

VALENCIA COLLEGE



# BRIDGES TO SUCCESS — APPLICANT — HANDBOOK



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“The Bridges to Success Program functions as a beacon that will challenge and inspire you to be actively engaged in the college experience to create, sustain, and achieve your milestones. We thrive on resilience...be entirely extraordinary!”

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# DISCLAIMER:

The BTS Applicant Handbook contains only general guidelines and information regarding the application process.

It is not intended to be comprehensive or address all possible policies or procedures, or exceptions to the general policies and procedures described.

The BTS Applicant Handbook is subject to change, at which time prospective students will either be notified, or those changes will be posted on the Bridges to Success website.

# BRIDGES TO SUCCESS ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission statement of the Bridges to Success Program is to close the achievement gaps among low income, first generation and minority students by providing mentoring, academic and financial support, and leadership development beginning the summer after high school graduation, with consideration for African American and underserved populations. The overall mission of the Bridges to Success Program is to ensure that every student is provided necessary support to have a successful experience at Valencia College. BTS, as a part of its action plan for minority recruitment and retention, maintains vital connections with colleges and universities throughout the country, and with minority churches and other civic and ethnic groups in the community that support students in their educational endeavors. As a result of these partnerships all of our students complete community service hours which gives them the opportunity to gain hands on experience in their desired career field, network with others, and be exposed to mentors who can assist them with the transition from college to the professional world

## INTRODUCTION

**Valencia College** invites high school graduates to apply for the **Bridges to Success Program (BTS)**. The Program is created to enhance the skills needed for academic success. BTS provides an academic, cultural, and social road map that has proven to be successful in graduating ethnically diverse student populations. BTS begins with a **six-week** summer program. Upon successful completion of the summer Program students are invited to participate in the **Bridges to Success Achievers Program**.

Students interested in the **Bridges to Success Program** must complete the following:

1. Apply for admission to Valencia College and pay the application fee.
2. Gain acceptance into Valencia College and activate their Atlas Account.
3. Complete the online application located in the Valencia College Atlas Student Portal.
4. Identify two individuals (teacher, community leader, volunteer coordinator, etc.) who can submit a recommendation form. Recommendation requests are submitted electronically and will require accurate email address information.
5. Write and upload a personal essay using Times New Roman 12pt Font, PDF version.
6. Submit a paper copy of unofficial high school transcript with registrar signature in a sealed envelope to the BTS office.
7. Official high school transcript must be submitted after graduation. The transcript can be submitted electronically by the High School.
8. The online application must be submitted before the application deadline date.  
**NO APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE DEADLINE.**
9. Sign up for Student Interview (notification sent via Atlas portal following application submission)
10. Attend Student Interview (on time and in professional attire)

## **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS CRITERIA**

1. Graduate of Orange or Osceola County High School
2. Have a minimum 2.75 unweighted academic GPA
3. Must be first-generation college student
4. Complete all the minimum academic courses required by the state of Florida
5. Qualify for Pell Grant as determined by the FAFSA (Federal Application for Federal Student Aid)
6. Meet Florida Residency Requirements
7. Qualify for Free or Reduced Lunch
8. Must have completed PERT exam or have taken SAT/ACT
9. Students not eligible for Federal Financial Aid because of immigration status are eligible to apply, but may need to submit additional documentation.
10. The Bridges to Success Program is NOT a **merit based program**. Students who are high academic achievers, and are focused on accelerated learning, online courses, and independent course study should consider applying for the Honors Program: Seneff Honors College.
11. Student must complete the online FAFSA for the current year as well as the next academic year by the designated deadline.
12. Student must complete the Bridges to Success Achievers Summer Program with at least a 2.75 GPA and a 100% course completion rate. If the summer program is not completed successfully, student will not be able to continue participating in the Bridges to Success Achievers Program going in to the fall semester.
13. ALL Students must participate in weekly Learning Support in the labs on campus. These hours are generally submitted at the end of the week to the academic advisor for review.
14. Student must attend all required summer program events/activities.

## **VALUE OF BRIDGES PROGRAM VS. WORK**

First year Bridges to Success students are required to participate in many programs and activities throughout the academic year (please see program calendar). Many of the programs are required if a student is receiving the Bridges to Success Achievers Program. The events and programs are created to enhance a student's learning experience, academic and developmental growth while attending Valencia College. BTS also understands that now more than ever students are working to help cover the cost of college and to assist their families financially. It is important for a student to weigh the cost of their Bridges award with the federal minimum wage when using work as an excuse for missing required Programs and activities.

BTS covers the cost of tuition, fees, supplies and books for students participating in the program.

The value of the Bridges Program far exceeds the federal minimum wage. Students should consider the current investment that the Program is making for future earning potential as a college graduate.

BTS recommends that students work no more than 20 hours a week to ensure they meet all program requirements for the program. Student who qualify for Work-Study should check their Financial Aid package and consider applying for on-campus employment opportunities.

## WHY BTS?

- ✓ Are you COMMITTED to earning a College Degree?
- ✓ Are YOU ready to be challenged, pushed, and encouraged to make YOUR Goals a reality?
- ✓ Do you want to be a part of a program with proven success strategies?
- ✓ Do you need Support, Structure, and Organization to stay on track academically?
- ✓ Could you benefit from REQUIRED Learning Support (Tutoring), Skill Shops, Mentoring, and Cohort Classes?
- ✓ Do you need help selecting, and following an academic advising plan for successful completion of your AA (Associates of Arts) or AS (Associates of Science) degree?
- ✓ Are you interested in performing service/giving back to your community through volunteerism and service projects?
- ✓ Are you interested in personal and professional growth opportunities (skill shops, seminars, lecture series, networking opportunities, college tours, and student leadership conferences)?
- ✓ Have you experienced some personal challenges and adversities in life, and want an opportunity to regroup and start on a new path?

## WHAT WILL YOU GAIN?

- ✓ Proven strategies for success and academic achievement
- ✓ Caring and supportive staff and faculty vested in your future
- ✓ Needed structure to stay focused on academic goals
- ✓ Clear and transparent communication of Program requirements
- ✓ Weekly updates/reminders from Academic Advisors and BTS Management
- ✓ Intentional interactions with your peers by participating in a cohort model Program
- ✓ Advanced registration for courses during Fall/Spring semesters



## **ARE YOU WILLING TO COMMIT?**

- ✓ Summer Program starts third week in June approximately two weeks after high school graduation
- ✓ Attend 6-week program with classes Monday- Friday for 6 weeks
- ✓ Engage in accelerated course work designed to prepare you for freshman year of college
- ✓ Be willing to limit your part-time/full time work hours to earn a college degree (no more than 20 hours a week)
- ✓ Attend campus seminars, mentorship sessions, and other BTS events throughout the semester
- ✓ Complete required tutoring/learning support (Writing, Math, Speech)
- ✓ Complete minimum of 30 hours of community service/volunteer service per semester
- ✓ Participate in Day of Service/Adopt A Highway project



# APPLICATION: HOW TO APPLY

## APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Note: If you are subject to DACA and/or are ineligible for federal financial aid because of your immigration status, this checklist will not mark all entries as “completed”.

- Submit the Bridges to SuccessAchievers Summer Program Application.
- Submit your essay. Essay should be formatted in Times New Roman, 12-point font, double-spaced.
- Request Recommendations from your Academic and Community/Volunteer References.
- Confirm your Florida Residency status. Check with Admissions for information about documenting your resident status.
- Submit your Unofficial Sealed High School Transcript to the Bridges to Successoffice. You **are required** to submit an official sealed high school transcript in an envelope with the high school registrar’s seal or signature affixed.
- Complete the current Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). *The FAFSA application can take 1-2 weeks to be sent to Valencia College. Valencia College may request additional documentation (verification) that may prolong the process an additional 2-4 weeks. Submit your FAFSA early!*
- Complete the following year’s Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). *The FAFSA application can take 1-2 weeks to be sent to Valencia College. Valencia College may request additional documentation (verification) that may prolong the process an additional 2-4 weeks. Submit your FAFSA early!*
- Submit your college-level ACT/SAT Test Scores.
- Submit your PERT Test Scores.
- Participate in an in-person student interview. Notification to sign up will be sent to students via the Valencia College email account (Atlas).



# ACHIEVERS SUMMER PROGRAM

## BRIDGES TO SUCCESS ACHIEVERS PROGRAM

The **Summer Program** is designed to provide a positive foundation for the transition from high school to college for incoming freshmen. Bridges students receive individualized attention from Valencia's faculty and staff. These individuals are dedicated to assisting students in making a successful transition from high school to college and will help build leadership skills through community service and co-curricular activities. Upon successful completion of the **Bridges to Success Achievers Summer Program**, students will become **Bridges to Success Achievers Scholars** in the Fall. Bridges Achievers Scholars receive renewable full-tuition and book stipend that will be coordinated with financial aid to cover the full cost of attending Valencia College.

The **Bridges to Success Program** pays the cost of tuition and books. If an applicant is selected for the **Bridges to Success Achievers Summer Program** and decides not to participate, it is their responsibility to submit a written notification that they will not be accepting the scholarship. If a student fails to notify the **Bridges to Success Program Office** that they are not participating in the Summer Program they may be required to pay or reimburse the Program for books, tuition, and fees. Students who qualify for aid such as PELL, or student loans will have funds available at the beginning of the academic term. All tuition and fees will be deducted from these funds. The BTS Program funds will be disbursed after all Program requirements (including minimum term GPA) have been met.

If student does not receive any Financial Aid (PELL, Grants, Programs, Loans, etc.) their tuition, fees, and books will be covered by the Program. If they do not meet all program requirements the student will owe a balance for the current term, and will be unable to register for the following term until the financial balance has been paid to the Valencia College Business Office.

## APPLICATION INFORMATION

- Pay your Valencia College application fee at least three weeks before the Bridges to Success application deadline.
- Complete all sections of the Bridges to Success Achievers Summer Program Application. Type "N/A" if the information does not apply to you.
- Have someone proofread your essay before submitting it with your application, and make the necessary corrections. Essay should be submitted in Times New Roman, 12-point font, double-spaced.
- You are required to submit an official/sealed high school transcript to the BTS office before the application deadline.
- **The campus you select on your application is the location you will attend during the Summer Program. Visit the Valencia College campuses' website to be sure you are selecting the correct campus location.**
- Your recommendation letters should be completed by someone who knows you well and can provide detailed information about your success and accomplishments in life. You will need their e-mail address.
- Submit all your community service hours to your school counselor well in advance, and be sure they are recorded on your sealed/unofficial transcript that you submit to the Office of Bridges to Success.

## APPLICATION INFORMATION (CONT'D)

- Check the [community partnership organizations](#) list on the Bridges to Success website to determine if you participate with any of the groups/organizations listed.
- Having siblings currently in the Program or applying does not guarantee admission into the Bridges to Success Program.
- Application decisions are generally finalized between March and April, and you will be notified then if you are accepted into the Program **via your Atlas email address only**. Notifications will not be sent to your personal e-mail account.
- Applications should be submitted by 6:00PM on the application deadline.
- All requests for application status should be made via e-mail to [bridgestosuccess@valenciacollege.edu](mailto:bridgestosuccess@valenciacollege.edu) using your Valencia ATLAS e-mail account. Include your Valencia ID in all e-mails sent to the Bridges to Success office.

## SUBMISSION OF FINANCIAL AID/FLORIDA RESIDENCY DOCUMENTATION

- You are **required** to complete the FAFSA (Summer Aid Year) and the FAFSA (Fall Aid Year).
- If you are selected for Financial Aid verification, this information must be submitted and processed **before** the BTS Program deadline (see the [BTS Calendar](#) for details) for Program eligibility. Verification of Financial Aid information can take several weeks to process. Check your ATLAS Account frequently for updates.
- To qualify for the Bridges to Success Program, you must be a Florida resident. Please visit [Valencia College Admissions and Records](#) to review Florida Residency requirements and processing time. Florida Residency applications should be submitted several weeks BEFORE the BTS Program deadline. BTS is unable to offer exceptions to the college deadline date.
- The BTS Office does not accept or process Financial Aid Documents. Students are encouraged to visit the Answer Center and submit documents. It is highly recommended that students take a picture or make copies of information being submitted in the event it is not processed or lost. When visiting the Answer Center bring pen/paper to take notes and record the name of the person who assisted you.

## ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

- **Do not** wait to take PERT assessment sections (reading, writing, math) on the application deadline date, or your scores will not be on file with Valencia College. No specific score is needed. PERT is not a pass/fail assessment. If you have taken the PERT in the past two years, email your name, VID number, date of birth, and the high school where you took the PERT to [Assessment Services](#) so they can retrieve your scores. It is your responsibility to ensure your scores are uploaded to your Atlas account by the deadline date.
- Bridges to Success requires that you submit all sections of the PERT score, or you can submit your *college-level* ACT/SAT scores. If scores are not college-level, you will be required to take the PERT. Visit the [Assessment Services Website](#) to learn how to submit your ACT/SAT scores. **It takes approximately 5 weeks for Valencia College to receive and process your scores.**
- For students whose second language is English, you will need to [take the LOEP](#) and score at Level 7 to participate in the Bridges Summer Program.

## ACCEPTANCE FORM

Accepted students will receive a Letter of Acceptance and instructions on completing the acceptance form via your Atlas email account. The Acceptance Form is submitted electronically by the student, and parent if the student is under 18 years of age. Failure to submit this form by the deadline is an automatic disqualification from further consideration for the summer Program. The form must be completed online and can be found on the BTS website: [www.valenciacollege.edu/bts](http://www.valenciacollege.edu/bts).

## RESCINDING BRIDGES PROGRAM

Any student who decides to rescind the Bridges to Success Achievers Program, and no longer attend Valencia College, is solely responsible for removing themselves from their registered courses, and repaying the program funds that BTS has spent on their behalf. Per the BTS Program Rescind Policy, students who are currently enrolled and awarded the BTS Program understand that their commitment to the Program and Program funding is for 2-3 years (31 credit hours per academic year towards an AA/AS degree). Students are required to remain in the program while working to earn their AA or AS degree for transfer to another college/university of their choice or to enter the work force. Exceptions to this policy include military service, documented medical hardship, court order, program requirements such as engineering, etc.

## PROGRAM PROCEDURE CHECKLIST

Students selected to participate in the Summer Program will receive a Procedure Check List which identifies procedures that newly selected **Bridges to Success Achievers Summer Program** students must complete and the corresponding deadlines.

The procedures are to:

1. Submit an official high school transcript by posted deadline
2. Complete online Acceptance Form (Dynamic Form)
3. Attend Prep Seminars leading up to the start of the Summer Program
4. Attend the Required Bridges Orientation and One-on-One Advisement Session
5. Parent or Guardian must attend the **Required Parent Orientation**

## BTS STUDENT SUCCESS SKILLSHOPS

Students will be **required** to complete skillshops during the Summer Program. These skillshops are co-curricular activities that will be centered on professional and personal development for the incoming freshman cohort. The skillshop schedule will be listed on the BTS website.

## PREP SEMINARS & BRIDGES NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION

Upon acceptance in the Bridges to Success Program, BTS Advisors will be offering prep seminars. These events are designed to provide an overview into the Bridges to SuccessAchievers Summer Program. The advisors will outline summer requirements, program expectations, and strategies for success as students transition from high school into this accelerated program. Attendance is required. Students who do not attend these prep seminars will be removed from the program and replaced with someone from the wait-list. NO EXCEPTIONS.

**Bridges to Success Program** first-year students are required to participate in the Bridges New Student Orientation (NSO) before final acceptance into the program. The Bridges NSO includes information on educational planning, college resources, and group advising. Accepted students will receive notification of Bridges NSO via Atlas email, and it will be posted on the Bridges to SuccessWebsite. Students who do not attend orientation will be removed from the program and replaced with someone from the wait-list. NO EXCEPTIONS.

## **BRIDGES TO SUCCESS RISK ASSESSMENT**

BTS offers a wide range of support for students and we are committed to providing services designed to benefit our students positively. Freshmen participating in the Bridges to Success Achievers Summer Program will be required to complete a risk assessment. This assessment will help us identify potential issues students may have which may need addressing while participating in the Program. If it is determined a student needs attention that is more specialized, BTS will provide resources and referral information. Email notification is sent IF there is need to schedule an appointment. Students are NOT to miss class for this appointment. Students are expected to check their ATLAS email daily. Students who fail to attend the Risk Assessment meeting are subject to have their BTS Program funds removed.

## **BRIDGES TO SUCCESS NEW STUDENT PARENT ORIENTATION**

The Bridges to Success Achievers Summer Program Orientation is **REQUIRED** for parents/guardians to attend. The orientation is designed to acquaint parents/guardians with the **Bridges to Success Program**. This orientation will facilitate a partnership and bond between Valencia College, Office of Bridges to Success, Students, and Parents. For parents whose first language is not English we will try to accommodate any translation service requests that are needed. Students must include this information in the special accommodations section on their acceptance form.

Parents will learn:

1. The history of the BTS Program.
2. The expenses covered by the program.
3. Expectations of a BTS program student.
4. Requirements for successful completion of the BTS Program.
5. The resources and services provided by the program.
6. Review of the learning support center on each campus.
7. Tips to help BTS students succeed in the program.



## **SUMMER RECOGNITION CELEBRATION**

The **Bridges to Success Program** hosts an end of the term recognition ceremony to recognize the Bridges to Success students who have successfully completed the summer program. Attendance is **REQUIRED** for all Bridges students.

### ANY QUESTIONS?

Please reach out to the Bridges to Success office:

[valenciacollege.edu/students/bridges-to-success](http://valenciacollege.edu/students/bridges-to-success)

Phone: 407-582-1395

### Locations

#### *East Campus*

Bldg 5, Rm 230

Monday to Friday: 8am to 2pm

#### *Osceola Campus*

Bldg 3, Rm 104

Monday to Friday: 9am to 5pm

#### *West Campus*

SSB, Rm 173



