



**Valencia College** Bridges to Success

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What is the Bridges to Success Summer Program, and what are the requirements to apply?

The Office of Bridges to Success (BTS) is responsible for working with diverse populations to assist with the post-secondary transition from application to enrollment and graduation; as well as assist the college in creating an educational environment that supports the success of these students.

In addition, BTS is committed to helping all students become successful in achieving their educational and career goals. We know that the *Road to Success* can be challenging as students balance their academic course work, responsibilities and personal life.

An important element in a student's success at Valencia is the connection with people and services that can assist them when they need it. BTS works within the college to provide services and programs of interest and benefit to our diverse student population.

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.

To be considered for the Bridges scholarship you must meet the following criteria:

- Student must be a resident of Orange or Osceola County
- Student must be a graduating senior (must graduate with a standard high school diploma, or GED, and be eligible to receive financial aid) with a minimum GPA of 2.75
- Student must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and have demonstrated financial need
- Student must take the Postsecondary Education Readiness Test (PERT) or have ACT/SAT Scores that indicate college readiness
- Submit all documents together in a complete packet. (Note: Incomplete packets will not be considered)

### 2. What is the difference between the Bridges Summer Program and the Bridges Achievers Scholarship?

The Bridges to Success Summer Program provides you with an opportunity to begin your college-level work in the summer prior to full-time degree seeking enrollment at Valencia College in the fall. If you are selected for the program you will register and attend courses for approximately six weeks between June and August.

Upon successful completion of the Bridges to Success Summer Program, you will become a Bridges to Success Achievers Scholar in the fall. Bridges Achievers Scholars receive a renewable in-state full-tuition scholarship and book stipend that will be coordinated with financial aid to cover up to the full cost of attending Valencia College.

**3. When may I start applying to the program, and what is the deadline?**

The application is released on the Bridges website in September of each year. You may start applying once you have all the documentation that the application requires. The deadline to apply is also indicated once the application goes live, and is typically in January.

**4. Is it okay if I submit a regular recommendation letter instead of the Bridges recommendation form with my Bridges application?**

The Bridges recommendation form must be completed online by a school counselor, coach, or community member and is the only acceptable form for recommendation. You will need the email address of the recommender in order to provide the link to complete the form.

**5. I took the PERT in high school; do I have to take it again?**

If you have already taken the PERT in high school you do not have to retake it again however, you must have all three sections of the PERT (writing, reading, and math) submitted to the Assessment Center before your Bridges application is submitted. Scores are NOT automatically sent to Valencia College. They must be taken to the Assessment Center so they are entered into the system and your academic record for the college. You are placed into classes based on the assessment scores we have on file with the college.

**6. I completed everything on the Bridges application checklist except submitting the high school transcript. Can I still turn it in my application?**

The Bridges application must be submitted with all items completed on the checklist. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.

**7. Are there any fees associated with the Bridges scholarship?**

There is no fee to apply for the Bridges scholarship. However, there is an application fee to apply for enrollment at Valencia (\$35.00). Additionally, there may be other fees associated with assessment. You can contact College Board or Valencia's Assessment Center for more information.

**8. Can I use a waiver to pay for the Valencia Application fee?**

Unfortunately, Valencia does not accept waivers for application fees.

**Note:** Before you can submit your Bridges application, you must first be accepted to Valencia College.

**9. Am I eligible to apply if I have earned Advanced Placement (AP) or Dual Enrollment (DE) credit?**

Yes, if you have earned **LESS than six (6) credit hours of AP or DE credits**. Bridges encourages students who have earned college credit to apply for the Seneff Honors Program.

**10. Is there a preliminary orientation or information session about Bridges I can attend prior to applying?**

Aside from select high school presentations which are conducted (September – December) At this time, Bridges does not offer individual orientation sessions for prospective students. For any questions specific to the program or applying, we encourage you to contact our main office at 407-582-1395, or visit our website at [www.valenciacollege.edu/bts](http://www.valenciacollege.edu/bts).

**11. If accepted into Bridges, would I have to begin in the summer, or can I start in the fall term?**

Students accepted into Bridges **must** begin with the Bridges Summer Program (See Valencia College Academic Calendar for Term B dates). Successful completion of the Summer Program will determine if a student is eligible to proceed into the Bridges Achievers Scholarship in the fall.

**12. How will I know if I have been accepted into the program?**

Once you have submitted an application by 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- all correspondence from the Bridges department and Valencia College is sent there. Emails are not sent to your personal email accounts (i.e., Yahoo, Gmail, Hotmail, etc.)

**13. Am I eligible to receive Bridges scholarship if I also have the Bright Futures scholarship?**

At this time, students may be awarded Bridges along with Bright Futures. Students are always encouraged to follow up with Bright Futures directly to ensure they meet their requirements.

**14. Will I have to attend both the Bridges New Student Orientation and Valencia Orientations?**

The Bridges New Student Orientation is mandatory to attend. This orientation covers all of your Bridges requirements, and will also cover many policies and procedures of Valencia College. Attendance at a regular Valencia orientation is optional.

**15. What is the Bridges Handbook, and why do I need to read it?**

The Bridges Handbook outlines the policies and procedures of your Bridges scholarship. It is mandatory that you review the handbook in its entirety, sign, and return the Handbook Agreement. Knowledge of the Bridges policies will help you remain successful in the program.

The Bridges Handbook can be found on the Bridges website:

<http://valenciacollege.edu/bridges/documents/2018-19-Bridges-Handbook.pdf>

**16. Will I be required to do any community service as a Bridges student?**

One of the requirements to maintain your Bridges scholarship is to complete 30 hours of community service per term (Fall and Spring) from the approved list of community service providers (See BTS Website). Community service hours are NOT completed during summer term.

**17. Can my community service hours from high school roll over to fulfill my Bridges requirements?**

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

**18. What are skill shops?**

Valencia offers a wide array of skill shops for students to learn or enhance skills necessary to succeed in college and their daily lives. In total, students must complete four (4) skill shops per term. A complete listing of skill shops offered at Valencia will be available in the Bridges office at the beginning of each term.

**19. Will my Bridges scholarship funds be available as a refund?**

Bridges will only cover the exact cost of tuition up to 31 credits per academic year, and a \$300 (Fall/Spring Terms) book stipend. The stipend can only be used in the Valencia College Bookstore. You **only receive a refund if you qualify for PELL grant**. The scholarship is awarded at the end of the semester after you have met all BTS scholarship requirements.

**20. Will I be able to use my Bridges book money to purchase other things?**

No, the Bridges book stipend functions as a store credit and is redeemed only at the Valencia Campus Bookstore. If you need additional resources for your class and there are funds left on your account, you will have to call BTS Management for Pre-approval.

**21. Why is it important that I attend a REQUIRED Bridges event?**

Any event that is required for Bridges to Success has objectives geared toward continuing each student's success not only with the program, but with the college as well.

**22. Do I need to meet with an academic advisor before I register for classes each term?**

Students are required to meet with their academic advisor in their first summer term to outline their advising plan. Following this meeting, students will only be required to meet with their advisor a minimum of once every spring term. However, students are always encouraged to meet with their advisors if unsure if they are on track with completing the courses in their Education Plan. In addition, students may be required to meet with their advisor more frequently on a case-by-case basis depending on the student's needs.

**23. Are there any required courses I must take as a Bridges student?**

Bridges will require students to take the following Student Life Skills (SLS) courses: SLS 1122, and SLS 1201. Students will receive college credit for these courses.

**24. What majors/areas of study will Bridges funds cover?**

Bridges covers most majors and degrees except technical certificates. Please see future student tab for additional information <http://net1.valenciacollege.edu/future-students/programs/>

**25. Will I still receive Bridges if my financial aid has been suspended?**

The payment of Bridges funds hinges on whether a student can qualify for financial aid. If the student fails to maintain federal requirements for financial aid then Bridges to Success will be unable to cover tuition/fees/or books.

**26. Are there any sponsored college tours or information sessions available for me to attend?**

Bridges will periodically sponsor tours to various colleges throughout Florida. Information about these tours will be circulated via email months prior to the trip date in order to give students adequate time to coordinate their schedule to attend. Students are also encouraged to reach out to the schools of their choice to receive information on applying and the transfer process.

**27. As a Bridges student, will I receive guaranteed admission to the four-year institution of my choice?**

Bridges does not guarantee acceptance to other institutions. However, Valencia has a direct connect program with the University of Central Florida. Students interested are encouraged to contact the Direct Connect UCF department for more information. Students are responsible for contacting the schools of their choice to find out the requirements needed to be considered for admission.

**28. Can a Bridges student take part in other activities and programs?**

Bridges encourages their students to fully engage in the college experience including; student activities, clubs, organizations, etc. However, should a student wish to take advantage of other scholarship opportunities, they should check with their campus advisor regarding any restrictions.