

Planning Your Future

For Freshmen

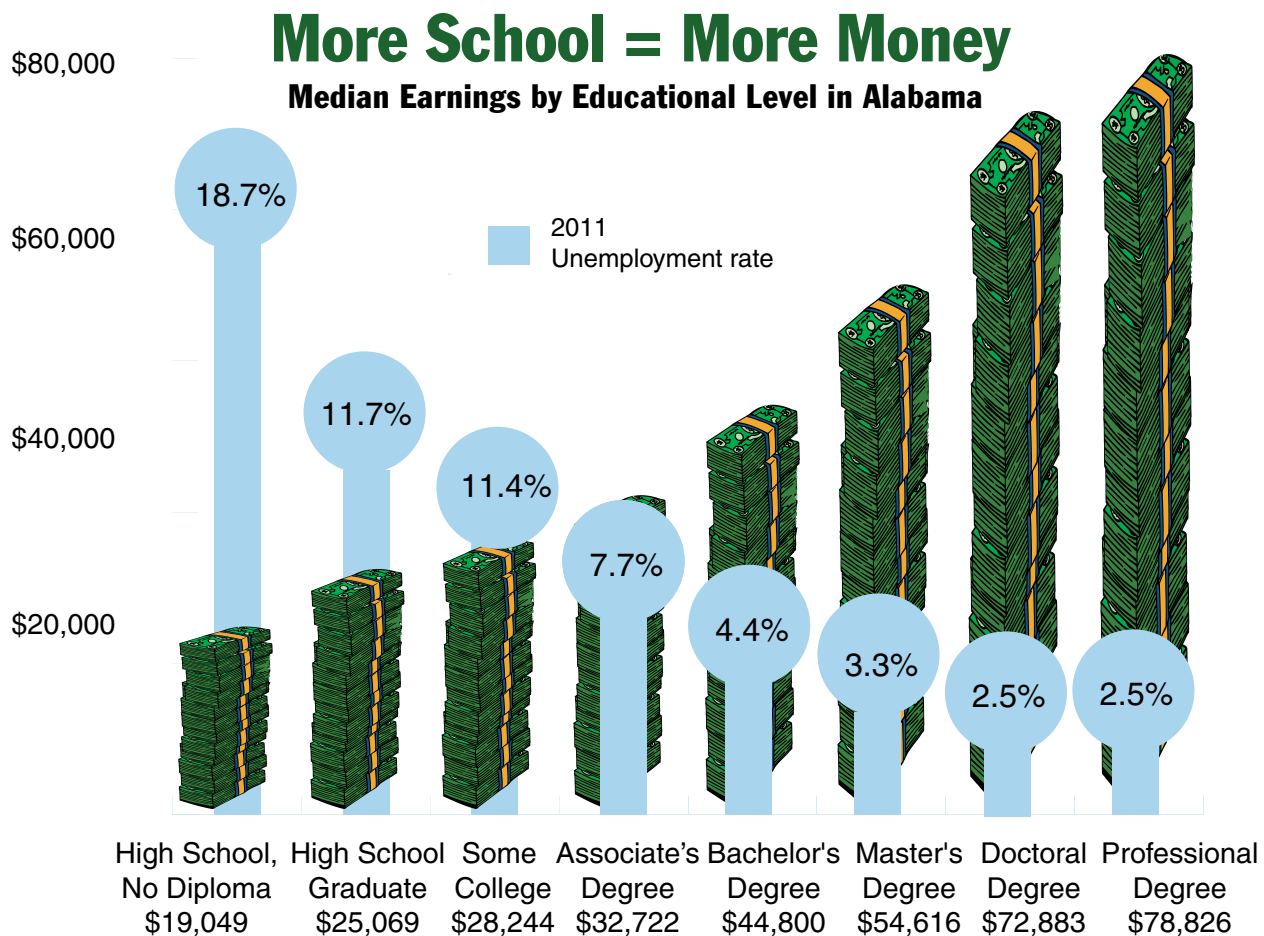
Your guide to preparing for higher education in Alabama



“How can a college degree help me?”

Let's be honest. Getting a college degree is mostly about money. Someone who earns a bachelor's degree will make an average of about \$17,795 more each year than someone with just a high school diploma.

Over a 40-year working lifetime, that's an additional **\$711,800.**



This graph gives the 2011 median earnings of Alabamians over age 25, both sexes, who worked year-round at a full-time job, based on their level of education, compared to the unemployment rate for each level of education. A median is a middle value, so the number of people earning less than the median is equal to the number of people earning more than the median. **Source: 2011 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau.**

“I’m only in 9th grade. Isn’t it a little early to start thinking about college?”

When colleges consider whether or not to accept you, they look at your grades from **all four years** of high school. So the time to get serious... is now.

Colleges also judge you on the classes you take in high school. You should challenge yourself. Rather than coasting through school in easy-credit classes, try taking honors and AP courses.

You might have had some difficulties in elementary school or junior high, but you can turn all that around. Make up your mind to actively participate in all your classes and make good grades.



This is the beginning of the rest of your life. Be prepared. It’s the smart thing to do!

• SCIENCE CLUB • FFA • CHOIR •
• YEARBOOK • FCA • SCHOLARS BOWL • BETA •
• HOSA • DRAMA CLUB • 4-H • KEY CLUB • FBLA •
• ART CLUB • SPANISH CLUB •

Get Involved

Don’t spend all your time studying. Join clubs, sports or other extracurricular activities. Many colleges look beyond your classroom grades to see if you are involved in activities that help you grow as a person.

Don’t stop at school activities — volunteer in community projects. It may help you get accepted into the college of your choice, and more importantly, it will help you become a better person.

“What courses will I need to complete high school?”

Are you going to college after high school? If you haven't decided yet, you should make this decision soon!

In 2013, Alabama changed the high school graduation requirements to have a single approach to a diploma where the focus is on coursework that will create an individualized high school plan for each student based on the results from the EXPLORE academic and career interest assessment and middle school coursework. When choosing electives, it is best to choose courses that relate to what vocation you desire or that will help you select a college major.



Alabama High School Graduation Requirements

Subject	Alabama High School Diploma requirements
English Language Arts	4 credits: English 9, 10, 11 and 12 or any AP/IB/postsecondary equivalent option of these courses.
Mathematics	4 credits: Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II/Algebra II with Trigonometry, or their equivalent. Additional courses to complete the four credits must be chosen from the <i>Alabama Course of Study: Mathematics</i> or CTE/AP/IB/postsecondary equivalent course, can include Computer Science Principles or AP Computer Science A.
Science	4 credits: Biology and a physical science, plus two additional science courses. Third and fourth science credits may be used to meet both the science and the CTE course requirement and must be chosen from the <i>Alabama Course of Study: Science</i> or CTE/AP/IB/postsecondary equivalent courses.
Social Studies	4 credits: World History, 2 credits of U.S. History, and Government/Economics or AP/IB/postsecondary equivalent courses
Physical Education	1 credit: LIFE (Personal Fitness); one JROTC credit may be used to meet this requirement
Health Education	1/2 credit: <i>Alabama Course of Study: Health Education</i>
Career Preparedness	1 credit: Career Preparedness Course (Career and Academic Planning, Computer Applications, Financial Literacy)
CTE and/or Foreign Language and/or Arts Education	3 credits: Students choosing CTE, Arts Education and/or Foreign Language are encouraged to complete two courses in sequence
Electives	2 1/2 credits
Total Units	24 credits

For links to all of the Alabama Courses of Study, visit www.alsde.edu/Home/General/CoursesOfStudy.aspx.

“I don’t know what kind of job I want.”

No one expects you to choose your career by age 15, but now **is** a good time to start thinking about it.

You already know which classes you like. Ever consider turning them into a career? Look below:

English-Language arts

Teaching, writing, law, journalism or public relations.

Mathematics

Accounting, statistics, financial planning, computers, aeronautics, teaching or insurance.

Science and health

Medicine, pharmacy, veterinary science, meteorology, occupational therapy, environmental science, chemistry or medical research.

Social studies

Psychology, city planning, criminal justice, anthropology, human resources, government, teaching or social work.

Foreign languages

Government, translating, international business, travel agency or foreign service.

Technical education

Construction, mechanics, manufacturing or transportation technology.

Computer science

Astronomy, advertising, business, engineering or software design.

Drama, music and art

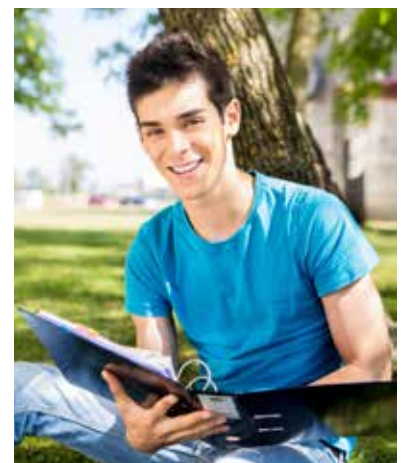
Animation, theater, advertising, cinematography, interior design, graphic arts, website design or broadcasting.

Free online help

The college planning website www.mappingyourfuture.org features *CareerShip*[®] to help you learn about different careers.

You can take a survey that matches your interests with suitable careers. You can also view a comprehensive list of careers, complete with job descriptions, required skills and average salaries. You can find out whether you’ll need an associate’s, bachelor’s, master’s or higher degree to pursue the career of your choice.

Lastly, *CareerShip*[®] also teaches you how to develop your résumé.



“Where will my folks get the money for my tuition?”

Paying for college is a big hurdle for most students. But don't despair — there's a lot of help out there.

How will I pay for college?

You and your family are responsible for paying for college. But there are many financial aid programs available to help with college costs.

Who can receive financial aid?

Student aid is awarded for two reasons:

- Financial need, which is based on your parent's income. This is called need-based aid.
- Achievement which can be based on your academic performance, athletics and other talents or accomplishments. This kind of aid is known as merit-based aid.

Most financial aid is need-based but is often awarded in combination with merit-based awards.



Who gives financial aid?

Colleges, state and federal governments, businesses and private organizations provide financial aid.

Colleges — offer need-based scholarships and merit-based scholarships based on academics/GPA. Some colleges offer additional merit-based scholarships for athletics or a particular field of study (accounting, band, nursing, etc.).

Alabama state government — offers several student aid programs, including the Alabama Student Assistance Program Grant and Alabama Student Grant, three community college scholarships and military benefits.

U.S. government — offers many grant and loan programs. Grants don't have to be paid back; student loans do.

Businesses and private organizations — offer scholarships based on who you are and where you grew up (your church, your parents' employers and local civic organizations like the Kiwanis Club, Key Club and Boys and Girls Club). Others offer scholarships based on your field of study in college.

“Where can I learn more about planning for college?”

What does financial aid cover?

Financial aid must be used to pay the costs of education, which may include tuition, fees, books, supplies and equipment as well as transportation, housing, food, laundry and personal expenses.

How do I apply?

You must file the Free Application for Student Financial Aid (FAFSA) to be considered for most state and federal student aid programs. File the FAFSA online at www.fafsa.gov.

Income figures from your FAFSA are plugged into a formula set by Congress to determine your family's expected family contribution (EFC). The EFC is the amount you and your family are expected to pay toward college. Tuition minus EFC equals your financial need.

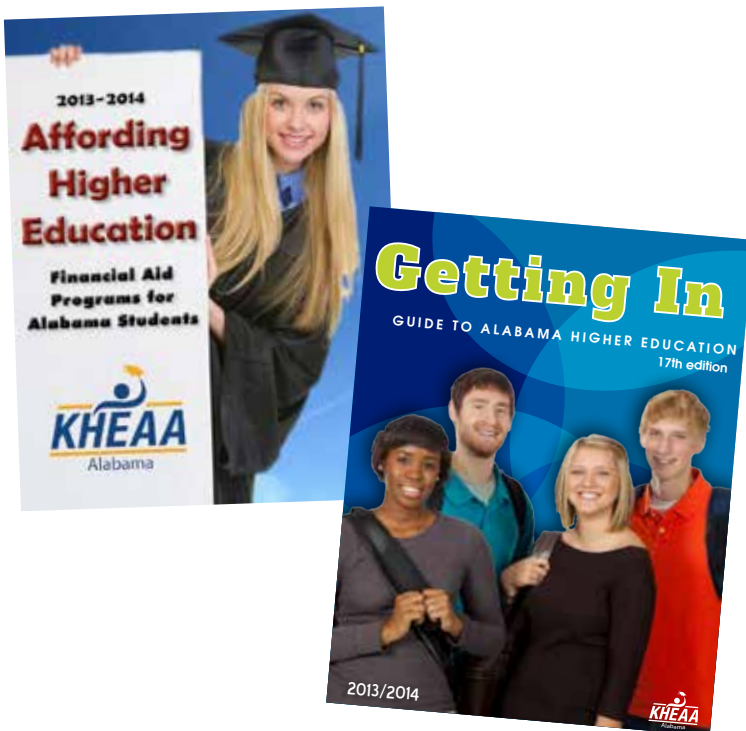
Where can I get financial aid information?

Free financial aid information comes from:

- Your school counselor.
- The financial aid offices of the schools you're interested in attending.
- This website! Check out these online books from KHEAA!

Getting In, a college planning guidebook for high school students, provides admissions requirements, tuition, financial aid, academic majors and degree programs at Alabama colleges and universities.

Affording Higher Education lists more than 4,000 financial aid programs available to Alabama students.



KHEAA is an EEOC employer.

KHEAA does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran status or disability in employment or services and provides, upon request, reasonable accommodations to afford individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in all programs and activities. Updated 12/13.

