, test scores, etc.) ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered "no", what steps must you take as a high school senior to get to "yes"?

Program of Study

The universities I'm considering offer the major I am interested in. ☐ Yes ☐ No

I know and meet any specific/special requirements for my major. ☐ Yes ☐ No

I understand the pros and cons of entering college with an "undeclared" major ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered "no", what steps must you take as a high school senior to get to "yes"?

Financial Preparation

I know how much it will cost to attend my selected schools ☐ Yes ☐ No

I have a plan to pay for college ☐ Yes ☐ No

I know and can meet the FAFSA priority deadlines for the universities I am interested in ☐ Yes ☐ No

I have registered on scholarship search engines and/or applied for scholarships ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered "no", what steps must you take as a high school senior to get to "yes"?

If you're missing some requirements, meet with your School Counselor to see if you can still complete them before you graduate. Once you've turned any no's to yes or have a plan to do so before graduation; you're ready to initiate your plan. Use this guide to stay on track.

Don't worry if you don't meet all the requirements right after high school. You can start at a community college and then transfer to a four-year university. If this is the case, head to the next assessment.

B Community College Readiness Assessment

If you plan to complete an associate degree, a certificate, or the foundation courses for a bachelor's degree at a community college, this is the assessment tool for you! Most students attend the community college closest to their hometown, but all community colleges in Wyoming have on-campus housing, so students from farther away can attend, too.

Graduation status

I have enough credits to graduate "on-time" ☐ Yes ☐ No

I passed all classes required for graduation ☐ Yes ☐ No

I completed all Hathaway requirements ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered "no", what steps must you take as a high school senior to get to "yes"?

Academic Preparation

I have passed all classes required for university admissions ☐ Yes ☐ No

My ACT score meets the requirements for my program of choice ☐ Yes ☐ No

If the answers to the two questions above are "yes", do I understand the pros and cons of attending community college first or directly enrolling in a university? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered "no", what steps must you take as a high school senior to get to "yes"?

Community College Awareness

The community college offers the major I am interested in or the general education courses to transfer to a university to pursue my major ☐ Yes ☐ No

I am aware of the enrollment steps (including applying, taking any necessary placement tests, and/or registering) at my selected community college ☐ Yes ☐ No

I understand the pros and cons of entering college with an "undeclared" major ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered "no," what steps must you take as a high school senior to get to "yes"?

Financial Preparation

I know how much it will cost to attend the community college ☐ Yes ☐ No

I have a plan to pay for college ☐ Yes ☐ No

I know and can meet the FAFSA priority deadlines for the college
I am interested in ☐ Yes ☐ No

I have registered on scholarship search engines and/or
applied for scholarships ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered “no”, what steps must you take as a high school senior to get to “yes”?

If your assessment indicates that you are missing some requirements, meet with your School Counselor to see if you can still complete them before you graduate.

Your goal is to have answered “yes” to most of these questions or to have set up a plan on how you will get to “yes” before you graduate high school. Note that if you answered “yes” to the questions under Academic Preparation, it’s likely that you could be admitted to and succeed at a four-year university. If you think you may want to attend a four-year university, complete assessment **A** in this section. Either way, use the resources in the rest of this guide to help you complete all the steps you’ll take before graduation!

A Note about transferring from community college to a university

Your community college will have transfer specialists within their academic advising team. You should meet with a transfer specialist and your community college program advisor to ensure the classes you are taking will transfer correctly into your university program of study.

C Technical School & Trade Program Readiness Assessment

If you want to earn a certificate at a technical school, this assessment tool is for you!

Graduation status

I have enough credits to graduate “on-time” ☐ Yes ☐ No

I passed all classes required for graduation ☐ Yes ☐ No

I completed all Hathaway requirements ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered “no”, what steps must you take as a high school senior to get to “yes”?

Academic Preparation

I have passed all classes required for admissions. ☐ Yes ☐ No

My ACT score meets the requirements for my program of choice. ☐ Yes ☐ No

Does my local community college offer a technical program or certificate I want? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If the answer to the question above is “yes”, would attending the community college be the best route? Why or why not?

If you answered “no”, what steps must you take as a high school senior to get to “yes”?

Technical School or Trade Program Admission Process

I understand the admissions process for my selected school
(interviews, entrance exams, portfolios, application deadline) ☐ Yes ☐ No

I know and meet any special requirements for my field of study ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered “no”, what steps must you take as a high school senior to get to “yes”?

Financial Preparation

I know how much it will cost to attend the technical school or trade program
that interests me ☐ Yes ☐ No

I have a plan to pay for my certificate program ☐ Yes ☐ No

I know and can meet the FAFSA priority deadlines for the schools
I am interested in ☐ Yes ☐ No

I have registered on scholarship search engines and/or
applied for scholarships ☐ Yes ☐ No

I know whether I will need to provide any special tools for my trade
or if they will be provided to me as part of my school program ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered “no”, what steps must you take as a high school senior to get to “yes”?

If your assessment indicates that you are missing some requirements, meet with your School Counselor to see if you can still complete them before you graduate.

Hopefully, you answered “yes” to most of these questions or set up a plan to get to “yes” by the time you graduate from high school. If you answered “yes” to the questions under academic preparation, you could likely attend and succeed at a four-year university or community college. Often, community colleges cost less than technical schools. If you think you may want to attend a four-year university or a community college, complete the appropriate assessment (**A** or **B**).

If a technical school is the correct path for you, use the resources in the rest of this guide to help you complete all the steps you’ll take before graduation.

D Military Academy/ROTC Readiness Assessment

If you plan to join the military by way of attending a military academy or through ROTC, then this assessment is for you!

Graduation status

I have enough credits to graduate “on-time” ☐ Yes ☐ No

I passed all classes required for graduation ☐ Yes ☐ No

I completed all Hathaway requirements ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered “no”, what steps must you take as a high school senior to get to “yes”?

Academic Preparation

I have passed all classes required for university admissions ☐ Yes ☐ No

My GPA meets the admission requirements for my program of choice ☐ Yes ☐ No

My ACT score meets the requirements for my program of choice ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered “no”, what steps must you take as a high school senior to get to “yes”?

Financial Preparation

I know how much it will cost to attend my selected schools ☐ Yes ☐ No

I have a plan to pay for college ☐ Yes ☐ No

I know and can meet the FAFSA priority deadlines for the universities
I am interested in ☐ Yes ☐ No

I have registered on scholarship search engines and/or
applied for scholarships ☐ Yes ☐ No

I understand how an ROTC program can help me to pay for college ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered “no”, what steps must you take as a high school senior to get to “yes”?

If your assessment indicates that you are missing some requirements, meet with your School Counselor to see if you can still complete them before you graduate.

Contact the ROTC programs at your school of choice once you have been admitted to learn about enrolling in ROTC.

SECTION 2:

Actions and Timelines



Staying on Track

Wherever you plan to go after high school graduation—whether you’re headed to college, the workforce, or the military—the checklists in this section will help you stay organized to reach your goal. Each checklist outlines specific action steps that act as a guide to your postsecondary plan. Simply find the checklist that applies to you, then use the pages throughout this guide, coded with the matching symbol, to find the information and resources you need to complete each step on your checklist.

Review the entire checklist for your postsecondary plan before you begin. It is helpful to see the complete picture of everything that needs to happen before you begin each step. If you are unsure about anything on your checklist, explore the rest of this guide, which includes additional details on completing each step, such as applying for and paying for college.

If you are ever unsure about something, your school counselor or GEAR UP staff can help.

Wyoming Education Options

4 Year University	Technical College
University of Wyoming 1000 E University Ave, Laramie, WY 82071 www.uwyo.edu College Code 3932	WyoTech 1889 Venture Drive, Laramie, WY 82070 www.wyotech.edu College Code 9157
Community College	
Casper College 125 College Drive, Casper, WY 82601 www.caspercollege.edu College Code 3928	Central Wyoming College 2660 Peck Avenue Riverton, WY 82501 www.cwc.edu College Code 5018
Eastern Wyoming College 3200 West C St Torrington, WY 82240 www.ewc.wy.edu College Code 3929	Laramie County Community College 1400 E College Dr, Cheyenne, WY 82007 www.lccc.wy.edu College Code 9259
NWCCD – Gillette 300 West Sinclair, Gillette, WY 82718 www.sheridan.edu College Code 3930	NWCCD – Sheridan 1 Whitney Way, Sheridan, WY 82801 www.sheridan.edu College Code 3930
Northwest College 231 W 6 th St, Powell, WY 82435 www.nwc.edu College Code 3931	Western Wyoming Community College 2500 College Dr, Rock Springs, WY 82901 www.westernwyoming.edu College Code 3933

Taking or Re-Taking College Entrance Exams

The ACT and SAT are college admissions tests. Many colleges and programs use ACT or SAT scores in their admission decisions, although some do not, and some specifically require one test or the other. Check the requirements for the colleges to which you're applying. ACT scores also impact scholarship eligibility (a 25 composite score is required for the highest level of Hathaway).

Also, universities often use your ACT or SAT score in specific subject areas to determine freshman year course placement, particularly for Math and English.

How can I get accommodations for the ACT?

Any student with an IEP or ELL accommodations in school should request accommodations for their ACT test. You can request accommodations when you register to take the ACT. A school official will need to verify your need for accommodations.

I already took the ACT as a junior. Should I re-take it this year?

Yes, yes, yes! GEAR UP students may take the ACT as many times as they need to improve their scores with fee waivers.

Here are a few questions to consider when deciding whether to re-take the ACT:

1. What are the scores necessary for your target schools or target scholarships?

Take a moment to research the schools you want to attend. Many schools list the average or mid-range ACT scores for their admitted students on their websites. Aim to be at or above their posted average scores but remember that extracurricular activities and GPA also factor into the admission decision. Use the "scholarship estimator" tools on college websites to determine whether a higher score could earn you a bigger scholarship. If so, how likely is it you could improve your score by the needed amount?

2. How many times have you already taken the test?

Although retaking the test can indeed raise your score, after the third time taking the exam, subsequent attempts at the test are unlikely to raise your score **unless you've done something drastically different to prepare**. Just taking the test over and over is rather pointless if you don't change anything in between attempts. Consider taking an ACT prep course to improve your score. (GEAR UP offers ACT prep services for free!)

3. Are your score expectations realistic?

Going up by three or four points on the ACT is a realistic goal with effort, especially from your first to second time taking the test. It is also important to realize that the higher your starting score is, the harder it is to increase your score with future retakes. **Score improvements don't come without effort.**

4. How do you move forward?

If you've considered these questions and concluded that you don't want or need to retake the ACT, congratulations! Focus on completing your applications and essays and make a strong finish in your high school career.

If you do want to retake the ACT, then pick a test date that fits your schedule and deadlines and start using the prep tools available.

National ACT Test Dates

NATIONAL TEST DATE	REGISTRATION DEADLINE
October 22, 2022	September 16, 2022
December 10, 2022	November 4, 2022
February 11, 2023	January 6, 2023
April 15, 2023	March 10, 2023
June 10, 2023	May 5, 2023
July 15, 2023	June 16, 2023

Go to [ACTStudent.org](https://actstudent.org) for more information about the ACT

SAT vs. ACT

SAT	ACT
SCORES	
The SAT is scored on a scale of 400-1600.	The ACT is scored on a scale of 1-36.
QUESTIONS	
SAT questions require more time to understand and answer. You are penalized for answering incorrectly.	ACT questions tend to be more straightforward. You are not penalized for incorrect answers.
READING	
The SAT has five reading passages.	The ACT has four reading passages.
SCIENCE	
There is no science on the SAT.	The ACT has a science section that tests your critical thinking skills.
MATH	
Both tests have the SAME advanced math concepts: arithmetic, Algebra I, Algebra II, geometry, and trigonometry.	
TOOLS	
Some SAT math questions don't allow you to use a calculator.	You may use an approved calculator for ALL math questions on the ACT.
ESSAY	
The SAT essay section is more comprehension focused. You have 50 minutes to complete it.	The ACT wants to see how well you can evaluate and analyze complex issues. You have 40 minutes to complete it.

Do you want to retake the SAT or ACT?
Talk to your GEAR UP counselor for help with test preparation, registration, and obtaining a fee waiver.

What is the Best Fit for Me?

Deciding which college to attend can be a challenge –
there are so many factors to consider!

Decide what is most important to you in a college experience, along with your long-term goals and how college will play a part in achieving those goals. By visiting college websites, talking with current and former students, and reading online reviews, try to learn as much as possible about your potential school.

Below are some things you might want to consider as you research. Circle the ones that are most important to you.

TYPE OF SCHOOL <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two-year or four-year• In-state or out-of-state• Public or private• All male, all female, coed• Religious or secular	STUDENT LIFE <ul style="list-style-type: none">• On and off-campus activities• Athletics• Greek life• Student organizations• Safety• Student body diversity	LOCATION* <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Urban or rural• Size of the nearest city• Distance from home• Geographic setting and weather
AFFORDABILITY <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Cost of Attendance (Tuition, fees, transportation, housing, books)• Scholarships• Campus employment opportunities	ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimum GPA• Average test score• Required high school courses• Likelihood of being accepted	HOUSING <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Residence halls• On/off campus housing• Meal plan• Parking for residents and commuters
ACADEMICS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Programs and majors offered• Student-faculty ratio• Accreditation	SIZE <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical enrollment• Average class size• Physical campus size (how long will it take to get to classes?)	WHAT OTHER CRITERIA ARE IMPORTANT TO YOU?

*If you attend a school in Wyoming, you will have GEAR UP support at your college, as well as additional GEAR UP scholarships you may be eligible for.

University

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

My top three schools of choice are:
(See Section 2 to help select schools)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

List the majors you are considering here
(See Section 6 for resources to help choose a career pathway)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Community College

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

My top three schools of choice are:
(See Section 2 to help select schools)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

List the majors you are considering here
(See Section 6 for resources to help choose a career pathway)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

The degree I am pursuing

- ☐ **Associate degree** (2 years)
- ☐ **Certificate** (for example, culinary arts, welding, automotive)
- ☐ **Bachelor's** (two years at a community college, plus two at a university)

Technical Institute/School

If you want to attend a technical institute/school and obtain a certificate or license in a skilled trade, this checklist is for you! At tech schools, you can train to become a certified professional in various fields, such as a motorcycle mechanic, nurse, or computer technician.

My top two schools of choice are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

I am interested in pursuing a career in:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Use this checklist for all higher education options.

Items marked in red are GEAR UP specific.

ACTION STEPS		RECOMMENDED TIMELINE	MY DATE	NOTES
Do these for every school where you apply	Keep track of college logins, check portals & emails regularly	Aug – July		
	Complete college app(s)	Aug – Sept		
	Obtain college application fee waivers	Before submitting application		
	Request transcripts	Within 1 week of completing an application		
	Register to take or re-take ACT/SAT and ensure scores are sent to colleges	Prep: July – Oct Retake: Nov – Dec		
	Explore ROTC or officer programs (if applicable)	Aug – Dec		
	Register for NCAA/NAIA Clearinghouse (if interested in playing college sports)	Aug – Dec		
	Obtain FSA ID (student & parent)	July – Sept		
	Complete the FAFSA GEAR UP hosts FAFSA events and can help you 1 on 1 to complete your FAFSA	Oct – Dec		
	Review your Student Aid Report (SAR)	Oct – Dec		
	Complete GEAR UP scholarship applications	Aug – May		
	Complete additional scholarship applications	Aug – May		
	Review admission letters and financial awards	Oct – Apr		

Use this checklist for the school you will attend.

Items marked in red are GEAR UP specific.

ACTION STEPS		RECOMMENDED TIMELINE	MY DATE	NOTES
Do these for the college you will attend	Accept admissions at school of choice	As early as possible. By May 1 for some		
	Pay enrollment deposit to your selected school. GEAR UP can assist with obtaining fee waivers	After accepting admission – Spring		
	Register for orientation	After accepting admission - Spring		
	Apply for housing	After accepting admission - Spring		
	Find off-campus housing (if college/technical institute does not have on-campus housing)	After accepting admission - Spring		
	Learn about and apply to TRiO/bridge programs	After accepting admission – Spring		
	Inform GEAR UP Staff and college counselor of decisions and awards	As soon as you know		
	Check your email and portal regularly and respond promptly to messages	Ongoing		
	Other			

Work, Work-Study, Internships

If you plan to work or intern while attending school, then this checklist is for you! Section 6 has resources to help you determine a career pathway.

My career interest areas or job prospects include:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

ACTION STEPS	RECOMMENDED TIMELINE	MY DATE	NOTES
Research training required for field of interest	Fall/Winter		
Research community college and technical school options	Fall/Winter		
Ask two to three people to serve as references	Winter/Spring		
Create/update resume (See Section 7)	Winter/Spring		
Research job openings	Winter/Spring		
Prepare for job applications by completing form in Section 7	Winter/Spring		
Apply for jobs	Spring		
Request letters of recommendation	As required for applications		
Other			

If you need more information about the career you want to pursue and the education that is required, visit www.pathful.com to learn more about educational requirements, pay, and the outlook for the profession.

SECTION 3:

The College Application Process



Taking Your Education to the Next Level

If you're planning to continue your education after high school – whether you're headed to a university, community college, or tech school – this section will help you get there. In the following pages you'll find guidance related to submitting college applications and smoothly transferring from a community college to a university.

Collecting Personal Information

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

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

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

Contact Information	
Full Name (first, middle, last)	
Street Address	
PO Box	
City, State, Zip Code	
Home Phone Number	
Mobile Phone Number	
E-Mail Address (not your high school email address)	

School Information	
Name of Current High School	
Address, City, State, Zip Code	
Telephone Number	
Expected Graduation Date	
Name of Previous High School Attended	
Address, City, State, Zip Code	
Telephone Number	
Dates Attended	

Collecting Personal Information

Colleges Attended/College Credits Earned	
(List any college from which you expect to receive credit, including dual or concurrent enrollment.)	
College Name	
Address, City, State, Zip Code	
Dates Attended	
Course Name/Number of Credits	
Course Name/Number of Credits	
Potential College Major	

Testing (ACT, SAT, AP)							
SAT Test Score (if applicable)							
Date (Month/Year)				Comp Score			
ACT Test Score: 1 st Attempt							
Date (Month/Year)				Comp Score			
English		Math		Reading		Science	
ACT Test Score: 2 nd Attempt							
Date (Month/Year)				Comp Score			
English		Math		Reading		Science	
ACT Test Score: 3 rd Attempt							
Date (Month/Year)				Comp Score			
English		Math		Reading		Science	
AP Courses							
AP Subject		Score		AP Subject		Score	
AP Subject		Score		AP Subject		Score	

Athletics, Clubs, and Organizations				
List your role/position each year				
List Names of Club/ Sports team	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior

Honors & Awards		
Name and Date of Award	Reason for Award/Honor	Sponsor

Community Service			
Name of Organization & Contact	Description of Volunteer Service	Number of Hours of Service	Date(s) of Service

Family and Other Personal Information

Student Status: ☐ US Citizen ☐ Permanent US Resident ☐ Refugee
 ☐ DACA ☐ Other _____

State of Residence: _____

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

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

Emergency Contact

Name/Relationship: _____

Phone Number: _____

Address: _____

Tracking College Applications

As you begin the college application process, it's a good idea to include at least one of each of the following types of choices:

Safe choice Your academic credentials fall above the school's range for the average freshman. You can be reasonably certain that you will be admitted to your safe choice school.

Realistic choice Your academic credentials fall within (or even exceed) the school's range for the average freshman. There are no guarantees, but it's not unreasonable to be accepted to several of your realistic choice schools.

Reach choice Your academic credentials fall below the school's average range for freshmen. It is important to apply to reach schools. If there is a specific, selective college you really want to go to and you have even a remote shot at getting accepted, go for it.

	College 1	College 2	College 3	College 4	College 5
Financial award offer received and reviewed					
Received Decision Yes/No					
Date you requested test score					
Date you requested College Transcript					
Date you requested HS transcript					
Date you sent application payment/waiver					
Date you Applied					
Application Deadline					

You're accepted! Now what?

Once you have received your acceptance letters and decided on a school, there are still a few actions you will need to take to complete your enrollment. Plus, you will want to keep track of some key information.

Use the tools on this page to help you keep everything organized and on time.

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

The college I am attending is: _____

My admission counselor's name: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

My financial aid counselor's name: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

My college username: _____ College Email: _____

My college ID #: _____

Use this table to track dates you completed important enrollment tasks						
Accepted admissions offer	Paid/deferred enrollment deposit	Applied for housing	Orientation date I selected	Sent final transcript	Accepted/Declined financial awards	Sent immunization records

Summer Bridge Programs

Summer Bridge Programs are designed to improve the preparation for and ease the transition into college in the fall. Students who attend these programs will earn credits toward their graduation requirements.

Name of program: _____

Application deadline: _____ Date applied: _____

Notes: _____

Summer College Checklist

If you have decided to enroll in a university, community college, or technical school, take some time to review the following checklist to make sure you have completed all the necessary steps to start in the fall.

- ☐ **Complete all financial aid tasks, including any errors on your FAFSA and completing verification (if selected). Receive financial aid award letter(s).**
Questions? Contact the financial aid office at your college
- ☐ **FAFSA Portal**
Make sure that you have updated your school choice so that state financial aid money is sent to the correct institution.
- ☐ **Have you been admitted? Have you received communication from the admissions office of your selected school(s)?**
If not, check with your Admissions Counselor to make sure they have everything they need.
- ☐ **Register for and attend orientation, if applicable. Your school may offer an all-encompassing two-day orientation/registration or ask you to view a recording online. At orientation, you will learn all the ins and outs of college life, and you will meet other new students as well. In many cases, you will be allowed to move into residence halls early and get a head start on college life.**
Questions? Contact your college's advising department or an academic advisor for your major.
- ☐ **Arrange for housing. If living on campus, apply for and receive a housing assignment.**
- ☐ **Pay your housing deposit by the published deadline. At many schools, this serves as your enrollment deposit and may be non-refundable.**
You may be able to get the amount reduced with demonstrated financial need.
- ☐ **Register for classes and obtain a fall schedule. To register for classes, you may need to meet with an academic advisor.**
- ☐ **If you plan to park a car on campus, register for parking. Each campus handles parking differently, so make sure to check out parking regulations before your first day.**
- ☐ **Inform your college/career counselor and GEAR UP advisor of all college acceptances and awards.**
- ☐ **Continually check your college portal and college email address.**
- ☐ **Send official documents when needed. For example, your college may require that you send final high school transcripts or health care forms. Make sure you reply promptly to all document requests.**
- ☐ **Complete placement testing, if required.**
Questions? Start by contacting your college's admissions office to determine if placement testing is required for you.
- ☐ **Plan for additional costs during the school year. There are more expenses associated with college than just tuition. Make sure you have a plan to pay for things like books and transportation throughout the school year.**

Transferring from a Community College to a University

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

Meet with your community college advisor early and often—academic advisors are your key to a smooth transfer. Share your goals with your advisor so that he/she can help you understand the requirements at your chosen transfer school. Completing these requirements means your courses will transfer from the community college to the university of your choice.

Most community colleges have a dedicated academic advisor for students who intend to transfer to a four-year university. It is a good idea to meet with them and your program advisor to ensure you are on track to transfer into your program of choice. You may choose to obtain an associate degree before transferring, but it is not always necessary. When selecting a university to transfer to, consider all options and don't limit yourself to the nearest 4-year college.

If you plan to transfer to the University of Wyoming, they offer the 2+2 plan.

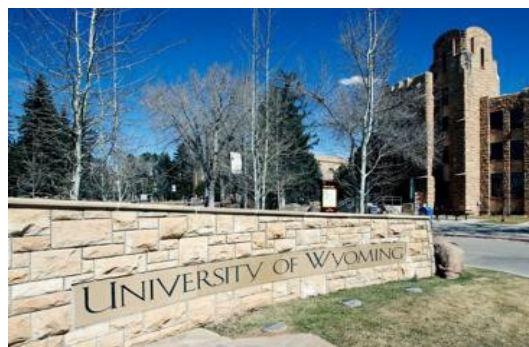
UW Transfer Programs:

Wyoming's community colleges and UW have partnered to provide program-specific articulation agreements that assure students that courses taken at Wyoming community colleges meet UW degree course requirements.

These articulation agreements mean that students earning an associate degree (AA, AS, or AB) in a given major at a Wyoming community college can transfer to UW and earn their bachelor's degree in the same major in two years.

Transfer students throughout the state of Wyoming can use these 2+2 plans to ensure they are taking the right coursework at the right time to complete their associate and bachelor's degrees on time without excess credits. Check back often because more programs are completing agreements each month.

If you have any questions, please contact your advisor or UW's Office of Academic Affairs at 307-766-4286.



SECTION 4:

Financial Aid



Paying for College

If you're concerned about how you're going to pay for your college or university experience, consider this:

- College might not cost as much as you think. In fact, most families overestimate the price tag.
- There is help available. Financial aid can make paying for school attainable
- Your education is a long-term investment. On average, college graduates earn twice as much as those with high school diplomas.
- You may be able to complete pay for college through scholarships

In this section of the guide, you will find information about types of financial aid, how to apply for aid, and how to interpret the financial aid offers you receive.

What is Financial Aid?

Financial aid is money to help you pay for college. It may be in the form of grants, scholarships, loans, work-study programs, or a combination. The aid comes from the federal and state governments, colleges and universities, banks, and private organizations.

Applying to receive financial aid is a separate process from applying for admission to a college. You must do both. For all government aid and much private and institutional aid, you apply using the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA (see coming pages in this section for more details.)

Primary Sources of Financial Aid	
Grants	Grants are money provided by the federal government to college students who demonstrate financial need and do not need to be repaid. The most common is the Pell Grant. In 2022, the maximum grant, which is available to students in the most need, is \$6,895*. To earn a Pell grant, you must be a U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen and will need to complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid).
Work-Study	This federally sponsored program provides students with part-time employment during college. Eligibility is based on financial need; students must complete the FAFSA to be considered.
Scholarships	Money for college that does not have to be repaid. Scholarships are awarded to all types of students. Some scholarships are for students with an exceptional academic record in high school and others are for students who possess certain characteristics important to the provider (such as hobbies, athletic ability, membership in a particular group, etc.) Most scholarships require an application, and dollar amounts vary. Applying for private aid through scholarships is covered in Section 4.
Loans	This is borrowed money that must be repaid with interest.

**This amount may change every year.*

Sources of Financial Aid

Very few students get all their financial aid for college from one source. When you are searching for financial aid, consider a wide variety of options and apply to as many programs as possible. Here are some common types of organizations that offer financial aid.

- **Your college:** College and universities offer financial aid programs for their students. Visit the financial aid webpages of every college you are considering and apply for all of the scholarships you think you might be eligible to receive.
- **The community:** Nonprofit organizations, foundations, and businesses often provide scholarships as a community service. To find these programs, talk to your school counselor
- **The government:** The Federal Government offers over \$150 billion in aid each year. Likewise, Wyoming offers millions of dollars to its students.

What types of Federal Student Aid are available?

The following chart outlines the most common types of federal student aid:

Program and Type of Aid	Program Information	Award Amount (subject to change)
Federal Pell Grant <i>A grant does not need to be repaid.</i>	For undergraduates with financial need who have not earned a bachelor's or professional degree. StudentAid.gov/pell-grant	Amounts can change annually. For 2022-2023 the maximum award amount was \$6,895 per year.
Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG) <i>A grant does not need to be repaid.</i>	For undergraduates with exceptional financial need, federal Pell Grant recipients take priority; funds depend on availability at a school. This is a first come, first serve grant. Students who complete their FAFSA early are more likely to receive. StudentAid.gov/fseog	Up to \$4000
Federal Work Study <i>Work-Study is money earned through a job and doesn't have to be repaid.</i>	For undergraduate students, part-time jobs can be on campus or off-campus. Money is earned while attending school. Your total work-study award depends on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you apply • Your level of financial need • Your school's funding level StudentAid.gov/workstudy	No annual minimum or maximum amounts
Federal Loans <i>A loan must be repaid with interest.</i> <i>Before you take out a loan, it's important to understand that a loan is a legal obligation that makes you responsible for repaying the amount you borrow with interest. Even though you don't have to begin repaying your federal student loans right away, you shouldn't wait to understand your responsibilities as a borrower.</i> <i>To find out what your potential student loan payment might be, visit the loan simulator at: https://studentaid.gov/loan-simulator/borrow-more/wizard/enrollment-info/current-or-future</i>	Subsidized Loans: The US Department of Education generally pays interest while the student is in school; the student must be enrolled at least half-time. StudentAid.gov/sub-unsub Unsubsidized Loans: The borrower is responsible for interest during all periods, including while the student is enrolled. A student must be enrolled at least part-times. StudentAid.gov/sub-unsub Direct PLUS Loan: For parents of dependent undergraduate students; the borrower is responsible for interest during all periods, including while the student is enrolled; a student must be enrolled at least half-time; financial need is not required; the borrower must not have adverse credit history. StudentAid.gov/plus	Subsidized Loans: Up to \$5000 depending on grade level and dependency status Unsubsidized Loans: Up to \$20,500 (less any subsidized amounts received for the same period) depending on grade level and dependency status. Direct PLUS Loan: Maximum amount is the cost of attendance minus any other financial aid received.

FAFSA Facts

(Free Application for Federal Student Aid)

Filing the FAFSA is free! We've made it easy for you to gather the information you will need to complete the FAFSA. The FAFSA is an important part of your journey, and it might even mean free money to cover your college costs. The next few pages provide helpful forms and sample documents to get you through three major steps to complete the FAFSA.

1. Get your FSA ID (the student **MUST** have an FSA ID, and it is very helpful for the parent to have an FSA ID if possible).
2. Complete the FAFSA (with your parent).
3. Review your SAR.

Pre-FAFSA Information

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

1. Student email: (not a high school email): _____ Cell phone: _____
Parent email: _____ Cell phone: _____
2. Are you a Wyoming resident? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Month/Year you began living in Wyoming: _____
3. Are your parents Wyoming residents? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Month/Year your parents began living in Wyoming: _____
4. What are your parents' dates of birth? Parent 1: _____ Parent 2: _____
5. Do you have a driver's license? ☐ Yes ☐ No
6. Are you parents ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐ Separated Date _____
7. What is the highest level of school your parents completed? (Check for each parent)
Parent 1: ☐ Middle school/Jr. High ☐ High School ☐ College or beyond ☐ Other/unknown
Parent 2: ☐ Middle school/Jr. High ☐ High School ☐ College or beyond ☐ Other/unknown

When you file the FAFSA, in addition to the information above, these are the items to have on hand (for yourself and your parents):

- Most recent W2 forms
- Most recent Federal Income Tax Forms
- An estimate of your disposable monthly income after all expenses are paid
- Child support paid or received
- Value of investment farms and businesses
- Other prior year benefits (works comp, military, clergy, or veteran amounts)

Step 1: The FSA ID

THIS INFORMATION SHOULD BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL AND STORED IN A SECURE LOCATION (ESPECIALLY IF YOU RECORD YOUR PASSWORD)!

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

You'll use your FSA ID every year you are in college to complete the FAFSA and review your federal student aid. Fill in this form as you create your FSA ID, so you have the information when you need it to log in later.

To create an FSA ID, go to: fsaid.ed.gov

Student Information

Email Address: _____ Phone Number: _____

Username: _____

Password: _____ (or hint)

Date of Birth: _____

Challenge Question	Answer

Parent Information

***Note** – If your parents have created an FSA ID for themselves when applying for aid for an older sibling, they will use the same FSA ID to help file your FAFSA and for all FAFSAs. The parent's email address and password should be used for the parent's FSA ID.

If using the IRS Data Retrieval tool, your address must EXACTLY match the address used on your tax return

Email Address: _____ Phone Number: _____

Username: _____

Password: _____ (or hint)

Date of Birth: _____

Challenge Question	Answer

Step 2: Filing the FAFSA

After creating your FSA ID, the next step is to file your FAFSA! File your FAFSA online at

www.fafsa.gov

Be sure to complete the 2023-2024 FAFSA.

If you need help filing the FAFSA, contact your college/career counselor or local EOC office to find out when you and your family can get assistance completing the form.

Find your nearest EOC office: <http://www.uwyo.edu/seo/eoc/Regional-Centers.html>

When filing the FAFSA, questions often arise about dependency status, parental information, and citizenship status. Below, you will find some charts to help you answer these questions.

What is my dependency status?

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

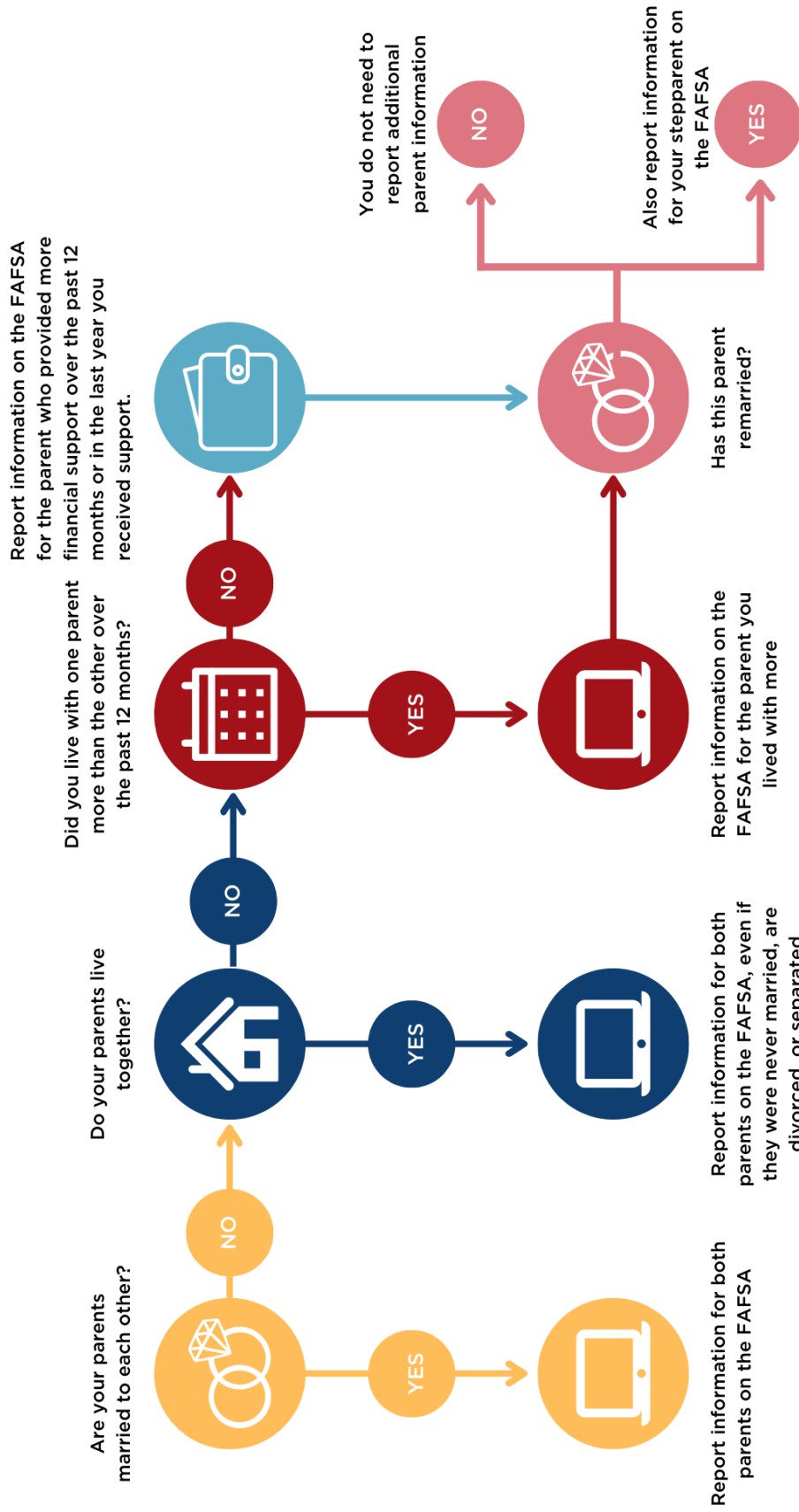
Mark any that are true.

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

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

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

Who is my Parent when I fill out my FAFSA?



The following people are not your parents unless they have adopted you:



Widowed Stepparent



Grandparents



Older Brothers or Sisters



Foster Parents



Legal Guardians



Aunts or Uncles

After Your FAFSA is complete – SAMPLE FAFSA PAGE

Congratulations, Student!

Your FAFSA form was successfully submitted to Federal Student Aid.

10/07/2021 15:31:05

Confirmation Number: F 12345678901

Data Release Number (DRN): 1234

Here's what happens next:

- You will receive an email version of this page.
- In 3-5 business days, you will receive an email notifying you that your FAFSA form was processed.
- Your FAFSA information will be made available to your school(s), and they will use it to determine the aid you may be eligible to receive.
- Your school(s) will contact you if they need more information or when they are ready to discuss your financial aid award.
- If you have questions about your financial aid package, contact your school(s).

An abbreviated version of your confirmation page has been sent to you at the following email address:

studentname@email.com

Print This Page 

We want to hear from you!

[Fill out Our Short Survey](#)

Share with your friends!



Estimated Expected Family Contribution (EFC) =002300

- The EFC is a measure of how much you can contribute to the cost of your education. Schools use your EFC to determine your federal student aid eligibility.
- The EFC is **not** how much aid you will receive or how much you have to pay for college.

ESTIMATED ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

- Based on the [eligibility criteria](#), you may be eligible for the following federal student aid:
- Federal Pell Grant Estimate – \$4,245.00
- Direct Loan Estimate – \$5,500.00
- You may also be eligible to receive other federal, state, or institutional grants, scholarships, and/or work-study.

Learn about federal tax benefits for education, including the *American Opportunity tax credit*.

After the FAFSA

1. Review your FAFSA Confirmation Page

After you complete the FAFSA form online and select “SUBMIT”, you’ll see a confirmation page like the one above. This is not your financial aid offer. You’ll get that separately from the school(s) you apply to and get into. Your school(s) calculate your aid.

The confirmation page provides federal aid estimates based on the information you provided on your FAFSA form. It’s important to know that these figures are truly **ESTIMATES** and assume the information you provided on the FAFSA form is correct. To calculate the actual amount of aid you’re eligible for, your school will consider other factors, such as the cost to attend the school. Additionally, these estimates only consider federal aid and not outside scholarships or state and institutional financial assistance you may also be eligible for.

2. Review your Expected Family Contribution (EFC)

The EFC portion of the confirmation page is outlined with a red box above.

The information you report on your FAFSA form is used to calculate your EFC. It’s very important to note that the EFC is not the amount of money your family will have to pay for college. Instead, the EFC is an index number used by financial aid offices to calculate your financial need. The formula they use is:

$$\text{Cost of attendance} - \text{Expected family contribution} = \text{Your financial “need”}$$

Each school will do its best to meet your financial need. Some schools may meet 100% of your financial need, and other schools may only meet 10 percent – it just depends on the school and the financial aid they have available that year. You should complete the FAFSA form **annually** because many factors can change from year to year. Additionally, some scholarships may require you to complete the FAFSA each year.

3. Be on the Lookout for Your Aid Offer(s)

The FAFSA form is made available on October 1st. Even if you submit it early, that doesn’t mean you’ll get an aid offer immediately. Each school has a different schedule for awarding and paying out financial aid.

Remember that your school disburses your aid, not the “FAFSA people” (Federal Student Aid). Contact your school’s financial aid office for details about when they send out aid offers. If you want to see an estimate of your school’s average annual cost, visit CollegeScorecard.ed.gov. If you want to report significant changes in your family or financial situation, contact your school’s financial aid office.

Step 3: Review my Student Aid Report (SAR)

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

What is the SAR?

The Student Aid Report (SAR) summarizes the information you submitted on the FAFSA and provides information about financial aid eligibility based on that information. A sample SAR is shown on the next page.

How and when will I get my SAR?

After you submit your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), you'll get your personal SAR (within three days if you complete the FAFSA online; within three weeks if you mail the paper FAFSA). Whether you receive your SAR online or through the mail depends on whether you provide an email address on your FAFSA. If you provide a valid email address, you'll receive an email with instructions on how to access an online copy of your SAR. If you have an FSA ID (username and password) and your FAFSA has been processed, you can log in at www.fafsa.gov to view your SAR information regardless of how you filed the FAFSA. The school(s) you list on your FAFSA will have access to your SAR data electronically within a day after it is processed.

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

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

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

What am I supposed to do with my SAR?

When you get your SAR, review it carefully to make sure it's correct and complete. Take a copy of it to your college/career counselor to get help reviewing it. The school(s) you listed on your FAFSA will use SAR information to determine your eligibility for federal and state financial aid. A school may ask you to verify the accuracy of the data you provide on the FAFSA, so you need to be sure the information is correct.

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

What if my SAR does not list an EFC?

If your EFC is blank on your SAR or if there is a "C" after the number, you need to make corrections to your FAFSA. It is extremely important that you make these corrections to your FAFSA to receive financial aid. Your SAR will provide you with details about the errors in your FAFSA.

What if there is an asterisk (*) next to my EFC?

If there is an asterisk (*) next to your EFC, this means that your FAFSA has been selected for verification. Being selected for verification is quite common. This just means that you will need to work with your college to complete a few extra steps to verify the information you provided on your FAFSA.

Your local EOC can assist you with any verification steps.

SAMPLE SAR



FAFSA.gov

Form Approved
OMB No. 1845-0001
App. Exp 12/31/2023

2021-2022

Electronic Student Aid Report

The SAR summarizes the information you submitted on your 2022-2023 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Application Receipt Date: 01/22/2022

XXX-XX-XXXX XX01

Processed Date: 01/22/2022

EFC: 4603 *

DRN:XXXX

This is your Expected Family Contribution. The number may be all zeros, or a combination of zeros and other numbers, but if it is blank or there is "C" after the number, you need to make corrections to your FAFSA or you won't get any aid. The details are in the body of the SAR below.

Comments About Your Information

Learn about federal tax benefits for education, including the American Opportunity Tax Credit (AOTC).

Based on the information we have on record for you, your EFC is 4603. You may be eligible to receive a Federal Pell Grant and other federal student aid. Your school will use your EFC to determine your financial aid eligibility for federal grants, loans, and work-study, and possible funding from your state and school.

Your FAFSA has been selected for a review process called verification. Your school has the authority to request copies of certain financial documents from you and your parent(s).

There is a limit to the total amount of Federal Pell Grants that a student may receive, which is the equivalent of 6 school years. Once a total amount of Pell Grant eligibility has been received, a student can no longer receive Pell Grant Aid.

WHAT YOU MUST DO NOW (use the checklist below to make sure that all of your issues are resolved.)

The parents' marital status you reported in Item 58 does not appear to agree with the parents' tax return filing status reported in Item 81. If one of these items is incorrect, click 'Make FAFSA Corrections' on the 'My FAFSA' page to make the correction. If the information you reported is correct, make sure the income information reported in Items 84 through 87, 91, and 92 correctly reflects your parents' 2021 income.

If you need to make corrections to your information, click 'Make FAFSA Corrections' on the 'My FAFSA' page using your FSA ID. If you need additional help with your SAR, contact your school's financial aid office or click the 'Help' icon on the FAFSA home page. If your mailing address or e-mail address change, you can make the correction online.

Based on your EFC of 4603, you may be eligible to receive a Federal Pell Grant of up to \$1695 for the 2022-2023 school year provided you have not met or exceeded the lifetime limit established for the Federal Pell Grant program.

If you are chosen for verification, it will appear here. This is very common. Contact your selected school's financial aid office for further instructions. You will not be awarded any financial aid until verification is complete.

You must log back into the FAFSA to make any correction indicated above.

Although you are instructed to use the "checklist" below, it's not formatted like a checklist; read everything below this instruction very carefully and do what it says! Your FAFSA is not considered "complete" until you do.

Making Corrections on your FAFSA

After filing the FAFSA, use the following checklist and flow chart on the next page to ensure that your FAFSA is complete, does not require corrections, and that your financial information has been sent to the correct college.

Log into the FAFSA with your FSA ID: Is your chosen college listed on your FAFSA? If not, make changes to your FAFSA to ensure that school is on your list so that your college gets your financial aid information.

Click “View or Print Your Student Aid Report” and review the information:

Look closely at lines **18, 29, 30, and 69.**

Line 18: Student’s legal state of residence. Make sure you fill out that you’re a resident of Wyoming (WY) to receive state financial aid.

Line 29: Student’s grade level in 2023-2024. You should answer “Never attended college/1st year.” Other answers might make the system think you are a student who is working on an advanced degree and may disqualify you from financial aid that is meant for students working on a certificate, diploma, associate, or bachelor's degree.

Line 30: Type of degree or certificate. Depending on the college you’ve chosen, you’ll want to select one of the following options:

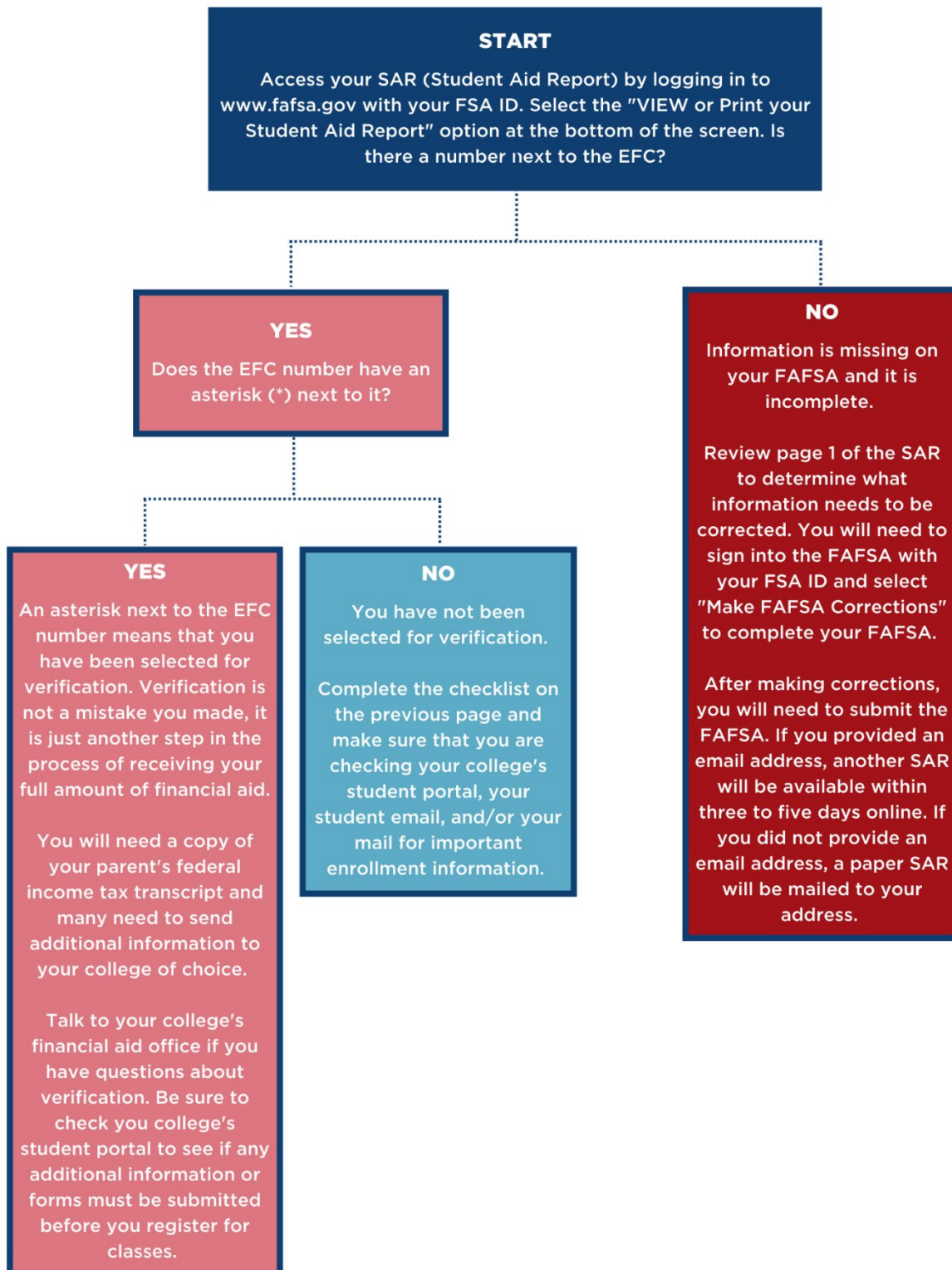
- **1st bachelor’s degree (if you plan on attending a four-year university for a bachelor’s degree)**
- **Associate degree, general education/transfer program (if you plan on attending a community college and later transferring)**
- **Certificate/diploma, occupational/technical education program of less than two years (if you are enrolling at WyoTech, or a technical school or trade school)**

Line 69: Parent’s legal state of residence. Make sure that you’ve filled out that your parents live in Wyoming, as this is important for establishing that you are a Wyoming resident for state aid and in-state tuition.

Attending a community college or four-year university? Log into your college’s student portal. This student portal is often mentioned in your acceptance letter or an email from the college. Check your portal to ensure you don’t need to submit any additional forms to your college’s financial aid office. The portal will also be where you receive information about registering for orientation and classes, so plan to check it often.

Attending WyoTech or Technical School? Check your mail and/or email or call your campus to speak to financial aid. Ask them to confirm that your financial aid documents are complete for the 2023-2024 school year. They may be sending your information in the mail during the summer so be sure to open any mail from them and complete action items before the deadlines.

FAFSA Verification – Did you receive an EFC?



Financial Aid Award Offers

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

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

It is important to know that the school with the highest financial aid offer will not necessarily cost the least amount of money to attend. Your out-of-pocket cost will depend on BOTH the cost of attendance and the financial aid award offer.

How much will I pay?			
School Name	Estimated Yearly Cost of Attendance	Financial Aid Offer	Estimated Out-of-Pocket Cost
	Be sure to include all costs (tuition, fees, room & board, etc.)	Use the amount listed for the specific school	Subtract your financial aid offer amount from the cost of attendance to estimate

Accepting and Declining Awards

After you decide which school to attend, carefully respond to that school's financial aid offer; you will be asked to "accept or decline" each component of your aid package. You can accept some offers but decline others if you don't need them. Always accept "free" money – like scholarships and grants. **And, accepting work-study if it's offered is a good idea.** It doesn't obligate you to find and take a work-study job but accepting it will allow you to go that route if you want to. Think carefully and review the terms closely before accepting any loans offered, as these must be repaid with interest. When choosing to accept a loan, you may accept only a portion of the amount that was offered or the entire amount. If you don't understand any portion of your award offer, contact the financial aid office at your school of choice.

Understanding Your Financial Aid Offer

Use this page and the sample financial aid offer on the next page to learn about the different sections to review when you receive a financial aid offer.

1. Your estimated cost of attendance includes **direct costs** of tuition, fees, room and board (if you are living on campus), as well as **indirect costs** which are assumed expenses. While you will only be billed for direct costs, you may obtain financial aid up to your total cost of attendance.
2. The awards in this section are considered Gift Aid because it includes scholarships and grants that do not have to be repaid. The amounts listed represent the maximum amount you could be eligible for, assuming you meet all eligibility requirements and enroll in at least 12 credit hours each term.
3. Other financial aid options to help you cover your expenses may include loans. If you are eligible for a Direct Subsidized or Unsubsidized loan, the maximum award will be listed here. You may choose to borrow some or all of that amount. Direct student loan payments can be deferred until six months after graduating or leaving college, but interest will accrue on unsubsidized loans.
4. Your Estimated Balance is the estimated amount that will need to be paid by means other than gift aid and loans.
5. Another option to cover your educational expenses is a need-based Federal Work-Study. The Work-Study program provides employment opportunities in various offices on campus and in community service agencies. You will be paid hourly and receive paychecks every two weeks for the hours worked. In most cases, Federal Work-Study will not be credited to your account.
6. Collegetown University offers both 10-month and 12-month payment plans. Payment plans are calculated by semester and are subject to change. You need to sign up for a payment plan each semester. Contact the financial aid office to find out if there are any required fees or interest when using a payment plan.
7. You must accept all grants, scholarships, and student loans by logging into your student portal and accepting your aid for both terms. You must do this each year you are enrolled.
8. If you have questions about anything related to your financial aid offer, contact the Financial Aid Office at your college of choice.

Your school financial aid offer may change from year to year depending on many different factors, so be sure to carefully review each year.

Sample Financial Aid Offer

Understanding Your Financial Aid Offer



Collegetown University
Collegetown, Tennessee

1 Estimated Cost of Attendance \$24,052

DIRECT BILLABLE COSTS	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Spring</i>	<i>Total</i>
Tuition & Fees	\$4,713	\$4,713	\$9,426
Room/Housing	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$5,000
Meals/Meal Plan	\$2,213	\$2,213	\$4,426
INDIRECT COSTS (ESTIMATED)			
Books/Supplies	\$600	\$600	\$1,200
Transportation	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$2,000
Other Educational Costs/Misc.	\$500	\$500	\$1,000

Financial Aid \$21,395

2 GRANTS & SCHOLARSHIPS	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Spring</i>	<i>Total</i>
Federal Pell Grant	\$3,447	\$3,448	\$6,895
TSAA State Grant	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$2,000
TN Hope Scholarship	\$2,250	\$2,250	\$4,500
University Scholarship	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$2,500

3 LOANS

Federal Direct Subsidized Loan	\$1,750	\$1,750	\$3,500
Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$2,000

4 Total Estimated Balance \$2,657

Resources to Pay Your Balance

5 WORK STUDY

	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Spring</i>	<i>Total</i>
Federal Work Study	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$2,500

6 PAYMENT PLAN

Estimated Monthly Payments	\$266 10 payments/year	\$221 12 payments/year
----------------------------	---------------------------	---------------------------

7 ACCEPTING YOUR FINANCIAL AID AWARD

Log into your Collegetown Cougar student portal to accept, decline, or partially accept your financial aid award and/or set up a payment plan.

8 If you have any questions or concerns related to this award notice, please contact the financial aid office: financial@collegetown.edu

SECTION 5:

Scholarships



What is a Scholarship?

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

- Academic performance (also referred to as merit)
- Financial Need
- Athletic Performance
- Special talents and affiliations
- Cultural Background and ethnicity
- And more!

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

What scholarships are available from the State of Wyoming?

The state of Wyoming has the Hathaway scholarship. Most high schools in Wyoming have aligned their graduation requirements with Hathaway scholarship requirements so that most* Wyoming graduates should be eligible for some level of Hathaway scholarship.

*A student must be a US resident to receive a Hathaway Scholarship

Applying for Scholarships

Securing a scholarship fund is a great way to help pay for college costs. The following pages explain what scholarships are, how they work, and how you can apply.

Many scholarships are competitive, so this section provides advice on finding those that are right for you, crafting your application essay, and submitting applications, so that you can maximize your chances of getting the award.

The What, Where, and How of Scholarships

While the State of Wyoming and your college of choice may offer many scholarship programs, you may want to consider applying for additional scholarship opportunities, especially if you plan to attend a four-year public or private university. The information on the following pages provides you with resources to search for and apply for scholarships.

Where do I find scholarships that are right for me?

Most scholarship opportunities can be found online using powerful search engines based on a personal profile you complete on the site. When you apply to some colleges and universities, your college application also serves as a scholarship application for merit-based scholarships at those colleges. Most colleges and universities also administer numerous scholarships that require additional applications, so check the scholarship section of each college's website carefully. Local organizations also provide scholarship opportunities for students. Places of worship, philanthropic organizations, schools, etc., are excellent sources of scholarships. Watch for announcements regarding local scholarships.

How do I avoid scholarship scams?

Unfortunately, some people prey on aspiring college students with scholarship scams.

Here are some red flags to watch for:

- Winning a scholarship that you didn't apply for.
- Companies that request personal identification information, such as a Social Security number or bank account information.
- Scholarships that require a fee to apply. If you're unsure about a certain company or opportunity, check with your college/career counselor.

GEAR UP recommends starting with these scholarship resources, although there are MANY more!

- Local Community Foundation: Research to see if your community has a local community or education foundation that provides scholarships
- Fastweb: Scholarship Search Engine: www.fastweb.com
- Scholarships.com: Find money for college and learn about the entire financial aid process
- College Greenlight: www.collegegreenlight.com
- Hispanic Scholarship Fund: www.hsf.net/scholarships

Scholarship Website	Username	Password



It pays to be in GEAR UP!

In 2020-2021, GUWY participants received over \$2.2 million in scholarships and free college credit. Part of this funding comes from GUWY internal scholarships (known as the Federal Opportunity Award), as well as scholarships provided specifically to GUWY participants by Wyoming post-secondary institutions (Institutional Scholarships). Here's a quick overview:

Federal Opportunity Scholarship

- \$800/semester (up to 12 semesters)
- Can be used at ANY accredited college or university
- Can be used in and out of Wyoming
- Apply by June 1st

GEAR UP Scholarships at Wyoming Colleges

- Provided by the University of Wyoming or any Wyoming Community College
- Amount depends on the college you are attending and the number of enrolled credits (\$500-\$5,000/semester)
- Applications vary by institution
- Must be an active participant in GEAR UP Wyoming

For more information, speak with your local GEAR UP Wyoming representative, email gearupwy@uwyo.edu, or scan the QR code above.

University of Wyoming GEAR UP Institutional Scholarship Rubric

GEAR UP UW Institutional Scholarship Eligibility Rubric -- Effective for awards beginning 2021-2022 school year.	
<i>A student needs 12 points total to be eligible for GEAR UP UW Institutional scholarship. The points for each activity category can only be claimed once.</i> <i>(For example, if a student has attended more than one summer academy, they will only receive 6 points. Students may not claim the points in each category multiple times.)</i>	
Activity	Points awarded
Attended academic enrichment academy (Summer academy)	6
Attended a college visit (other than home site)	4
Completed two scholarship applications in addition to the GUUW Institutional	4
Attended 1.5 hours or more counseling/advising/academic planning/career counseling sessions throughout all GUWY participation	4
Attended an ACT Workshop <u>OR</u> successful completion of at least 2 hours of Magoosh ACT Prep	4
Attended a college visit at home site	2
Attended 1 hour or more of tutoring sessions	2
Attended 1 hour or more of GEAR UP programs/events	2
Attended 1 hour or more of financial aid counseling sessions or workshops	2
Parent/Guardian attended at least 1 parent engagement event	2
Successful completion of at least 1 dual or concurrent enrollment course	2
Successful completion of in-person job shadowing or 2 hours of Virtual Job Shadow	2
Meet with the GEAR UP UW Student Programming Coordinator virtually or in-person before High School Graduation	2

Top Scholarship Opportunities

Hathaway Scholarship

The Hathaway Scholarship is a tiered scholarship for Wyoming high schoolers. Hathaway awards may be used at the University of Wyoming or any Wyoming Community College. The different levels of Hathaway are determined by a combination of GPA and ACT scores. Students must also complete a standard array of courses to be eligible for any level of Hathaway award. For more information visit hathawayscholarship.org.

Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE)

The Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) is a regional tuition savings agreement. WUE enables students from Wyoming (and other participating states) to enroll as nonresidents in 160+ participating public colleges and universities and pay 150% or less of the enrolling institution's resident tuition. Students apply directly to their college of choice and may need to request the WUE rate when applying for admissions. There may be additional eligibility requirements to qualify for WUE rates, and awards are first come first serve (so apply early!). For more information visit wue.wiche.edu.

Daniels Fund

The Daniels Scholarship Program provides four-year college scholarships for graduating high school seniors who demonstrate exceptional character, leadership, and commitment to serving their communities. The Daniels Scholarship Program is unique in that it values character over academic achievements. Applications must be submitted online between September 15 and October 15. The application is lengthy, so do not wait until the last minute to complete it. If chosen for the next round, applicants will then be asked to submit essay question responses and letters of recommendation between October 24 and November 15. Finalists will be notified in January and will be invited to attend in-person interviews in February or March. Winners are announced in late March. Recipients receive four years of full funding for their education (including tuition, room and board, and a year abroad if they choose to study abroad). The Daniels Scholarship can be used at any college in the United States. Newly initiated scholars attend a conference the June before they begin college and have access to a support network of other Daniels Scholars and support advisors. danielsfund.org/scholarships/daniels-scholarship-program/overview

University of Wyoming Trustees' Scholars Award

To be considered for this award, a student must complete their application to the University of Wyoming by November 1 of their senior year. Based on GPA, test scores, and academic rigor, some students will be invited to submit a resume and complete short-answer questions (due December 20). Selected students will then be invited for interviews, and the finalists will be announced in February. Recipients of this award will have a four-year scholarship for tuition, mandatory fees, and university room and board. The Trustees' Scholar Award can only be used at the University of Wyoming.

Need-Blind Colleges and Other Resources

Need-Blind Colleges

The term need-blind means that a college does not consider an applicant's ability to pay when evaluating your application. Some need-blind colleges will cover 100% of a student's financial needs without loans.

For more information on colleges with need-blind admissions visit

cappex.com/articles/match-fit/need-blind-admission-colleges

QuestBridge

QuestBridge is a national nonprofit organization that connects high achieving, low-income students to the nation's leading colleges and other opportunities. QuestBridge partners with 48 renowned colleges across the United States to provide students with generous financial assistance at these partner schools. Undocumented high school seniors are eligible to apply and receive a four-year, full-ride scholarship to a top-ranked partner school. The National College Match application opens during the summer and closes on September 27. The QuestBridge application serves as both an application for admission and a scholarship application. Here is the timeline for QuestBridge

September 27 (of your senior year) – Complete and submit your QuestBridge application.

October 13 – Rank up to 15 college partners.

October 19 – Finalists are notified.

November 1 – Finalists submit Match requirements.

December 1 – Finalists who ranked colleges find out if they matched

December 11 – Submit QuestBridge Regular Decision Form to be considered for admission and generous financial aid to additional college partners.

Fall 2023 – Finalists attending college partners join the QuestBridge Scholars Network.

Students selected as finalists will continue through the match process. If you receive a Match Scholarship your entire cost of attendance (tuition, room and board, books, supplies, and travel expenses) will be covered.

Non-finalists can continue to apply to QuestBridge partner schools using their Regular Decision forms. Once matched to a college, QuestBridge scholars join a supportive network of students and a network of additional resources. For more information about this opportunity and to start your application visit:

Questbridge.org/high-school-students/national-college-match

Writing a Personal Statement

Many college and scholarship applications require an essay or personal statement, but it can be hard to know where to start. Here are some do's and don'ts for writing a memorable personal statement:

Choose a topic that will highlight YOU

- DON'T focus on the great aspects of a particular college, the amount of dedication it takes to be a doctor, or the number of extracurricular activities you took part in during high school.
- DO share your personal story and thoughts. Take a creative approach and highlight areas that aren't covered in other parts of the application, like your high school records
- DON'T try to cover too many topics. This will make the essay sound like a resume that doesn't provide any insight into your personality.
- DO focus on one aspect of yourself so the readers can learn more about who you are. Remember that the readers must be able to find your main idea and follow it from beginning to end. Ask a parent or teacher to read just your introduction and tell you what he or she thinks your essay is about.

Show, don't tell

- DON'T simply state a fact to get an idea across, such as "I like to surround myself with people with a variety of backgrounds and interests."
- DO include specific details, examples, and reasons to develop your ideas. For the example above, describe a situation when you were surrounded by various types of people. What were you doing? With whom did you talk? What did you take away from the experience?

Use your voice

- DON'T rely on phrases or ideas that people have used many times before. These could include statements like, "There is so much suffering in the world that I feel I have to help people." Avoid overly formal or business-like language, and don't use unnecessary words.
- DO write in your voice. For the above example, you could write about a real experience that made you feel you had to take action.
- DON'T plagiarize. Admissions officers will be able to tell.

Ask a teacher, GEAR UP staff, or parent to proofread

- DON'T turn your essay in without proofreading it, and don't rely only on your computer's spell check to catch mistakes.
- DO ask a teacher or parent to proofread your essay to catch mistakes. You should also ask the person who proofreads your essay if the writing sounds like you.

Writing a Standout Essay

Scholarship applications often require applicants to write a short (one to two page) essay in response to specific prompts. Examples include the following:

- If you had the authority to change your school in a positive way, what specific changes would you make?
- Describe how you have demonstrated leadership ability both in and out of school.
- Pick an experience from your own life and explain how it has influenced your development.

The tips below can help you get started on a standout essay. Don't forget that your English teacher is a great resource.

Introduction (first paragraph)

Tip: Provide an overview of what you will discuss in the essay; be sure it is responsive to the essay prompt. If the essay is about you, give a brief description of your experiences, aspirations, family background, etc. Touch on why you want the scholarship.

Body (paragraphs two to three)

Tip: Go into more detail on one of the topics listed in the first paragraph. For example, elaborate on your previous experiences, family, and financial situation, volunteer work, employment, academic career, future goals, college plans, etc.

Conclusion (last paragraph)

Tip: Close your essay with a wrap-up of why you should be considered for the scholarship and how your goals match the organization's goals. Avoid stating, "In conclusion..." and don't regurgitate what you wrote in earlier paragraphs.

Remember that all scholarship and college admission applications are different, so you will have to craft your essay to meet specific requirements and the expectations of the scholarship awarding organization. Look closely at the question or prompt on the application and research the organization giving the scholarship so that you can tailor your essay.

Remember to be yourself!
Essays serve as a glimpse into
how your mind works and
how you view the world.

Proofread and Revise Your Essay

It is important to take the time to proofread and revise your essay before submitting it. To make your essay truly stand out, ask yourself the following questions, adapted from Rebecca Joseph, Ph.D.:

1. **Does your essay start with a story that hooks us in the first paragraph?**
2. **If you start in the past, do you get to the present very quickly?**
Scholarship committees want to know about the recent you. Great essays can start more recently and weave in past events.
3. **If you are writing about your community or family, do you share about yourself or are you more focused on telling the stories of other people?**
4. **Do you only tell one story and not try to tell your entire life story?**
5. **If you are writing about an obstacle or challenge you've overcome, do you get to how you have responded and made a difference in the life of your community by the second or third paragraph of the essay?**
Scholarship committees want to know who you are and how you make an impact by drawing upon your obstacles or challenges.
6. **Do you have a metaphor that goes through the entire piece?**
Does this metaphor reveal who you are and what you offer to potential colleges? You can embed this metaphor throughout your piece.
7. **Can I close my eyes and picture your story?**
Does it make you sound unique and not like anyone else applying? Can I see your leadership and initiative and the power of what you will offer a college?
8. **Endings – Do you end with a bang?**
Do you make it clear by the end that you have goals and aspirations that drive you? Do you end up leaving the reader wanting to get to know you more?

Letters of Recommendation

Many of your applications – to schools, for scholarships and jobs – will require that you provide letters of recommendation. A teacher, counselor, GEAR UP staff, coach, supervisor, or any other adult who will be able to share with the selection committee why you deserve to be chosen may write these letters.

Consider someone who can discuss your character, strengths, and challenges; someone who knows you and has experience interacting with you. If you need more than one letter for the same application, select individuals familiar with different aspects of your life to write them (e.g., one teacher, your supervisor at work, and your coach.)

Who might you ask for a letter of recommendation?

Name	Relationship	Years Known	Email	Phone Number

Always ask the individual ahead of time if they would be willing to write a recommendation letter for you. You do not want to miss an application deadline because the person writing your letter was too busy. Give them at least **one month's** notice. (The more time you can give, the better.)

What should you provide for your reference?

- A resume that includes: your honors, awards, athletic involvement, community service, and academic record
- If a specific form or format for their letter of recommendation is required, provide the form or specifications
- Pre-addressed and stamped envelope if the letter needs to be mailed
- Information about the scholarship and the organization awarding the scholarship

Follow up at least a week before the deadline to ensure they don't need any additional information from you.

Always write a thank you note to anyone who writes a letter for you. Letters of recommendation take time, and people put a lot of thought and effort into them. You do not want to take them for granted.

Recommendation Request Form

Student name: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Letter of recommendation is due by: _____

This is a recommendation for: _____

Please address the letter of recommendation to:

Name of Organization: _____

To the attention of: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

My resume is attached. Additionally, the information below may be useful in your preparation of this letter of recommendation for me.

Name of scholarship and awarding organization: _____

Information about the award/organization: _____

Some experiences we have shared: _____

My aspirations: _____

☐ Please call or email me when the letter is complete and ready to pick up

☐ Please mail the letter in the prepared envelope I have provided

☐ Please send the letter via email to _____

Thank you in advance for your time and for agreeing to recommend me.

Scholarship Application Tracking

Tracking Scholarship Applications						
Name of Scholarship	Items needed to apply (e.g. essay, recommendations, transcripts, applications, etc.). Highlight each when complete	\$ Amount	Deadline	Notes	Date Submitted	Date/Amount Received
GEAR UP Opportunity	Online Application Complete FAFSA	\$800	June 1			

SECTION 6:

Undocumented Students and Other Special Circumstances



A Pathway to College for ALL Students

If you want to continue your education beyond high school, your citizenship status should not hold you back. Attending a university, community college, or technical school is within your grasp. If you are not documented, however, your path through the application and financing process will differ from other students.

There are many variables to consider when you are deciding which college to attend and figuring out what the cost will be. While answers about residency, tuition, and scholarship eligibility are not always simple, this section provides general information on resources available to help you find a school and pay for your education.

Who is included in the term “undocumented”?

The term “undocumented” broadly includes all immigrants who reside in the United States without legal status.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Students: Qualifying individuals who were unlawfully brought to the US before they turned 16 are protected from deportation and receive a work permit. The DACA act provides them the temporary right to live, study and work in America legally. Eligible students must apply to receive DACA protections, and they must be renewed every two years. You can find more information or file your claim at uscis.gov/DACA.

***New applications are currently closed.**

Entered with Legal Status but Overstayed: Individuals who entered the United States with legal status (e.g. student visa) and then remained in the country after their ‘duration of status’ date or after their visa expired.

Are Currently in the Process of Legalizing: Individuals who are pursuing legalization but currently have no legal status.

Resources for Additional Information

College Board	collegeboard.com
Immigrants Rising	immigrantsrising.com
Mexican American Legal Defense Education Fund	maldef.org
National Immigration Law Center	nilc.org
Pew Hispanic Center	pewhispanic.org
Presidents’ Alliance on Higher Education & Immigration	presidentsalliance.org
United We Dream	unitedwedream.org

Four Things You Need to Know about College

If you're a high school student who is undocumented, you probably have a lot of questions about going to college. Here are some important facts;

1. You CAN go to college

The first thing you should know is that no federal law prevents U.S. colleges from admitting undocumented students. Only a few states have placed any kind of restrictions on undocumented students attending public colleges and universities. In Wyoming, all students can attend public colleges or universities, but the state prohibits in-state tuition rates for undocumented students. In most cases, colleges set their own rules for admitting undocumented students, so you should research the policies of the colleges you are interested in attending.

Undocumented students may be eligible to pay 150% of the in-state tuition rate at the University of Wyoming through the Western Undergraduate Exchange (wiche.edu).

You CAN attend a Wyoming college or university!

2. You are not alone.

You're the one who will have to put in the work it takes to get to college – but building a support network is key. Start with your family. Make sure they know you want to attend college and talk with them about selecting and paying for college.

You can also seek advice from trusted teachers and counselors at your high school. Along with guiding you, they might be able to put you in touch with other undocumented students who have successfully enrolled in college.

3. You can find a college that fits you.

As you look for colleges that match your wants and needs, you might want to find out if the colleges you're interested in have programs, student organizations, or centers that support first-generation immigrant students.

4. You can find resources to help you.

This section of the guide will provide you with general information on selecting, applying for, and paying for college. There are many other resources available for undocumented students.

Questions and Answers about Paying for College

If you are an undocumented student, paying for college may look different than other students. Here are some common questions and answers about paying for college.

- **Do colleges offer financial aid or scholarships to undocumented students?**

Yes, some do. Private colleges often have special funds available. To apply for this financial aid, you may have to fill out the CSS/Financial Aid Profile or the college's forms. Check with the admission or financial aid office at each college you are interested in to find out its requirements.

- **Am I eligible for scholarships?**

Yes, you just need to find the ones that you qualify for. Start by talking to your guidance counselor and checking out the Scholarship Resources page on the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) at maldef.org and scholarshipsaz.org. There are many scholarship opportunities, and some private scholarship organizations allow undocumented students to apply. There are even a few scholarships specifically for undocumented students. Be sure to look into local scholarships offered by community groups such as the Kiwanis that might be open to all students living in the local community. [See page 74 for information about QuestBridge and need-blind colleges.](#)

- **Can I get federal financial aid?**

No. You cannot get federal financial aid unless you're a U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen. This means you should not fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

- **Can I get a Pell Grant?**

No. Pell Grants are a type of federal financial aid.

- **Do I pay the in-state or out-of-state rate at the public college in my home state? What about in a different state?**

Wyoming law currently prohibits in-state tuition rates for DACA students and undocumented students. DACA and undocumented students will pay the "non-resident" tuition rate. For up-to-date information on the status of tuition rates for DACA students, contact the colleges' financial aid or residency offices.

Also, tuition rates at many private colleges across the country do not differ between in-state and out-of-state students. Because of these differences in policies by college, you will want to call each institution to determine if you qualify for in-state tuition rates. Upon admission, it is very important to review financial aid award letters carefully.

In some cases, private colleges or out-of-state colleges may give students better offers than public colleges in Wyoming.

FAFSA Information

The FAFSA process differs for DACAmented students, citizen students with undocumented parents, and undocumented students.

DACAmented Students

DACAmented students are NOT eligible for federal aid, and in Wyoming, are not eligible for state aid either. However, if a college or scholarship requests it, a DACAmented student can file the FAFSA to demonstrate their financial need for institutional and private scholarships.

DACAmented students can use their SSN to create an FSA ID and complete the FAFSA. During the FAFSA process, it is important to represent your status accurately. Students should select “no, I am not a US Citizen or eligible non-citizen”.

Keep in mind that students will receive a rejection letter because they do not qualify for aid, but they will still get an ECT. The EFC can be used to demonstrate their need for institutional and private scholarships.

Citizen Students with Undocumented Parents

Your parent(s) citizenship status does not affect your ability to complete the FAFSA or whether you are eligible for Federal Financial Aid.

If students have an undocumented parent, they must manually enter parental income information into the FAFSA. Do not use the IRS Data Retrieval tool.

Because undocumented parents do not have an SSN, they cannot create an FSA ID. You should enter all zeros on the FAFSA where it asks for parent SSN. Parents must print, sign, and mail in the signature page, not the whole application. The bar code on the signature page will match the student's application.

Undocumented Students

Students without an SSN cannot submit a FAFSA. Some scholarships request that students print out the FAFSA and submit it to demonstrate financial need. The College Board's CSS Profile can also serve as a tool to demonstrate need.

cssprofile.collegeboard.org

Source: Scholarships A-Z

State Policies Affecting Undocumented Students in Higher Education

Though it is traditionally less expensive to attend school in the state you have established residence, that may not be the case for undocumented students. Certain states have policies and legislation that may make them more affordable for you. There are also Need-Blind colleges that may cover the entire cost of attendance for admitted students.

In-State Tuition and Financial Aid

Generally, to receive the in-state tuition discount, undocumented students must attend a school in a state for a certain number of years and graduate high school or obtain a GED in that state. The chart below shows tuition equity laws and policies that allow undocumented students to qualify for in-state tuition in their state of residence.

To qualify for the benefits of living in a certain state, you must be a resident of that state. The state where you live full-time is considered your state of residence. It is difficult to establish residency in a state if you are a dependent of someone who lives in a different state. Steps to establishing residency in a state can include obtaining a driver's license or ID card within the state, starting a local bank account, and filing state income taxes in the state.

State Policies on Undocumented Students	
States offering in-state tuition through legislation	California, Colorado, Connecticut, District of Colombia, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington
States offering state financial aid or institutional scholarships at public colleges or universities	California, Colorado, District of Colombia, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, and Washington
States that provide DACA recipients with access to in-state tuition and some public institutions	Idaho, Maine, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Ohio
States that provide access to at least some public institutions	Michigan, Arizona, Delaware, Indiana, Iowa, Nevada, Pennsylvania
States that actively bar enrollment in all or certain public institutions <i>*may allow DACA</i>	Alabama*, Georgia*, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina*, Tennessee, Wisconsin
States without explicit legislation on tuition or state financial aid	Alaska, Arkansas, Louisiana, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, West Virginia, Wyoming

Professional and Occupations Licensure

In addition to completing your educational requirements, some careers will also require professional licensure to work in the field. When deciding on a career path, you may need to consider whether you will be eligible to take the professional exams (Bar exam, state board exams, etc.) associated with your career choice. Access to professional licenses for undocumented individuals will vary depending on the state.

The need for and access to a professional license to work in the field may affect the career you choose to pursue, it may affect where you attend college, or where you choose to live after graduating high school.

State Policies on Professional Licensure for Undocumented Individuals	
States with policies that allow individuals to obtain occupational licensure in all professions regardless of their immigration status, provided that they meet all other requirements	California, Colorado, Illinois, Nevada, New Jersey
States with policies that allow undocumented individuals to obtain occupational licensure in one or more professions regardless of their immigration status, provided that they meet all other requirements	New Mexico, Oregon
States with policies that allow individuals with work authorization , such as DACA recipients, to obtain occupational licensure in one or more professions that require licensure	Arkansas, Connecticut, Florida, Indiana, Mississippi, Nebraska, New York, Pennsylvania, Utah, West Virginia
States with NO policies identified that actively expand access to occupations licensure for individuals who do not have legal immigration status	Alaska, Arizona, Delaware, District of Columbia, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, Wyoming
States with policies that actively prohibit individuals without legal status from accessing occupational licensure in most or all professions that require licensure	Alabama

Source: highedimmigrationportal.org/states

Going on a Religious Mission

If you choose to go on a religious mission before attending college or at another point during your college career, there are some additional steps you will need to complete.

Should I apply for college if I plan to go on a mission immediately following high school?

Yes! Even if you are planning on going on a mission as soon as you graduate, you should still take all the steps you would if you were not going on a mission. You may get your call immediately, it could take months to get your call, or your mission could start months after you receive your call. There is always the chance that a physical or mental issue could prevent you from serving as you intended. The preparation process for going on a mission can sometimes take months. No matter the case, it is best that you apply for colleges and scholarships during your senior year.

If you do get your mission call, there are a few items you will need to complete.

Deferring your college enrollment

You should contact admissions at the school you plan to attend as soon as you receive your mission call. Each institution will have its own policy, but usually, you can defer your enrollment one time without needing to reapply to the college when you return. Be sure to ask if you need to contact the financial aid department to defer any scholarships from the college.

Scholarships

If you have been awarded scholarships, you should contact the awarding organization to inform them you will be going on a mission and wish to defer your scholarship. They may ask for a copy of your call letter for confirmation.

You do not need to do anything to defer federal financial aid (Pell grants, etc.).

GEAR UP

You should let your GEAR UP coordinator know that you are applying to go on a mission. They will continue to assist you with your college and scholarship application process. When you receive your call letter, you should provide a copy to your GEAR UP coordinator. Once you have completed your mission, you should notify your GEAR UP coordinator, and they can help you reenroll in college.

SECTION 7:

Pursuing Education through the Military



Military Service

If you are interested in joining an ROTC program or attending a military academy, this section includes resources that may be helpful as you prepare. In addition to the courses for your program of choice, you will participate in ROTC leadership classes that will help prepare you for a military career after graduation.

General Information About Pursuing the Military While in College

America's Service Academies

Federal military academies provide learners with a complete postsecondary education and leadership training. In return for a four-year degree financially covered by the government, graduates commit to serving in the military after finishing their training. Enrollees also typically receive free room and board during their studies. Typical postgraduate obligations ask for five years of service.

Students can choose from five federal military academies, each representing a branch of the armed forces. While graduates tend to enlist with their academy's parent organization, they can also serve other segments of the military. To ensure they enroll only the top candidates, these academies have challenging admission requirements. Enrollees who do not complete their education or their service obligations typically need to repay their tuition to the government.

Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC)

ROTC is a college program offered at over 1,700 colleges and universities across the United States that prepares young adults to become officers in the U.S. military. In exchange for a paid college education and a guaranteed post-college career, cadets commit to serve in the military after graduation. Each service branch has its own take on the ROTC, and universities that offer ROTC may offer it for one, some, or all of the military branches.

First, you must be accepted to a college that has an ROTC program. Joining an ROTC program does not mean that you are automatically obligated to serve in the military. Each branch will have different procedures, but usually, you will complete at least one year in college and pass a physical before you have the option to contract. Once you contract, you may be eligible for a monthly living stipend. You may also apply for additional scholarships after contracting.

Each military branch also has national scholarships through its respective ROTC program. These scholarships usually cover full tuition plus a living stipend. If you are awarded and accept a national scholarship, you are committing to serve for the length specified, often 4-6 years, after you graduate college.

More information about ROTC is available on these Websites:

todaysmilitary.com/training/rotc

bestcolleges.com/resources/rotc-programs

Qualification and Benefits

Mental and Physical Requirements

In order to contract, you will need to pass a physical examination and pass a fitness test. There are some medical conditions that may disqualify you from serving in the military.

A non-exhaustive list of conditions that may disqualify you includes:

- Chronic gastrointestinal issues (e.g., Celiac or Crohn's Disease)
- Severe allergies
- Asthma
- Diabetes
- Previous serious injuries that may affect your mobility (e.g., knee surgery)
- Flat feet
- Epilepsy
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Depression and/or anxiety disorders
- Hearing and/or Vision impairment

You should be honest with your recruiter and any medical professionals about your medical history.

Benefits

Scholarships

Acceptance into and participation in ROTC programs often means you will earn money while attending college. There are different tiers of scholarship awards as well as stipends. You may be awarded up to full tuition, a living stipend, and reimbursement for travel costs to your institution.

Officer Status

After you graduate from college and complete your ROTC requirements, you will be an officer. As an officer, you will usually have an increased salary and better housing options. Additionally, you will be eligible for continued promotions and specialized careers related to your college major.

SECTION 8:

Working While in College



Who is part of the workforce?

Whether you start your own business, are employed by someone else (part-time or full-time), or do occasional side jobs or “gigs” you are part of the workforce. It is important to track your employment experiences, references, and the skills you have acquired.

It is important to present yourself professionally when applying for a job, internship, or scholarship. This section contains tools and examples to help you put your best foot forward when pursuing employment while in college.

Entering the Workforce

When you plan to begin working, this section will help you get started. It can be beneficial to find a part-time job relevant to your field of study to help make connections in the industry and learn hands-on skills that you will need when you finish your degree and start your full-time career. There are many skills that can cross over between unrelated fields, so any work experience can be useful.

Internships

Internships give you the opportunity to gain work experience in your field of interest. Most frequently, internships are available to high school or college students. They may be paid or unpaid, and students may have the opportunity to earn class credit for their work. Your college advisor may be able to help you identify internship opportunities in your field.

Work Study

Work-study jobs are usually on campus and are very flexible to accommodate your class schedule. A work-study is a great way to make connections on campus with staff, faculty, and other students. Make sure to select “yes” to work-study on your FAFSA, even if you are not sure that you want to work during school. You are not obligated to take a job even if you select “yes.”

Whichever option you’re headed for, you’ll find valuable resources in the coming pages.

Most jobs that you apply for will require either a resume, an application, or perhaps both. Use the form on the next page to help you get organized. In the pages after that, you’ll find tips for creating your resume and cover letter, along with samples of each.

On the last page of this section, you will find a table for tracking your job applications – a helpful tool to ensure nothing falls through the cracks.

Balancing Work and School

Working while attending school is a reality for most college students. It is important to balance work with your studies so that your grades do not suffer. Most grants and scholarships require you to maintain a certain GPA, and you need to pass your classes to earn your degree.

You should treat your education like a full-time job. Make sure that your employer knows that you are not available during your class times. Don’t forget to schedule time to study and complete homework assignments in addition to the time you spend in the classroom. It is important to note that the last two weeks of the semester (dead week and finals week) often have a different schedule than the rest of the semester, so plan ahead and alert your supervisor of any changes to your availability.

Resume and Job Application Information

Fill out the form on this page, and you'll have all the information you need in one place to fill out job applications. You can also use these details as the basis for your resume.

Remember to keep your personal information confidential!

Academic history

Name of high school: _____

City and state of high school: _____

Dates attended: _____ Date of graduation: _____

Cumulative GPA: _____ ACT Score: _____ SAT Score: _____

Dual/Concurrent Classes _____

Athletics, Clubs, and Organizations				
(List your role/position each year)				
Name of Club/Team	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior

Community Service			
Name of Organization/Contact	Description of Volunteer Service	Number of Hours of Service	Date(s) of Service

Honors and Awards		
Name and Date of Award	Reason for Award/Honor	Sponsor

Work Experience (List most recent experience first)				
Start and End Date of Employment	Job Title	Company Name	Business Address	Duties

References			
Non-relatives whom potential employers can contact to explore whether you would be a good hire. Make sure to ask your references if they are willing to give you a reference before listing their name.			
Name	Title	Phone Number	Email

Creating a Resume

Both the content and format of your resume are important. It does not matter how great your work or life history is – if your resume is poorly formatted, hard to follow, or has typos, you will not be considered for employment. The sample provided on the next page is one clear, well-organized example you can follow.

The Basic Elements of a Resume

Heading: Include your name, address, email address, and phone number. Make it stand out and make an impression by using a large, bold font. Make sure your email is professional (not starwarsfan@hotmail.com or crzychik@aol.com, for example).

Education: List all degrees completed or in progress. As a high school student, include your GPA if it is 3.0 or above, and list courses that reflect your work ethic and high aspirations, such as AP or dual enrollment courses and any courses relevant to the position for which you are applying. After you complete your college degree, do not include your high school information.

Work Experience: Include your job title, the employer, the location (city and state, at minimum), and the dates of employment for each job listed. Include a brief description of your achievements/responsibilities. Ideally, paid work and unpaid work (community service) are listed separately.

Achievements: Optional – List any honors or awards that you have received. Make sure to include the name of the organization that bestowed the honor/award and the date. If including scholarships, only include those based on merit, not financial need.

Activities: Optional – List any activities that you have participated in during high school. (e.g., clubs or organizations, sports, etc.). If you have held any leadership positions, make sure to list those too!

Personal References: Be sure to get permission from anyone you use as a reference before using their name and provide them with a copy of your resume. Do not use relatives as references. References can be on a separate sheet of paper, formatted just like your resume.

Sample Resume

Jessica B. Fletcher

3328 West Parker Ave
Mytown, WY 82000
307-555-5555
Jessica.fletcher@email.com

Education

May, 2022 High School Diploma with 3.37 GPA, ABC High School
Mytown, WY

Special Courses

Spanish I-III, Marketing, AP Chemistry, AP Computer Science

Work Experience

September 2019-Present Pharmacy Sales Associate, Walgreens, Mytown, WY

Duties include cashiering, customer service in English and Spanish, answering the phone and assisting or transferring callers as needed, generating cleanup, and other duties as assigned.

May-August 2019 Order-Taker/Cashier, McDonald's, Mytown, WY

Duties included accurately taking customer orders in English and Spanish, entering them into the electronic order system, handling customer payments including providing correct change, and handling credit card transactions.

Extracurricular Activities & Awards

2019 – current S.A.D.D (Students Against Drunk Driving) – member
2019 – 2020 Club R.I.F. (Reading is Fundamental) – Secretary
2018 – 2020 Beta Club (Student Service Club) – member
August 2019 “I Care” Customer Service Award – McDonald's

Community Service

St. Mary's Food Bank – canned food drive, November 2018, November 2019
Sunday School Teacher – pre-school class, 2017-2020

References

Ms. Wonder Woman, History Teacher, ABC High School, (307) 666-5555, wonder.woman@ABC.org

Mr. Cowboy Joe, Manager, McDonald's, (307) 777-5555, c.joe@mcd.com

Creating a Cover Letter

If you have the opportunity to add a cover letter to an employment application, do it! It gives the employer a better sense of your communication skills, as well as a sense of your personality and enthusiasm for the job. Some employers require a cover letter.

A cover letter should not be a restatement of your resume. Use your cover letter to provide specific examples of the skills you have and how they relate to the position you are for which you are applying. This is especially important if your previous work experience is not directly related to the position you hope to attain.

This section provides tips for writing an excellent cover letter.

The Basic Elements of a Cover Letter

1. **Greeting:** Address your cover letter to the proper person.
2. **Opening:** Write a personable, inviting opening paragraph that highlights how your skills are a perfect fit for the job.
3. **Hook:** Highlight your achievements as they relate to the job for which you're applying.
4. **Skills:** Highlight additional relevant skills, such as computer languages or certifications.
5. **Close:** Briefly recap your strengths as a candidate and include your contact information.

Note – If a cover letter is required to apply for a job and you don't include one, your resume or application, no matter how good, will not even be considered.

Sample Cover Letter

Jessica B. Fletcher

3328 West Parker Ave, Mytown, WY 82000 • 307-555-5555 • jessica.fletcher@email.com

Ms. Rhonda West,
Customer Service Manager
Acme, Inc.
123 Corporate Blvd.
Sometown, WY 85000

Re: Customer Service Representative Opening (Ref. ID: CS300)

Dear Ms. West:

I was excited to see your opening for a customer service representative, and I hope to be invited for an interview.

I recently graduated from high school where I was a member of the Beta Club for two years. Beta Club members plan and complete at least one service project each month, and through those projects I gained considerable experience working with and for people from all walks of life.

After school and on weekends, for more than two years, I have been working in positions that require exceptional customer service skills. At McDonalds, I was awarded the “I Care” Customer Service Award after just three months in the position. At Walgreens, because of my fluence in Spanish, I am regularly called upon to assist Spanish-speaking customers. Based upon the posting for this position, I believe you will find my skills in this area very useful to your company.

Although I have not been out of high school long, in the part-time positions I have held, as my supervisors will attest, I have already demonstrated the ability to resolve a variety of issues (such as billing disputes and dissatisfied or angry customers), and I consistently met all goals set by my employers. I have also demonstrated a strong sense of responsibility and maturity as evidenced by my successful completion of rigorous AP courses, leadership roles in extracurricular activities, and my high GPA.

In addition to my work experience, I gained considerable customer service and communication skills during my tenure as secretary of the Reading Is Fundamental Club at my high school. In that role, I regularly contacted elementary schools, nonprofits, and after school programs for youth to discuss possibilities for collaboration. After identifying ways in which our goals overlapped and how working together could be mutually beneficial to our organizations, I worked with the RIF sponsor and other officers to work out the important details to ensure success.

I also bring to the table strong computer proficiencies in Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access. I am confident my comfort with computer and various database operations will allow me to quickly learn any proprietary software your company may use. Please see the accompanying resume for details of my experience and education.

I am confident that I can offer you the customer service, communication, and problem-solving skills you are seeking. I will follow up in a few days to answer any preliminary questions you may have. In the meantime, you may reach me at (307) 555-5555 to schedule an interview. Thank you for your time – I look forward to learning more about this opportunity!

Sincerely,

Jessica Fletcher

Tracking Applications								
Company Name	Role	Pay Rate	Link to Job Posting/Web site	Date Applied	Contact Name, Number, Email	Response	Interview Date/Time	Offer

SECTION 9:

Glossary and Additional Resources



Glossary

There are a lot of acronyms and potentially unfamiliar terms on the road to college. Here are a few that you might be wondering about. If there's one you don't see listed here, ask your GEAR UP staff, or check with your college/career counselor for assistance.

2+2 Program: A postsecondary pathway in which students begin at the community college where they complete general education requirements over 2 or 3 years and then transfer to a university (for the remaining 1 or 2 years) to complete a bachelor's degree.

ACT/SAT: Standardized college entrance exams. Many colleges and universities ask for the ACT or SAT scores as part of the application process.

Admission: Notification from the college to which you applied that you are accepted. Students must respond by the given deadline to inform the college if they will accept the offer. Students accepted to multiple schools will want to compare their financial aid packages to help them decide which school to attend.

Advisor: A college staff member or professor who helps a student plan and complete a course of study at a college or university.

Application: A form that must be filled out to be considered for entry into a university, community college, or technical school, to be considered for a scholarship, and in many cases, to be considered for a job.

Associate Degree: A degree granted after successful completion of a course of study requiring approximately 60 credits, typically by a community or junior college. Full-time community college students taking 15 credits per semester can generally finish an associate degree in two years (also known as AA or AS degree, short for Associate of Arts and Associate of Science)

Award Letter: Notice from a school detailing the amount and type of financial aid that the school is willing and able to provide a student.

Bachelor's Degree: A degree earned for a course of study that normally requires 120 to 130 credits, involving specific classes related to the student's major. Full-time students ideally complete a bachelor's degree in four years, although changing majors, transferring institutions, taking fewer than 15 credit hours per semester, and/or taking courses that don't count toward one's declared major can make it take longer (also known as BA or BS, short for Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science).

Certificate: An official document attesting to a particular fact or accomplishment. In the postsecondary realm, students complete a series of specified courses, and sometimes an internship and typically pass a test to obtain certificates in specific trades or areas of expertise required to work in those fields. Examples include welding, medical technology, auto mechanics, massage therapy, and court stenography.

Community College: A public postsecondary institution that offers courses to residents in the surrounding area. Students may attend community colleges to obtain an associate degree or technical certificates or may take courses there towards a bachelor's degree, before transferring to a four-year university (2+2 or 3+1 pathway). Students can also take courses to enhance their skills in an area or just for fun.

Cost of Attendance (COA): The total cost of going to college, including tuition, fees, room and board, books, transportation, and personal expenses.

DREAMers: Individuals who would have qualified under the DREAM Act are often referred to as DREAMers. The term has been used to define individuals in the U.S. who were brought to the country at an early age without documentation but have assimilated to the U.S. culture and have been educated by U.S. school systems. Not all immigrant youth identify as DREAMers.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA): A kind of administrative relief from deportation. The policy allows young children (under the age of 16) who came to the U.S. without documentation and have been educated by U.S. school systems, the opportunity to remain in the U.S. by following specific guidelines.

Early Action: When a student applies for admission to a college by an early deadline (before the regular admission deadline) and receives notice of acceptance, denial, or deferment with no obligation to the university to enroll.

Early Decision: When a student applies for admission to a college by an early deadline (before the regular admission deadline) with the understanding that if accepted, the student must enroll in that school. Students should apply for early decision only to their first-choice school.

Expected Family Contribution (EFC): The portion of a family's financial resources that should be available to pay for college based on a federal formula using the information on the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid).

FAFSA: The Free Application for Federal Student Aid is an online form submitted annually by current and prospective college students (undergraduate and graduate) in the United States to determine eligibility for student financial aid. Students who are eligible to file the FAFSA should complete it every year.

Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID: A username and password used by current and prospective students and their parents to log into U.S. Department of Education websites including the FAFSA website. The ID is used to sign documents electronically (it has the same legal status as a written signature.)

Fee Waiver: Permission to not pay a fee based on meeting some requirement or condition. In the postsecondary realm, waivers of college application fees and ACT or SAT fees are often available for students based on financial need.

Financial Aid Package: The amount and types of federal, state, and college aid that a college/university offers to a student it has accepted to offset the cost of attendance at their school. Also referred to as Award Letter.

Four-Year University: A postsecondary institution/school that offers undergraduate (bachelor's) degrees. Many four-year universities also offer graduate (master's) degrees.

Full-Time Student: A student who enrolls in at least a minimum number (determined by your college or university) of credit hours or courses.

Grade Point Average (GPA): The average of all the courses you have received in high school or in college on a four-point scale.

Ivy League: A group of long-established colleges and universities in the eastern U.S. having high academic and social prestige. It includes Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Columbia, Dartmouth, Cornell, Brown, and the University of Pennsylvania.

Letter of Recommendation: Letters of endorsement (often from high school teachers/staff) written on a student's behalf during the college and/or job application process.

Major: A concentration of study focused on a discipline, which requires the completion of specific courses.

Minor: A college or university student's declared secondary academic discipline during undergraduate studies.

Need-Blind College: A college where applicants are evaluated without any consideration of a student's ability to pay tuition and fees. Some need-based colleges will cover a large portion or all the cost of attendance for students with financial needs.

Orientation: A meeting/event many colleges offer (hours or days-long) where incoming students and parents/guardians receive information about registering for classes, meet their advisors, and learn about school resources and policies.

Pell Grant: Money from the U.S. government to support a student's education that does not have to be paid back. Pell grants are awarded to U.S. citizens and legal residents based on financial need and timeliness of completing the FAFSA.

Placement Test: Colleges and universities may require students to take tests to determine the appropriate level for college math and/or English class.

Postsecondary Education: The broadest term to describe any education beyond high school, including community college, university, technical school, etc.

Residence Hall: A building primarily providing living/sleeping quarters for large numbers of students. Also known as a dorm or dormitory and often referred to as "on-campus housing".

Resident: A student who lives in and meets the residency requirements for the state where a public university is located. Tuition at public universities often is more expensive for non-residents.

Resume: A brief account of a person's education, qualifications, and previous experience, typically sent with a job application.

ROTC: Program to train college students to become officers in the U.S. Armed Forces. Stands for Reserve Officers' Training Corps.

Room & Board: The cost of a room in a dormitory and a dining hall meal plan at a college or university.

Scholarship: Money to support a student's education that does not have to be paid back. Scholarships are awarded based on academic, athletic, artistic, or other types of achievements, affiliations, or competitions.

Student Aid Report (SAR): The SAR summarizes the information included on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The SAR provides the Expected Family Contribution (EFC), which is used to determine whether a student is eligible for a federal Pell grant and other federal aid.

Student Loan: Money a student borrows to help pay for college which must be paid back. Subsidized loans are offered to students who qualify through the FAFSA. The federal government pays the interest while the student is in college. There are also unsubsidized loans where interest begins accruing as soon as the loan is accepted.

Summer Bridge Programs: Programs offered by many universities and some community colleges which occur in the summer between high school graduation and fall transition to college, and offer students accelerated, focused learning opportunities that can help better prepare them to succeed in college.

Technical School: A general term used for a college that provides mostly employment preparation skills for trained labor, such as welding and culinary arts. These programs generally take no more than two years to complete. Examples include the Le Cordon Bleu Institute, Universal Technical Institute, and DeVry.

Transcript: An official academic record from a specific school. It lists when you attended, the courses you have completed, grades, and sometimes test scores. Universities, colleges, and technical schools usually require high school transcripts to be submitted as part of the application process.

TRiO Programs: Federal outreach and student support service programs at the middle school, high school, and college level to assist students with the understanding of basic college requirements, and to motivate students toward successful completion of postsecondary education.

Tuition: The amount of money charged for instruction/classes at postsecondary institutions (see also – cost of attendance).

Undeclared/Undecided: Term to describe a student who is unable or not ready to select a major at a college university. Colleges typically ask students to pick their major by the end of their sophomore year.

Work Study: A federal program that provides the opportunity for college students to work part-time jobs (often on the campus of the school they attend) to earn money to pay educational expenses. Students receive compensation in the form of a paycheck, much like a traditional job. Students must submit the FAFSA to be considered for work-study positions.

Recommendation Request Form

Student name: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Letter of recommendation is due by: _____

This is a recommendation for: _____

Please address the letter of recommendation to:

Name of Organization: _____

To the attention of: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

My resume is attached. Additionally, the information below may be useful in your preparation of this letter of recommendation for me.

Name of scholarship and awarding organization: _____

Information about the award/organization: _____

Some experiences we have shared: _____

My aspirations: _____

☐ Please call or email me when the letter is complete and ready to pick up

☐ Please mail the letter in the prepared envelope I have provided

☐ Please send the letter via email to _____

Thank you in advance for your time and for agreeing to recommend me.

GEAR UP Site Contact Information

College	Phone	Building Name	Address
Casper College	307-268-3036	Strausner Hall	125 College Drive, Casper, WY 82601
Central Wyoming College	307-855-2033		2660 Peck Ave., Riverton, WY 82501
Eastern Wyoming College	307-532-8269	Tibbet Building (Second floor)	3200 West C Street, Torrington, WY 82240
Laramie County Community College	307-778-1239	Crossroads Building	1400 C College Dr., Cheyenne, WY 82007
Northwest College	307-754-7822	Orendorff Building	231 W 6 th Street, Powell, WY 82435
NWCCD (Sheridan)	307-674-6446 (ext. 2009)	Whitney Building 168D	PO Box 1500, Sheridan, WY 82801
NWCCD (Gillette)	307-686-0254 (ext. 2829)	Technical Education Center 105E	300 W. Sinclair, Gillette, WY 82718
Western Wyoming Community College	307-382-1667	Room 1126	2500 College Dr., Box G302 Rock Springs, WY 82901
University of Wyoming	307-766-6733	Knight Hall (Third floor)	Dept. 3808 1000 E. University Ave., Laramie, WY 82071

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