

THE OFFICIAL GUIDE TO ALL THE MONEY STUFF

One of the most important things to know after graduation? How to handle your money. But don't take our word for it. Here's what other students are saying.

78% of students say

money issues will influence their post-graduation choices

&

that they will have to pay for at least part of their college tuition

PLANNING EARLY PAYS OFF. SERIOUSLY.

THREE KEY THINGS TO FOCUS ON:



Build up savings



Manage money



Avoid credit card debt

WHERE ARE YOU HEADED NEXT?



College Avenue



Career Road



Military Way

SCHOLARSHIPS & RESOURCES

Money for college based on skills and needs — no need to pay the money back! These top websites have information on loads of scholarship opportunities:

Fastweb.com

BigFuture.collegeboard.org

Cappex.com

FEDERAL, STATE, & PRIVATE AID

FAFSA: See if you qualify for loans, grants, or work-study money from the federal government.

TASFA: Texas residents who aren't US citizens complete this form instead of FAFSA.

CSS PROFILE: Money for private colleges and universities.

OTHER WAYS TO GET HELP

Work-study: Job experience that helps with college costs.

Loan forgiveness or debt repayment plans: Pay back less money, or get more time to pay it back.

Loan repayment calculator: Calculate monthly payment and interest over time.

Parental GI Bill: If your parents were in the military, you may get educational benefits.

Tuition exemption for foster care status: If you lived with a foster family, you might not have to pay college tuition or fees.

OTHER THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Work-school balance: High school and college are different worlds — consider limiting your work hours.

EXPLORE FIRST

Internships and apprenticeships: Test out a job you might be interested in while gaining work experience..

Texas Reality Check: Learn which kinds of jobs support your ideal lifestyle.

College or training on the job:

Employers may pay for tuition or training in a relevant field. This is often called tuition reimbursement.

HELP FOR FUTURE PLANS

ROTC: Program that pays college tuition in exchange for training and a commitment to serve after graduation.

GI Bill: Benefits you can get after serving, like money toward your college tuition or job training.

AMVETS scholarships: Educational grants for active military and veterans, including graduating seniors attending college.

Hazelwood Act: Tuition exemptions at Texas colleges for military veterans.

Tuition waivers for service: Many colleges and universities offer tuition discounts for veterans — or waive tuition fees entirely.

Retirement: The military offers what might be the best retirement deal out there — join at 17 and you could receive full benefits by 37!

Part-time options: Joining the National Guard or U.S. Armed Forces Reserve offers financial and educational benefits without a full-time commitment.

EXPLORE BEFORE YOU GO

ASVAB: A test to help you figure out what job you should have in the military.

OWN EVERYDAY MONEY STUFF LIKE A BOSS.



COST OF LIVING

Apartment, food, car, health, clothes? It's easy to accidentally spend more than you make.



BUDGETING

Setting goals about how to spend your money will help you save for what's important.



SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

Move any money you have left over at the end of the month to save it for emergencies.



HEALTH INSURANCE

Health insurance is required by law — get it through your school, an employer, or healthcare.gov.



OTHER INSURANCE (CAR, HOME, RENTER'S, ETC.)

Some kinds of insurance, like those that protect your house or car, are required. Others, like those that protect a rented apartment or provide your family money after you die, are voluntary (but often a smart move).

BORROWING



BUILDING CREDIT

A steady paycheck means you can build your credit, get low rates on loans, and borrow money for less.



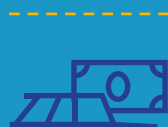
CREDIT CARDS

Credit cards let you spend money and pay it back later but can be very risky if you don't understand the fine print!



LOANS AND DEBT

Debt can be good if it's for things like a home, education, or business. Those things can gain value over time.



CAR PAYMENTS

If you borrow money to buy a car, you'll have a monthly payment with interest.

CREDIT VOCABULARY

INTEREST: A repeating fee that banks charge you for borrowing money (a percentage of what you've borrowed every month).

APR: APR is basically another term for interest rate. Look for low APR when applying for a credit card or buying a car.

CREDIT SCORE: Banks track how good you are at paying back loans. If you're reliable, you can borrow money at less cost!



It's not just about the money stuff — get more help for what's next.

TexasOnCourse.org



SOURCES:

Council for Economic Education, "Financial Literacy after High School" infographic
College Savings Foundation, "How Youth Plan to Fund College"
George Lucas Educational Foundation (Edutopia), "Financial Literacy Pays Off" infographic
Sallie Mae, survey of 500 high school seniors