

ALABAMA · STATE AID REFERENCE

Alabama State Aid Cheat Sheet (2026-2027)

A two-page reference for counselors and families. Free to copy, print, and share.

Alabama has no HOPE Scholarship, no Promise program, and no statewide merit award. Families wait for a state award letter that is never coming, and while they wait, the largest scholarship in the process closes. The big money here is the college's own automatic grid, awarded with no essay and no committee, on deadlines that fall in December of senior year. Alabama also changed four aid programs in July 2026, so any handout printed before then is wrong on all four. Verified against ACHE and ADVA, August 2026.

The Programs at a Glance

Program	What it pays and who qualifies
College automatic merit (not a state program)	The largest awards in Alabama, and none of them are the state's. No essay, no interview, no committee: hit a GPA and a test score and the money is yours. Entry points are far lower than families assume, running from a 2.00 GPA and a 15 ACT up to automatic full tuition. Deadlines fall between December 1 and July 30 depending on the school. Full ladder on page 2.
ASAP (need-based state grant)	\$300 to \$5,000 per academic year for Alabama residents, undergraduate, at roughly 80 participating Alabama institutions. The FAFSA is the application. There is no separate form and no separate deadline. Each college awards ASAP from a fixed block of state money that empties, so an October FAFSA matters more than anything the family controls.
Alabama G.I. Dependent Scholarship (ADVA, not ACHE)	In-state undergraduate tuition up to the Department of Defense Tuition Assistance cap per credit hour, currently \$400, plus up to \$1,000 a semester for required textbooks and instructional fees. For children, stepchildren, spouses, and unremarried widows of Alabama veterans rated 40 percent or more service connected. Children get five academic years, spouses of veterans rated 40 to 90 percent get three. Payer of last resort, never retroactive, FAFSA required every year.
Law Enforcement Officers' Family Scholarship (new, fall 2026)	Up to \$2,500 per academic semester. For the child of a law enforcement officer, under age 24, where the officer has lived in Alabama at least five years, or the spouse of an officer meeting the same test. This is not a survivor program: the officer does not need to have died or been injured, which is exactly why eligible families will skip it. Application mechanics were not yet posted at verification. Call ACHE.
(Re)Engage Alabama (adult completion)	Up to \$3,000 per term at a four-year institution, or \$1,500 per term at a community college, for adults with some college credit and no degree. The age floor dropped from 25 to 22 in 2026. Per term, not per year, which makes it one of the largest state awards available to anyone in Alabama. Applied for through the institution.
ANGEAP (National Guard)	Tuition and instructional fees for active members in good standing with a federally recognized Alabama National Guard unit, capped at the median tuition of an Alabama public four-year. As of fall 2026 it covers certificate, associate, bachelor's, master's, doctoral, and workforce development programs. Payer of last resort. Requires a FAFSA, a 2.00 GPA, and at least \$100 of remaining cost. ACHE sets the year's amount by July 31.
ASGP (private colleges only)	Cannot exceed \$3,000 per academic year. Not need-based, which surprises most families. Limited to a short list of eligible independent Alabama colleges, so attending an Alabama private college does not by itself qualify a student. The application comes from that college's financial aid office, not the state, with the deadline printed on the form.
POFSEAP (survivor assistance)	Tuition, required fees, books, and supplies, with no dollar limit on the award. For dependents and eligible spouses of Alabama police officers and firefighters killed in the line of duty. Undergraduate study at Alabama public institutions only. Narrow eligibility, uncapped benefit, so it is worth a call even when a family is unsure. ACHE handles it directly at 334-242-2273.
Also worth knowing	ACCS dual enrollment scholarships: grades 10 through 12, a 2.5 GPA, and a principal or superintendent signature. Check the STARS Guide before enrolling. LASEA replaced AMSTEP in 2026 and is loan repayment for teachers in acute shortage fields, not a student scholarship, despite what scholarship sites still say. ROTC reaches full tuition at Alabama State, UAB, and North Alabama. Some campuses extend in-state tuition within fifty miles of the state line.

Deadlines to Post on Your Wall

Program or college	Deadline	Where it is submitted
Auburn, Troy, Samford, Tuskegee	December 1. Samford runs to February 15 as a final date. Tuskegee's window is December 1 to January 1.	College portal. Tuskegee needs a separate scholarship form.
University of Alabama	December 5. Some out-of-state tiers publish December 15.	College application portal
UAB	January 15 in state, May 1 out of state. Honors closes February 1.	College application portal
University of North Alabama	March 2	College application portal
Jacksonville State	May 1. Honors scholarship application closes February 1.	College application portal
Alabama State	July 30	College application portal
ASAP	No deadline of its own. FAFSA opens October 1. File it then.	studentaid.gov, then the college
G.I. Dependent and ANGEAP	Before the term begins. Neither is ever awarded retroactively.	ADVA portal, or the Guard unit

Say this out loud to every junior: Alabama has no statewide scholarship deadline, and that is the problem. The deadline that decides the largest award a family will receive belongs to a college, and it lands before winter break.

The Rules That Trip Families Up

- There is no Alabama HOPE, and nobody sends a letter saying so. Families pace themselves to a state program that does not exist. The award that decides the bill is the college's automatic grid, and it closes in December of senior year while everyone is still thinking about applications.
- Automatic does not mean no deadline. The file must be complete by the college's scholarship priority date, which is usually earlier than its admission date. A student admitted in February to a school with a December scholarship date is admitted and unfunded.
- Payer of last resort cuts against the families who need it most. The G.I. Dependent Scholarship and ANGEAP pay only what is left of tuition, fees, and books after every other grant and scholarship applies. A Pell-eligible student may receive nothing. File the FAFSA anyway, because both programs require one on file every year.
- Superscoring is not consistent across Alabama. The University of Alabama, UAB, and Samford do not superscore for merit. Auburn, Jacksonville State, and North Alabama do. One student can hold a score that pays at one Alabama college and does not qualify at another, in the same week.

Automatic College Merit: Check These Three Things Early

This is the section that decides the bill, and none of it is administered by the state. Work it school by school.

1. Which grid is the student already on?

College	Lowest tier that pays (Alabama residents)	Amount	Top automatic tier	Deadline
Jacksonville State	2.00 GPA, 15 ACT	\$2,000	\$10,500 at a 31 ACT	May 1
UAB	3.00 GPA, 22 ACT	\$4,000	\$12,000 at a 3.50 and a 30	Jan 15
North Alabama	3.00 GPA, 20 ACT	\$2,000	\$12,000 on the same award family	Mar 2
University of Alabama	3.00 GPA, 25 ACT	\$4,000	Full tuition at a 3.50 and a 30	Dec 5
Auburn	3.50 GPA, 28 ACT	\$5,000	\$11,000 at a 33 ACT	Dec 1
Alabama State	No published GPA or test floor on most tiers	\$1,000	\$5,000 in state	Jul 30

Full tuition is not a full ride: housing and food remain the family's, roughly half the cost of a year on campus. Most awards renew at a 3.00, checked annually rather than by semester.

2. Does that college superscore, and can a later test still be added?

For a student sitting one point under a tier line, these are the two most valuable questions a counselor can hand a parent. Auburn sets a separate January date for updating scores after its December deadline. Ask every school whether it has an equivalent, because several do and none advertise it.

3. Is there a path that skips the test entirely?

Yes, and it is the least known thing in Alabama financial aid. UAB pays residents \$4,000 to \$12,000 on a test-optional award at a 3.25 GPA with no score at all, and Jacksonville State pays \$6,000 to \$8,000 at a 3.75. A strong transcript and a bad test day is a funded combination here.

Counselor Calendar: What to Tell Students When

When	What has to happen
Sophomore and junior year	Start dual enrollment through the community colleges: a 2.5 GPA and a principal signature. Check the STARS Guide first so credits land as requirements, not electives. Look up the tier line at the two most likely colleges and plan ACT dates backward from December of senior year.
Senior fall, October	The FAFSA opens October 1. File it that month. It is the entire ASAP application, and the state money is awarded from a block that empties. Create FSA IDs for both parent and student first, using a personal email address.
Dec 1 to Dec 5	The largest window in the state, and the one nothing on the calendar warns you about. Auburn, Troy, and Samford close December 1. Tuskegee's separate scholarship form opens December 1. The University of Alabama closes December 5. Applications must be complete, not started.
January to July	UAB closes January 15 in state and May 1 out of state. Honors closes February 1 at both UAB and Jacksonville State, earlier than those schools' general dates. Then North Alabama March 2, Jacksonville State May 1, Alabama State July 30. When a family arrives late, and many do, these doors are still open. Say so plainly rather than letting them conclude they missed everything.
Any time, before the term	G.I. Dependent, ANGEAP, POFSEAP, the Law Enforcement Officers' Family Scholarship, and (Re)Engage Alabama. All need paperwork in before the semester starts, none are awarded retroactively, and verification takes weeks.

Three Mistakes That Cost Alabama Students Money

- Waiting for the state. There is no Alabama merit program, so no letter arrives and nothing prompts the family to act. Every month spent waiting runs down the clock on a December college deadline. This one costs Alabama families more than everything else on this sheet combined.
- Assuming the family earns too much. Automatic merit does not means test. A household at \$150,000 receives the same \$4,000 at UAB for a 3.00 and a 22 as a household at \$30,000, and can walk into full tuition at the flagship at a 3.50 and a 30. Income affects the state grants, not the grids.
- Steering a mid transcript toward the biggest name. Auburn's grid does not start until a 3.50 and a 28. Jacksonville State starts at a 2.00 and a 15. A student with a 3.1 and a 21 gets zero from one and thousands from the other. Prestige and payout run in opposite directions here.

The December blind spot

Alabama's state programs run off the FAFSA on a spring and summer clock, so nothing about the calendar warns a family that anything is due in the fall. Meanwhile the biggest awards in the state close between December 1 and January 15 of senior year. Nothing gets denied and no letter arrives. The application simply lands after the money is committed, and the family never learns what it cost them. This is a conversation for juniors in the spring, not seniors in the spring.

Free Resources: No Account, No Cost, No Data Collection

Resource	Where
All Alabama state aid programs and official rules	ache.edu/index.php/student-assistance
G.I. Dependent Scholarship, eligibility and portal	va.alabama.gov/dependents-scholarship
Dual enrollment through the community colleges	accs.edu/academics/dual-enrollment
Our full Alabama guide, updated as rules change	collegereadyparent.org/alabama
Scholarships at 400+ colleges, all 50 states	collegereadyparent.org/college-scholarships

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