

ARIZONA • STATE AID REFERENCE

Arizona State Aid Cheat Sheet (2027-2028)

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

Counselors: this sheet covers the Class of 2027, who file 2027-2028 forms during the 2026-2027 school year. Arizona has no statewide scholarship portal and no state aid application. The FAFSA goes to the colleges and the colleges package the money, so every date that matters sits on a campus calendar. Two things families get wrong: the Arizona Promise Program is not the only income door, and April 1 is an admission deadline, not a FAFSA suggestion. Dollar figures are the ones published for fall 2026 entry; Arizona resets them annually.

The Programs at a Glance

Program	What it pays and who qualifies
Arizona Promise Program (the state program)	In-state tuition, mandatory fees, and program fees after all other gift aid, up to 8 semesters. Requires Arizona residency, an Arizona diploma with a 2.50 GPA calculated on core courses unweighted, Pell eligibility, and admission plus FAFSA plus verification documents by April 1. The student must enroll first-time, full-time, and in person at ASU, NAU, or UA the fall immediately after graduation. No housing, meals, books, or summer.
Arizona Teachers Academy (service obligation)	Tuition and mandatory fees after all other non-loan aid, up to 8 semesters for undergraduates and 4 for community college students, under A.R.S. 15-1655. At ASU, NAU, the University of Arizona, and Scottsdale, Rio Salado, Pima, and Central Arizona Colleges. One year of Arizona public school teaching per year funded, or the student repays. Private college students use the Arizona Teacher Student Loan Program.
AzLEAP (need-based grant)	Up to \$2,500 a year; ABOR reports the average award is about \$1,000. Arizona resident undergraduates with substantial need, Pell eligible, at least half time, U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen. No separate application. Each campus gets a fixed pot, so eligible does not mean funded.
Foster youth tuition waiver (A.R.S. 15-1809.01)	Tuition and fee waiver at any Arizona public university or community college, reduced by other federal aid and public grants but not by ETV funds. In foster care at or after age 14, or adopted from care after 14; under 23; citizen or lawfully present; personal assets under \$10,000. FAFSA annually, plus 30 hours of volunteer service each year after the first. Apply through the ETV process at Foster Success.
Line of duty and Purple Heart waivers (A.R.S. 15-1808)	Tuition waiver at public universities and community colleges for the child or spouse of a peace officer, correctional officer, firefighter, paramedic, National Guard member, or service member killed in the line of duty. Also Arizona National Guard Purple Heart recipients since 9/11/2001, and armed forces recipients with a VA rating of 50 percent or more. Verified by an outside board, not by the college.
Proposition 308	In-state tuition and access to state and local aid regardless of immigration status, for students who attended an Arizona high school for at least two years and graduated in Arizona or earned an Arizona equivalency diploma. It changes the tuition rate. It does not open Promise, which requires Pell, or AzLEAP, which requires citizenship.
Also worth knowing	Community college promise programs are a separate statute (A.R.S. 15-1705) and a separate thing: the state funds a pot, each district builds its own scholarship. Maricopa's district award is \$600 a semester for four semesters with no FAFSA and no GPA gate, while city-funded programs in Mesa, Phoenix, Peoria, and Queen Creek cover remaining tuition and fees for residents. Flinn Scholarship: a full ride for roughly 20 seniors, closing in senior fall.

Three more income doors sit on university sites, not state ones: NAU Access2Excellence, ASU Obama Scholars, and the ASU University Grant. See page 2.

Deadlines to Post on Your Wall

Date	What has to be done	For which program
Fall 2026	The 2027-2028 FAFSA opens. Everything below assumes it is filed and error free.	All of them
Nov 1, 2026	University of Arizona early action and merit scholarship priority date.	UA merit
Jan 15, 2027	FAFSA plus a complete admission file: application, transcripts, and fee. ASU states there are no exceptions.	ASU Obama Scholars
Mar 1, 2027	ASU recommends the FAFSA be submitted and error free. Also the UA renewal FAFSA date for continuing students.	ASU College Attainment Grant; UA Promise renewal
Apr 1, 2027	Admitted, FAFSA filed, and verification documents submitted. Also the NAU FAFSA date, school code 001082, and the ASU Promise renewal date. April 15 closes NAU departmental scholarships.	Arizona Promise; NAU A2E
May 1 and May 15, 2027	Accept admission and pay the enrollment fee, then confirm ASU housing or the Obama Scholars housing portion is removed.	Campus merit; ASU Obama Scholars
Jul 1, 2027, then day one	ASU verification documents due. Then full-time enrollment is checked: ASU on the first day of class, UA at the first Pell Recalculation Date. A canceled fall award cannot be reinstated.	ASU programs; Arizona Promise

Say this out loud to every senior: in Arizona the campus deadline is earlier than the state deadline, every time. April 1 is the last of the four dates that matter, not the first.

The Rules That Trip Families Up

- April 1 is an admission deadline. Promise requires the student to be admitted to ASU, NAU, or the University of Arizona by April 1, with the FAFSA and verification documents in by the same date. A family that files the FAFSA on March 30 without having applied to a university has already missed it.
- The \$65,000 number is NAU's, not the state's. Promise publishes no income figure; it runs on Pell eligibility. The \$65,000 figure belongs to NAU's Access2Excellence, and it is two tests, adjusted gross income and Student Aid Index, both at or under \$65,000.
- The GPA is core courses, unweighted. The 2.50 for Promise is not the weighted number on the transcript, and the University of Arizona measures it through the sixth semester, so it is fixed at the end of junior year.
- Enrollment format is eligibility, not preference. A gap year, a spring start, a part-time first semester, or the online version of the same degree each end Promise. At UA a change out of main campus is permanent.

The Four Income Doors: Check All of Them

Only one of these is a state program. The other three sit on university websites, which is exactly why families miss them. A parent who researches Arizona state financial aid finds Promise, learns it is Pell gated, and stops.

Door	The income test	What it pays	Where
Obama Scholars	Family income \$42,400 or less, and Pell eligible	Tuition and fees; year 1 adds partial housing and meals on campus	ASU, in person
Arizona Promise	Pell eligible. No published income figure.	In-state tuition, mandatory fees, and program fees	ASU, NAU, UA
Access2Excellence	AGI \$65,000 or less and SAI \$65,000 or less. Or tribal membership at any income, any state.	100 percent of undergraduate tuition, not fees	NAU Flagstaff and statewide
University Grant	Family income \$120,000 or less, and not Pell eligible	\$3,000 a year on top of merit, capped at tuition	ASU, in person and LA

At NAU the two largest programs interlock: A2E pays tuition, Promise pays the mandatory and program fees. A student who qualifies for only one still has a bill.

Counselor Calendar: What to Tell Students When

When	What has to happen
Sophomore and junior year	Protect the core course GPA, because that is the number Promise is graded on, and at the University of Arizona it stops counting at the end of junior year. Ask for the core course list; it is not the transcript GPA. Students who are members of one of Arizona's 22 federally recognized tribes should look at NAU's A2E now, since income and residency do not gate it. Flinn Scholarship planning starts here, not in senior fall.
Senior fall, Sept to Nov 1	File the 2027-2028 FAFSA as soon as it opens. Apply for admission early, because in Arizona the scholarship review runs off the admission file. November 1 is the University of Arizona merit and early action priority date. The Flinn application closes in the fall.
December to March	January 15 is the hard date for ASU Obama Scholars, and it covers the FAFSA and a complete admission file including transcripts and the application fee. Set up the college portal account the day admission arrives, with a login a parent can find, then watch it weekly for verification requests. March 1: ASU recommends the FAFSA be error free for College Attainment Grant continuation, and it is the University of Arizona renewal FAFSA date.
April 1	The state date. Admitted, FAFSA filed, verification documents in, at ASU, NAU, or the University of Arizona. Also the NAU A2E FAFSA date and the ASU Promise renewal date. April 15 closes NAU departmental scholarships.
May to July	May 1: accept admission and pay the enrollment fee. May 15: confirm ASU housing or the Obama Scholars housing money is removed. July 1: ASU verification documents. Community college promise applications in several districts close around July 1.
First week of class	Confirm the student is enrolled in at least 12 credits. ASU checks on the first day; the University of Arizona checks at the first Pell Recalculation Date. Adding a class in week three does not fix a canceled award.

Three Mistakes That Cost Arizona Students Money

- Reading April 1 as the FAFSA date. It is also the admission date and the verification document date. Families pace themselves to spring and discover in April that being admitted was part of the deadline. Tell seniors the deadline is November, January, and April, in that order.
- Deciding the family makes too much. Arizona has income doors at \$42,400, at Pell, at \$65,000, and at \$120,000, and the \$120,000 one specifically requires the student not be Pell eligible. A family that skips the FAFSA on an income assumption forfeits the one program written for them.
- Comparing the merit line on two offer letters. Promise is last-dollar, so for a Pell eligible student a bigger merit award shrinks the Promise grant by the same amount. The University of Arizona publishes examples where an \$11,000 award and a \$3,000 award both leave the family owing \$0 for tuition. Compare what is left against housing and food, not the scholarship headline.

The Promise door only opens once

This is the rule that costs the most and is published in the smallest type. The University of Arizona states that a student must be eligible for Arizona Promise in their first year enrolled, and cannot gain eligibility for the first time in a later year. There is no appeal to become eligible.

So the family whose income drops after freshman year, whose student becomes Pell eligible as a sophomore, gets Pell and other need-based grants and never gets Promise. The one exception runs inside year one: if verification or a special circumstances appeal changes the Student Aid Index during the first year, the student is automatically re-reviewed. Two clocks run alongside it. Promise covers eight semesters, and semesters where the student was ineligible or away still count. And renewal dates differ by campus for the same state program: April 1 at ASU, March 1 at the University of Arizona.

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

Arizona Promise eligibility and the official rules	azregents.edu/programs/arizona-promise-program
NAU Access2Excellence, income and tribal eligibility	nau.edu/financial-aid/aid-programs/access-2-excellence
ASU Obama Scholars, College Attainment Grant, University Grant	tuition.asu.edu/special-financial-assistance-programs-arizona-residents
Our Arizona guide, full deadline tables, and 400+ college scholarship pages	collegereadyparent.org/arizona

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