

Transition Newsletter

POSTSECONDARY SERVICES

FOR AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

Thinking about going to college, a technical school, or another type of education after high school? Planning ahead can help make your goals more affordable and less stressful.

If you are planning to attend school in the **fall of 2027**, it is a good idea to start learning about financial aid early. Financial aid can help pay for things like tuition, books, housing, transportation, and other education expenses.

What should I know about FAFSA?

For the 2027–2028 school year, be sure to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) as soon as you are able. Some financial aid is limited, so applying early can be important.

- Students and parents generally need their own StudentAid.gov accounts.
- The FAFSA has been simplified and is designed to be easier to complete.
- Financial information can be transferred directly from the IRS when families give permission.
- Changes to the financial aid formula may affect how much aid you qualify for.
- The number of children in a family is no longer used in the same way when calculating federal financial need.

What types of financial aid are available?

Student loans – Federal loans are often a good place to start because they usually have lower interest rates and more flexible repayment options. • Subsidized Loans – Based on financial need. If you qualify, the government generally pays the interest while you are in school at least half-time and during certain other periods. • Unsubsidized Loans – Not based on financial need. Interest starts adding up when the loan is disbursed, even while you are in school.	Grants – Usually based on financial need and generally do not have to be repaid. Some grants have rules you must follow, so ask questions and understand the requirements before accepting one.
Work-study – An opportunity to earn money through an approved job while attending school.	Scholarships – Money awarded based on academics, activities, background, or other criteria and generally do not have to be repaid.

For more information on FAFSA and further guidance, visit:

southdakota.mappingyourfuture.org or bit.ly/ourdakotadreamsfasfa.

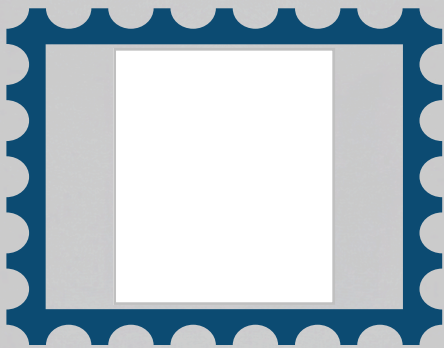
Many high schools also offer Financial Aid nights so talk to your guidance counselor to see if your school has one scheduled. You can also ask me about eligibility requirements for financial assistance through VR funding, so contact me and I'll explain how that might look for you!



SCHOLARSHIP TIPS

1. Don't wait for the last minute to apply for scholarships.
2. Don't let others do your work, the application needs to be an authentic portrait of you so do the work yourself.
3. If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
4. If an application asks for money, walk away.
5. Never share your bank or credit card information, and you should never have to pay to apply for a scholarship. Legitimate scholarships do not require any payment to apply.
6. Don't avoid a scholarship just because you have to write an essay.
7. Don't reuse essays without updating the information.
8. Don't count out small scholarships. They can add up quickly!
9. Don't get discouraged. There are \$50 billion in scholarships given out each year, there's an award for you!

contact me



DHS.SD.GOV

POST-SECONDARY TO-DO LIST...

✓ **SCHEDULE TOURS** — Vocational colleges, universities, and 18-21 Transition Programs encourage tours from high school juniors and seniors to get a first hand glimpse of what the new environment will feel like. Many schools will have scheduled visit days or you can always schedule individual tours as well. If visiting vocational colleges and universities, be sure to ask/learn about:

- Disability Services—assists students with disabilities with full and equal access to all programs, classes, and activities.
- TRIO Services—support services (academic guidance, tutoring, and more) to help students achieve their academic goals.

Students must contact these offices to learn more about what's available and to see if they qualify for these services.

✓ **APPLY FOR SCHOLARSHIPS** — Reach out to your high school guidance counselor to learn about local scholarships that can help pay for post-secondary schools, if awarded. You can also look at the websites posted in this newsletter for more scholarship opportunities and tips when applying for them. You can also go to: doe.sd.gov/scholarships/

✓ **ASK ABOUT DUAL-CREDIT CLASSES** — Dual credits are available to SD high school students who meet admissions standards to enroll in public SD postsecondary institutions and simultaneously earn credits for both their high school diploma and postsecondary degree or certificate.

ourdakotadreams.com/k12-students/dual-enrollment

✓ **STUDY EVERY DAY** — There is no question that studying every day is going to help you succeed. If you are not already doing this in high school, start forming this habit now. It is a habit you will need to practice in college and it will certainly help you in high school. bit.ly/improveyourstudyhabits

✓ **CHALLENGE YOURSELF** — The most satisfaction comes from goals that are hard to accomplish. Get in the habit of taking the more difficult classes or taking on difficult projects. There may be a time in college that you are required to take on something challenging. When that happens, you will already have the experience of testing yourself, and know you can succeed!



★ CONSIDER ATTENDING CATCH THE COLLEGE WAVE!

Catch the College Wave is a half-day event for students with disabilities who are considering college or other post-secondary education. Students can learn about resources, opportunities, and what to expect after high school. Upcoming events are being held at colleges across South Dakota in October and December.

Learn more at tslp.org/events

SOUTH DAKOTA SCHOLARSHIP PORTAL

The SD Scholarship Portal helps you find scholarships to help pay for education after high school. One application period means fewer deadlines to remember!

July 17

Apply: September 15–March 15

Need help? Visit sdcommunityfoundation.org/scholarships and select “For Students” for a step-by-step guide. Start early and apply!

