

## GENERAL INFORMATION FOR THE STUDENT

For students planning to continue their education after high school, there are three general sources of financial aid. First, there are federal government grants and loans; also state governments may provide grants and loans. Second, there are colleges, universities, and technical vocational institutions which provide grants, loans, and/or work-study programs. Third, there are the savings or contributions of the family. In addition, there are local and national scholarships and grants. Your high school counselor should be your first stop toward higher education.

### If college is not for you

Your future plans may be such that they would not be furthered by a college education. The cost and the effort involved may be too great for you or you may lack the academic ability needed to do successful college work. In any case, your education will not stop the moment you receive your high school diploma. Education is a continuous, never-ending process.

There are several thousand technical vocational training schools in the United States. Examples are: cosmetology and barber schools; aviation flight schools; schools of art, music, drama and related fields; health service schools; and mechanical technical schools. A number of them require a high school diploma. Depending upon the program, your course of study may take anywhere from a few weeks to several years. The purpose is to provide direct, practical training—as opposed to theory—in a trade, craft or skill. Tuition varies widely from school to school and from state to state.

The Armed Forces provide both on-duty and off-duty education and training. Off-duty education is available through the United States Armed Forces Institute and covers courses in communications, the humanities, mathematics, science, social science, and technical vocational subject.

All kinds of adventures in learning are available to you, most of them within easy reach of home and pocket-book. They are yours for the asking, whether or not you go to college.

### Career information and scholarships

The American Legion's college financial aid electronic guide, *NEED A LIFT?*, lists sources of information about many careers. A postcard sent to the address of the careers listed that appeal to you will bring helpful information about where to study, courses to select, job opportunities, pay, etc. Also included in *NEED A LIFT?*, you will find information about sources of many scholarships; however, thousands of others are available. Some may exist in your local community while others may be found in the publications listed in *NEED A LIFT?*. After you have selected your course of study and the school you wish to attend, write to the Admissions Officer and Financial Aid Director to determine the scholastic standards required and the possibility of qualifying for a scholarship offered through the school. In addition to other grants, there are hundreds of scholarships and loans provided each year through colleges, individual states, corporations, endowments and other organizations.

For your copy of *NEED A LIFT?* contact: The American Legion, Emblem Sales, PO Box 36460, Indianapolis, IN 46236 or, visit [emblem.legion.org](http://emblem.legion.org).

If you really want to continue your education, you can do it. Start planning early. Seek the advice of your parents, teachers, counselors, and friends. Determine what you want and go get it. Good luck!

### Helpful information

[www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org) FinAid was established in the fall of 1994 as a public service. This award-winning site has grown into a comprehensive source of student financial aid information, advice and tools. Access to FinAid is free for all users and there is no charge to link to the site.

[www.finaid.org/questions/minority.phtml](http://www.finaid.org/questions/minority.phtml) Cites programs and publications pertaining to scholarships and other financial aid programs of special interest to Black, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American Students.

*The A's and B's of Academic Scholarships* (revised annually) is for the student in the upper 33% of the class, with a B average or better. It describes over 100,000 scholarships in amounts ranging from \$200 to \$30,000. It is available from Octameron Associates, PO Box 2748, Alexandria, VA 22301; Phone 703-836-5480; fax 703-836-5650; or online at [www.octameron.com](http://www.octameron.com)

*The College Board College Costs & Financial Aid Website*. Here are the most complete, up-to-date facts on costs plus financial aid and scholarship availability at two and four-year colleges. An extensive guidance section covers such important subjects as estimating financial need, applying for financial aid, assessing financial aid awards, responsible borrowing, and working while in college. It is available at [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)

*Do-It Write: How To Prepare A Great College Application*. This publication helps students to overcome writer's block and personalize their topics. It also includes dozens of actual essays with insightful comments and answers questions about the rest of the application so students can complete each step with ease. Available from Octameron Associates, PO Box 2748, Alexandria, VA 22301; telephone 703-836-5480; fax 703-836-5650; or online at: [www.octameron.com](http://www.octameron.com)



THE AMERICAN LEGION

## A GUIDE FOR Parents & Students



HIGHER EDUCATION  
Your Stairway to Knowledge



THE AMERICAN LEGION  
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

P.O. Box 1055  
Indianapolis, IN 46206  
[www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org)

## INTRODUCTION

Everyone today desires the services of well-qualified men and women. While the demand in some areas is greater than the supply in the areas where supply is projected to be greater than the demand, graduates will find it necessary to become more careful in career planning.

Before selecting a career or the type of educational institution you plan to attend, careful study should be given to the JOB PROJECTIONS contained in the U.S. Department of Labor's *Occupational Outlook Handbook*. This document is usually updated annually and should be carefully studied to assure you of a marketable skill after investing your time and money. This handbook includes information covering 250 occupations. Order from U.S. Government bookstore. Telephone: 202-512-1800 fax 202-512-2104, web: bookstore.gpo.gov.

For lack of interest or economic reasons, a large number of qualified students are not graduating from high school and many who graduate do not go on to college or a technical vocational institution to acquire a marketable skill. Members of The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary and many other organizations are working to find a solution to this problem, which represents a threat to our future economy and national security and the general well being of our country.

Lack of interest and lack of money can be rendered ineffective as reasons for not continuing your education. Guidance of qualified students must start early in high school. Effective guidance will show youth the economic, cultural and social gains that may accrue as a result of advanced training and will help youth find ways to finance an education.

The American Legion is dedicated to the pursuit of quality education for all students and firmly believes "No student should decide he cannot afford to continue his education beyond high school."

## PLANNING YOUR FUTURE

**Here are some suggestions to help high school students prepare for the future, particularly for college or technical vocational training.**

Discuss your plans and problems with your parents, teachers and counselors.

### 1. Know yourself

Achievement, abilities, interests, and ambitions are important factors to be evaluated in setting your goals. Initiative, responsibility, and personality will determine your degree of success. (Discuss this with your counselor.)

### 2. The world of work

Explore the many occupational fields. Evaluate this information as it relates to your self-evaluation. Do not select an occupational field or goal just because "Uncle Charlie" or "Aunt Jane" is successful or thinks it is for you.

### 3. Plan for your vocation as early as possible

Start planning your future upon entering high school. Get some experiences in the various occupations which interest you. Find out all you can about these occupations. Talk to people actually doing the work in which you are interested. For instance, talk to your teachers about contacting people in careers that appeal to you. (Do not secure vocational information from outdated sources.)

### 4. Select your college or technical vocational institution

Investigate the schools which offer training in the field of your choice. If possible, talk to people who have attended these institutions. If you do not know such a person, ask the Education Chairman of your local American Legion Post or Auxiliary Unit and they will arrange for you to meet someone following the career in which you are interested. Find out the cost of your proposed course and what scholarships the school you selected offers. Learn about projected demands for the field of employment you select.

### 5. Plan your high school program

Certain courses are required for entrance into college. The catalog of your chosen school will tell you what courses you should take. Your counselor will help you.

### 6. Learn to study

Your teachers can help you develop good study habits for various subjects. Work hard to improve your study habits. You will be glad you did.

### 7. Strive for good grades

Grades of "B" or better are called "recommended" grades. You must have recommended grades to be eligible for most scholarships. If you are not getting recommended grades, talk to your teacher about your difficulty.

### 8. Become a well-rounded individual

Develop hobbies and participate in school, community, and church activities. Broaden your field of interest through reading and contacts with people. Make frequent visits to your local library.

### 9. Planning finances

Parents and students should consider the combination of savings, scholarships, loans, and part-time Student jobs when planning the financing of higher education. (Do not secure your information from old publications.)

### 10. Learn about college acceptance

A few degree granting institutions require applications to take admission examinations of some kind. Secure information on these tests from the Admissions Office of the university/college you plan to attend or your high school counselor.

### 11. Prepare your scholarship application early

Get references, transcripts, and other materials in order long before the scholarship deadline. Obtain scholarship applications early in the year before you expect to start college.

## PERSONAL RECORD

Keep your own personal record showing the steps you've taken in applying for school admission and financial aid. Include dates that information/applications were requested, dates received and follow-up. If after a reasonable time you have not received a reply to your request, do not hesitate in sending a second request.

### Students' Responsibility

Each college and organization granting scholarships determines which students shall be admitted or receive scholarships. In making these decisions they use the results of tests, along with other information about an applicant, such as his/her school grades, recommendations, rank in class, etc.

## GETTING ORGANIZED

Getting and staying organized will make the entire process of planning for college move along easier. The following tips can help:

- Start individual files for the information you gather about various financial aid programs and colleges.
- Organize all your information in a filing folder, box, or cabinet.
- Keep copies of everything you submit in your files.
- Set up a calendar, noting your applications deadlines and important requirements. Mark everything clearly.

### What to file:

- Brochures, catalogs, correspondence, forms, and notes from schools. Setup a separate folder for each school.
- Information about financial aid programs.
- Scholarship information and applications.
- Forms you need to complete in order to apply for financial aid. Make note of the date you mailed the form.
- Copies of documents you used to complete the forms, (including your driver's license, recent bank statements, latest federal tax forms, and W-2's).
- Correspondence of all loan applications and information.

In your search for financial assistance, do not assume someone else will provide you with all the information regarding programs for which you will be eligible. Research the many programs through your own initiative, and seek the advice and assistance of your guidance counselor and The American Legion's *NEED A LIFT?* college financial resource guide on CD-ROM, or online at [www.needalift.org](http://www.needalift.org).