

# Senior To Do Checklist

## Van Buren Senior Checklist Class of 2025

### All Seniors

- Complete the yearbook packet and return to Mr. Jones (be mindful of due dates)
- If you plan to participate in the graduation ceremony, order a cap and gown.
- Submit CPR certification to [holly.strait@vbcwarriors.org](mailto:holly.strait@vbcwarriors.org)
- Talk with your family about graduation plans/parties
- Sign graduation/diploma sheet with your official name as it should appear on your diploma and you want it read at graduation.
- Complete sign out sheet and return to the office (these will be distributed in May)
- Meet with Mrs. Kerby if you are planning to participate in silver cord
- Sign Transcript release sheet in Mr. Roush's room (May)
- Turn in post graduation plans
- Turn in all books, computers and pay all fees

### Early Graduation

- Complete early graduation application
- If you plan to attend college in January, complete FAFSA
- Continue to check email until May, Many important announcements are made via email

### Military

- Do your research at [www.military.com](http://www.military.com)
- Track and maintain your results from the ASVAB taken junior year
- 
- Meet with recruiters to determine which branch and career area will interest you
- Prepare for the physical exam and fitness requirements
- Have the school counselor complete your High School Graduation Status Verification letter
- Determine enlistment date

### Apprenticeships/ Trade Schools

- Check out opportunities at Registered Apprenticeship/Future Ready Iowa.
- After you turn 18, fill out the Apprenticeship application .
- Earn and Learn Complete required tests and paperwork

## Senior To Do Checklist

### **Entering the workforce**

- Complete your resume and cover letter, have it proof-read and printed
- Practice your interview skills and prepare lists of questions to ask.
- Prepare job applications and submit
- Arrange transportation and housing
- Set up checking and savings accounts
- Complete employer paperwork including: W-4, payroll information, health care information

### **College Bound**

- Determine which colleges have the major that will correspond with your career goals. Plan to visit college recruiters and make college visit days (see form for visit day) Talk with your family about budgeting and plans for financing college.
- If you plan to attend a 4 year school, take or retake the ACT register at [act.org](http://act.org)
- If you plan to attend a community college, make an appointment to take the Accuplacer and/or ALEKS
- Apply for admission to your top college choices
- Visit the Van Buren Co. CSD homepage and check the scholarship page (student portal) Plan your scholarship applications and essays
- Complete the FAFSA for financial aid

### Fall

- As soon as possible after Dec. 1st release date, complete and submit your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at [fafsa.gov.](http://fafsa.gov), along with any other financial aid applications your chosen school(s) may require. You should submit your FAFSA by the earliest financial aid deadline of the schools to which you are applying, generally by early February. Refer to the FAFSA "Applying for Aid" section of the site as you go through the application process.
- After you submit the FAFSA you should receive your Student Aid Report (SAR) within 3 days to 3 weeks. This document lists your answers to the questions on your FAFSA and gives you some basic information about your aid eligibility. Quickly make any necessary corrections and submit them to the FAFSA processor.
- If you haven't done so already, register for and take the standardized tests required for college admission. Check with the colleges you are interested in to see what tests they require.
- Apply to the colleges you have chosen. Prepare your applications carefully. Follow the instructions and PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO THE DEADLINES!

## Senior To Do Checklist

- Well before your college application deadlines, ask your counselor and teachers to submit the required documents (e.g.transcript, letters of recommendations, etc) to the colleges to which you're applying.*
- Complete any last scholarship applications.*

### Spring

- Visit colleges that have invited you to enroll.*
- Review your college acceptance and compare the colleges "financial aid offers"*
- Contact a school financial aid office if you have questions about the aid that the school has offered you. In fact, getting to know your financial aid staff early is a good idea no matter what. They can tell you about deadlines, other aid for which you might wish to apply, and any important paperwork you might need to submit.*
- When you decide which school you want to attend, notify that school of your commitment and submit any required financial deposit. Many schools require this notification and deposit by May 1st.*
- Work hard all the way to graduation! Second semester grades can affect scholarship eligibility!*
- Stay involved in after-school activities and seek leadership roles if possible!*

### **REMEMBER!!!!**

***Register for all test in advance and be sure to give yourself time to prepare appropriately! If you have difficulty paying a registration fee, ask your school counselor about getting the fee waived.***

## Things to Consider When Looking for a College!

### 1. Types of College/University:

**Liberal Arts:** A college with an emphasis on undergraduate study in liberal arts and sciences

- Examples: Grinnell, Cornell, Coe, Wartburg
- **Four Year (Bachelor's Degree):** A college that offers students an undergraduate degree in a wide range of academic majors.
- Examples: Iowa State, University of Iowa, University of Northern Iowa
- **Two Year (Also called a community college or junior college. Associate's Degree):** These colleges offer many types of educational programs, including those that lead to degrees/certificates and that serve a job-entry educational experience.
- Examples: Indian Hills, Iowa Central Community College, Southeastern Community College, Ellsworth, Kirkswood
- **Technical/Vocational (Also called trade school or career college):** Secondary education that focuses exclusively on the job training needed for a specific career or skilled trade.
- Examples: Iowa Lakes Community College, Midwest Technical Institute, Siouxland Pipe Welding School, Body Wisdom Massage Therapy, Iowa School of Beauty.

2. Size of the college/ university: Do you want to be part of a smaller or larger campus? Think about what **YOU** will need to be successful.

Do you work better in a smaller classroom setting or a larger one?

3. Think about what you want to study and where you can find that major. What types of internships have students done in the past?

### **What do I ask the College Reps?**

- *What type of financial aid is offered at your school? Are scholarships, loans, grants, and work-study jobs available?*
- *Can you explain the admission criteria?*
- *What major do you offer?*
- *What types of student activities are available on campus? (Student government, sports, music, theater, art, Greek system?)*
- *How safe is your college?*
- *How many students graduate in 4 years? What is the job placement like after graduation?*
- *What is the average class size? What is the faculty to staff ratio? Do your professors teach the classes or will a teaching assistant be doing so?*
- *What are your facilities like? (Library, gym, book store, student health center, career center, cafeteria, wellness center)*
- *Is there adequate parking? Is it free or by permit only?*
- *What type of student orientation do you provide?*

### **When you're ready to look at a specific school!**

- Arrange to tour your campus
- Ask to meet with staff/faculty and students who can tell you about your areas of interest
- Arrange to talk with an admission counselor to talk more about tuition, scholarships, life on campus, etc
- Consider sitting in on some classes
- If you know someone on campus personally, be sure to get their input!
- Don't be afraid to ask questions
- Ask yourself: "Will this school be able to meet my needs academically, socially, economically, and intellectually?"

# VAN BUREN COUNTY COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT



PO Box 220, Keosauqua, Iowa 52565  
Phone (319) 293-3334 Fax (319) 293-3301

Mr. Jeremy Hissem, Superintendent

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## College Visit Form

College/University \_\_\_\_\_

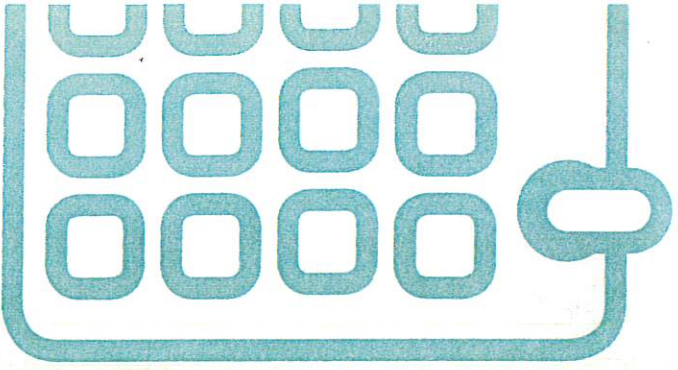
Student \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

College Representative Signature \_\_\_\_\_

### "Warrior Pride County Wide"

It is the policy of the Van Buren County Community School District not to illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy please contact the district's Equity Coordinator: 807 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Keosauqua, IA 52565 or by phone at (319) 293-3334.



# TEST DATES

United States, US Territories, and Puerto Rico



2024|2025

Test Dates	Regular Registration Deadline	Late Registration Deadline	Photo Upload and Standby Deadline
September 14, 2024	August 9	August 25	September 6
October 26, 2024	September 20	October 7	October 18
December 14, 2024	November 8	November 22	December 6
February 8, 2025	January 3	January 20	January 31
April 5, 2025	February 28	March 16	March 28
June 14, 2025	May 9	May 26	June 6
July 12, 2025*	June 6	June 20	July 4

\*No test centers are scheduled in New York for the July test date.

Test Information Release for the 2024–2025 testing year will occur in September, December, and February. See [www.act.org/the-act/tir](http://www.act.org/the-act/tir) for more information.

[www.act.org](http://www.act.org)

## Scholarship Essay Tips

Your essay is your best chance to make the case for why you should receive the scholarship; it helps the scholarship provider learn about you and gives them a much more detailed look at your school and home life.

If you use them right, those few paragraphs can help your application stand out and could mean the difference between getting a scholarship and a "thanks for applying" letter.

Of course, putting so much emphasis on an essay may make it seem like a daunting task, especially if you don't consider yourself a great writer. By following these four tips, just about anyone can create a standout essay.

1. **Know your audience:** It is important to realize that every scholarship provider is looking for a specific student who meets unique criteria. When you get your application, look closely at the questions, the organization giving the scholarship and any past recipients you can find. Are they emphasizing classroom performance? Looking for someone who's dealt with adversity at home? Interested in character or community service more than grades? Whatever the answer, your research will put you a step ahead of applicants who are copying and pasting one size fits all essays.
2. **Plan far in advance:** You can also avoid the one size fits all essay by getting an early start on each application. Begin your research and planning a week or so before you think you should, and you'll be able to take enough time to turn out something great. This will also give you time to craft an outline, which can help your essay stay concise and on target. Think of two or three main points you want to make in response to the essay question, add some supporting information under each of them, and consider a sentence or two of introduction and conclusion. Before you know it, you'll have built the structure and thesis of your essay, and you won't have to rush to write it.
3. **Make it personal and passionate:** When you do start writing, don't forget that the main purpose of your essay is to convince the scholarship committee that you're the student they've been looking for. Answer the questions you've set out in your outline, but make sure every point you make is illustrated with a specific detail that shows you care about the subject. Don't just mention you work with disadvantaged kids; tell them how your love of soccer got you into coaching those kids. Don't just tell them about your acting awards; show how the stage helped you conquer your shyness. Putting your unique interests and perspectives on the page will go a very long way toward creating a memorable essay.
4. **Find an editor:** Last but not least, make sure you have time to run your essay by a good editor, whether it's a parent, teacher, or grammar-nerd friend. Even a well-researched and passionately written essay can be derailed by spelling mistakes or awkward sentences, and if you've spent a lot of time looking at your words, it's easy to miss basic mistakes. A few minutes of proofreading by a trusted editor can make a huge difference. I also recommend reading your essay aloud to yourself, so you can hear how it flows.

Scholarship essays are a big component of your applications and can be a major headache, too. But by starting early, answering the right questions, and describing what makes you unique, you'll be writing standout essays with the stress.

*Matt Knrad, U.S. News and World Report, Jan. 31, 2013*



## ACTIVITIES AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

This sheet is here to help you! By filling this out, it can get you a really good start when you go to fill out applications and write your essays.

Ask your counselor, your colleges, and your religious and civic groups about scholarship opportunities. Your parents' employers and organizations they belong to may also offer scholarships.

You should **NEVER** pay for scholarship information or application fees.

Employment History:

Extracurricular Clubs and/or Groups:

Volunteer and/or Community Service Hours:

Leadership Positions:

Awards/Recognitions:

Sports:

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### \*Examples of things to list in your essays and applications!\*

- |                |                  |                |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| -Cross Country | -Choir           | -Leo Club      |
| -Football      | -Marching Band   | -Outdoor Club  |
| -Volleyball    | -Color Guard     | -Quiz Bowl     |
| -Basketball    | -FBLA            | -Rotary Club   |
| -Wrestling     | -FFA             | -Weight Club   |
| -Rhythm Squad  | -NHS             | -Archery       |
| -Cheerleading  | -Student Council | -Band          |
| -Track & Field | -Art Club        | -YLC           |
| -Baseball      | -Spanish Club    | -E-Sports Club |
| -Softball      | -Science Fair    |                |
| -Golf          | -ETC/Fall Play   |                |
| -Basketball    | -Iron Chef       |                |

**Name:**

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**GPA and Class Rank:**

**Intended Field of Study:**

**Extracurricular Activities (Clubs, sports, groups, etc.):**

**Awards and Recognition:**

**Volunteer Work/Community Service:**

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**Scholarship(s) Being Applied For:**

**Letter Should be Addressed to:**

**Date Letter is Needed By:**

# VAN BUREN COUNTY JR/SR HIGH SCHOOL

## TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED WITH FINANCIAL AID

Parents and Students:

Now is the time to get started on the financial aid process for the 2023-2024 school year. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) provides the starting point for state and federal grants, loans and scholarships. Many private scholarships and college scholarships also required the completion of FAFSA before a student is eligible to receive funds. FAFSA filing deadline is being adjusted and will either be available in December or January. The information provided to FAFSA will be based on 2022 tax information.

Here are some tips for getting started.

Begin by visiting [fsaid.ed.gov](https://fsaid.ed.gov)

This site will allow you *and* your son/daughter to establish a federal student aid ID. Having the ID will enable you to submit and sign documents electronically which speeds up the processing. Students and Parents will each need to establish a FSA ID as you will both be providing information on the FAFSA form.

When you log on to the site, you will need to enter your demographic information along with your social security number. The site will direct you through establishing a user name, password and several security questions. **Please note: It is critical that you record your answers on piece of paper and file the information with other important documents. Trying to recall this information each time you update your FAFSA can be very difficult. Typically, you will only visit this site 1 time per year throughout your college education so a record of security passwords, questions, and secure codes is extremely important.**

When answering security questions, avoid answers that require spaces or punctuation. For example, " St. Mary's Church", should be entered as stmaryschurch

FSAID will also request an email account to send a "secure" code for finishing the ID process. We encourage you to use an email account you check frequently because other information about your award will also come to this account.

**STUDENTS:** Please do not use your school established email account as those will be de-activated upon graduation. Students will not be able to access financial aid information once those accounts are de-activated and you will need to access this information following graduation and throughout your college education.

Establishing a FSA ID can be done at any time between now and filing your FAFSA and will probably take you about 20-30 minutes.

Once FSA ID is complete, you may visit [fafsa.ed.gov](https://fafsa.ed.gov)

This site will again have you enter demographic information and allow you to enter financial information used to establish an estimated family contribution (EFC). This site is linked to the IRS so if your tax information is filed electronically; it can be uploaded directly in the FAFSA report.

**FSAID help is available. If you have questions, please contact Mrs. Chapuis at 319-293-3183, ext: 4009**

**FAFSA help is also available by contacting Sonya Davis at the Educational Opportunity Center on IHCC campus. Even if you are not attending IHCC, she can assist with the financial aid process.**

**The Educational Opportunity Center and Iowa State Extension Service will be hosting a FAFSA Completion Night at Van Buren County CSD in October. Watch Facebook posts the first of October learn about specific times.**

# FAFSA FILING TIPS & HELPFUL HINTS

## ARE YOU A DEPENDENT OR INDEPENDENT STUDENT?

(Not living with parents or not being claimed by them on tax forms does not make you an independent student on the FAFSA)

If you answer "yes" to any of these questions you are an independent student on the FAFSA.

If you answer "no" to all of these questions you are a dependent student and will be required to use your parent(s) information on the FAFSA.

- Were you born before January 1, 2001?
- As of today, are you married? (Answer "Yes" if you are separated but not divorced)
- At the beginning of the 2024-25 school year, will you be working on a graduate program?
- Are you currently serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for purposes other than training or are you a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces?
- Do you have children or dependents who will receive more than half of their support from you between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025?
- At any time since you turned 13, were both your parents deceased, were you in foster care or were you a dependent or ward of the court?
- As determined by a court in your state of legal residence, are you or were you an emancipated minor or in a legal guardianship?
- At any time on or after July 1, 2023, were you homeless or at risk of being homeless?
- Other unusual circumstances that prevent you from contacting your parents or contacting your parents would pose a risk to you.

## WHO IS CONSIDERED A PARENT ON THE FAFSA?

- If your parents are married to each other, then report information for both parents on the FAFSA.
- If your parent was never married and does not live with your other legal parent, or if your parent is widowed, answer questions about that parent.
- If your parents are divorced or separated, answer questions about the parent you lived with more in the last 12 months or if you did not live with one parent more than the other, the parent that provided the most financial support during the last 12 months. If this parent is remarried as of today, answer the questions about that parent and your stepparent. If both biological parents provide equal support, use the parental data of the parent that earned more in 2022.
- If your widowed parent is remarried as of today, answer the questions about that parent and your stepparent.
- If your legal parents are not married to each other and live together, select "Unmarried and both parents living together" on FAFSA and provide information about both of them regardless of their gender.

## FARMS/BUSINESS ON FAFSA

- In past years, the value of a family farm or small business with less than 100 employees was not reported. Beginning with the 2024-25 FAFSA, the net worth of each will be reported on the FAFSA. Refer to your personal records or contact your accountant.

## INVESTMENTS INCLUDE:

- Real estate or rental property (NOT the home you live in)
- Trust funds
- UGMA/UTMA accounts (that you own)
- Money Market funds
- Mutual Funds
- Certificates of Deposit
- Stocks
- Stock options
- Bonds
- Other securities
- Installment & Land sales
- Commodities
- Educational Savings accounts, including 529 plans, Coverdell and Educational IRAs. (List as parent asset)

## DO NOT INCLUDE:

- The home that you live in
- Life insurance values
- Retirements accounts
- Pension funds
- Annuities
- ROTH IRAs
- Keogh Plans
- Cash, savings or checking accounts already reported on FAFSA
- UTMA/UGMA accounts for which you are a custodian, but not the owner.

It is the policy of Indian Hills Community College not to discriminate in its programs, activities, or employment on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, creed, religion, and actual or potential family, parental or marital status.

If you have questions or complaints related to compliance with this policy, please contact Associate Dean, Student Development, 525 Grandview Ave, Ottumwa, IA 52501, (641) 683-5155, equity@indianhills.edu (students, faculty and staff); Executive Dean, Centerville Campus and Learning Services, (641) 683-5174, learningservicesequity@indianhills.edu (students with disabilities); or the Director of the Office for Civil Rights U.S. Department of Education, John C. Kluczynski Federal Building, 230 S. Dearborn Street, 37th Floor, Chicago, IL 60604-7204, phone number (312) 730-1560, fax (312) 730-1576, ocr.chicago@ed.gov.

# HERE'S WHAT YOU'LL NEED COMPLETING 2024-2025 FAFSA

Information is subject to change as new information becomes available from the U.S. Department of Education. Please call the Educational Opportunity Center at 641-683-5315 for assistance completing your FAFSA. Use the checklists below to help you complete the (FAFSA) Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

## Helpful Hints

### FSA ID

The FSA ID is a username and password that will confirm your identity when accessing your financial aid information. If you are a dependent student, you and your parents will need to create a FSA ID username and password to electronically sign the FAFSA. Create your FSA ID at [www.studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/](http://www.studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/).

Please write down the username and password that you create and bring it to your appointment.

### WHEN DO I FILE?

The 2024-2025 FAFSA form is available December 2023. An exact date is yet to be determined. Each college has a priority deadline for completing the FAFSA. You should check with each college and file the FAFSA as soon as possible.

**QUESTIONS?** Please call the Educational Opportunity Center at 641-683-5315.

### STUDENTS:

- Social Security Number and Name that is printed on the social security card, date of birth.
- Driver's license number.
- Permanent Resident Card and Alien registration number, if not a U.S. citizen.
- 2022 federal and state tax returns (1040).
- W-2 forms and other records of income earned in 2022.
- Records of any untaxed income received in 2022 (veterans benefits, etc.)
- 2022 business and investment farm records (net worth).
- As of today, what is the balance of your checking, savings?
- As of today, what is the value (net worth) of investments? Includes stocks, bonds, mutual funds, rental properties, CD's, etc. (Does not include the home you live in or vehicles)
- As of today, are you married? If married, what is the date of marriage? If divorced or separated, what is the date of divorce or separation?
- Amount of child support paid and/or received in 2022.
- A federal student aid identification (FSA ID) username and password. (set up at [www.studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/](http://www.studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/))
- If an independent student is married and filed taxes separately, their spouse must create a FSA ID and provide consent for the student to be eligible for aid.

### PARENTS:

- Social Security Numbers and Name that is printed on the social security card and dates of birth.
- 2022 federal and state tax returns (1040).
- W-2 forms and other records of income earned in 2022.
- Records of any untaxed income received in 2022 (veterans benefits, etc.)
- 2022 business and investment farm records (net worth).
- As of today, are you married or remarried? If married, what is the date of marriage? If divorced or separated, what is the date of divorce or separation?
- As of today, what is the balance of your checking, savings?
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- A federal student aid identification (FSA ID) username and password. Both parents (if married or remarried) set up at [www.studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/](http://www.studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/)

### IRS DATA RETRIEVAL:

- The IRS Data Retrieval tool within the FAFSA can be used to automatically pull most of your 2022 tax information into your FAFSA application in most cases. You will still need copies of your 2022 taxes and W-2 forms on hand for reference.

# FAFSA FILING TIPS & HELPFUL HINTS

## ARE YOU A DEPENDENT OR INDEPENDENT STUDENT?

(Not living with parents or not being claimed by them on tax forms does not make you an independent student on the FAFSA)

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- Annuities
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- Keogh Plans
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If you have questions or complaints related to compliance with this policy, please contact Associate Dean, Student Development, 525 Grandview Ave, Ottumwa, IA 52501, (641) 683-5155, [equity@indianhills.edu](mailto:equity@indianhills.edu) (students, faculty and staff); Executive Dean, Centerville Campus and Learning Services, (641) 683-5174, [learningservicesequity@indianhills.edu](mailto:learningservicesequity@indianhills.edu) (students with disabilities); or the Director of the Office for Civil Rights U.S. Department of Education, John C. Kluczynski Federal Building, 230 S. Dearborn Street, 37th Floor, Chicago, IL 60604-7204, phone number (312) 730-1560, fax (312) 730-1576, [ocr.chicago@ed.gov](mailto:ocr.chicago@ed.gov).