

**CLASS OF  
2025**

**TN Achieves  
PARENT  
HANDBOOK**

**IN PARTNERSHIP  
WITH:**





On behalf of the tnAchieves Board of Directors and team, we are so excited to share the tnAchieves Parent/Guardian Handbook. This handbook is designed to ensure you are fully equipped to keep your student on track to begin college and to feel fully supported through a college credential.

This handbook is meant to help you navigate college with your student. It is important to note that all students receive their handbook at their mandatory TN Promise meeting. Make sure they are following its guidelines and advice.

Because we are the partnering organization to the TN Promise scholarship, you will find an emphasis on TN Promise in this handbook, although we know many students will make a college decision outside of TN Promise eligibility. Please encourage your student to remain TN Promise eligible by meeting the requirements – even if TN Promise is a plan B!

At tnAchieves, college means pursuing a degree or credential after high school. In other words, we want our students to find the right fit whether this is earning a certificate at a TCAT, an associates degree at a community college or a bachelor’s degree at a four-year institution. We believe all avenues of college are huge wins for your student!

Please reach out for assistance when needed. We want to support you while you are supporting your student. You can find contact information for our staff at [tnAchieves.org/contact!](https://tnAchieves.org/contact!)

My team and I look forward to being a part of this important time and supporting your family through this life-changing journey.

**KRISSY DEALEJANDRO**  
tnAchieves, President & CEO

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CLASS OF 2025  
TNACHIEVES STUDENT HANDBOOK

As you review the Parent/Guardian Handbook, you will see page references to the Student Handbook. **Scan the QR code to download a copy of the tnAchieves Student Handbook.**



College is for **EVERYONE!** There are many opportunities, resources and aid available to help students enroll. tnAchieves believes that there is a place in college in Tennessee for your student!

WHAT IS COLLEGE?

College is a great opportunity for students to pursue after high school graduation. Whether your student is planning to learn a skill by enrolling in a certificate program or move to a university to begin a bachelor’s degree, your student has made a great decision!

- **Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT)**
  - Students attend TCATs to gain mastery of a skill and enter the workforce quickly.
  - Most programs will be completed in 12-18 months.
- **Community College**
  - Students attend community colleges to earn associates degrees or certificate degrees.
  - Many students transfer to a public or private four-year college after the completion of their associates degree.
- **Four-Year College or University**
  - Students attend four-year colleges or universities to pursue associates or bachelor’s degrees.
  - Students can also continue their education in a graduate degree program at most four-year colleges and universities.

DEGREES AVAILABLE	TCAT	COMMUNITY COLLEGE	FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY
Certificate	✓	✓	
Associates		✓	✓
Bachelor’s			✓
Graduate			✓

FINANCIAL AID AVAILABLE			
TN Promise	✓	✓	✓*
TN Reconnect	✓	✓	
Tennessee HOPE		✓	✓
Wilder-Naifeh Technical Skills Grant	✓		
Tennessee Student Assistance Award (TSAA)	✓	✓	✓
Federal Pell Grant	✓	✓	✓
Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant	✓	✓	✓
Federal Work Study Program	✓	✓	✓

\*At a four-year institution, the TN Promise scholarship may not be last-dollar, meaning it may not fully cover all tuition and mandatory fees. The amount of funding a student receives will be based on the average amount of tuition and mandatory fees at a community college, which is estimated to be \$4,700. As a last-dollar scholarship, TN Promise will provide the remaining amount after Pell, HOPE and TSAA funds are applied. For example, if the average tuition and mandatory fees at a community college were \$4,700 per year and a student receives \$4,500 in HOPE funds each year but no other federal or state aid, TN Promise would provide \$200 to be applied toward tuition and fees at one of the eligible four-year institutions. A student must also be enrolled full-time in an associates degree program to remain eligible for TN Promise at an eligible four-year institution.

Students have the opportunity to pursue various types of undergraduate degree options at Tennessee colleges and universities. The list below outlines each type of degree option available and where students can earn them.

- 1

**CERTIFICATE DEGREE PROGRAMS**

A post-secondary credential that is designed for students who are looking for a short-term educational experience and wish to join the workforce quickly.

  - Certificate programs allow students to gain mastery of a specific skill such as welding, dental hygiene or practical nursing.
  - Students can pursue certificate degree programs at community colleges and Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCAT).
- 2

**ASSOCIATES DEGREE PROGRAMS**

An undergraduate degree that is achieved by completing at least 60 post-secondary credit hours.

  - Students can either enter the workforce upon completion or transfer to a four-year institution to complete their bachelor's degree.
  - Students can pursue associates degree programs at community colleges and select four-year colleges and universities.
- 3

**TENNESSEE TRANSFER PATHWAYS (TTP)**

A course of study that allows students to begin classes at a community college and earn an associates degree.

  - These credits transfer to a bachelor's degree program at any public university and some private universities in Tennessee.
  - Students can pursue Tennessee Transfer Pathways at community colleges.
- 4

**BACHELOR'S DEGREE PROGRAMS\***

An undergraduate degree that is achieved by completing at least 120 post-secondary credit hours.

  - Most students enter the workforce upon completion, while some students will continue their education in a graduate degree program.
  - Students can pursue bachelor's degree programs at four-year colleges and universities.

WHAT IS YOUR STUDENT'S COLLEGE PLAN?

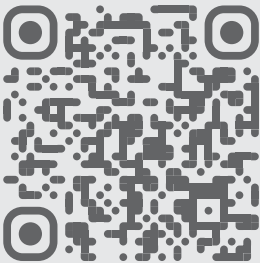
List your student's college choices in order of preference. Remember, it is best to apply to college sooner rather than later!

• First College Choice

• Plan C

COLLEGE EXPLORATION

The state of Tennessee has developed a tool to help students explore the state's wide variety of colleges and universities. Scan the QR code to visit CollegeForTN.org's College Finder.



The lists below contain the public and independent post-secondary institutions in Tennessee. It is important to keep in mind that not all colleges are TN Promise eligible. It is also important to note that TN Promise funding varies based on the type of institution your student is attending and the other sources of financial aid your student receives. For more details regarding TN Promise funding, please reference the tnAchieves Student Handbook or visit [tnAchieves.org/colleges](https://tnAchieves.org/colleges).

TN PROMISE INSTITUTIONS

Tennessee Community Colleges	Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCATs)		Eligible Four-Year Colleges/Universities*
Chattanooga State Community College	TCAT Athens	TCAT Knoxville	Austin Peay State University
Cleveland State Community College	TCAT Chattanooga	TCAT Livingston	Baptist Health Sciences University
Columbia State Community College	TCAT Upper Cumberland	TCAT McKenzie	Bethel University
Dyersburg State Community College	TCAT Crump	TCAT McMinnville	Bryan College
Jackson State Community College	TCAT Dickson	TCAT Memphis	Carson-Newman University
Motlow State Community College	TCAT Elizabethton	TCAT Morristown	Cumberland University
Nashville State Community College	TCAT Harriman	TCAT Murfreesboro	Freed-Hardeman University
Northeast State Community College	TCAT Hartsville	TCAT Nashville	John A. Gupton College
Pellissippi State Community College	TCAT Henry/Carroll	TCAT Northwest	Johnson University
Roane State Community College	TCAT Hohenwald	TCAT Oneida	King University
Southwest Tennessee Community College	TCAT Jacksboro	TCAT Pulaski	Lane College
Volunteer State Community College	TCAT Jackson	TCAT Shelbyville	LeMoyne-Owen College
Walters State Community College			Lincoln Memorial University

OTHER TENNESSEE COLLEGES (NOT TN PROMISE ELIGIBLE)

Aquinas College	Sewanee: The University of the South
Belmont University	Tennessee Technological University
East Tennessee State University	Tennessee Wesleyan University
Lee University	Union University
Lipscomb University	University of Memphis
Maryville College	University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
Memphis College of Art	University of Tennessee at Knoxville
Middle Tennessee State University	University of Tennessee at Martin
Milligan College	Vanderbilt University
Rhodes College	Watkins College of Art, Design & Film

Tennessee State University\*\*  
Trevecca Nazarene University  
Tusculum College  
Welch College  
William R. Moore College of Technology

\*In order to use the TN Promise scholarship at a four-year college or university, students must enroll in and be accepted into an associates degree program at that school – not a bachelor's degree program. Students enrolling in a health sciences program will not be eligible to receive TN Promise funding until admitted into the actual program of study. If you are a UT Promise student, please visit [UTPromise.org](https://UTPromise.org) for more information.

\*\*Dental hygiene is Tennessee State University's only TN Promise eligible program. Students enrolling at Tennessee State University in a program other than dental hygiene will be ineligible for the TN Promise scholarship.



KIMVIRLI

Cleveland, Tennessee  
TCAT Chattanooga

“Graduating from college was a real life changer. I am now working in the beauty industry as a licensed cosmetologist. College helped me see that anything is possible!”



This checklist helps you and your student stay on track to complete each step of the tnAchieves college-going process. Use the space below each requirement description to log usernames, passwords or any other important information for each step. **Note: TN Promise eligibility requirements are listed in green.**

DATE COMPLETED	BY NOV. 1, 2024	Complete the TN Promise application at <a href="#">TNPromise.gov</a> .
DATE COMPLETED	DEC. 2024- FEB. 2025	Attend your mandatory TN Promise meeting.
DATE COMPLETED	BY APRIL 15, 2025*	File the 2025-2026 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). <small>Visit <a href="#">StudentAid.gov</a>. See page 7 for more information.</small>
DATE COMPLETED	BY APRIL 15, 2025	Apply to an eligible TN Promise institution. <small>A list of eligible institutions can be found on page 4.</small>
DATE COMPLETED	BY MAY 1, 2025	Submit all requested admissions documents to anticipated college. <small>Check your college email for admissions updates.</small>
DATE COMPLETED	SPRING 2025	Connect with your tnAchieves mentor.
DATE COMPLETED	BY JULY 1, 2025	Complete and submit 8 hours of community service. <small>Submit by 11:59 PM CT at <a href="#">tnAchieves.org</a>. See page 9 for future deadlines.</small>
DATE COMPLETED	BY JULY 1, 2025	Complete financial aid verification, if selected. <small>Verification is completed through your college’s financial aid office.</small>
DATE COMPLETED	BY JULY 1, 2025	Ensure your college is listed on your TSAC Portal and FAFSA. <small>Visit <a href="#">tnAchieves.org/update</a> for instructions on how to update your TSAC Portal and FAFSA, if needed.</small>
DATE COMPLETED	FALL 2025	Enroll as a full-time student at a TN Promise eligible institution. <small>Students must be enrolled in a minimum of 12 credit hours or a full-time TCAT program.</small>
DATE COMPLETED	FALL 2025	Connect again with your tnAchieves mentor.

**Applying to college can be an intimidating process.** Many colleges have institutional scholarships that are only available to students who complete a college application prior to October or November of their senior year of high school, so **applying early is always the best option!**

It is normal for students to be unsure about where they want to go to college. Encourage them to apply to multiple schools and take campus tours, meet with admissions counselors and ask their high school counselors for advice. Specific admissions requirements vary from college to college, but luckily the basics are largely the same. There can be a lot involved, so make sure students take care of all the details the college application requires and encourage them to keep in touch with their college of choice! **Once students decide which college(s) they are interested in, it is time to begin the admissions process. Below are the typical steps for admissions:**

1. APPLY TO COLLEGE.  
Typically, students can apply online. Keep in mind some schools require admissions essays and/or application fees.
2. REQUEST HIGH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPT.  
In most cases, school counselors will send this upon request. A final transcript will be required once students have graduated high school, but it is best to send one prior to graduation to begin the admissions process.
3. SEND ACT/SAT SCORES.  
Official high school transcripts may have ACT/SAT scores. If not, score reports can be ordered through ACT.org or SAT.org.
4. OBTAIN CERTIFICATE OF IMMUNIZATION.  
Proof of Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) and Varicella are required to be a full-time student. Hepatitis B Immunization Health History must be turned in or a waiver must be completed.
5. PROVIDE PROOF OF CITIZENSHIP.  
Citizenship is often confirmed through the FAFSA, but a driver’s license will give valid proof. For other accepted documentation, ask the admissions office.
6. LOOK FOR LETTER OF ADMISSION.  
Once all required documentation has been completed, most colleges will send an acceptance package in the mail or via email detailing next steps including how to set up student accounts, make advising appointments and how to sign up for new student orientation.
7. COMPLETE REQUIRED PLACEMENT TESTING.  
Students with a score below a 19 in reading and/or math or below an 18 in English on their ACT may be required to take additional testing prior to registering for classes. This can be completed by contacting the testing center. tnAchieves offers the Summer Bridge Program, which provides students an opportunity to become more prepared for college. Learn more at [tnAchieves.org/summer-programs](#).
8. REGISTER FOR NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION.  
Orientation is different for each school and required at most. Some orientations start as early as April. The sooner students sign up, the sooner they can register for classes ensuring the best options for creating a schedule.
9. SCHEDULE AN ADVISING APPOINTMENT.  
It is imperative for students to meet with their advisor at least once a semester. After the first meeting, students should leave with a plan for the next 2.5 years. This allows them to see what they must complete to graduate on time. Students will often meet with advisors at orientation. Check with the college to see its process.
10. REGISTER FULL TIME.  
Students who take a full-time schedule are more likely to graduate. Full-time enrollment is also a requirement of many scholarships and financial aid, including TN Promise. Full time is 12 hours at a community college.
11. SHOW UP FOR CLASS.  
It is best for students to go to campus the week before classes begin to figure out parking and ensure they know where they are going for classes.

# FINANCIAL AID

Financial aid helps students and families pay for college. There are many scholarships and grants available to students to help cover the cost of post-secondary education, and it all begins with completion of the 2025-2026 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)!

## FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID

The FAFSA serves as the application for federal and state aid. The 2025-2026 FAFSA is expected to be available for completion at StudentAid.gov in December 2024. Please note that filing the FAFSA is FREE! You should never pay money to file the FAFSA. In addition to being a TN Promise requirement, filing the FAFSA **by April 15, 2025** increases the probability that eligible students will receive more aid. Some scholarships are offered on a first-come, first-served basis, so completing the FAFSA as soon as possible is strongly encouraged.

### What do I need to file the FAFSA?

The FAFSA is based on 2023 student and parent tax information. Here are a few documents you may need to successfully file a 2025-2026 FAFSA:

- Student and parent FSA IDs (Begin at StudentAid.gov.) *It takes a few days for your FSA ID to be verified, so get this done now! It will only take a few minutes.*
- 2023 Federal Tax Return or other income documentation for student and parent(s)
- Social Security number(s)
- 2023 untaxed income records, such as child support received and veterans' non-education benefits
- Current information on checking and savings account balances; stock, bond and other investments; and business and farm assets

**Prior to FAFSA completion, students and parents must create an FSA ID at StudentAid.gov.** The FSA ID allows access to Federal Student Aid's online system and serves as the legal signature for the FAFSA. Students and parents must have two separate FSA IDs; therefore, the same email address cannot be used for both. After FSA ID creation, store the information in a safe place that is easily accessible to you and your student! You will need this each year your student is in college.

Only one FAFSA per student per academic year should be filed. The FAFSA should be completed using the student's name and Social Security number.

There will be a section on the FAFSA for parent tax information. While you and your student need separate FSA IDs, you will provide student and parent tax information on the same FAFSA application.

After FAFSA completion, a confirmation email will be sent to the email address provided on the FAFSA application. Please keep this email for your student's records! We recommend

creating a folder to store all of your important financial aid documentation and confirmations.



## TYPES OF FINANCIAL AID\*

### 1. Federal Pell Grant

A Pell Grant is a federal grant awarded to students based on FAFSA information. The Pell Grant amount is determined by the Student Aid Index (SAI). SAI is calculated based on the parent and student income information provided on the FAFSA and measures how much a student's family would be able to contribute to a year of college.

### 2. TN Promise

A last-dollar scholarship that funds a student's remaining tuition and mandatory fee balance after all other state and federal scholarships and grants are applied.

- TN Promise is available to the current year's seniors. There is no ACT or GPA requirement for eligibility.
- Students are required to follow the tnAchieves requirements and policies to maintain their scholarship eligibility.
- Students must remain enrolled full-time, maintain a 2.0 GPA (or good standing at a TCAT) and complete community service prior to every term enrolled.

### 3. Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship (TELS) Program Awards

The awards outlined below are funded through the Tennessee Lottery.

- **Tennessee HOPE Scholarship:** Award amount is up to \$2,250 per semester for 4-year institutions and 2-year institutions that offer on-campus housing; up to \$1,600 per semester for 2-year institutions
  - Students must have a minimum 21 ACT Composite (or concordant equivalent on the SAT) on a national or state test date OR final cumulative 3.0 GPA for entering freshmen graduating from eligible public or category 1, 2 or 3 private high schools.
  - GED/HiSET students must have minimum ACT/SAT test scores stated above AND minimum average scores on the GED of 170 and HiSET of 15.
  - TN homeschool and non-category 1, 2 or 3 private high school graduates must have ACT/SAT test scores stated above OR complete at least two dual enrollment classes at an eligible postsecondary institution while enrolled in the home school program totaling at least six hours and achieve a 3.0 college GPA in each of the two dual enrollment courses.
- **Wilder-Naifeh Technical Skills Grant:** Award amount is up to \$2,000 per academic year.
  - The Wilder-Naifeh Technical Skills Grant is available to anyone who enrolls in a certificate or diploma program at a Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) and meets residency requirements.
  - Students may be eligible for Tennessee HOPE Scholarship if they are initially HOPE eligible and enroll at an eligible post-secondary institution within three years of completing a diploma program at a TCAT.

#### For Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship (TELS) eligibility, a student must:

1. Be a Tennessee resident as classified by the Tennessee Board of Regents;
2. Complete the FAFSA online at StudentAid.gov; and
3. Enroll in an eligible post-secondary institution within 16 months following graduation from a Tennessee high school or completion of a Tennessee homeschool or GED program. TN Promise recipients must enroll the fall following high school graduation.

### 4. Tennessee Student Assistance Award (TSAA)

TSAA is a state-funded grant program and includes funds from the Tennessee Education Lottery. TSAA is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. To receive priority consideration, students are strongly encouraged to submit the FAFSA as soon as possible after it opens each year. To be eligible, the applicant must:

- Complete the FAFSA;
- Meet financial need requirement determined by FAFSA;
- Be a Tennessee resident. If the student is a dependent, a parent must also be a Tennessee resident;
- Be enrolled at least half time at an eligible Tennessee post-secondary institution;
- Not be in default on a loan or owe a refund on any grant previously received at any institution; and
- Have not received a baccalaureate degree.

*Additional scholarships/grants may be awarded based on student academic achievement and FAFSA information after completion. For a complete list of scholarships available to Tennessee graduates, please visit [www.tn.gov/collegepays](http://www.tn.gov/collegepays).*

## FINANCIAL AID VERIFICATION

Some students are selected for financial aid verification after FAFSA completion. Verification is a process initiated by the Department of Education and requires additional financial documentation be submitted to the college financial aid office. If your student is selected for financial aid verification, the college will notify your student. At that time, your student should begin working closely with the college's financial aid office until all requested documentation is submitted. A student must have a complete financial aid file in order to receive any scholarships or grants.

**Students should NEVER drop a course without talking to the financial aid office about how it may impact scholarship and grant eligibility!**

**7** \*The types of financial aid outlined on pages 7-8 are either need-based or merit-based. They are NOT loans that must be paid back.



TN PROMISE

AFTER MY STUDENT APPLIES...

MY STUDENT APPLIED FOR TN PROMISE; NOW WHAT?

tnAchieves is now regularly communicating with TN Promise students and parents. You and your student should already each be receiving a weekly tnAchieves Monday Email and other relevant reminders for scholarship deadlines and priority dates. It is incredibly important you both routinely check your email and read tnAchieves communication in its entirety!

All students who applied by the deadline will be required to meet several eligibility requirements prior to college enrollment:

- 1
- Mandatory TN Promise Meeting**

Students are required to attend their assigned mandatory TN Promise meeting, which is based on their high school. Students will have the opportunity to learn about TN Promise scholarship requirements/expectations and begin setting college & career goals. Mandatory TN Promise meetings are published on [tnAchieves.org/meeting](https://tnachieves.org/meeting). Students and parents will receive reminders for this meeting via email and text message. Parents are encouraged to attend the mandatory TN Promise meeting with their student; however, parents cannot attend on behalf of their student.

Students who cannot attend their assigned mandatory TN Promise meeting must complete the *tnAchieves Excuse Form*. View the *tnAchieve Excuse Form policy* at [tnAchieves.org/meeting](https://tnachieves.org/meeting).

- 2
- Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**

Your student is required to complete the *2025-2026 FAFSA by April 15, 2025* for TN Promise eligibility. The 2025-2026 FAFSA is based on student and parent 2023 tax information. Please visit [tnAchieves.org/FAFSA](https://tnachieves.org/FAFSA) for detailed FAFSA information.

- 3
- Volunteer Mentors**

Students will have the opportunity to work with a volunteer mentor by opting into the mentoring program following the mandatory TN Promise meeting. Mentors are meant to be a resource for you and your student. Mentors are asked to reach out to students every two weeks throughout the year-long commitment.

- 4
- Community Service**

Your student is required to complete and submit 8 hours of community service by the established deadline prior to the beginning of each semester/trimester. Below is a list of upcoming deadlines. Please see page 6 of the tnAchieves Student Handbook for further information regarding acceptable forms of community service. **Community service hours are submitted via the community service form at [tnachieves.org/CS](https://tnachieves.org/CS).**

Term <sup>1</sup>	Deadline <sup>5</sup>	Timeframe for Completion
Summer 2025 <sup>2</sup>	April 1, 2025 by 11:59 PM CT	August 1, 2024-April 1, 2025 <sup>3</sup>
Fall 2025	July 1, 2025 by 11:59 PM CT	August 1, 2024-July 1, 2025 <sup>3</sup>
Spring 2026	December 1, 2025 by 11:59 PM CT	July 2, 2025-December 1, 2025
Summer 2026 <sup>4</sup>	April 1, 2026 by 11:59 PM CT	December 2, 2025-April 1, 2026
Fall 2026	July 1, 2026 by 11:59 PM CT	December 2, 2025-July 1, 2026
Spring 2027	December 1, 2026 by 11:59 PM CT	July 2, 2026-December 1, 2026
Summer 2027 <sup>4</sup>	April 1, 2027 by 11:59 PM CT	December 2, 2026-April 1, 2027
Fall 2027	July 1, 2027 by 11:59 PM CT	December 2, 2026-July 1, 2027

<sup>1</sup>If you will graduate high school prior to the spring 2025 term, please visit [tnAchieves.org/early-grad](https://tnachieves.org/early-grad) to learn more about next steps.

<sup>2</sup>Students beginning college in the summer directly following high school graduation must meet the April 1, 2025 deadline. Students must also submit an additional 8 hours by July 1, 2025 for the fall term.

<sup>3</sup>While community service hours completed on or after August 1, 2024 can be counted towards the Summer and Fall 2025 deadlines, students will not be able to **submit** until after November 1, 2024.

<sup>4</sup>Summer terms after fall 2025 are only required for TCAT and Moore Tech students. Community college and 4-year university students choosing to enroll in a summer term are required to complete and submit 8 hours of community service by the established deadlines.

<sup>5</sup>Students attending South College are required to submit 8 hours prior to each quarter. Contact tnAchieves for specific deadlines.

ENROLL AS A FULL-TIME STUDENT.

At a community college or four-year college, students must be enrolled in at least 12 credit hours each semester to be a full-time student.

- At a TCAT, students must maintain enrollment in a full-time program. Students who enroll full-time are more likely to graduate.
- For most programs, students should enroll in 15 credit hours each semester in order to graduate on time.

MAINTAIN SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS.

Colleges measure academic achievement via Grade Point Average (GPA). GPA is measured by term and by academic year (cumulative). Many scholarships and grants have minimum semester and/or cumulative GPA requirements (ex., TN Promise is a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA), so students should always be aware of their college GPA!

- TCAT students should always maintain satisfactory academic progress (SAP) with their program of choice.
- Students attending a community college who plan to transfer to a university after obtaining an associates degree must earn at least a C average in each class in order for the credits to transfer.

GO TO CLASS.

Attendance is crucial! With every absence, students miss out on information that may not be in their books but on their tests. Failure to attend class can also result in a student being dropped from their course.

- Students should utilize any and all review options before tests- class reviews, peer group studies, etc.
- Students need to be active during class. Taking notes, asking questions and listening makes students more likely to perform well, and it gets the attention of their professor!
- Attendance matters even when students are taking online or virtual courses. Some online courses may have additional participation or attendance requirements, so it is important for students to read the course syllabus carefully.

ASK FOR HELP.

Professors/instructors hold office hours each week where students can talk one-on-one or in small groups with their professor. Professors usually have time before and after class to talk as well. Students should reach out during these times. Professors are a great resource if a student is struggling during the class. Each professor provides a course syllabus at the beginning of each term. Keep this syllabus in an easily accessible place! The syllabus is a great resource for class assignments, professor office hours and contact information, grading scales and expectations.

- College campuses include multiple resources (e.g., math labs, writing centers, tutors, advisors and counselors) that are typically all FREE. All students should take advantage of these resources!
- Students should meet with an academic advisor to create a plan for what courses they need to complete each semester, term or trimester in order to graduate on time with their degree or certificate.
- Instructors and tutors may also be available virtually to assist with online/virtual courses.

PLAN FOR ADDITIONAL COSTS.

Outside of tuition costs, students can expect to pay for books, school supplies and some additional class fees. At colleges with on-campus housing, students should prepare for additional living costs. Students attending TCATs can expect to purchase tools or other materials needed for their program of study.

- It is important for students and their families to find a way to cover these additional costs before classes begin. Many students take on a part-time job, utilize work-study on campus or create a plan of action with their family.
- Help students create a budget so they know what they can spend on food, activities and gas.

GRADUATE!

Making it to college is an accomplishment, but graduating from college should be the goal! Below is a list of general graduation requirements:\*

- Completion of curriculum for specific program of study
- Remain in good academic standing or maintain satisfactory academic progress (TCAT)
- Completion of an intent to graduate form
- Payment of a graduation fee

\*Some students may be required to take one or more tests designed to measure achievement in general education and in their specific major in order to graduate and/or transfer.

# COMMON HICCUPS

## **My student has not heard from tnAchieves.**

Checking your email is crucial as a TN Promise student. Students are required to provide an email address on their TN Promise application. This is how we communicate with all students. If a student provides a parent email, tnAchieves copies parents on each student email. If a student provides an invalid email, it is their responsibility to correct it by contacting [tnAchieves@tnAchieves.org](mailto:tnAchieves@tnAchieves.org). Students receive an email every Monday from tnAchieves so they know what they should be doing each week as related to college access and success. If they do not receive an email, that means their email is incorrect in our system or they are no longer eligible. Not receiving an email is not a valid excuse for missing TN Promise requirements.

## **Why is it important to update tnAchieves when emails and phone numbers change?**

tnAchieves uses the contact information initially provided on the TN Promise application to send important communication related to program requirements. Failure to notify tnAchieves of changes may result in students missing important emails and texts related to upcoming deadlines.

## **My student filed the wrong FAFSA.**

If your student completed the incorrect year's FAFSA, as long as it is before the TN Promise deadline they can simply log back into StudentAid.gov and complete the correct year's FAFSA. If it is after the TN Promise deadline, students will no longer be eligible for TN Promise, but they should complete the correct year's FAFSA as soon as possible as other financial aid may still be available.

## **I don't want to give my student my tax information for FAFSA.**

The majority of students under the age of 24 will require parent tax documentation to complete the FAFSA. A parent must have a separate FSA ID to complete the FAFSA, so they are able to complete the tax information themselves rather than giving it to the student.

## **If I have not filed taxes by April 15, 2025, can we still file the FAFSA before the TN Promise deadline?**

Yes. Due to changes in the FAFSA application process, students will report income information from 2023 taxes.

## **Will my student receive a check from financial aid to pay for college?**

Depending on your family's need, students may receive a check for cost of living expenses each semester. However, this check may not come until after the semester begins. TSAC sends funds directly to the colleges for TN Promise, so students never directly receive funding from TN Promise.

## **What happens if a student misses a TN Promise deadline?**

Failure to meet any TN Promise deadline will result in a student being permanently ineligible for TN Promise.

## **My student completed but did not submit their community service and is now being told they are ineligible.**

Students are expected to submit their community service through an online form at [tnAchieves.org/community-service](https://tnAchieves.org/community-service). If students sign in at their community service event, this does not count for submission. If students submit a community service form through their college or anywhere but tnAchieves.org, this does not count for submission. Students should never rely on their community service supervisor, school counselor or anyone else to submit their community service. Students should always submit their community service themselves and make sure they receive a confirmation email. If a confirmation email is not sent immediately, check spam folders as it may have been sent there. Even if community service was completed prior to the deadline, if it was not submitted at tnAchieves.org it will not be accepted. Failure to submit community service by the deadline will result in TN Promise ineligibility.

## **My student did everything right, but has been dropped from all classes two weeks before classes begin.**

Often, students think they have done everything they need to do but are missing financial aid documentation. If all documentation is not completed by the institutional deadline students will be dropped from their classes until payment has been made or documentation has been turned in and processed. This is a very busy time for financial aid, so processing can take up to six weeks. Sometimes, it is easiest to set up a payment plan to allow time for the documentation to process. Once everything is processed, if eligible, students will be refunded money already submitted for payment. Making payment locks in the student's schedule so classes are not dropped again prior to starting the semester as it can be very difficult to get into the same courses. Talk to financial aid about the options available to students.

## **How can students transfer to a four-year program or institution once they have completed their degree or certificate through TN Promise?**

The Tennessee Transfer Pathways ensure students follow a prescribed curriculum that is transferable, marked by clarity and available for students to review on the first day of enrollment. There are approved transfer pathways that span multiple disciplines and are accepted at all public institutions in Tennessee. More information about participating institutions can be found at [tntransferpathway.org/transfer-campus](https://tntransferpathway.org/transfer-campus). Although a student who completes an associates degree is no longer eligible for TN Promise, the student should contact the four-year institution they are interested in to discuss other sources of financial aid.

## **Can my student take a semester off?**

No. Students are required to enroll directly after high school and remain enrolled continually to maintain their TN Promise eligibility. If students are unable to attend college due to an extenuating circumstance, they should consult with their college's financial aid office to begin the financial aid appeal process.

## **How does my student submit an appeal?**

Students wishing to appeal their financial aid status should first consult with their college's financial aid office. Certain circumstances may require an appeal through the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation (TSAC). To submit an appeal to TSAC, students should visit [tnachieves.org/resources/appeal-process](https://tnachieves.org/resources/appeal-process).

## **Can my student transfer amongst TN Promise eligible institutions?**

Students are permitted to transfer between TN Promise eligible institutions, but the transfer cannot take place in the middle of a semester/trimester. Students must complete the term before transferring and should consult with the admissions and financial aid offices at both institutions to ensure a successful transition.

## **I called the college to ask about my student's financial aid/grades/schedule, but they will not give me any information.**

Colleges are required to meet federal privacy standards known as FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act). Similar to HIPPA laws in the medical field, FERPA laws protect student educational records. Once a student turns 18, the college can only discuss financial aid, schedules and GPA information with the student. If you would like to be able to speak to the college on your student's behalf, they can sign a FERPA waiver with the college to allow them to discuss protected information with you.

## **Can I complete the mandatory meeting requirement on behalf of my student?**

Although parents are encouraged to attend the mandatory TN Promise meeting with their students, the student must attend the meeting to receive credit for the requirement. The TN Promise scholar must be in attendance to maintain scholarship eligibility.

## **What if a mandatory TN Promise meeting is rescheduled?**

Should a school district in a county close for any reason, tnAchieves will cancel and reschedule all meetings in that county. tnAchieves will notify students, parents and mentors of the cancellation and rescheduled date as soon as possible in the event of a closure. **Students are expected to attend the rescheduled mandatory TN Promise meeting.**

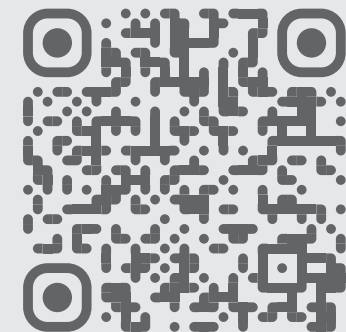
## **What if a student is unable to attend the mandatory TN Promise meeting?**

**Students who are unable to attend their assigned mandatory meeting will follow these steps:**

1. Review the excuse form policy on page 9 of the student handbook or page 13 of this handbook for a list of acceptable excuse reasons. A student's excuse reason must fall within the accepted categories listed in this policy to be approved to miss the mandatory meeting. If a student's reason does not fall within these categories, the student is required to attend the mandatory meeting.
2. A student is responsible for notifying tnAchieves before or following the missed meeting via the excuse form provided at [tnAchieves.org](https://tnAchieves.org). Failure to meet this requirement, even with a valid excuse, may result in the loss of TN Promise eligibility.
3. After submitting the excuse form, students will receive notice via email from tnAchieves whether their excuse form has been approved. If the excuse is approved, students will be required to view a webinar provided by tnAchieves. This webinar will be sent on February 11, 2025 and is required to be completed by March 15, 2025.

**tnAchieves staff is always available to help ensure your student is successful.**

Contact us anytime you have questions or concerns. Scan the QR code to view a full list of tnAchieves staff!





# POLICIES

To remain TN Promise eligible, students must:

**High School:**

**1. Attend and graduate from an eligible high school.**

- a. Students must apply their senior year of high school with the Class of 2025 and meet the established TN Promise application deadline.
- b. A student must be a Tennessee resident.
  - i. Students' residency will be determined by their post-secondary institution.
  - ii. Students who reside with a parent outside of Tennessee pursuant to military orders will be considered eligible to participate in the scholarship program.
- c. Students who complete a GED or HiSET diploma must enroll full-time in an eligible post-secondary program in the fall after they receive their diploma, provided that the diploma was earned before the student reached 19 years of age. This assumes the GED or HiSET student met all TN Promise requirements.

**2. Attend all scheduled mandatory TN Promise meetings. Students must attend their assigned scheduled meeting as outlined in the student handbook and tnAchieves website.**

- a. Excuse forms will be reviewed for the following: participation in a school-sanctioned event (e.g., athletic event and/or practice, concert and/or rehearsal, national or state conference or competition), death in the immediate family, personal illness, conflict with post-secondary class schedule, conflict with religious observance, personal or immediate family emergency, conflict with work schedule, lack of transportation.
- b. Students are responsible for notifying tnAchieves prior to or following their missed meeting via the excuse form provided at tnAchieves.org. Failure to meet this requirement, even with a valid excuse, may result in the loss of TN Promise eligibility.
  - i. All other excuses outside those outlined above are not considered excusable absences and will result in a student losing TN Promise eligibility. This includes meetings that are rescheduled due to inclement weather or school closings.
  - ii. Students who arrive late to a mandatory meeting will lose their TN Promise eligibility. Likewise, students that leave a meeting prior to adjournment will lose their TN Promise eligibility.
  - iii. Students who have an approved absence from tnAchieves must complete the mandatory meeting requirement virtually.
    - Excused students will gain access to the virtual mandatory meeting on February 11, 2025 via email from tnAchieves.
    - Excused students must complete the mandatory meeting requirement by March 15, 2025 to remain eligible for TN Promise.
- c. Students who graduate high school during the fall term are required to return to their high school for the assigned mandatory meeting.
- d. Students who transfer during their senior year are responsible for alerting tnAchieves and attending the assigned mandatory meeting designated for the high school to which they transferred.
- e. A parent/guardian cannot attend the assigned meeting or view the virtual mandatory meeting on a student's behalf. Students must complete the mandatory meeting requirement to remain eligible for TN Promise.
- f. Students who require accommodations at their assigned team meeting will be responsible for alerting tnAchieves at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting (e.g., sign language interpreter).

**3. Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by April 15, 2025.** This deadline is tentative and is subject to change should the 2025-2026 FAFSA not open on December 1, 2024.

- a. Failure to qualify for federal aid in the form of a Pell Grant and/or state aid in the form of TELS (e.g., HOPE) or TSAA funding will not affect a student's TN Promise eligibility.
- b. Students must be eligible for in-state tuition.
- c. Students must complete the correct year's FAFSA each year prior to the deadline established by TSAC.

**4. Submit all financial aid verification documents each year for community and four-year colleges.**

- a. Students attending a TCAT must complete the verification process by October 1 each year.
- b. tnAchieves encourages students to submit all documents by July 1 to ensure the post-secondary institutions have adequate time to process.
- c. Students must select the eligible institution they plan to attend as their first choice on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as well as direct their TSAC Student Portal to the eligible institution.
- d. It is the responsibility of students to confirm with the post-secondary institution that their admissions and financial aid files are verified, processed and ready for award.

**5. Complete and submit at least 8 hours of community service prior to the start of each semester/trimester/quarter by the established deadline.** See the Community Service Policy on page 10 for further details regarding this requirement.

**College:**

**1. Maintain full-time status each semester.**

- a. If students fall below full-time, they will no longer be eligible.
- b. TCAT students must be enrolled in a full-time program.
- c. Failure to attend class can result in loss of eligibility.

**2. Begin at an eligible post-secondary institution in the fall term directly following high school graduation.**

- a. Students who graduate from high school prior to the spring 2025 term may begin at their post-secondary institution early. Early graduates need to complete the current and previous academic year's FAFSA and submit community service by April 1, 2025. Students must also complete their mandatory TN Promise meeting requirement by the established deadline.
- b. Students may begin college in the summer directly following high school graduation if they have met all TN Promise requirements. Please note that community college and 4-year students who begin college in the summer directly following high school graduation will be subject to a GPA check after the summer term. Students must maintain a cumulative 2.0 GPA to remain eligible for TN Promise.
- c. Students may be granted a medical or personal leave of absence from timely enrollment in the initial semester full-time attendance or continuous enrollment at an eligible post-secondary institution as long as all other acceptable eligibility criteria are met. Students must request a leave of absence with their chosen post-secondary institution or TSAC for approval.
  - i. An approved leave of absence of six months or less shall not count against the five-semester or eight-trimester limit at an eligible post-secondary institution.

**3. Attend an eligible post-secondary institution for continuous semesters.**

- a. Students cannot leave the post-secondary institution for a period of time and remain eligible.
- b. If students withdraw from all classes or stops attending during the semester, they will no longer be eligible.

**4. Maintain a 2.0 cumulative GPA at the end of each academic year.**

- a. TCAT students must maintain satisfactory academic progress each trimester.

**5. Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by the established deadline each year throughout their post-secondary experience.**

- a. Failure to qualify for federal aid in the form of a Pell Grant and/or state aid in the form of TELS (e.g., HOPE) or TSAA funding will not affect a student's TN Promise eligibility.
- b. Students must be eligible for in-state tuition.
- c. Students must complete the correct year's FAFSA each year prior to the deadline established by TSAC.

**6. Submit all financial aid verification documents each year for community and four-year colleges.**

- a. Students attending a TCAT must complete the verification process by October 1 each year.
- b. tnAchieves encourages students to submit all documents by July 1 to ensure the post-secondary institutions have adequate time to process.
- c. Students must select the eligible institution they plan to attend as their first choice on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as well as direct their TSAC Student Portal to the eligible institution.
- d. It is the responsibility of students to confirm with the post-secondary institution that their admissions and financial aid files are verified, processed and ready for award.

**7. Complete and submit at least 8 hours of community service prior to the start of each semester/trimester/quarter by the established deadline.**

See the Community Service Policy below for further details regarding this requirement.

**Community Service Policy:**

**Complete and submit at least 8 hours of community service prior to the start of each semester/trimester/quarter by the established deadline.**

**Community service must be completed under the supervision of an established organization (e.g., nonprofit, public service organization).**

- a. Community service is not:
  - i. Work resulting in payment.
  - ii. Work done under the supervision of an extended or immediate family member.
  - iii. Work done for an individual rather than an organization (e.g., babysitting, mowing a neighbor's lawn, picking up trash in the neighborhood).
  - iv. Proselytizing (sharing or teaching faith).
  - v. Work done off the clock/unpaid at the student's job.
- b. Virtual community service webinars are available as a means to complete up to 4 community service hours for each deadline. The remaining 4 hours must be completed via job shadowing and/or community service opportunities that fit within the guidelines.
  - i. Each virtual community service webinar counts as one hour. Students will be automatically credited one hour per webinar after viewing the webinar in its entirety and following on-screen instructions.
  - ii. Students are not required to submit a community service form for viewing the webinars.
  - iii. Webinars may only be accessed via tnAchieves.org. All other forms of virtual community service will be denied.
- c. Students must complete and submit all information regarding community service by the established deadline at tnAchieves.org. Failure to comply by the established dates will result in loss of eligibility. Keep in mind, it is not the responsibility of the organization and/or supervisor to submit hours on a student's behalf.
- d. Should students feel that extenuating circumstances beyond their control prohibited them from completing and submitting community service by the deadline, they may file an appeal with tnAchieves at tnAchieves.org/appeal.
  - i. If the appeal is denied, students will not be able to submit community service after the deadline and will remain ineligible for TN Promise.
  - ii. If the appeal is approved, students will have one week from appeal approval to complete and submit 8 hours of community service, unless otherwise specified in the appeal approval.
  - iii. Should students fail to submit all required community service in the allotted time, they will remain ineligible for TN Promise.
- iv. Students who are unable to complete community service hours in person due to illness, injury, a documented disability and/or accommodation must file an appeal with tnAchieves prior to the community service deadline.
  - If the appeal is approved, the student will be allowed to complete 8 hours of virtual community service webinars.
  - v. Documentation is required for any community service appeal submitted to tnAchieves.
  - vi. Unless otherwise specified, an approved appeal only applies to the community service deadline being appealed. Any additional exceptions or accommodations for future terms must be appealed prior to each deadline.
- e. In the event that a post-secondary institution reverses a student's ineligibility certification after a community service deadline, an exception to the missed deadline may be considered by tnAchieves.
  - i. If granted, students will be contacted by tnAchieves. Community service must be completed and submitted in its entirety no later than two weeks from notification.
  - ii. Should students fail to submit all required community service in the allotted time, they will remain ineligible for TN Promise.

**Other components:**

**1. Only a member of tnAchieves staff may determine a student's TN Promise eligibility.**

- a. Mentors are an extension of tnAchieves but are not tnAchieves staff members.
- b. tnAchieves mentors are volunteers and may lack adequate time to answer all questions; therefore, it is the students' responsibility to confirm eligibility with tnAchieves staff.

**2. TN Promise only funds last-dollar tuition and mandatory fees. It does not pay for books or other post-secondary expenses (e.g., application fee, program and class specific fees). TN Promise only covers fees required of all students.**

**3. A student cannot be mentored by a family member.**

**4. Mentors cannot choose students to mentor.**

- a. tnAchieves staff will randomly assign students to mentors.

**5. TN Promise follows the admissions requirements of the post-secondary institution.**

- a. TN Promise will fund learning support classes if the student fails to meet the ACT requirements for college-level coursework.

**6. Students are responsible for notifying tnAchieves staff when their contact information changes. Incorrect information does not preclude students from ineligibility.**

Should students fail to adhere to any/all policies, tnAchieves invokes the right to remove their eligibility. tnAchieves values honesty and integrity. A student who submits misinformation will immediately lose TN Promise eligibility. Be respectful in all correspondence and communication, including social media.

**Policies may be subject to change without notice.** It is a student's responsibility to refer to the policies as posted at tnAchieves.org for updates and changes to the TN Promise legislation.



