

The Five Postsecondary Options After High School



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Graduation is not an end, but a beginning—a fork in the road where students choose an option toward a fulfilling career. While a traditional university is a common choice, Tennessee offers five distinct postsecondary options, each requiring some type of continuing education or training to ensure success in a workforce where nearly 75% of jobs will require it by the end of the year. Please remember, if you want to attend a highly competitive college or university, the coursework you select is critical!

UNIVERSITIES

These four-year institutions generally offer bachelor's degrees, as well as advanced graduate and professional degrees for specialized careers. Public universities in Tennessee are selective, meaning they evaluate applicants based on academic rigor and test scores.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Offering associate degrees and certificates, these schools are "open-enrollment" and serve as a cost-effective bridge to a bachelor's degree through credit transfers. Students can complete general education requirements here and transfer to a university to finish a major. A student can earn an associate's degree in several programs by completing two years. There are 13 community colleges in Tennessee and many more satellite campuses.

TECHNICAL COLLEGES (TCATs)

Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology provide hands-on employment preparation for skilled labor, such as welding, auto collision repair, cosmetology, culinary arts, and more, in programs lasting two years or less. They offer open enrollment through high-demand programs with a potential waiting list. Many programs can be started in high school through the TSAC Dual Enrollment Grant.

MILITARY SERVICE

The five active-duty branches—Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard—provide full-time careers with integrated educational benefits. Students can enlist immediately, serve part-time in the National Guard while in college, or pursue officer training through ROTC.

APPRENTICESHIPS

These "earn while you learn" programs combine supervised paid on-the-job training with classroom instruction over two to five years. Graduates earn recognized industry credentials and licenses for trades like carpentry or electrical work. Several local businesses offer apprenticeships for MHS students. These local opportunities are listed later in this guide.

Maximizing High School: Dual Enrollment

Eligible high school students can use dual enrollment to work toward a college degree and a high school diploma simultaneously. This program provides a GPA bump at the high school level and college credit hours that typically transfer to most public universities and community colleges. At TCATs, dual enrollment allows students as young as 9th grade to begin training, with the TCAT often covering any cost gap not met by state grants. Ask your counselor about eligibility for DE classes. **MHS offers transportation for those in need, but most students will provide their own if able.**

This guide highlights key components of each of the five postsecondary options. After reviewing the information, please feel free to contact our counseling office regarding any questions or additional support.

MHS Offers Five Different Early Postsecondary Options

 TN Department of Education	AP Advanced Placement	CLEP College Level Exam Program	DE Dual Enrollment	LDC Local Dual Credit	IC Industry Certification
Description	- College-level high school courses offered in multiple subjects - Nationally recognized exams	- Nationally recognized exams used to assess college-level knowledge - Exams offered in multiple subjects	- Postsecondary (PS) course taught at the PS institution, high school, or online - Student enrolled in the PS institution	- High school course aligned to standards at local postsecondary (PS) institution - Optional exam for credit at local PS institution	Assessment by an independent certifying entity based on standards for knowledge, skills, and competencies
Structure	Course and Exam	Exam	Course	Course and Exam	Exam
Provider	The College Board	The College Board	Individual TN PS Institutions	Individual TN PS Institutions	Industry
Student Fees and Assistance	- Exam fees - College Board and state assistance for low-income students	Exam fees	- Course tuition, fees, books - Dual Enrollment Grant (a lottery scholarship)	Exam fees	Exam fees
High School Credit and Graduation Requirements	AP courses meet graduation requirements and/or elective	CLEP is not a course and does not meet high school graduation requirements	District sets policy on awarding high school credit and graduation requirements	LDC course fulfills the same requirements as aligned high school course	IC is a program of study and does not meet graduation requirements
High School Recognition State Policies	- Qualifies for graduation with state distinction - Qualifies for GPA weighting	CLEP is not a course and does not meet high school graduation requirements	Qualifies for graduation with state distinction		Qualifies for graduation with state distinction
Postsecondary Credit Determinant	Score on AP exam	Score on CLEP exam	- Dual enrollment course completion - Passing grade as assigned by PS instructor	Score on challenge exam at or above the established cut score	Score on industry certification exam
Postsecondary Credit Awarded	- Determined by postsecondary institutions - Awarded upon matriculation	- Determined by postsecondary institutions - Awarded upon matriculation	- Credit awarded on PS transcript upon course completion - Credit can be transferred to other PS institutions	- Credit accepted at the partnering PS institution - Students should notify registrar upon matriculation	Determined by postsecondary institutions

Universities and Community Colleges

What is the Best Fit for Me?

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

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

Each student should consider what they know about themselves at this point.

- Pre-ACT/ ACT scores
- Results from interest inventories
- Results from ASVAB (11th grade)
- YouScience results - aptitude
- Current GPA

Below are some things you should consider as you research.

TYPE OF SCHOOL • 2-year or 4-year • Public or private • University/research institution or liberal arts college • All male, all female, or coed • Religious or secular	STUDENT LIFE • On and off-campus activities • Athletics • Greek life • Student organizations • Safety • Student body diversity	LOCATION • Urban or rural • Size of nearest city • Distance from home • Geographic setting and weather
AFFORDABILITY • Cost of Attendance (COA) (tuition, fees, transportation, housing) • Scholarships • Campus employment	ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS • Minimum GPA • Average test scores • Required high school courses • Likelihood of being accepted	HOUSING • Residence halls • On/off-campus housing • Meal plan • Parking for residents and for commuters
ACADEMICS • Programs and majors offered • Student-faculty ratio • Accreditation	SIZE • Total enrollment • Average class size • Physical size of campus	WHAT OTHER CRITERIA ARE IMPORTANT TO YOU?

Senior Transition Senior Transition is an essential course for 12th graders preparing for life after high school. It provides practical support for the college application and scholarship processes, specifically focusing on crafting the college essay. Students engage in self-discovery and future planning through career exploration, interviewing skills, and community-focused projects such as job shadowing.	ACT Prep Taking ACT Readiness Preparation is highly beneficial for 11th-grade students because it provides a dedicated environment to understand the exam's significance for postsecondary readiness and career pathways. The course offers practical instruction and practice to build familiarity with the exam's structure and format, while also teaching specific strategies for maximizing scores, such as "test tips" and methods for managing test anxiety.
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Degree Types

The exact training and education you need after high school depends on the career path or interest area you have in mind. Completing classes or training beyond high school (called postsecondary education) should lead you to obtain one or more of the academic credentials described below:

POSTSECONDARY ACADEMIC CREDENTIALS	EXAMPLES
Certificate This credential is awarded to individuals who complete a defined set of requirements, coursework, and sometimes fieldwork and/or an apprenticeship in a specific area. Certificates are usually earned in 12-20 months at community colleges and technical institutions like Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology.	Certificate in Automotive Technology Certificate in Practical Nursing
Associate Degree These are awarded by a community college or junior college to individuals who complete a prescribed course of study. Usually taking two years, Associate degrees are awarded in specific areas (majors) and often built on the Associate of Applied Science (AAS) and Associate of Arts (AA) degrees.	AAS in Early Childhood Education AAS in Accounting AAS in Medical Laboratory Technician AA in University Parallel Studies
Bachelor's Degree These are awarded by a college or university to individuals completing a specified course of study, usually taking four years. Coursework includes general studies and specific concentration classes (majors). These degrees include the Bachelor of Science (BS), Bachelor of Arts (BA), and Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) foundations. (Also called baccalaureate.)	BS in Engineering BA in English Literature BFA in Dance
Graduate Degree These are awarded by a college or university to individuals who have earned a bachelor's degree and wish to further their education with a masters or doctoral degree. It typically takes 2-3 years to earn a masters and may take anywhere from 2-6 years or more to earn a doctorate. These degrees include the Master of Arts (MA), Master of Science (MS), Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), and Doctor of Education (EdD).	MA in English Literature MS in Counseling PhD in History EdD in Curriculum and Instruction
Professional Degree Professional degrees are pursued after the completion of a bachelor's degree and can take two to six years to complete. The advanced study and work required for a professional degree prepares the holder for a particular profession by emphasizing competency skills along with theory and analysis/	JD - Lawyer MD - Physician DVM - Veterinarian DDS - Dentist

Tennessee Financial Aid

To qualify for these scholarships and grants, a student must **complete the FAFSA**, be a U.S. citizen or an eligible non-citizen (with some exceptions), and be a Tennessee resident one year before the application deadline. In Tennessee, to be eligible for the maximum scholarship and financial aid, every senior must complete the FAFSA before April 1.

Pink = 4 year path Purple = 2 year path Green = Technical College (TCAT) Path

Tennessee HOPE Scholarship

The HOPE Scholarship awards up to \$2,250 per semester for freshmen and sophomores, and \$2,850 per semester for juniors and seniors at four-year institutions, and up to \$1,600 per semester at two-year institutions.

Requirements:

- Minimum 21 ACT composite (or concordant equivalent on the SAT) on a national or state test date OR
- Final cumulative 3.0 unweighted GPA* for entering freshmen graduating from eligible public or category 1, 2, or 3 private high schools

Aspire Award (For both 4 year and 2 year paths)

The Aspire Award provides up to \$750 per semester at four-year institutions and up to \$250 per semester at two-year institutions as a SUPPLEMENT to the Tennessee HOPE Scholarship.

Requirements:

- Meet Tennessee HOPE Scholarship requirements AND
- Parents' or an independent student's (and spouse's) adjusted gross income must be \$36,000 or less on the tax form
- Students may receive ASPIRE or GAMS (see below) but not BOTH

General Assembly Merit Scholarship (GAMS)

The award amount is up to \$500 per semester as a SUPPLEMENT to the Tennessee HOPE Scholarship

Requirements:

- At least a final cumulative 3.75 unweighted GPA* AND 29+ ACT composite (or concordant equivalent on the SAT) on a national test date or state test date

Wilder-Naifeh Technical Skills Grant

The award amount is up to \$2,000 per academic year.

Requirements:

- Available to anyone who enrolls in a certificate or diploma program at a Tennessee College of Applied Technology and meets residency requirements

Tennessee Promise

The Tennessee Promise is a scholarship and mentoring program that allows students in Tennessee to attend a community or technical college tuition-free. It provides students a last-dollar scholarship, meaning the scholarship will cover the cost of tuition and mandatory fees not covered by the Pell Grant, the HOPE Scholarship, or the Tennessee Student Assistance Award. Students may use the scholarship at any of the state's 13 community colleges, 24 colleges of applied technology, or other eligible institutions offering an associate degree program.

Requirements:

- Apply for the scholarship
- Complete the FAFSA
- Attend a mandatory mentor meeting
- Apply to a community or technical college
- Complete and report eight hours of community service

Tennessee Student Assistance Award (TSAA) (For both 4 year and 2 year paths)

The amount of the award is based on the institution indicated on the student's FAFSA. Award amounts for an academic year are: four-year/two-year private - \$4,000, and four-year public/two-year public/Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology/career schools - \$2,000.

Requirements:

- Student Aid Index (SAI) of 3500 or less from the FAFSA
- Priority for this award is given to U.S. citizens

For more information on key terms for postsecondary education, visit <https://www.collegefortn.org/know-the-lingo/>

Tennessee Public Universities

Austin Peay State University

601 College Street, Clarksville, TN 37040

www.apsu.edu

- Total Undergraduate Enrollment: 9,211
- Total Graduate Enrollment: 1,235
- Average ACT: 21.0
- CEEB Code: 1028

East Tennessee State University

1276 Gilbreath Drive, Johnson City, TN 37614

www.etsu.edu

- Total Undergraduate Enrollment: 10,878
- Total Graduate Enrollment: 2,964
- Average ACT: 22.4
- CEEB Code: 1198

Middle Tennessee State University

1301 East Main Street, Murfreesboro, TN 37132

www.mtsu.edu

- Total Undergraduate Enrollment: 18,090
- Total Graduate Enrollment: 2,663
- Average ACT: 22.5
- CEEB Code: 1466

Tennessee State University

3500 John A. Merritt Boulevard, Nashville, TN 37209

www.tnstate.edu

- Total Undergraduate Enrollment: 5,141
- Total Graduate Enrollment: 1,544
- Average ACT: 18.6
- CEEB Code: 1803

Tennessee Tech University

1 William L. Jones Drive, Cookeville, TN 38505

www.tntech.edu

- Total Undergraduate Enrollment: 9,185
- Total Graduate Enrollment: 1,371
- Average ACT: 23.7
- CEEB Code: 1804

University of Memphis

3720 Alumni Avenue, Memphis, TN 38152

www.memphis.edu

- Total Undergraduate Enrollment: 16,136
- Total Graduate Enrollment: 5,269
- Average ACT: 20.7
- CEEB Code: 1459

University of Tennessee Chattanooga

615 McCallie Avenue, Chattanooga, TN 37403

www.utc.edu

- Total Undergraduate Enrollment: 10,186
- Total Graduate Enrollment: 1,397
- Average ACT: 22.5
- CEEB Code: 1831

University of Tennessee Health Science Center

920 Madison Avenue, Memphis, Tennessee 38163

www.uthsc.edu

- Total Undergraduate Enrollment: 392
- Total Graduate Enrollment: 2,845
- Average ACT: N/A
- CEEB Code: N/A

University of Tennessee Knoxville

1300 Volunteer Boulevard, Knoxville, TN 37996

www.utk.edu

- Total Undergraduate Enrollment: 30,570
- Total Graduate Enrollment: 6,736
- Average ACT: 27.2
- CEEB Code: 1843

University of Tennessee Martin

554 University Street, Martin, TN 38238

www.utm.edu

- Total Undergraduate Enrollment: 6,797
- Total Graduate Enrollment: 718
- Average ACT: 21.5
- CEEB Code: 1844

University of Tennessee Southern

433 West Madison Street, Pulaski, TN 38478

www.utsouthern.edu

- Total Undergraduate Enrollment: 1,011
- Total Graduate Enrollment: 38
- Average ACT: 21.0
- CEEB Code: 1449

Private Institutions (Lottery Scholarship Eligible)

These private colleges are eligible for Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarships like the HOPE Scholarship.

Baptist College of Health Sciences
www.bchs.edu
Memphis

Belmont University
www.belmont.edu
Nashville

Bethel University
www.bethelu.edu
McKenzie

Bryan College
www.bryan.edu
Dayton

Carson-Newman University
www.cn.edu
Jefferson City

Christian Brothers University
www.cbu.edu
Memphis

Cumberland University
www.cumberland.edu
Lebanon

Fisk University
www.fisk.edu
Nashville

Freed-Hardeman University
www.fhu.edu
Henderson

John A. Gupton College
www.guptoncollege.edu
Nashville

Johnson University
www.johnsonu.edu
Jackson

King University
www.king.edu
Bristol

Lane College
www.lanecollege.edu
Jackson

Lee University
www.leeuniversity.edu
Cleveland

LeMoyne-Owen College
www.loc.edu
Memphis

Lincoln Memorial University
www.lmunet.edu
Harrogate

Lipscomb University
www.lipscomb.edu
Nashville

Martin Methodist College
www.martinmethodist.edu
Pulaski

Maryville College
www.maryvillecollege.edu
Maryville

Milligan University
www.milligan.edu
Elizabethton

Rhodes College
www.rhodes.edu
Memphis

Sewanee: The University of the South
www.sewanee.edu
Sewanee

South College
www.south.edu
Knoxville, Nashville

Southern Adventist University
www.southern.edu
Collegedale

Tennessee Wesleyan University
www.tnwesleyan.edu
Athens

Trevecca Nazarene University
www.trevecca.edu
Nashville

Tusculum University
www.tusculum.edu
Greeneville

Union University
www.uu.edu
Jackson

Vanderbilt University
www.vanderbilt.edu
Nashville

Welch College
www.welch.edu
Nashville

Tennessee Community Colleges

Chattanooga State Community College

4501 Amnicola Highway, Chattanooga, TN 37406

www.chattanoogaastate.edu

- Total Undergraduates: 7,657
- Average ACT: 18.3
- NCES Code: 4041
- CEEB Code: 1084

Cleveland State Community College

3535 Adkisson Drive, Cleveland, TN 37312

www.clevelandstatecc.edu

- Total Undergraduates: 3,295
- Average ACT: 18.9
- NCES Code: 3955
- CEEB Code: 2848

Columbia State Community College

1665 Hampshire Pike, Columbia, TN 38401

www.columbiastate.edu

- Total Undergraduates: 5,730
- Average ACT: 19.7
- NCES Code: 3953
- CEEB Code: 1081

Dyersburg State Community College

1510 Lake Road, Dyersburg, TN 38024

www.dscc.edu

- Total Undergraduates: 3,326
- Average ACT: 19.1
- NCES Code: 3969
- CEEB Code: 7323

Jackson State Community College

2046 North Parkway, Jackson, TN 38301

www.jsc.edu

- Total Undergraduates: 3,546
- Average ACT: 18.3
- NCES Code: 3967
- CEEB Code: 2266

Motlow State Community College

6015 Ledford Mill Road, Tullahoma, TN 37388

www.mscc.edu

- Total Undergraduates: 6,018
- Average ACT: 19.0
- NCES Code: 4003
- CEEB Code: 1543

Nashville State Community College

120 White Bridge Road, Nashville, TN 37209

www.nsc.edu

- Total Undergraduates: 7,559
- Average ACT: 17.5
- NCES Code: 3983
- CEEB Code: 0850

Northeast State Community College

2425 Highway 75, Blountville, TN 37748

www.northeaststate.edu

- Total Undergraduates: 5,773
- Average ACT: 19.3
- NCES Code: 4019
- CEEB Code: 0453

Pellissippi State Community College

10915 Hardin Valley Road, Knoxville, TN 38101

www.pstcc.edu

- Total Undergraduates: 9,412
- Average ACT: 19.6
- NCES Code: 4021
- CEEB Code: 0319

Roane State Community College

276 Patton Lane, Harriman, TN 37748

www.roanestate.edu

- Total Undergraduates: 5,012
- Average ACT: 19.5
- NCES Code: 3985
- CEEB Code: 1656

Southwest Tennessee Community College

5983 Macon Cove, Memphis, TN 38134

www.southwest.tn.edu

- Total Undergraduates: 7,165
- Average ACT: 16.4
- NCES Code: 4004
- CEEB Code: 0274

Volunteer State Community College

1480 Nashville Pike, Gallatin, TN 37066

www.volstate.edu

- Total Undergraduates: 6,986
- Average ACT: 19.0
- NCES Code: 4037
- CEEB Code: 1881

Walters State Community College

500 South Davy Crockett Parkway, Morristown, TN 37813

www.ws.edu

- Total Undergraduates: 5,924
- Average ACT: 19.0
- NCES Code: 4028
- CEEB Code: 1893

The 2+2 Pathway: From Community College to a 4-Year University

For many Maryville High School students, beginning at a community college is a strategic and cost-effective way to earn a bachelor's degree. By utilizing the **Tennessee Transfer Pathways (TTPs)**, you can complete your first two years locally **free** (using TN Promise) and transition seamlessly to a university as a junior.

Step 1: Start at a Community College (Years 1-2)

Most MHS students choose **Pellissippi State Community College** due to its proximity and strong partnership with MHS, including local dual credit opportunities.

- **Financial Advantage:** Use the **Tennessee Promise** to attend tuition-free. This "last-dollar" scholarship covers tuition and mandatory fees not met by other federal or state aid.
- **Academic Foundation:** Earn an **Associate of Arts (A.A.)** or **Associate of Science (A.S.)** degree while completing your general education requirements.
- **Guaranteed Transfer:** By following a TTP in one of 50+ majors (like Business, Engineering, or Nursing), your credits are guaranteed to transfer to any Tennessee public university.

Step 2: Transfer to a 4-Year University (Years 3-4)

After completing your associate degree, you will apply to a university as a transfer student to finish your bachelor's degree.

- **The "Rocky Top" Connection:** MHS students often aim for the **University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK)**. Programs like the *Rocky Top Transfer* provide a clear roadmap from Pellissippi State to UTK.
- **Junior Status:** If you follow a TTP and maintain the required GPA, you will enter the university with **junior standing**, having already finished half of your degree.
- **Expanded Choices:** Beyond UTK, your TTP credits are accepted at all TBR universities (like MTSU or ETSU) and many private institutions like **Johnson University** or **Lipscomb**.

Important Deadlines & Checklist

- **November 1:** Apply for **Tennessee Promise** through the TSAC Student Portal during your senior year.
- **April 1:** Submit your **FAFSA** to remain eligible for state scholarships and grants.
- **Ongoing:** Meet with your college advisor every semester to ensure you are taking the correct "Pathway" courses for your intended major.
- **Community Service:** Complete and report **16 hours** of community service August 1st of each year to maintain your Tennessee Promise eligibility.



CAUTION: Admission to UT:Knoxville is competitive. For UTK, the Pathways do not guarantee admission.

Resources for MHS Students

Resource	Purpose	Website
SchoolLinks	Explore 2-year and 4-year colleges and track applications.	Access via Class Link
TN Transfer Pathway	Find the specific list of classes needed for your major.	TNTransferPathway.org
MHS Ready Grad Center	Get local guidance on college and career readiness.	MHS Campus
CollegeForTN	Research financial aid, scholarships, and TN Promise details.	CollegeForTN.org

The "2+2" Financial Advantage (Estimated Savings)

Starting at a community college can save a Maryville High School student over \$30,000 in tuition and living expenses over four years.

Expense (Per Year)	2-Year Community College (Pellissippi State)	4-Year Public University (UT Knoxville)
Tuition & Fees	\$0 (with TN Promise)	\$13,812
Living Costs	\$0 (Living at home in Maryville)	\$13,356 - \$16,448 (On/Off Campus)
Books & Supplies	~\$1,300	~\$1,598
Total Annual Cost	~\$1,300	~\$28,000 - \$31,000

Bottom Line: By completing your first two years at a community college, you effectively eliminate nearly half the cost of a bachelor's degree.

Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCATs)

EACH TCAT OFFERS SIMILAR BUT UNIQUE PROGRAMS

College of Applied Technology at Athens

<http://www.tcatathens.edu>

College of Applied Technology at Chattanooga

<http://www.chattanooga.state.edu>

College of Applied Technology at Crump

<http://www.tcatcrump.edu>

College of Applied Technology at Dickson

<http://www.tcatdickson.edu>

College of Applied Technology at Elizabethton

<http://www.tcatelizabethton.edu>

College of Applied Technology at Harriman

<http://www.tcatharriman.edu>

College of Applied Technology at Hartsville

<http://www.tcathartsville.edu>

College of Applied Technology at Henry/Carroll

<http://www.tcatparis.edu>

College of Applied Technology at Hohenwald

<http://www.tcathohenwald.edu>

College of Applied Technology at Jacksboro

<http://www.tcatjacksboro.edu>

College of Applied Technology at Jackson

<http://www.tcatjackson.edu>

College of Applied Technology at Knoxville

<http://www.tcatknoxville.edu>

College of Applied Technology at Livingston

<http://www.tcatlivingston.edu>

College of Applied Technology at McKenzie

<http://www.tcatmckenzie.edu>

College of Applied Technology at McMinnville

<http://www.tcatmcminnville.edu>

College of Applied Technology at Memphis

<http://www.tcatmemphis.edu>

College of Applied Technology at Morristown

<http://www.tcatmorristown.edu>

College of Applied Technology at Murfreesboro

<http://www.tcatmurfreesboro.edu>

College of Applied Technology at Nashville

<http://www.tcatnashville.edu>

College of Applied Technology at Northwest

<http://www.tcatnorthwest.edu>

College of Applied Technology at

Oneida/Huntsville

<http://www.tcatoneida.edu>

College of Applied Technology at Pulaski

<http://www.tcatpulaski.edu>

College of Applied Technology at Shelbyville

<http://www.tcatshelbyville.edu>

College of Applied Technology at Upper

Cumberland

<https://tcatuppercumberland.edu>

Programs offered at TCAT Knoxville

Administrative Office Technology	Automotive Technology	Collision Repair Technology
Computer Operating Systems, Networking, and Cybersecurity	Cosmotology	Dental Assisting
Diesel Powered Equipment Technology	Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration	Industrial Electricity
Industrial Maintenance/Mechatronics	Machine Tool Technology	Medical Office Information Technology
Nursing Aide	Pipefitting and Plumbing Technology	Practical Nursing (LPN)
Surgical Technology	Truck Driving	Welding Technology

The TCAT Advantage: Skills-Based Education

For Maryville High School (MHS) students, the **Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT)** offers a fast-track into high-wage, high-skill careers. With a TCAT diploma, students often enter the workforce in under two years with little to no debt. TCATs focus on "clock-hour" programs where students learn by doing. Whether you are interested in Welding, Aviation Maintenance, or Practical Nursing, the education is designed to get you job-ready quickly.

The Financial Advantage: Tuition-Free Training

Starting at a TCAT, such as TCAT Knoxville, can be even more cost-effective than a community college because of specialized technical grants.

Expense (Per Trimester)	TCAT (With Financial Aid)	4-Year University (Direct Entry)
Tuition & Fees	\$0 (With TN Promise & Wilder-Naifeh)	~\$6,500 - \$7,000
Wilder-Naifeh Grant	+\$2,000/year (Applied to costs)	Not Available
Books & Tools	Varies by program (e.g., kits for Cosmetology)	~\$800
Total Out-of-Pocket	Near \$0 for many programs	High

Pathway for MHS Students: 9th Grade through Graduation

1. High School: Dual Enrollment

MHS students as young as **9th grade** can qualify for the Dual Enrollment Grant (DEG) at a TCAT.

- **The Cost:** The DE Grant covers up to **1,296 clock hours** of training.
- **Credit:** Hours earned in high school count directly toward your TCAT certificate or diploma after graduation.
- **Requirements:** You must maintain a **2.0 GPA** in your dual enrollment courses to keep the grant.

2. After Graduation: Full-Time Enrollment

After finishing at MHS, you can use the **Tennessee Promise** as a "last-dollar" scholarship to finish your remaining clock hours tuition-free.

- **Wilder-Naifeh Technical Skills Grant:** Provides up to **\$2,000 per academic year** for any student enrolled in a certificate or diploma program at a TCAT.
- **Waitlists:** Some high-demand programs have waiting lists; it is critical to apply during your senior year.

MHS Senior Enrollment Checklist for TCAT

1. **Select a Program:** Visit the TCAT website to see which programs are offered (e.g., TCAT Knoxville's Aviation or Nursing programs).
2. **Apply Online (Early):** TCATs are first-come, first-served. Apply early in your senior year to secure a spot.
3. **Submit FAFSA (By April 1):** Essential for the Wilder-Naifeh Grant and TN Promise.
4. **Submit Transcripts:** Have MHS send your official final transcript after graduation.
5. **TN Promise Requirements:** Complete your 16 hours of community service and attend your mandatory tnAchieves meeting.

Local TCAT Resources

Campus	Distance to Maryville?	Website
TCAT Knoxville	~25 minutes	tcatknoxville.edu
TCAT Harriman	~45 minutes	tcatharriman.edu
TCAT Morristown	~1 hour	tcatmorristown.edu
Ruth and Steve West Center at PSTCC Blount Campus (TCAT Welding, Machine Tool Tech., and Industrial Maintenance/Mechatronics)	~15 minutes	tcatknoxville.edu https://www.pstcc.edu/wdc-bc/

Career Spotlight 1: Practical Nursing (LPN)

The Practical Nursing program prepares students to become Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) who work under the supervision of doctors and registered nurses in hospitals, clinics, and long-term care facilities.

- **Program Length:** 12 months (3 trimesters) consisting of 1,296 clock hours
- **Schedule:** Monday–Friday, 8:00 AM – 2:30 PM (Day) or 3:30 PM – 10:00 PM (Evening)
- **Credential Earned:** Practical Nursing Diploma
- **Admission Requirements:** Must be 18 years old, have a high school diploma/GED, and pass the HESI Exam with a 70% in Math and Reading
- **Competitive Entry:** Acceptance is based on a point system; you can earn extra points by attending an information session or completing medical coursework at a TCAT.
- **Career Outlook:** The average LPN salary in Tennessee is approximately **\$53,658 to \$56,399 per year** (\$26–\$27/hour) as of early 2026.

Career Spotlight 2: Welding Technology

This program provides step-by-step mastery of welding techniques, from basic beads to advanced pipe welding, preparing students for multiple industry certifications.

- **Program Length:** 12 months (3 trimesters) consisting of 1,296 clock hours
- **Schedule:** 8:00 AM – 2:30 PM (Day) or 3:30 PM – 10:00 PM (Night) at the Main Campus
- **Credential Earned:** Combination Welder Diploma
- **Certificates Available:** You can also earn shorter-term certificates as a Shielded Metal Arc Welder (432 hours) or Gas Metal Arc Welder (864 hours).
- **Curriculum:** Includes shop safety, cutting processes, blueprint reading, and advanced techniques like Gas Tungsten Arc (TIG) pipe welding
- **Career Outlook:** The average salary for a welder in Tennessee is approximately **\$42,024 to \$42,366 per year** (\$20/hour), though certified welders in the Knoxville area can earn higher rates near \$25/hour.

Military Service

If you are interested in joining a branch of the U.S. military immediately after high school graduation, this section includes resources that may be helpful as you prepare to enlist. Time in the military can teach you a valuable trade, prepare you for a life-long career serving your country, or simply give you time to decide what you want to do next. It can be a valuable experience with good benefits and structure.

Consider speaking with relatives or friends who have served or are currently serving. Additionally, recruiters can tell you information about their particular branch of service and help with answering questions about serving in the military and protecting our nation.

Military Career Opportunities

There are literally thousands of careers in the military. Jobs in the military vary in the type of work as well as level of responsibility, yet each job is essential to accomplishing the overall mission of defending our country. To see military careers that might be a good fit for you, visit www.careersinthemilitary.com/home.

Military Recruiters

A military recruiter can help answer questions about serving in his or her particular branch of service, while providing a positive assessment of opportunities. A recruiter's job is to find qualified candidates for his or her respective service and provide the candidates with information about – and reasons for – joining the military. Students interested in military service are advised to talk with a recruiter for the branch of the military in which they are interested. Your Ready Graduate Coordinator can tell you when military recruiters will be at your high school or set up a meeting for you.

Questions to Ask a Recruiter

One way to prepare for your meeting with a recruiter is to develop specific questions about the branch. Recruiters are ready to answer these questions and any others you have in mind. If they cannot answer your question immediately, they will find the information you need and get back to you.

Visit www.todaysmilitary.com/joining-eligibility/questions-ask-recruiter, where you'll find some excellent questions to ask a recruiter.

Each military branch will visit at least twice a month. They will be set up in the lunch room during all lunches on Fridays. If you would like to schedule a meeting with a specific branch, contact your Ready Graduate Advisor at MHS to do so.



Types of Military Service

The following information is taken directly from Today's Military at:
<https://www.todaysmilitary.com/joining/types-of-military-service>

Active Duty (Full-Time)

Active-duty service members are full-time members of the military, living on base or in military housing and immersed in military culture. After attending basic training, they are stationed at a base either domestically or overseas. Active-duty terms typically last four to six years at a time.

Reserve (Part-Time)

Each active-duty branch of the military, except the Space Force, has a Reserve component under its command, which is available for deployment in times of war or national emergency. Reservists are part-time service members, which allows them time to pursue a civilian career or college education while simultaneously serving their country. Members of the Reserve attend basic training and are required to participate in training drills one weekend a month, as well as a two-week program each year.

National Guard (Part-Time)

The National Guard consists of the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard, and is assigned to their particular state. The Guard's main focus is on homeland security, humanitarian relief, and training drills one weekend a month and two full weeks per year. National Guard units assist communities in their state during emergencies like storms, floods, fires, and other natural disasters. National Guard members are part-time service members, which allows them time to pursue a civilian career or college education while simultaneously serving their country.

ASVAB

Before you become part of the military, there is one test that you'll need to take — the ASVAB. The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) is a multiple-choice test, administered by the United States Military Entrance Processing Command, used to determine qualification for enlistment in the United States Armed Forces. The ASVAB also qualifies individuals for the mission occupation specialty, job, or career they will pursue in the military, in addition to enlistment bonuses.

Just like any other test, it is recommended that students prepare for the ASVAB. Learn more about the ASVAB and how to prepare for it by visiting the sites below.



Students at MHS will have the opportunity to sign up for the ASVAB and take the test at school, typically in the first 2-3 weeks of the Spring Semester. See the Ready Graduate Coordinator to sign up.

Additionally, all juniors will take the ASVAB during their fall semester. This test is also used as one of the most accurate career and interest inventories.

How to Read Your ASVAB Results

1. FIND YOUR ACCESS CODE

- **Where is it?** Look for the access code on the bottom right of your score sheet.
- **What do I do with it?** Go to www.asvabprogram.com and enter this code. This unlocks the "Occu-Find" tool, where you can search for thousands of careers based on your unique strengths.

2. THE 3 "BIG PICTURE" SCORES (Career Exploration Scores)

These three scores group your skills into broad categories to help you see where you naturally excel.

- **Verbal Skills:** How well you understand written text and vocabulary. (High score? Look at Law, Education, Communications).
- **Math Skills:** How well you solve problems using arithmetic and logic. (High score? Look at Finance, Engineering, Computer Science).
- **Science & Technical Skills:** Your knowledge of physical science, electronics, and mechanics. (High score? Look at Healthcare, Automotive, Manufacturing).

3. PERCENTILE SCORES (How You Compare)

You will see columns for "**Grade %**" (how you compare to all students in your grade) and "**Same Sex %**".

- **What it means:** If your Percentile Score is **60**, it means you scored **better than 60%** of other students in your grade.
- **50** is the national average. Anything above 50 is above average!

4. STANDARD SCORE BANDS (The Gray Bars)

- You will see gray bars surrounding your "X" score on the graph.
- **What they mean:** Standardized tests aren't perfect. If you took the test again tomorrow without studying, your score would likely fall somewhere inside that gray bar.
- **Tip:** If the gray bars for two different subjects (like Math vs. Science) **overlap**, your skills in those areas are roughly equal. If they **do not overlap**, you have a clear strength in the higher one.

5. THE "AFQT" SCORE (Military Entrance Score)

- **What is it?** This stands for *Armed Forces Qualification Test*.
- **Does it matter for college?** No. This score is *only* used to determine if you are eligible to enlist in the military.
- **How it's calculated:** It uses only four subtests: Arithmetic Reasoning, Math Knowledge, Word Knowledge, and Paragraph Comprehension.

6. YOUR "FYI" CODE (Find Your Interests)

- On the back of your results (or online), you will see an **Interest Code** based on the "Find Your Interests" survey (e.g., **R-I-S**).
- These letters correspond to 6 personality types:
 - **R** = Realistic (Doers)
 - **I** = Investigative (Thinkers)
 - **A** = Artistic (Creators)
 - **S** = Social (Helpers)
 - **E** = Enterprising (Persuaders)
 - **C** = Conventional (Organizers)
- **Action Step:** Use these 3 letters in the **Occu-Find** search bar online to see which jobs fit your personality AND your skills!

Delayed Entry Program

The Delayed Entry Program (DEP), also called the Delayed Enlistment Program (or the Future Soldiers Program in the Army), is a program in which individuals who want to enlist in the United States Armed Forces are placed before they ship out to basic training or “boot camp.” Students who plan to join the military immediately following high school will likely enlist through the DEP.

Basic Training "Boot Camp" Preparation

Going into basic training physically and mentally strong will provide you with the confidence you need to complete the training. If you wait until the first day of basic training to start preparing, you will fight an uphill battle. The requirements and training for each branch of the military are different. To learn more about the differences and to get tips on how to prepare, check out the sites below:

<https://mybaseguide.com/military-fitness-tests/>

Becoming an Officer

Commissioned officers generally enter the military with a four-year college degree or greater. In certain cases, enlisted service members can advance and transition to officers during the course of their military career as well. Officers are generally employed in management roles or highly specialized fields that require professional degrees (e.g., doctors, lawyers, and chaplains).

An officer’s education often determines which career he or she will have in the military. In most cases, the candidate will meet with a military advisor or career counselor during college to select a potential job specialty.

<https://www.todaysmilitary.com/joining-eligibility/becoming-military-officer>

Applying to America's Service Academies

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

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

The five federal military academies vary in their application approaches and admission requirements. In general, applicants need strong academic achievements, physical capabilities, and leadership qualities. Along with academic training, enrollees participate in regular military training and preparation.

www.todaysmilitary.com/education-training/military-schools

Congressional Nominations

Service academies or military colleges require that applicants be nominated by a member of Congress. A congressman will typically select 10 potential candidates and then use a competitive nomination process to select a single candidate to endorse. The nine runners-up are usually placed on a waiting list, so if the selected candidate decides against a military college, an alternate can be selected. To improve your chances of success, you should apply for nomination from more than one representative or senator.

U.S. Military Acad.

West Point, NY

U.S. Merchant Marine Acad.

Kings Point, NY

U.S. Naval Acad.

Annapolis, MD

U.S. Coast Guard Acad.

New London, CT

U.S. Air Force Acad.

Colorado Springs, CO

When Entering the Workforce is Your First Step

If you plan to begin working immediately after graduation, this section will help you get started. It might be a full-time job to give you time to better figure out your long-term plan, or a part-time gig to help you pay for college. Many high school seniors have an opportunity to enroll in college classes while still in high school (Early Postsecondary Opportunities EPSOs), which will help their wages and career readiness. Also, enrolling in a TCAT program could help with additional training while still working. Speak to your local community college or technical college to learn about training in advance of entering the workforce.

You may also want to consider opportunities for apprenticeships or internships:

Apprenticeships

“On the job,” paid training that offers you the chance to learn a skill or trade while working. Apprenticeships can last anywhere from one to four years. The best way to find an apprenticeship is to reach out to companies you are interested in working for to determine if they offer apprenticeships. Most labor unions (plumbers, pipefitters, electrical, HVAC, etc.) offer excellent apprenticeship programs. You can also search for apprenticeships by location at www.apprenticeshiptn.com

Local PAID Apprenticeship Opportunities (Spaces are limited and vary by company)

Company	Location	Website
Massey Electric	Maryville	https://masseyelectric.com/apprentice-program/
Danny Davis Electric	Maryville	https://www.ddelectric.com/apprenticeship-program
IBEW -Electrical Apprenticeship	Knoxville	http://www.etaknox.org/
Messer Construction	Karns	https://www.messer.com/apprenticeships/
Comfort Systems	Knoxville	https://skmes.com/careers/apprenticeships/
Action Electrical	Knoxville	https://www.gobuildtennessee.com/training-program/action-electrical-inc/
Insulators Local 46	Knoxville	https://insulators46.org/news-details/webview/about-the-program/single/20848
Stowers Machinery	Knoxville	https://www.stowerscat.com/careers/thinkbig-program/
Funderburk Electrical Services	Knoxville	https://www.funderburkelec.com/apprentice#Contact

PRO TIP: Consider a Work-based learning course while you are still in high school to build connections and potential opportunities.

Internships

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

Most jobs that you apply for will require either a resumé or an application, or perhaps both. You'll find tips for creating your resumé and cover letter, along with samples of each below.

If you're not sure what type of job to pursue, here are some websites that might help:

www.CollegeForTN.org - Explore your interests and research the careers that match you.

www.BLS.gov - Provides information on the outlook for various careers, including salary, demand, educational requirements, etc.

www.jobs4tn.gov - Find a job, post a resumé, set up a virtual recruiter, and get hired – with local Tennessee jobs.

Utilize Schoolinks to research careers, apply for jobs, create resumes, and more!!

Creating a Resumé

Both the content and format of your resumé are important. It doesn't matter how great your work or life history is — if your resumé is poorly formatted, hard to follow, or has typos, you won't be considered for employment.

The Basic Elements of a Resumé

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

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

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

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

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

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

Job Shadowing Opportunities

Job shadow visits allow a student to spend several hours or a full day with an employer, much like a college visit, exposing a potential student to college opportunities. During a job shadow visit, students will observe employee(s) performing their regular job duties while observing and asking questions to develop a realistic outlook for what they do. **MHS offers sophomores, juniors, and seniors two FREE excused job shadow visit days. Stop by the Ready Grad Center to pick up your Job Shadowing Packet.**

Key Components for Using a Job Shadow Day

1. Basics & Eligibility

- Who: Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors.
- Allowance: You get two (2) free excused job shadow visit days.
- Student-Led: You are responsible for finding the business and scheduling the visit yourself, similar to a college visit.
- Host Rule: Your host must be over 21 years old.

2. The Three Required Forms (Critical)

You must use blue or black ink for all forms.

- Form #1: Pre-Visit Permission Form
 - Action: Signed by parent and student.
 - Deadline: Turn in to Mrs. Giles (Room 241 at MHS) 3 days before your visit.
- Form #2: Emergency Info & Host Evaluation
 - Part 1 (Emergency Info): Parent fills this out *before* you go. You give it to your host when you arrive.
 - Part 2 (Host Eval): The host fills this out to rate you. They can return it via email, mail, or the QR code on the form.
- Form #3: Post-Visit Reflection & Excuse
 - Action: You must take this with you and get it signed by your host.
 - Deadline: Turn in to Student Services within 3 school days after your visit to be excused.

3. Before You Go

- Schedule It: Call the business to set a date (there are phone scripts in the packet to help you say the right thing).
- Confirm: Call 1-3 days before to confirm the time, parking, and dress code.
- Research: Look up the company so you can ask good questions.

4. On The Day

- Dress: Wear professional clothing appropriate for that specific workplace.
- Arrival: Arrive 10 minutes early.
- What to Bring:
 - Form #2 (to give to the host).
 - Form #3 (to get signed).
 - Notebook/pen and lunch money.

5. After The Visit

- SchoolLinks: You must log into SchoolLinks (under "School" -> "Experience Tracking") and complete the Student Reflection.
- Turn in Form #3: Submit the signed form to Student Services within 3 days.
- Thank You: It is best practice to send a thank you letter or email to your host (templates are provided in the packet).

9th Grade Milestones

Activity

Check all that you have accomplished so far.

Milestone

Milestones are reference points in your high school career that mark important stages of progress. Each milestone allows you to evaluate your forward progress toward the goal of college and career.

Actions

- Begin taking aligned courses to a personalized education and career plan (e.g., a focus area or CTE course of study).
- Have a conversation with parents/guardians about the costs of postsecondary education and how you will plan for those costs (e.g., creating a savings account).
- Experiment with different organizational and study methods to see what works best for you.
- Try something new to expand personal skills or interests (e.g., sport, club, course).
- Schedule an annual meeting with a school counselor to update your postsecondary plan.
- Have conversations with teachers, family members, and other adult mentors to talk through your college and career interests.
- Become involved with school student organizations, clubs, or teams.
- Learn about eligibility criteria for honor societies, special diplomas, certifications, or other merit awards.
- Start a resume to document extra-curricular activities and accomplishments, work experience, and skills.
- Participate in college and career exploration experiences (e.g., campus visits, hands-on events, college and career fairs, school-based enterprise, industry-specific exposure).
- Volunteer in your community and/or in a professional field related to your academic, personal, or career interests.

Knowledge

- I understand the connection between GPA, ACT, or SAT scores and their impact on early postsecondary opportunities and postsecondary admission, scholarships, financial aid, etc.
- I understand how to backwards plan from my career goals to what I should be focusing on in high school.
- I understand that it is important to save money for postsecondary expenses (including direct costs like tuition and indirect costs like transportation, supplies, and fees).
- I understand the importance of rigorous coursework in preparing me for success in postsecondary opportunities.

10th Grade Milestones

Activity

Check all that you have accomplished so far.

Actions

- Participate in college and career experiences (e.g., campus visits, hands-on events, college and career fairs, school-based enterprise, industry-specific exposure).
- Participate in a meaningful summer experience such as a job, internship, or early postsecondary preparation (e.g., pre-college summer camp, computer coding camp, apprenticeship related to CTE concentration).
- Continue involvement with school and student organizations.
- Volunteer in your community or school.
- Update your resume to include your work, volunteer experiences, honors, or skills that you've acquired since the last school year.
- Do a practice job interview with a school counselor or your ready graduate advisor, and have a conversation about your potential eligibility/competitiveness for admission.
- Have conversations with a teacher, family member, or other adult mentor to talk about your college and career interests.
- Have a conversation with a counselor and family members about tuition, fees, and other costs for postsecondary, as well as your potential eligibility for need and merit-based aid.
- Research course offerings for your junior year, including early postsecondary opportunities such as advanced placement, dual enrollment and dual credit, or work-based learning.
- Consider taking ACT Prep if your schedule allows.

Knowledge

- I understand the structure and content of ACT or SAT college readiness exams.
- I understand the different postsecondary options available to me and the criteria required for admission.
- I understand the importance of rigorous coursework and how my current course performance will impact future course opportunities, especially opportunities to earn early postsecondary credit and to qualify for merit-based scholarships (e.g., HOPE Scholarship).
- I understand that I should revisit my postsecondary plan regularly (i.e., each semester) and discuss my plans with a counselor, teacher, advisor, or family member who can help.

Milestone

Milestones are reference points in your high school career that mark important stages of progress. Each milestone allows you to evaluate your forward progress toward the goal of college and career.

11th Grade Milestones

Activity

Check all that you have accomplished so far.

Actions

- Continue to visit college and career-related campuses or events.
- Volunteer in your community or school regularly.
- Attend THEC “Path to College” planning nights.
- Prepare to take the ACT or SAT (e.g., take a preparation course, take a practice test, use free resources, etc.).
- Do a practice job interview with a family member, adult mentor, or a professional in your field of interest.
- Continue to participate in school and student organizations and take on leadership roles and/or increased responsibility.
- Organize and lead volunteer activities.
- Update your resume to include your work, volunteer experiences, honors, or skills that you’ve acquired since the last school year.
- Schedule a meeting with your school counselor to discuss details of the postsecondary application process, how to choose a program of study, and how to identify postsecondary institutions that could be a “fit”.
- Continue to have conversations with trusted teachers, family members, or other adult mentors to talk through your college and career interests.
- Complete and pass early postsecondary opportunities (dual credit, dual enrollment, AP, industry certificates).
- Develop a list of postsecondary opportunities according to your academic and career interests.
- Take the ACT or SAT.
- Participate in a meaningful summer experience such as employment, an internship, or postsecondary preparation (e.g., pre-college summer camp, computer coding camp, job related to your CTE concentration).
- Write a draft of a college essay, personal statement, or cover letter, and get feedback from a teacher, counselor, or college access professional.
- Identify 2 or 3 teachers who you think would write you a letter of recommendation for postsecondary opportunities, and talk to them before the end of the year.
- Consider taking Senior Transition if your schedule allows.

Knowledge

- I understand the major components of the postsecondary application process, including admission, financial aid, and choosing a major, concentration, or certificate.
- I understand the difference between scholarships, loans, and grant aid.
- I understand the importance of rigorous coursework in preparing me for success in postsecondary opportunities.
- I know where MHS posts scholarship opportunities.
- I know how to request a transcript for a summer program, job, internship, or scholarship applications.
- I understand the importance of the ACT or SAT and that I can retake either exam in my senior year.
- I understand this is an important summer to get a job or internship, apply for a summer academic program, or explore a passion or interest related to my college and career interests before applying.

Milestone

Milestones are reference points in your high school career that mark important stages of progress. Each milestone allows you to evaluate your forward progress toward the goal of college and career.

SENIORS: Are You Ready for What's Next?

Congratulations on all the hard work that you have done during your junior year in planning for your next step after MHS! Senior year will be a whirlwind of activities from start to finish. Use your time wisely to get a head start on your plans for after high school.

- = College/Community College Route
- ★ = Military
- = Workforce or Apprenticeship

Summer

- Take a look at some college applications and consider all of the different pieces of information you will need to compile.
- Make a list of teachers, counselors, employers, and other adults you might ask to write letters of recommendation for your college applications.
- Continue investigating colleges.
- Begin thinking about your applications. Generally, colleges will have their applications online by the beginning of August. Work on the essay before you return to school.
- Consider a summer job in your future field.
- Audit your "soft skills." Make a list of any hands-on experience (lawn care, car repair, volunteering) to build a functional resume.
- ★ Connect with recruiters from different branches to compare benefits (Active Duty vs. Reserve). Start a basic fitness routine (push-ups, sit-ups, and running).

August/September

- Register for the ACT if you did not take it as a junior, or if you aren't satisfied with your score and want to take it again. (Your counselor can help you with fee waivers).
- Take a look at some college applications and consider all of the different pieces of information you will need to compile.
- The SAT test date most popular with high school seniors is this month.
- Visit with your school counselor to make sure you are on track to graduate and fulfill college admission requirements. If you're ahead of schedule, consider taking courses at a local university or community college to get a jumpstart on college credit.
- Take every opportunity to get to know colleges: meeting with college representatives who visit MHS during the fall, attending local college fairs, visiting campuses (if possible). Ask your counselor if they know of special campus visitation programs.
- Narrow down your list of colleges and begin to consider "safety", "reach", and "realistic" schools.
- Make sure you have the application and financial aid information for each school. Find out if you qualify for any scholarships at these schools.
- Create a checklist and calendar to char:
 - Standardized test dates, registration deadlines, and fees
 - College application due dates
 - Financial aid application forms and deadlines
 - Other materials you'll need for college applications (recommendations, transcripts, essays, etc.)
- Some schools require the CSS/Financial Aid Profile. Ask the colleges to which you are applying for their deadlines. Register as early as September. See your counselor about fee waivers.
- Research local unions (IBEW, UA, Carpenter's Union) for their specific application windows—some only open once a year.
- Obtain "The Big Three" documents: an unexpired Photo ID (Driver's License), Social Security Card, and a certified copy of your Birth Certificate. You cannot be hired without these.
- ★ Register for the **ASVAB** (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery). Your score determines which jobs (MOS/Ratings) you qualify for.
- ★ Obtain "The Big Three" documents: an unexpired Photo ID (Driver's License), Social Security Card, and a certified copy of your Birth Certificate. You cannot be enlisted without these.

October

- Some colleges will have deadlines as early as this month. These would include Rolling Admission, Early Decision, and Early Action deadlines.
- If you cannot afford the application fees that many colleges charge, ask your counselor to help you request a fee waiver.
- The FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) will be available on October 1. Visit www.fafsa.gov to complete this form.
- Finalize your college essay. Many schools will require that you submit at least one essay with your application.
- Request personal recommendations from teachers, school counselors, or employers. Follow the process required by MHS to request letters of recommendation.
- Research possibilities of scholarships. Ask your counselor about colleges, religious, and civic groups scholarship opportunities. There are also some good scholarship websites including: FastWeb (www.fastweb.com), The College Board (www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search), and Bold (www.bold.org).
- You should NEVER pay for scholarship information.
- Attend local job fairs or trade "Signing Days." Draft a resume that highlights technical skills, punctuality, and any shop classes taken at MHS.
- Use the FAFSA! Even if not going to college, FAFSA funds can often be used for **Pell-eligible** certificate programs or technical schools.
- ★ Meet with your chosen recruiter to take a practice ASVAB (EST). Discuss potential ship dates and "Guaranteed Job" options in your contract.

November

- Complete the TN Promise scholarship application no later than November 2nd.
- Finalize and send any early decision or early action applications due this month. Have a parent, teacher, counselor, or other adult review the application before it is submitted.
- Every college will require a copy of your transcript from MHS. Follow our procedures for sending transcripts.
- Make sure testing companies (ACT or SAT) have sent your scores directly to the colleges to which you are applying.
- Reach out to local businesses for "Job Shadowing" opportunities over winter break.
- ★ If you are 18 (or 17 with parental consent), schedule your **MEPS** (Military Entrance Processing Station) physical. This is a full day of medical screening.

December

- Begin to organize regular decision applications and financial aid forms, which will be due in January and/or February.
- Register for the January SAT (if needed). It is the last one colleges will be able to consider for a senior.
- Look into "Pre-Apprenticeship" programs that may start shortly after graduation.
- ★ Register for the January ASVAB (if needed).
- ★ Finalize your branch choice. If you've passed MEPS, you may enter the **Delayed Entry Program (DEP)**, meaning you are officially "sworn in" while finishing high school.

January

- Many popular and selective colleges will have application deadlines as early as January 1. Others have deadlines later in January and February. Keep track of and observe deadlines for sending in all required fees and paperwork.
- If necessary, register for the February ACT (some colleges will be able to consider it).
- Ask your school counseling office in January to send first-semester transcripts to the schools where you applied. At the end of the school year, they will need to send the final transcript to the college you will attend.
- It is time to file the FAFSA (no later than March 1). The sooner you complete it, the sooner you will have an idea of your financial aid options. Watch the mail for your Student Aid Report (SAR) - it should arrive four weeks after the FAFSA is filed, or watch your email if you filed electronically.
- Many Trade Union JATC (Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee) applications open this month. Check for requirements like high school algebra credits.
- ★ Continue DEP meetings and physical training. If you haven't taken the ASVAB at school, you have missed your window.

February/March/April

- While most of your applications are complete and you are waiting to receive admission decisions, don't slack off in the classroom. The college that you attend will want to see your second-semester transcript. No senioritis!
- Acceptance letters and financial aid offers will start to arrive. Review your acceptances, compare financial aid packages, and visit your final choices, especially if you haven't already physically been on campus before.
- Practice for "Aptitude Tests" (often covering reading comp and mechanical reasoning). Prepare for "Panel Interviews" where union members will interview you.
- If you are entering the workforce immediately, start applying for "Direct Hire" roles 60 days before graduation.
- ★ Review your "Statement of Understanding" and contract. Ensure any bonuses or educational perks (GI Bill) are in writing.

May

- May 1 is the date when many colleges require a commitment and deposit. When you've made your college decision, notify your counselor and the colleges. Complete the MHS procedures on how to mark where you are going. Send in your deposit by the postmark date of May 1. If you've been offered financial aid, accept the offer and follow the instructions provided by the college or university. It is good courtesy to notify the other schools you will not be attending.
- Make sure that you have requested that your final transcript be sent to the school you will be attending.
- If you are "wait-listed" by a college you really want to attend, visit, call, and write the admissions office to make your interest clear. Ask how you can strengthen your application.
- Follow up on application statuses. If accepted into an apprenticeship, find out what tools or gear (boots, belts, PPE) you are required to provide for your first day.
- ★ Clear any final medical or legal hurdles. Ensure MHS sends your **final transcript** to your recruiter; you cannot ship to Basic Training without proof of graduation.

Summer

- It's been a long journey through high school and to college. Enjoy your summer.
- Summer jobs can help pay some of your college expenses and give you great career preparation.
- Make a list of what you will need to take with you for your dorm room. The suggested list of items, room and furniture dimensions, and many other questions can usually be answered by visiting the college's website and searching under "housing" or "residence life" for further information.
- You will most likely get a roommate assignment from your college. Call, write, or email them to get acquainted in advance. In your conversations and communication, you should be able to figure out who will bring what for your room.
- Some colleges will offer a summer orientation/registration. Make sure to attend this to meet fellow students and other important people on campus. This is a great way to familiarize yourself with the new campus. This is often the time you sign up for your fall courses.
- Start your "Probationary Period." Focus on being 15 minutes early every day—in the trades, "on time" is considered late.
- ★ Finalize your power of attorney or bank allotments if shipping to Basic Training. Stay hydrated and injury-free.
- ☆ Open a high-yield savings account. Your first few months of full-time pay or military basic pay are the best time to start an emergency fund.