

CLASS OF 2020 | PARENT/GUARDIAN HANDBOOK

The mission of tnAchieves is to increase higher education opportunities for Tennessee high school students by providing **last-dollar scholarships** with **mentor guidance**.



WELCOME

On behalf of the tnAchieves Board of Directors and team, we are so excited to share with you the tnAchieves parent/guardian handbook. This handbook is designed to ensure you are fully armed to keep your student on track to begin college, but ultimately we want your student to feel supported through a college credential.

At tnAchieves, college for us 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.

This handbook is meant to help you navigate college with your student. It is important to note that all students received a tnAchieves handbook at a public high school drop off or will receive one at an upcoming homeschool/private school meeting. Make sure they are following its guidelines and advice.

Because we are the partnering organization to Governor Haslam's TN Promise in 90 Tennessee counties, 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!

Please reach out for assistance when needed. We want to support you while you are supporting your student.

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, Executive Director



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Welcome | 1 |
| What is College? | 2 |
| Undergraduate Degree Options | 3 |
| Tennessee Colleges | 4 |
| Student Checklist | 5 |
| Admissions | 6 |
| Financial Aid | 7-8 |
| TN Promise | 9 |
| Now That Your Student is in College | 10 |
| Common Hiccups/TN Promise Policies | 11-14 |

WHAT IS COLLEGE?

College is for everyone. There are many opportunities, resources and aid available to help students enroll. Finding the right fit is so important!

What is college?

College is a great opportunity for students to pursue post 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, it is a great decision that your student has made that will help them be successful!

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 | Tennessee College of Applied Technology | 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 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 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 fees. The amount of funding you will receive will be based on the average annual amount of tuition and fees at a community college, which is estimated to be \$4,000. As a last-dollar scholarship, TN Promise will provide whatever amount remains after Pell, HOPE and TSAA funds are applied. For example, if the average tuition and fees at a community college were \$4,000 per year and you were receiving \$3,500 in HOPE funds each year but no other federal or state aid, TN Promise would provide \$500 to be applied toward tuition and fees at one of the eligible four-year institutions.

UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE OPTIONS

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 options available and where you can earn them.

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.

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.

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.

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.

*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.

What is your student's college plan?

List your student's college choices in order of preference.

First College Choice

Plan B

Plan C

TENNESSEE COLLEGES

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 the student is attending and the other types of financial aid the student receives. For more details regarding TN Promise funding, please reference your student's tnAchieves handbook or visit www.tnachieves.org.

TN Promise Institutions

| Tennessee Community Colleges | Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology | | Four-Year Colleges/Universities |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| Chattanooga State Community College | TCAT Athens | TCAT Livingston | Austin Peay State University |
| Cleveland State Community College | TCAT Chattanooga | TCAT McKenzie | Tennessee State University |
| Columbia State Community College | TCAT Covington | TCAT McMinnville | Baptist College of Health Sciences |
| Dyersburg State Community College | TCAT Crossville | TCAT Memphis | Bethel University |
| Jackson State Community College | TCAT Crump | TCAT Morristown | Bryan College |
| Motlow State Community College | TCAT Dickson | TCAT Murfreesboro | Carson-Newman University |
| Nashville State Community College | TCAT Elizabethton | TCAT Nashville | Christian Brothers University |
| Northeast State Community College | TCAT Harriman | TCAT Newbern | Cumberland University |
| Pellissippi State Community College | TCAT Hartsville | TCAT Oneida | John A. Gupton College |
| Roane State Community College | TCAT Hohenwald | TCAT Paris | Johnson University |
| Southwest Tennessee Community College | TCAT Jacksboro | TCAT Pulaski | King University |
| Volunteer State Community College | TCAT Jackson | TCAT Ripley | Lane College |
| Walters State Community College | TCAT Knoxville | TCAT Shelbyville | LeMoyné-Owen College |
| | TCAT Whiteville | | Lincoln Memorial University |
| | | | Martin Methodist College |
| | | | South College |
| | | | Southern Adventist University |
| | | | Trevecca Nazarene University |
| | | | Tusculum College |
| | | | Welch College |
| | | | William R. Moore College of Tech. |

Other Tennessee Colleges

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

STUDENT CHECKLIST

Use the checklist below to stay on track to receive your TN Promise scholarship!

TN Promise eligibility requirements are listed in green.

| | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | BY NOVEMBER 1, 2019 | Complete the 2020 TN Promise application. Visit www.TNPromise.gov . |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | FALL 2019 | Attend assembly hosted by tnAchieves. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | BY FEBRUARY 1, 2020 | File the 2020-2021 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Visit www.fafsa.gov . |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | BY APRIL 1, 2020 | Apply to an eligible TN Promise institution. A list of eligible institutions can be found on page 4. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | SPRING 2020 | Attend mandatory spring team meeting hosted by tnAchieves. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | BY MAY 1, 2020 | Submit all requested admissions documents to anticipated college. Check your college email for admissions updates. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | BY JULY 1, 2020 | Complete and submit 8 hours of community service. Submit by 11:59 PM at www.tnachieves.org . |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | BY JULY 1, 2020 | Complete financial aid verification, if selected. Verification is completed through your college's financial aid office. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | BY JULY 1, 2020 | Ensure your college is listed on your TSAC Portal and FAFSA. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | FALL 2020 | Enroll as a full-time student at a TN Promise eligible institution. Students must be enrolled in a minimum of 12 credit hours at a community college or eligible four-year college or in a full-time program at a Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | FALL 2020 | Attend fall team meeting hosted by tnAchieves. Your meeting date/time will be communicated to you via email and text message. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | ONGOING | Stay in communication with your tnAchieves mentor. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | ONGOING | Check your email every Monday for weekly updates from tnAchieves. tnAchieves will send you weekly emails containing important information regarding your participation in the program. |

NOTES

Applying to college can be an intimidating process. Applying early is always the best option. 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! If your student is not sure where they want to go, that is perfectly normal. Encourage them to apply to multiple schools and take tours of the campuses, meet with admissions counselors and ask their school counselors for advice. Specific college admissions requirements vary from college to college, but luckily the basics are largely the same. There can be a lot involved, so make sure your student takes care of all the details the college application requires. And encourage him/her to keep in touch with their college of choice!

Once your student has decided 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 that 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 complete the admissions process.

3. Send ACT scores.

Official transcripts may have ACT scores. If not, score reports can be ordered through www.ACT.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 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 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 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.

8. Sign up 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 their 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.

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 2020-2021 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 2020-2021 FAFSA is available for completion at www.fafsa.gov. In addition to being a TN Promise requirement, filing the FAFSA by February 1, 2020 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 a FAFSA?

The FAFSA is based on 2018 student and parent/guardian tax information. Here are a few documents you may need to successfully file a 2020-2021 FAFSA:

- Student and parent/legal guardian FSA IDs (See below for details.)
- 2018 Federal Tax Return or other income documentation
- Social Security number(s)
- Driver's license (if any)
- 2018 tax information for student and parent(s)/legal guardian(s)
- 2018 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 parent(s)/guardian(s) must create an FSA ID. The FSA ID allows access to Federal Student Aid's online system and serves as the legal signature for FAFSA. Students and parents must have two separate FSA IDs; therefore, the same email address cannot be used for both the student and parent/guardian FSA ID. FSA IDs can be created at www.fsaaid.ed.gov. After FSA ID creation, store the FSA ID in a safe place that is easily accessible to you and your student!

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/guardian tax information. While you and your student need separate FSA IDs, you will provide student and parent/guardian 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 up with 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

Federal Pell Grant

A Pell Grant is a federal grant awarded to students based on FAFSA information. Pell Grant amount is determined by the Estimated Family Contribution (EFC). EFC is calculated based on the parent/guardian 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 post-secondary.

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 \$1,750 per semester for 4-year institutions and 2-year institutions that offer on-campus housing; up to \$1,500 per semester for 2-year institutions

- 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 AND must have been enrolled in a homeschool program for one year immediately preceding graduation and be registered with a TN local school district.

Wilder-Naifeh Technical Skills Grant

Award amount is up to \$2,000 per academic year

- Available to anyone who enrolls in a certificate or diploma program at a Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) and meets residency requirements
- May be eligible for Tennessee HOPE Scholarship if student is initially HOPE eligible and enrolls at an eligible post-secondary institution within 3 years of completing a diploma program at a TCAT

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

- Be a Tennessee resident one year prior to application deadline;
- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online at www.fafsa.gov; and
- 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.

TN Promise

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 current year's seniors. No ACT or GPA requirement for eligibility. A student must complete the scholarship application by November 1, 2019.
- 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.

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 a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as soon as possible after October 1 each year. To be eligible, the applicant must:

- Complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA);
- Have a valid Expected Family Contribution (EFC) of 2,100 or less; and
- Be a Tennessee resident. If the student is a dependent, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must also be a Tennessee resident.

There are additional scholarships/grants that 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 <https://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 the student and the student should begin working closely with the college 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!

TN PROMISE

My student applied for TN Promise; now what?

There is no ACT or GPA requirement for TN Promise eligibility. Students were simply required to apply at TNPromise.gov by November 1, 2019. [tnAchieves](http://tnAchieves.org) visited all public high school seniors in October to deliver student handbooks and conduct the first TN Promise meeting. Private/homeschool applicants attend their first meeting in November and December 2019. Dates and locations can be found at www.tnachieves.org.

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

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

Your student is required to complete the 2020-2021 FAFSA by February 1, 2020 for TN Promise eligibility. The 2020-2021 FAFSA is based on student and parent/guardian 2018 tax information. Please visit pages 8-10 of the student handbook for detailed FAFSA information.

Team Meetings

Team meetings are designed to help prepare students for the college enrollment process and the first semester of college. Students are required to attend the mandatory meetings assigned for their high school. Parents and guardians are strongly encouraged to attend team meetings but cannot attend for the student! You can find a complete meeting schedule by high school at www.tnachieves.org and on pages 28-39 of your student's handbook.

A student's failure to attend his/her assigned mandatory meeting will result in the loss of TN Promise eligibility. Work and lack of transportation are not valid excuses to miss mandatory meetings. If your student is an early graduate, the student is required to attend meetings assigned to the institution from which he/she graduated.

Mentors

Each student who completes the FAFSA by the established deadline is paired with a volunteer mentor. This mentor is 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.

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. A list of upcoming deadlines can be found below. Please reference pages 22-23 of your student's handbook for further information regarding acceptable forms of community service.

Community service hours are submitted via our online form at <https://tnachieves.org/community-service/submit-cs-hours/>.

| Semester/Trimester | Deadline*** | Timeframe for Completion |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Summer 2020* | April 1, 2020 by 11:59 PM CT | November 2, 2019-April 1, 2020 |
| Fall 2020 | July 1, 2020 by 11:59 PM CT | November 2, 2019-July 1, 2020 |
| Spring 2021 | December 1, 2020 by 11:59 PM CT | July 2-December 1, 2020 |
| Summer 2021** | April 1, 2021 by 11:59 PM CT | December 2, 2020-April 1, 2021 |
| Fall 2021 | July 1, 2021 by 11:59 PM CT | December 2, 2020-July 1, 2021 |
| Spring 2022 | December 1, 2021 by 11:59 PM CT | July 2-December 1, 2021 |
| Summer 2022** | April 1, 2022 by 11:59 PM CT | December 2, 2021-April 1, 2022 |
| Fall 2022 | July 1, 2022 by 11:59 PM CT | December 2, 2021-July 1, 2022 |

*Only students attending a TCAT may enroll the summer directly following high school graduation and must meet the April 1, 2020 deadline. They must also submit an additional 8 hours by July 1, 2020 for the fall term.

**Summer semester/trimester deadlines only apply to students attending a TCAT or students choosing to enroll full time in a summer semester at a community college or eligible four-year institution.

***Students attending South College are required to submit 8 hours prior to each quarter. Contact us for specific deadlines.

NOW THAT YOUR STUDENT IS IN COLLEGE

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 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 that 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!

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.

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.

- 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 project 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.

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 that email with tnAchieves. 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 with the program. Not receiving an email is not an excuse for not completing TN Promise requirements. Contact tnachieves@tnachieves.org to correct email addresses.

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 in to FAFSA and complete the correct year's FAFSA. If this 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/guardian tax documentation to complete the FAFSA. Parent(s)/guardian(s) must have a separate username and password 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 February 1, 2020, 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 2018 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 his/her community service and is now being told they are ineligible.

Students are expected to submit their community service through an online form at www.tnachieves.org. If a student signs in at their community service event, this does not count for submission. If a student submits a community service form through their college or anywhere but www.tnachieves.org, this does not count for submission. Students should never rely on their community service supervisor, their 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.

My student did everything right, but has been dropped from all their 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 6 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 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 that students may 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: www.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 he/she is interested in to discuss other sources of financial aid.

Can my student take a semester off?

No. Students are required to be enrolled continually to maintain their TN Promise eligibility. If a student is 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?

Should a student wish to appeal their financial aid status, they 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: <https://www.tn.gov/collegepays/article/TELS-Program-and-TN-Promise-Scholarship-Appeals-and-Exceptions>

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.

My student needs to miss their assigned meeting. What is their next step?

Students are required to attend their mandatory TN Promise meeting. If an extenuating circumstance impedes their ability to attend they should reference the excuse form policy of their tnAchieves handbook. An outline of eligible excuses and procedure can be found on pages 12-13 of this manual. Students that are granted an excuse from their mandatory meeting will be required to attend another school's meeting to make up their requirement.

Can I attend the mandatory meeting on behalf of my student?

Although parents are encouraged to attend TN Promise meetings, they are not permitted to attend on behalf of their student. The TN Promise scholar must be in attendance to maintain scholarship eligibility.

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 HIPAA 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, he/she can sign a FERPA waiver with the college to allow them to discuss protected information with you.

TN PROMISE POLICIES

To remain TN Promise eligible, a student must:

High School:

1. Attend and graduate from an eligible high school.

- a. A student must apply his/her senior year of high school with the class of 2020 and meet the TN Promise established application deadline.
- b. A student must be a Tennessee resident.
 - i. A student's residency will be determined by the post-secondary institution.
 - ii. A student who resides with a parent outside of Tennessee pursuant to military orders will be considered eligible to participate in the scholarship program.
- c. A student who completes a GED or HiSET diploma must enroll full-time in an eligible post-secondary program in the fall after he/she receives his/her 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 team meetings. A student must attend his/her assigned scheduled meeting as outlined in the student handbook/website.

- a. Excuse forms will be reviewed for the following:
 - i. Participation in a school-sanctioned event (e.g., athletic event, choir concert, national or state conference or competition)
 - For athletic events, student must present tnAchieves with the game schedule AND a signed note from the coach.
 - For other events, student must present tnAchieves with a signed note from the faculty advisor/sponsor.
 - No rehearsals or practices of ANY type will be considered excusable absences.
 - Club meetings will not be considered excusable absences.
 - School social events (e.g., proms) will not be considered excusable absences.
 - Any event falling outside of a school-sanctioned event will NOT be considered an excused absence (e.g., club sports, auditions).
 - In order for the absence to be considered excused, a student must be a member of the school's student body and an active participant in the event.
 - ii. Death in the immediate family
 - Student must present tnAchieves with a death certificate, obituary or a funeral service remembrance card that is specific to the meeting date missed to remain eligible.
 - Immediate family is defined as a parent, legal guardian, sibling or grandparent.
 - iii. Personal illness
 - Student must present tnAchieves with a signed doctor's note that is specific to the meeting date missed to remain eligible.
 - Illness within the family is not an excusable absence.

TN PROMISE POLICIES

- iv. Conflict with post-secondary class schedule
 - Student must present tnAchieves with a class schedule AND a signed note from the professor confirming attendance specific to the meeting date missed to remain eligible.
 - v. Conflict with religious observance
 - Student must present tnAchieves with a signed note from religious leadership indicating date and time of the required religious observance or activity that conflicts with assigned team meeting and confirming student attendance.
 - vi. Personal or Immediate Family Emergency
 - Student must present tnAchieves with valid proof that is specific to the meeting date and time missed to remain eligible (e.g., emergency room documentation).
- b. Students are responsible for notifying tnAchieves prior to or within 72 hours following the missed meeting via the excuse form provided at www.tnachieves.org. Failure to meet this requirement, even with a valid excuse, will result in loss of TN Promise eligibility.
- i. Work, lack of/inoperable transportation, scheduled vacations (even years in advance) including weddings and all other excuses outside those outlined above are not considered excusable absences and will result in a student losing his/her TN Promise eligibility. This includes meetings that are rescheduled due to inclement weather or school closings.
 - ii. A student who arrives late to a mandatory meeting will lose his/her TN Promise eligibility. Likewise, a student who leaves a meeting prior to adjournment will lose his/her TN Promise eligibility.
 - iii. A student who has an approved absence by tnAchieves must attend a make-up meeting to remain eligible. The student must attend the make-up meeting prior to the end of the scheduled team meeting's calendar (i.e., if a student misses the second team meeting and meets the 72 hour excuse form policy requirement, he/she is responsible for attending another meeting before the conclusion of the spring team meetings.). Failure to attend a make-up meeting for any reason will result in loss of TN Promise eligibility.
 - It is important to note that tnAchieves strongly encourages students to attend their initial assigned meeting rather than requesting an excused absence, as the make-up meetings will most likely be held outside the student's county of residence and the mentor is not asked to attend make-up meetings.
- c. A student who graduates high school during the fall term is required to return to his/her high school for the assigned mandatory meetings.
- d. A student who transfers during his/her senior year is responsible for alerting tnAchieves and attending the assigned mandatory meeting designated for the high school to which he/she transferred.
- e. A parent/guardian cannot attend meetings on the student's behalf. The student must attend the meetings to remain eligible.
- f. A student who requires accommodations at his/her assigned team meeting will be responsible for alerting tnAchieves 72 hours in advance of the meeting (e.g., sign language interpreter).
- g. A homeschool student must have documentation from his/her umbrella school indicating a school-facilitated break to be considered excused from the assigned mandatory meeting.
3. Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by February 1, 2020.
- 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. A student must be eligible for in-state tuition.
 - c. A student must complete the 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. A student 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. Student must select the eligible institution he/she plans to attend as his/her first choice on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as well as direct his/her TSAC Student Portal to the eligible institution.
 - d. It is the student's responsibility to confirm with the post-secondary institution that his/her 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. 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 your neighborhood).
 - iv. Proselytizing (sharing or teaching faith).
 - b. Students must submit all information regarding community service by the established deadline at www.tnachieves.org. Failure to comply by the established dates will result in loss of eligibility.

College:

- 1. Maintain full-time status each semester.
 - a. If the student falls below full-time, he/she will no longer be eligible.
 - b. TCAT students must be enrolled in a full-time program.
 - c. Failure to attend class could result in loss of eligibility.
- 2. Begin at an eligible post-secondary institution in the fall term directly following high school graduation.
 - a. A student may begin at his/her post-secondary institution prior to the fall term directly following high school graduation; however, the student will be responsible for incurred tuition and fees until fall.
 - b. A TCAT student may begin in the summer directly following high school graduation if he/she has met all TN Promise requirements.

TN PROMISE POLICIES

- c. A student 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. A student must request a leave of absence with his/her chosen post-secondary institution 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. A student cannot leave the post-secondary institution for a period of time and remain eligible.
 - b. If a student withdraws from all classes during the semester, he/she 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 his/her 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. A student must be eligible for in-state tuition.
6. Submit all financial aid verification documents by July 1 each year for community and four-year colleges.
 - a. A student 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.
 - i. A student may be required to pay tuition and mandatory fees out of pocket if his/her financial aid file is not processed and verified by the beginning of classes.
 - c. Student must select the eligible institution he/she plans to attend as his/her first choice on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as well as direct his/her TSAC student portal to the eligible institution.
 - d. It is the student's responsibility to confirm with the post-secondary institution that his/her 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. 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 your neighborhood).
 - iv. Proselytizing (sharing or teaching faith).
 - b. Students must submit all information regarding community service by the established deadline at www.tnachieves.org. Failure to comply by the established dates will result in loss of eligibility.

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 student's 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. A student is responsible for notifying tnAchieves staff when his/her contact information changes. Incorrect information does not preclude a student from ineligibility.
7. Rescheduled Meeting Policy: If the student's school is cancelled or released early for any reason, tnAchieves will reschedule the mandatory meeting. It is the student's responsibility to visit www.tnachieves.org to find the new date for his/her meeting.

Should a student fail to adhere to any/all policies, tnAchieves invokes the right to remove a student's 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 www.tnachieves.org for updates and changes to the TN Promise legislation.



Changing Lives Transforming Communities

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tnAchieves.org | [@tnAchieves](https://www.instagram.com/tnAchieves)