

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Updated: 8/17/2023

1. WHAT IS THE BRIDGES TO SUCCESS (BTS) PROGRAM, AND WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS TO APPLY?

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

Program Eligibility Requirements:

- Graduate of an Orange or Osceola County high school
- Have a minimum 2.75 unweighted academic GPA
- Must be a first-generation college student
- Complete all the minimum academic courses required by the state of Florida
- Qualify for Pell Grant as determined by the FAFSA
- Meet Florida residency requirements
- Qualify for Free or Reduced Lunch
- Must have completed PERT Assessment (Reading, Writing, Math)

2. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE BRIDGES SUMMER PROGRAM AND THE BRIDGES ACHIEVERS PROGRAM?

The Summer Program is designed to provide incoming first-year students with a positive foundation for transitioning from high school to college. Bridges students receive individualized attention from Valencia College faculty and staff. These individuals are dedicated to assisting students in making a successful transitioning from high school to college. Students will develop leadership skills through community service and co-curricular activities. Students will become Bridges to Success Achievers in the Fall after completing the Bridges to Success Summer Program. Bridges Achievers Scholars receive a renewable full-tuition and book stipend that will be coordinated with Financial Aid Services to cover the full cost of attending Valencia College.



3. WHEN MAY I START APPLYING TO THE PROGRAM, AND WHAT IS THE DEADLINE?

The Bridges to Success admission application opens each year in September. You may apply upon acceptance to Valencia College. You will need your Valencia ID number and all necessary documentation required for application completion. The application deadlines are on the Bridges to the Success website calendar.

4. IS IT OKAY IF I SUBMIT A REGULAR RECOMMENDATION LETTER INSTEAD OF THE BRIDGES TO SUCCESS PROGRAM RECOMMENDATION FORM WITH MY APPLICATION?

No. The Bridges to Success Program recommendation form must be completed online by a school counselor, teacher, coach, or community member. You will need the email address of each recommender to provide a link to complete the form.

5. I TOOK THE PERT IN HIGH SCHOOL; DO I NEED TO TAKE IT AGAIN?

If you have taken the PERT in high school within the last two years, you are not required to retake it. However, you must have **all three sections** of the PERT (reading, writing and math) submitted to Testing and Assessment before your Bridges to Success program application is submitted. Scores are **NOT** automatically sent to Valencia College. We recommend you use this link to view the hours and times to schedule an appointment to take the PERT if needed:

<https://valenciacollege.edu/students/assessments/>

If you have recently taken the PERT exam at your high school and need your scores pulled from the PERT repository, please use this link to request that your PERT scores be added to your Valencia College record:

<https://valenciacollege.edu/students/assessments/requesting-scores.php#pert>

Follow the instructions to complete the PERT Score Retrieval Form and any non-expired PERT scores will be added to your student account. If you need assistance regarding the PERT, reach out to Testing and Assessment whose contact information can be found in the links above.

6. I COMPLETED EVERYTHING ON THE BRIDGES TO SUCCESS PROGRAM APPLICATION CHECKLIST EXCEPT SUBMITTING THE HIGH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPT. CAN I STILL SUBMIT MY APPLICATION?

The Bridges to Success Program application must be submitted with all items completed on the checklist. Deliver a sealed unofficial academic transcript to the BTS office before the application deadline in January or have your Valencia College coach upload your transcript to your application. The coaches are provided instructions to upload your transcript.

7. ARE THERE ANY FEES ASSOCIATED WITH THE BRIDGES TO SUCCESS PROGRAM?

There is no fee to apply to the Bridges to Success Program, however, Valencia College has a \$35.00 application fee. BTS applicants must first apply and be accepted to Valencia College before applying to BTS. Additionally, there may be other fees associated with Assessment services. You may contact the Valencia College Assessment Center for more information.

8. AM I ELIGIBLE TO APPLY IF I HAVE EARNED ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) OR DUAL ENROLLMENT (DE) CREDITS?

Yes, if you have earned 6 college AP or DE credits or less you can apply. This includes any credits earned in existing classes. Applicants who wish to participate in an accelerated academic model are encouraged to apply to the Seneff Honors Program: valenciacollege.edu/honors or contact **407-582-3835**

9. DOES BRIDGES TO SUCCESS OFFER GUIDANCE OR INFORMATION BEFORE I APPLY?

Yes, Your school counselor should have information about our program, BTS will hold recruitment sessions at some high schools. Please We encourage you to contact our main office at 407-582-1395 for any questions not answered in this flyer or you may visit our website at valenciacollege.edu/bts

10. IF ACCEPTED INTO THE BRIDGES PROGRAM, AM I REQUIRED TO BEGIN COLLEGE IN THE SUMMER?

Yes, students accepted into the program must enroll during the summer (six weeks). Refer to the Valencia College Academic Calendar for Summer Term B start and end dates. Eligibility for the Bridges to Success Achievers Program requires successful completion of the Summer Program.



11. HOW WILL I KNOW IF I HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED INTO THE BRIDGES TO SUCCESS PROGRAM?

Once you have submitted a completed application before the deadline, you will be notified of a decision via Valencia College ATLAS email in March. It is important that you check your ATLAS email daily, as all correspondences from BTS and Valencia College are sent to your ATLAS email. Emails are not sent to personal accounts (i.e., Gmail, Yahoo, Hotmail, etc.)

12. AM I ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE THE BTS AWARD IF I ALSO HAVE THE BRIGHT FUTURES SCHOLARSHIP?

Yes, students may be offered the Bridges to Success award along with Bright Futures. We encourage recipients of both to follow up with Bright Futures to ensure they meet their requirements.

13. WILL I NEED TO ATTEND BOTH THE BRIDGES TO SUCCESS PROGRAM ORIENTATION AND THE VALENCIA COLLEGE ORIENTATION?

Students are required to attend an in-person Bridges to Success New Student Orientation. However, students must also complete the online Valencia College Orientation.

14. WHAT IS THE BRIDGES TO SUCCESS PROGRAM HANDBOOK, AND WHY DO I NEED TO READ IT?

The **BTS Handbook** outlines the policies and expectations of the program. Students are required to read the handbook in its entirety and sign and complete a digital Handbook Agreement confirming they have read and understand the program information and expectations. This information will help you remain successful in the program. The BTS handbook can be found on the Bridges website valenciacollege.edu/bts

15. WILL I BE REQUIRED TO DO ANY COMMUNITY SERVICE AS A BTS PARTICIPANT?

Yes, one of the requirements of the program is to complete 30 hours of community service per term (Fall and Spring) from the approved list of community locations listed on our website. Community service hours are NOT required during the summer term.

16. CAN MY COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS FROM HIGH SCHOOL ROLL OVER TO FULFILL MY BTS REQUIREMENTS?

No, the hours you complete must coincide with the term you are attending Valencia College.

17. WHAT ARE 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.



BTS collaborates with the college to provide information about skillshops. These skillshops are designed to motivate students and provide practical advice about managing college life. The skillshops are free and are offered at convenient times and locations collegewide, and they are filled with information that is useful for the student. Skillshops aid in personal growth and development. Students should take full advantage of these opportunities to expand their knowledge base while working towards earning their college degree. Further information can be found on the Valencia College Website.

All BTS students are required to complete a certain number of skillshops each semester.



18. WILL MY BRIDGES TO SUCCESS PROGRAM FUNDS BE AVAILABLE AS A REFUND?

BTS only covers the exact cost of tuition up to 31 credits per academic year. If you receive the PELL grant you will receive a refund. The program award is paid out at the end of the semester after all Bridges requirements have been met.

19. WILL I BE ABLE TO USE MY BRIDGES BOOK STIPEND TO PURCHASE OTHER SUPPLIES?

- BTS covers the cost of books for the initial Summer, Fall and Spring terms.
- If a student reaches the maximum allotment, they will be responsible for covering any balance.
- Once books are charged, the charge will register in your ATLAS account.
- Students may not keep any unused funds.
- The Book Stipend can ONLY be used to purchase books, course materials, and supplies listed on the course syllabus.
- Food, clothing, and electronics (headphones, printers, speakers, cell phone accessories) are STRICTLY Prohibited. Students who violate this policy are subject to repayment of charges or moved to not-awarded status for the semester.

20. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT THAT I ATTEND A REQUIRED BRIDGES PROGRAM EVENT?

Any event with required attendance has an objective geared toward the continued success of the student with the program and the College.

21. DO I NEED TO MEET WITH AN ACADEMIC ADVISOR BEFORE I REGISTER FOR CLASSES EACH TERM?

Students are required to meet with their BTS program academic advisor in their first Summer term to outline their educational advising plan. The advisor will register the students in classes for the first Summer and Fall terms. Students are always encouraged to meet with their advisors to ensure they are on track with completing the courses in their Education Plan. In addition, students may be required to meet with their advisors more frequently on a case-by-case basis depending on the needs of the student.

22. ARE THERE ANY REQUIRED COURSES I MUST TAKE AS A BTS PARTICIPANT?

The Bridges to Success program will require you to take the following Student Life Skills (SLS) courses: SLS 1122, and SLS 1202. Students will receive college credits for these courses as part of their educational plan. Students may also be required to enroll in developmental Math and/or English and Writing courses based on their PERT scores.

23. WHAT MAJORS/AREAS OF STUDY WILL THE PROGRAM AWARD COVER?

The program award covers most majors and degrees except for technical certificates. Please see the Valencia College Future Student tab for additional information:
net1.valenciacollege.edu/future-students/programs

24. WILL I STILL RECEIVE THE PROGRAM AWARD IF MY FINANCIAL AID IS SUSPENDED?

Payment of the BTS funds is contingent on whether a student qualifies for financial aid. If a student fails to maintain federal requirements for financial aid, BTS cannot cover tuition, fees or books.

25. ARE THERE ANY SPONSORED COLLEGE TOURS OR INFORMATION SESSIONS AVAILABLE FOR ME TO ATTEND?

The Bridges to Success program periodically sponsors college tours to universities throughout Florida. To provide adequate time for students to coordinate their schedules, information about tours will be emailed several months before the event. Students interested should contact their advisor for the details. Additionally, we encourage students to reach out to their college preferences to request information.

26. AS A BRIDGES TO SUCCESS PROGRAM PARTICIPANT, WILL I RECEIVE GUARANTEED ADMISSION TO THE FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION OF MY CHOICE?

No, the Bridges to Success program does not guarantee acceptance to other institutions. However, Valencia College has a DirectConnect with the University of Central Florida that provides collaborative advising to ensure a smooth transition to the university.

27. CAN A BRIDGES TO SUCCESS PROGRAM PARTICIPANT TAKE PART IN OTHER ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS?

The Bridges to Success program encourages students to fully engage in the college experience including, but not limited to, student activities, clubs and organizations. However, students interested in taking advantage of other awards or scholarships should check with their advisor for any applicable restrictions.

