



APPLY YOURSELF FLORIDA

2018-19 Student Guide

ACAC
American College Application Campaigns

FLORIDA
COLLEGE ACCESS NETWORK

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You're starting an exciting new journey!

Soon, you'll be graduating from high school, and moving on to the next stage of your life.

If you plan to continue your education, the first step of this journey is applying to college. This guide will help you choose colleges that are right for you, take steps to apply to college, and identify the next steps after you've applied.

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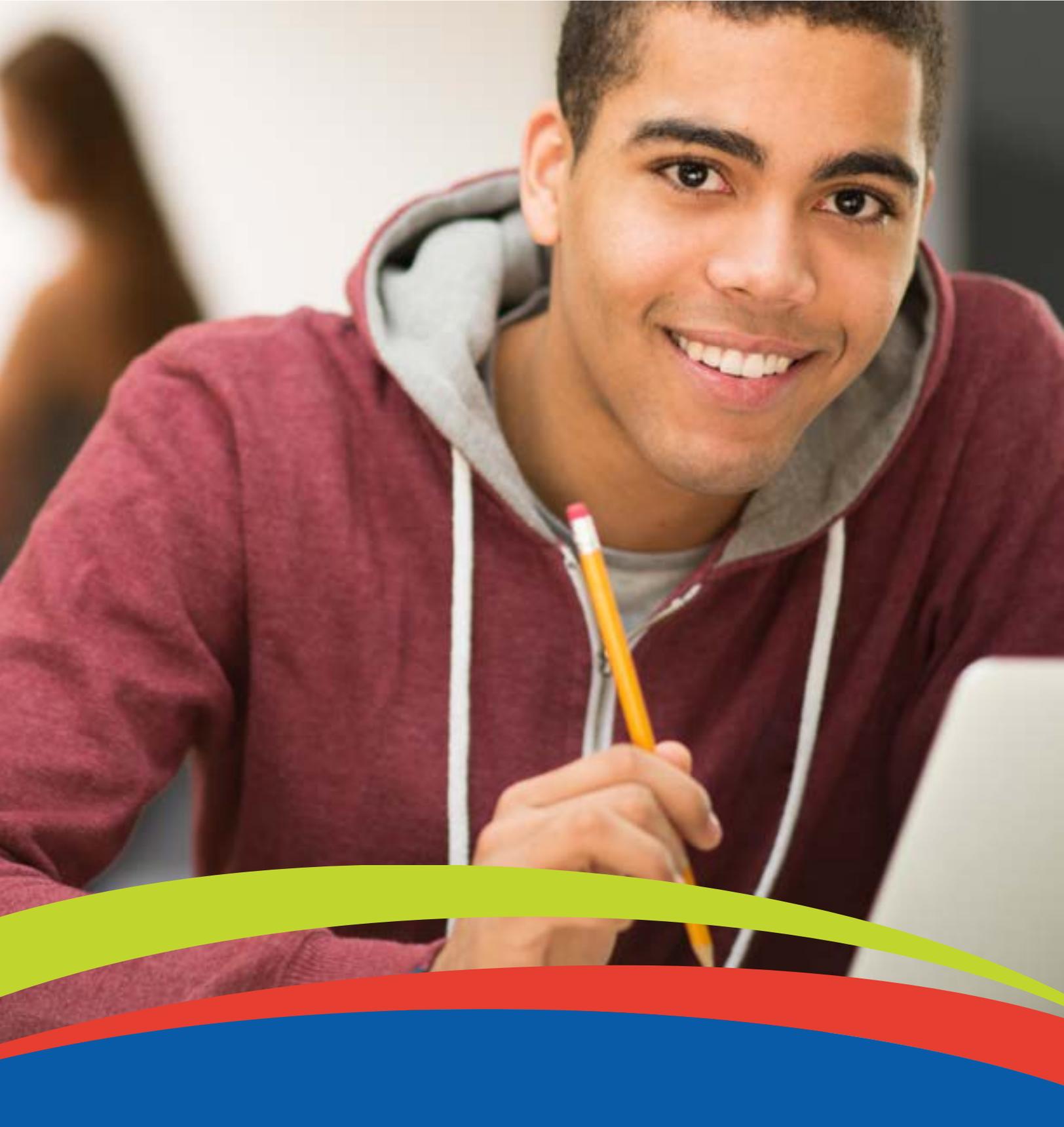
Acknowledgments

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What Should I Do After High School?

Exploring your options



What Can I Do After High School?

Depending on the type of work you're interested in, there are different options for continuing your education to help you achieve your career goals.

Career/Technical School

Career and technical school programs typically range from 6 months to 18 months. These programs will help you learn skills to prepare for a specific career, such as plumbing, electrical, auto mechanical, culinary, cosmetology, etc. Your local state college or technical college likely offers certificates for these types of jobs.

2-Year College

At a 2-year school like your local state college, you can earn an associate's degree, which can help you build a body of knowledge that can prepare you for a career or for further education. Associate's degrees in areas like healthcare or information technology/computer science can prepare you for work in those fields.

2+2 Programs

In Florida, state colleges have formal 2+2 agreements with local universities. These relationships give students the option to complete the first two years of their bachelor's degree at a state college and the second two years at a university. This can help families save money on a four-year degree.

4-year College or University

At a 4-year college or university, you can complete bachelor's degree. A bachelor's degree can prepare you for work in fields like business, engineering, and teaching. You can also continue on to graduate school for careers in medicine or law.

As part of earning a bachelor's degree, you will build a broader body of knowledge. This can offer you more flexibility to change careers over time.

Military

Many students enlist in the military, where you will be provided on-going training in specific jobs that can translate to civilian work. You will also have the option to return to school later using GI Bill benefits.

Service Year

You may choose to do a gap year program that allows you to explore your interests. Organizations like AmeriCorps allow you to earn money for college through service. AmeriCorps members participate in service programs like disaster cleanup, home building, and others.

Employment

After high school, you have the option to start working. To increase your earning potential, consider exploring apprenticeship programs. You can also look into free training opportunities online or through a local library.

College Exploration Resources

Use the following free resources to do more research and figure out what you might want to do after high school (and how you can pay for it!)

MyCareerShines

<https://mycareershines.kuder.com>

This site is free to all Florida high school students, and allows you to take assessments that help you figure out what you might like to do. MyCareerShines also has tools to help you find schools that offer the programs you need.

FloridaShines

<https://www.floridashines.org/find-a-career>

FloridaShines is similar to MyCareerShines, but it offers information that is specific to Florida college and universities.

BeyondEducation

<http://www.beyondeducation.org>

Reference this tool to explore the employment rates and earnings outcomes of graduates from state colleges, universities, and technical schools in Florida.

ACTProfile

<https://www.actprofile.org/login>

ACTProfile combines career planning with college planning. With this tool, you can take a series of assessments to find careers that might be a good fit for you, and then find education options based on these results.

CollegeAbacus and Pell Abacus

<https://collegeabacus.org>

<https://pell.collegeabacus.org>

These tools will help you figure out how much college will actually cost. It will also allow you to compare multiple schools at once. If you receive free or reduced lunch, you can use Pell Abacus to get an idea of how much aid you can expect to receive.

GetSchooled

<https://getschooled.com>

GetSchooled offers a wide variety of test prep, financial aid, and college application resources.

Where Should I Apply?

Choosing the right school for you



Finding the Right Fit

When considering colleges, it's important to research your options. This will help you choose a school with features that fit your needs, interests, and talents.

Consider these factors when comparing schools:

Size

Colleges range in size. Some might be the size of your high school, while others are the size of a small town!

At a small school you will likely take classes with 30 or fewer students. Classes at a big school could have as many as 500 students. Many classes at larger colleges are also taught by graduate students.

Big schools often have more services, programs, and activities available. By contrast, small schools may offer more specialized programs and personalized attention.

Location

Do you want to save money by living at home? Do you want to come home on weekends? Or do you want to be as far away as possible?

Do you want to go to school in an urban area where you can use public transit? Or would you prefer a more quiet, rural setting?

These are all questions to consider when thinking about a school's location.

Culture

Big schools often offer opportunities for joining fraternities or sororities. These schools also may have nationally recognized sports teams and a culture of school pride.

A smaller school, however, may have a more tight-knit environment. You can check the school's list of student clubs and organizations to find your niche.

Programs

Large schools usually offer a wide variety of academic programs. This offers you flexibility if you're not yet sure what you want to study, or if you want to change your major.

If you're interested in something specific, a small school might offer a more specialized program. You also may have the opportunity to work closely with faculty earlier in your education. At larger schools, many of your professors

The Perfect Match

What kinds of schools should I apply to?

Based on your academic record, you should apply to at least **one safety school**, **one reach school**, and **two match schools**. See page 11 to learn how to use fee waivers to cover the cost of your application fees.

Safety Schools

Schools you're confident you'll be accepted to

Safety schools may include schools with higher acceptance rates, schools with less selective admissions requirements, or schools where your academic record is stronger than the average admitted student.

Keep in mind Florida state colleges are "open admission," meaning that they accept all students who apply.

Match Schools

Schools you will likely be accepted to

Match schools should be more selective than the safety schools you apply to. At a Match school, your academic record should be similar to that of the average admitted student's record.

Reach Schools

Schools you could be accepted to

Reach schools are institutions that tend to have lower acceptance rates than other schools. At these schools, your academic record may be on the lower end compared to the average admitted student.

What is my academic record?

There are several factors that impact your academic record, including your average high school **grade point average (GPA)**, the **rigor** of the classes you've taken (Honors, AP, IB, Dual Enrollment, etc), and your **standardized test** scores (SAT, ACT, etc.)

How Do I Pay for College?

What Will College Cost? It Depends

Where You Go

- **Private schools** tend to cost more than **state** schools
- **State universities** tend to cost more than **state colleges** and **community colleges**
- If you qualify as a **Florida resident for tuition purposes**, you will be eligible to pay a lower in-state tuition rate at Florida schools.

What You Get

- Many schools offer generous **school-based aid and scholarships** based on need and merit
- Be sure to check the school's **priority application deadlines** so you can be considered for the most aid possible

Consider all the costs

- Yearly tuition/cost per credit hour
- Books, supplies, and lab fees
- Housing, meals, and transportation
- Summer courses (keep in mind that Florida state universities require one summer semester)

Florida's 2+2 Program

All Florida state colleges are open enrollment, meaning they guarantee admission to almost all students.

Students who complete an associate's degree at a state college are guaranteed acceptance to a state university to complete their bachelor's degree

In other words, you can start the first two years of your BA at a state college, and then complete the second two years at a state university. This could help you save money.

Where will the money come from?

Options for Paying

- Federal and state grants (these do not need to be repaid)
- Private, institutional, and state scholarships (Bright Futures)
- Federal and state loans (keep in mind that these must be repaid when you graduate)

File the FAFSA!

- Filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the best way to qualify for state and federal grants and loans
- You can file your FAFSA as early as October 1 by going to fafsa.ed.gov

How Do I Apply?

Preparing what you need for applications



Application Checklist

There are a lot of steps to applying for college. Use this checklist to make sure you are meeting all of the requirements along the way.

- Decide on at least four schools you want to apply to: 2 match schools, 1 safety school, and 1 reach school (see page 11 to learn how to use fee waivers to cover the cost of college applications)
- Make a note of all application deadlines, including priority scholarship deadlines
- Send requests for your high school transcripts, midterm grade report, and standardized test scores (ACT/SAT) to be sent to each school (talk to your school counselor for help)
- Request recommendation letters from teachers or counselors
- Write your personal essay, and have someone proofread it
- Submit your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- Fill out online application
- Print out confirmation page
- Pay application fee, or send fee waiver (Remember that your application is not considered complete until your application fee is paid or your fee waiver is received)
- If you do not hear from the college in 2-3 weeks, contact the admissions office to ensure your materials were received

Application Worksheet

There is a lot of information you will need to complete your college application.

To make sure you have everything you need for application day, use the Application Worksheet in the back of this guide.

You may need help from your school counselor or parents to answer all the questions on this sheet.

Letters of Recommendation

A good letter of recommendation can help highlight strengths that are not reflected on the rest of your application. To get a good letter, follow these tips:

- **Request letters of recommendation from teachers or counselors you have a good relationship with**
- **Request the letter at the beginning of the school year to give your recommender plenty of time to write it**
- **Write thank you notes for each writer!**

Writing the Essay

Essays are your opportunity to tell the story your GPA and extracurricular activities don't tell. Admissions officers want to get to know you as a person, so make sure to let your personality shine!

Tip	Do	Don't
Research essay requirements	Check early to see what each college on your short list requires. Take note of essay topics, word limits, and formatting requirements	Wait until the last minute to find out if you need to write an essay.
Choose a topic that will highlight your strengths	Share your personal story and thoughts. Tell a specific story that highlights your best qualities.	Focus on the great aspects of the college, the amount of dedication it takes to be a doctor, or the number of extracurricular activities you've done.
Keep your focus narrow and personal	Focus on one aspect of yourself so the readers can learn more about who you are. Remember that readers must be able to understand 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.	Try to cover too many topics. This will make the essay sound like a laundry list that doesn't provide any details about you.
Show, don't tell	Include specific details, examples, stories, and reasons to develop your ideas. For the example to the right, describe a situation when you were surrounded by various types of people. What did you do? What did you take away from the experience?	Stating something about yourself rather than sharing a story. For instance, saying "I like to surround myself with people with a variety of backgrounds and interests," instead of describing a story that shows this to be true.
Use your own voice	Write about an experience that you had and how it made you take action or how it changed your thinking.	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."
Ask a parent or teacher to proofread	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.	Turn your essay in without proofreading it or rely only on your computer's spell check to catch mistakes.

Remember to bring your essay with you to your school's Apply Yourself Florida event! You can bring it on a USB drive, or email the essay to yourself.

Application Fee Waivers

Most colleges have an application fee of \$30-\$50. If you qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, you may be eligible for an application fee waiver to complete your college application. If you're not sure whether you qualify, talk to your school counselor!

ACT Fee Waivers

- **Eligibility:** Students who used a fee waiver to take the ACT exam
- **Access:** School counselors should print the necessary number of fee waivers and sign off on student eligibility. Students must also sign the form.
- [Download the fee waiver here](#)

SAT Fee Waivers

- **Eligibility:** Students who used a fee waiver to take the SAT exam or SAT subject test
- **Access:** Students can access the fee waivers directly through their online College Board Account. Students may use up to four fee waivers. Counselor approval is not required.
- [Find more information here](#)

NACAC Fee Waivers

- **Eligibility:** You may be eligible for up to four fee waivers if you meet at least one of these criteria:
 - Used a fee waiver to take the SAT or ACT
 - Are enrolled in a free or reduced price lunch program
 - Are enrolled in a program for low-income students (TRIO, Upward Bound)
 - Your family qualifies for public assistance
 - You are a ward of the state
 - Other special circumstances outlined by your school counselor
- **Access:** School counselors must print the form and sign off on you eligibility.
- [Download the form here](#)

Don't Forget!

- **The school will not consider your application complete until they receive your fee waiver**
- **If you are not using a fee waiver, you will need a credit card to pay the application fee**

Fee Waivers by School

School Name	Waivers Accepted	How to Use the Waiver
Florida A&M (FAMU)	ACT, SAT	Apply on-line using the application for FL Fee Waiver applicants. Attach the fee waiver prior to submission.
Florida Atlantic University (FAU)	ACT, SAT	Students should submit the application without payment and mail the fee waiver to the address listed on the application screen.
Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU)	ACT, SAT	Complete online application and answer question about application fee waivers. After answering questions on application, wait for fee waiver code to be sent from admissions office. Then, mail the fee waiver to the address below, or email to undergrad@fgcu.edu . Florida Gulf Coast University Office of Undergraduate Admissions 10501 FGCU Blvd. S. Fort Myers, FL 33965-6565
Florida International University (FIU)	ACT, SAT	Upon reaching payment page, select pay by check option. Then, mail the waiver to the address on the page, or email the waiver to admiss@fiu.edu .
Florida Polytechnic University	ACT, SAT	On the payment page, select the pay by fee waiver option. Mail the fee waiver to the admissions office, or email admissions@flpoly.org .
Florida State University (FSU)	ACT, SAT, NACAC	Submit part 1 of application. In part 2 of application, upload a copy of your signed fee waiver. The waiver may also be faxed to 850-644-0197, emailed to admissions@fsu.edu , or mailed to: FSU Admissions PO Box 3062400 Tallahassee, FL 32306
New College of Florida	NACAC, ACT, SAT, Common App	Submit fee waiver through the Common App website

Fee Waivers by School Cont.

School Name	Waivers Accepted	How to Use the Waiver
University of Central Florida (UCF)	NACAC, ACT, SAT, Common App	Submit application without payment. Mail a written request and fee waiver to the address listed on application screen or submit via email to uaoperations@ucf.edu . Please include your name and date of birth. If a Social Security Number (SSN) appears on the waiver request, please black out all but the last four digits for security purposes. If using the Common App, submit the fee waiver through the Common App website.
University of Florida (UF)	ACT, SAT	On the payment screen, select the "mail payment" option. Mail the fee waiver to the address on the application screen.
University of North Florida (UNF)	NACAC, ACT, SAT	Submit your application without payment. Mail fee waivers to 1 UNF Drive, Jacksonville FL 32224.
University of South Florida (USF)	NACAC, ACT, SAT	Submit application without payment. Mail fee waiver to the address listed on application screen, email to admissions@usf.edu , or fax to 813-974-9689.
University of West Florida (UWF)	NACAC, ACT, SAT	Select mail in payment option. Then send waivers to UWF via email, or regular mail, or drop it off in person. Email: admissions@uwf.edu Mail to: UWF Undergraduate Admissions 11000 University Pkwy. Bldg. 18 Pensacola, FL 32514

Application Deadlines

School Name	General Deadline	Priority Deadline
Florida A&M (FAMU)	May 1	November 30 (priority scholarship consideration)
Florida Atlantic University (FAU)	May 1	Students should submit the application without payment and mail the fee waiver to the address listed on the application screen.
Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU)	May 1	Complete online application and answer question about application fee waivers. After answering questions on application, wait for fee waiver code to be sent from admissions office. Then, mail the fee waiver to the address below, or email to undergrad@fgcu.edu . Florida Gulf Coast University Office of Undergraduate Admissions 10501 FGCU Blvd. S. Fort Myers, FL 33965-6565
Florida International University (FIU)	Rolling Admissions	November 1 (merit scholarship deadline)
Florida Polytechnic University	Rolling Admissions after November deadline	November 1 (priority admission consideration)
Florida State University (FSU)	February 7	November 1 (priority admission consideration)
New College of Florida	April 15	November 1 (priority admission consideration)
University of Central Florida	May 1	
University of Florida	November 1	
University of North Florida	Rolling admissions	October 31 (priority admission consideration)
University of South Florida	March 1	November 1 (preferred admission consideration) January 1 (preferred financial aid deadline) January 15 (scholarship consideration deadline)
University of West Florida	June 1	December 1 (priority scholarship deadline) December 15 (priority financial aid deadline)

Residency

If you are applying to a Florida school, you are likely eligible for in-state tuition at a lower rate. Here's what you need to know about filling out the residency requirements.

Who is a "Florida Resident for Tuition Purposes"?

- If your parent has lived in Florida for at least 12 consecutive months, then you are likely a Florida resident for tuition purposes
- To claim residency, you must complete a residency form or affidavit
- College staff will review this form and related documentation to determine your eligibility

Who is the "claimant," or the person claiming residency?

- If you are a dependent, your parent is the claimant
- Most recent high school graduates are dependents, but there are some exceptions
- If you think you might be an independent, talk to your school counselor for help

What documents can verify Florida residency?

- A copy of a driver's license or Florida state identification card
- Voter registration
- Florida vehicle registration
- Talk to your admissions office for guidance regarding other acceptable documents

Special residency cases

- Members of the armed services stationed in Florida, as well as their spouses and dependent children, may qualify as residents for tuition purposes
- For a full list of students in special circumstances who may qualify as Florida residents for tuition purposes, please see the Florida Department of Education's web page: bit.ly/FLResidency

What if I'm Undocumented?

- **If you are on track to graduate this spring, and you have attended high school in Florida for the past three years, you may be eligible for a waiver to pay in-state tuition at a Florida school**
- **To be eligible for this tuition waiver, you must apply to college within 24 months of graduation**
- **After you are admitted to a school, you will need to submit an HB851 Out-of-State Fee Waiver**

Post-Application Checklist

Applying to college is an important step in continuing your education, but it's not the last step! Here's what you'll need to do next.

Finalize your Application

- Make sure your application fee has been paid
- Make sure your transcripts have been sent

Apply for Financial Aid

- Create your FSA ID, a login ID that you need to use the StudentAid website
 - You and your parent will each need to create your own FSA ID
 - Go to fsaid.ed.gov to get started
- Complete the FAFSA
 - The FAFSA opens on October 1
 - The earlier you complete it, the more likely you are to qualify for financial aid
 - Go to fafsa.ed.gov to get started
- Complete the Florida Financial Aid Application (FFAA)
 - The FFAA opens October 1
 - It is necessary to complete this application to receive state-funded grants and scholarships, including Bright Futures
 - Complete the FFAA at www.floridastudentfinancialaidsg.org/ua/sawstua_uaform.asp
- Apply for grants and scholarships
 - Florida offers both merit- and need-based scholarships, including Bright Futures, First Generation Matching Grant, and Florida Student Assistance Grant
 - Some of these scholarships require that you complete the Florida Financial Aid Application
 - Research local scholarships through your local education foundation, community foundation, or by talking to your school counselor

Get Ready to Go!

- Accept an admissions offer by May 1
- Get necessary supplies, like books, dorm room essentials, etc.
- Attend new student orientation
- Sign up for housing and meal plan (if you're living on campus)
- Submit housing deposit by the deadline (check your college's website for more information)
- Register for classes if you did not already do so at student orientation
- Have a great first semester!

Worksheets

