



# Ask Benji

Your digital FAFSA assistant.

# Ask Benji Team



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# Agenda

- Tell us if you are a student or parent in the chat
- What Should I know?
- What is FAFSA?
- What Can I do Now?
- Student & Parent Resources!

# What should I know

*Juniors & Families*



# College & Postsecondary Plans

- **College:** Means Community College, Vocational school, Trade & Apprenticeships programs, and Universities
- **Postsecondary:** Term to refer to student plans after high school.

## You might hear, "What are your postsecondary plans?"

- Arizona needs more students to look at continuing education after high school
- Certificates, trade/vocational programs in addition to the 2-year and 4-year degree programs.



# Postsecondary Options

**Community College:** Two-year associate degrees, trade programs, and certificates are offered. The Maricopa Community College system is introducing four-year bachelor's degree programs.

**Universities:** For private and state universities, the costs will differ. Also, Universities typically where you will find 4-year programs.

**Trade/Vocational School:** Specialized training that gives the student a pathway to a career or field of work. Programs vary in length depending on the field and earning potential.

Examples of professions include electricians, dental hygienists, veterinary technicians, and plumbers. *Check out your local Community College for vocational programs!*

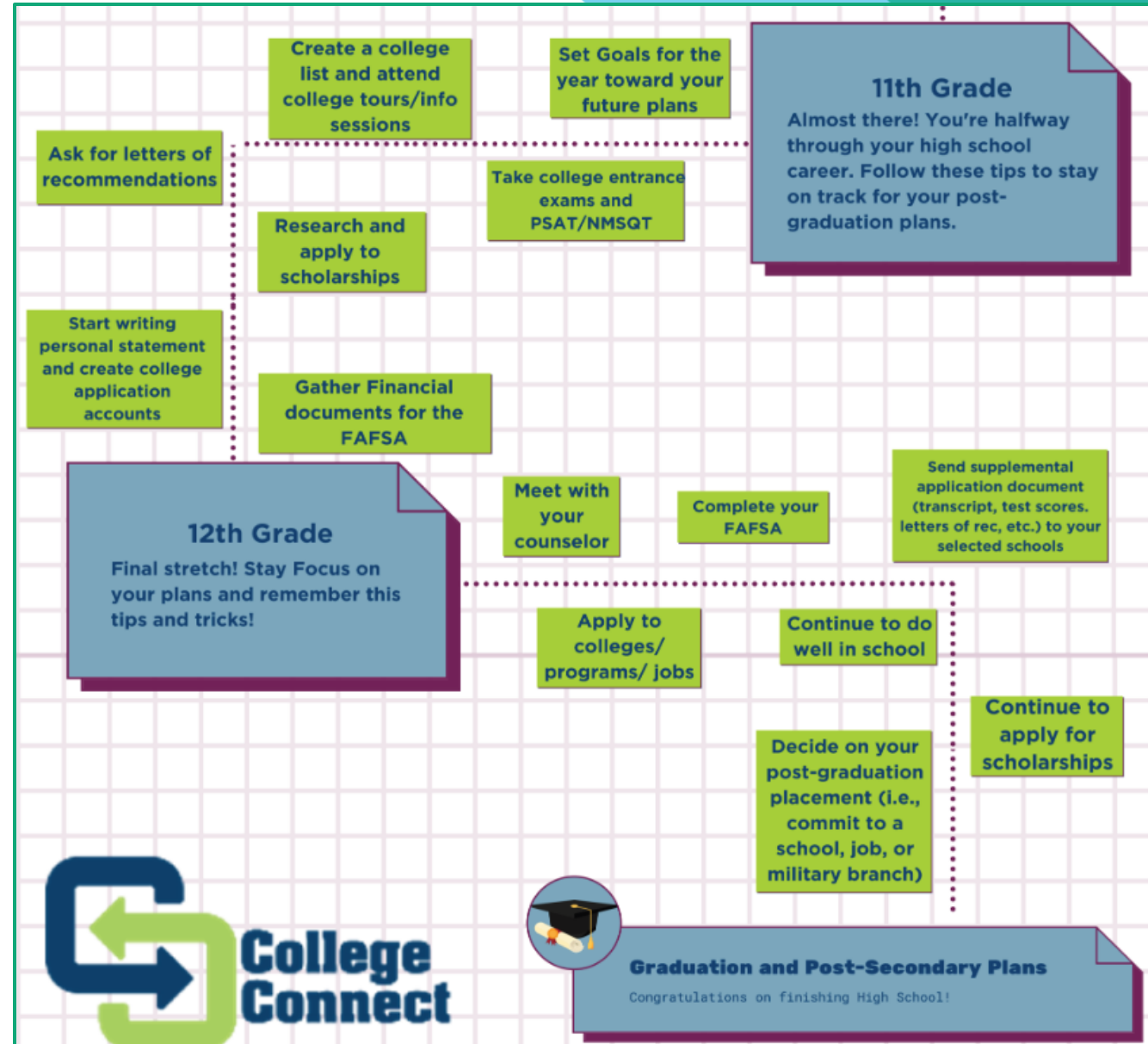
**Military:** The military pathway can work by enlisting right out of high school or completing a bachelor's degree. Pursuing college or an ROTC college program is valuable because it allows you to join the military as a commissioned officer (higher rank and pay). Compare benefits and engage with them like you would a college.



# General Timeline

Reminder: Not all students are the same

- Junior Grades
  - Schools will look at these grades since the **senior year grades** will be in progress...
- Summer & Fall 2024 is a good time to visit schools or reach out to **Admission counselors**
  - Fall 2024 **priority deadlines** will be announced for **college applications**
  - **Complete FAFSA Form**
- Apply to **scholarships** early! You can start now.



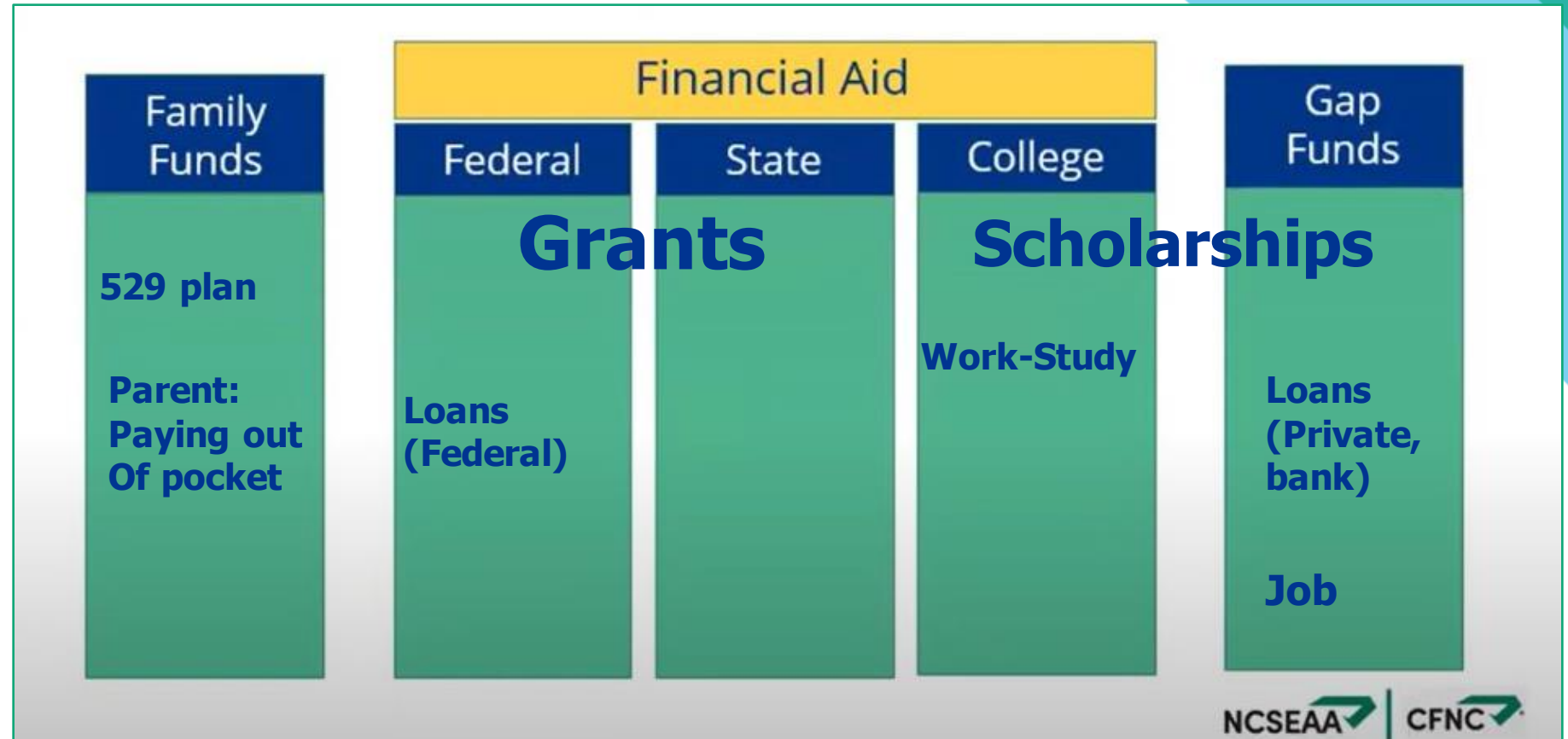


What is  
Financial  
Aid?



# Three Different Funding Categories

- Here are some examples of different ways students and families can pay for school.
- Not all students will have family funds, and that is why grants and scholarships can help!



# Financial Aid Types

- **Scholarships:** A scholarship is gift aid and can be awarded based on criteria like academic performance, talents, community involvement and more!
- **Grants:** A grant or voucher is a form of financial aid that doesn't have to be repaid unless you withdraw from your school or program.
- **Work-Study:** The Federal Work-study program allows you to earn money to pay for school by working part-time at your college.
  - How: Students can look for jobs via the school job board or talk with the College Advisor or admission Counselor about navigating the process.
- **Loans:** A loan is money you borrow for college/career school that you'll pay back w/ interest. There are federal and private types. Federal loans tend to have lower interest rates & better payment terms than private ones.

**The FAFSA is a form that Senior students are encouraged to complete to help with their postsecondary/college plans.**

# Federal Aid Eligibility & Materials

## Complete the FAFSA Form

- Must be a U.S. Citizen or *eligible* non-citizen
  - Valid Social Security Number
  - Your A-Number (if you're not a U.S. citizen)
- Federal income tax returns, W-2s & other records of money earned
  - Two years back, for example, current seniors only needed documents from 2022 for this year's application FAFSA *2024-25*
- Students need an FSA ID
  - And their parent will need an FSA ID

# City, State, and Federal Financial Aid

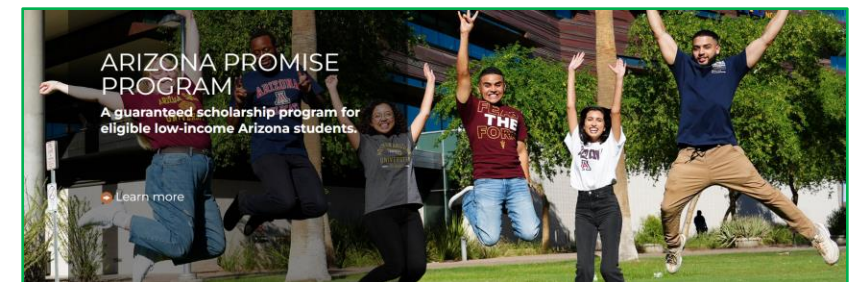
## Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program

- The Arizona Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program is a federally-funded, state-administered program that provides financial, academic, and student support for young people who are or have been in foster care and are enrolled in qualified colleges, universities, or vocational education programs.



## Arizona Promise Grant

- [The Arizona Promise Grant](#) is need-based aid and requires the FAFSA form. It helps funding with our Tri-U state universities (ASU, UArizona, NAU) only. The state grant does have a deadline every year.



# Community College Promise Programs

- There are college-specific promise programs for students seeking a community college program.
- They are not in every city or CC but are growing in number.
- **Reminder:** Students can find certificate and trade programs at your local CC.
  - **Offerings of programs vary**
- Here is what senior students can access right now.



## Maricopa Promise Programs

### MCCCD Promise Programs

Program	Participating Colleges	Covered Costs
Coronado Promise	Maricopa Community Colleges	TBD
Mesa College Promise	Mesa Community College	Last Dollar Tuition & Fees \$250 stipend/semester for other costs
PeoriaAZ Promise	Glendale Community College	Last Dollar Tuition & Fees
Phoenix Promise	Maricopa Community Colleges	Last Dollar Tuition & Fees \$965 stipend/semester for other costs
Queen Creek Promise	Chandler-Gilbert Community College	Last Dollar Tuition & Fees \$500 stipend for other costs

\* The Coronado Promise covers \$5,000 for Community College tuition and fees.

# Myth Busters of the FAFSA

- **FAFSA is just for loans.**
  - No. The FAFSA can help secure need-based and merit-based aid at your college. Students can also opt not to take loans and pursue scholarships and grant aid.
- **My parents don't have to help me with the FAFSA form since I will pay for it myself.**
  - No. Parents need to assist students in completing the FAFSA for other financial aid options besides loans. **Students will need parent(s) help with the FAFSA.**
- **If my parents help me with my FAFSA form, they will be responsible for my student loans.**
  - **No. That is why you have your own FSA ID** for your financial aid account. Parent(s) are not responsible for any student loan unless they do a parent plus loan or if they have their educational loans.
- **I can't use my FAFSA form for a trade or vocational program.**
  - No, you can if the school is federal aid eligible. Look at your community college, and don't snooze on them.
- **I've done it for another child, and they got nothing. Why try again?**
  - You never know what financial aid a college may offer a student until they apply. Colleges use the FAFSA to calculate other aid (scholarships, work-study, etc.).



What Can I  
Do Now?



# Find your career interests

Have you thought about what you want to do after high school?

Will what you want to do require an associate's, bachelor's, professional certification, or other advanced degrees?

Take part in your school's career planning platform: AzCIS  
Or use Arizona's publicly available platform, MyFutureAZ

Try it below:



# Make a plan to pay for college

Start the conversation about how you are going to pay for college.

- Parent/student work income
- Savings, 529 account, etc.
- Grants/scholarships/loans

You can visit the US Dept of Ed's Net Price Calculator to explore the cost for your school.

- Compare in-state school vs. out-of-state costs
- Living on campus or off campus (home)

Ways to save on tuition and time your senior year:

- Take college prep courses
  - Examples: Dual enrollment, AP, and/or IB
- Starting at a Community College and transferring to a University



College Scorecard  
Sample

# Start the scholarship search

Scholarship Matrix									
	Scholarship Name	Deadline Date	Award Amount	Notes/Requirements	Website	Applied? Y/N	Awarded? Y/N	Category (1,2, or 3?)	
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									

**Scholarships should always be free to apply.**

- No, don't wait until after you graduate to apply for scholarships
- There are need-based, merit-based, and background-specific scholarship
  - Example: Tall people scholarship, Electricians, heritage-based, first responders, or military scholarships.
- You can find scholarships at your intended "college" or find private scholarship
- Scholarship applications will have varying deadlines; track them
- You can apply to as many scholarships as you can find and work with your goals

**Scholarship Matrix  
here:**





# EFA Scholarships



## Education Forward Arizona Scholarship

### ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- ★ HAVE A 3.0 GPA
- ★ LIVE IN ARIZONA
- ★ BE PELL GRANT ELIGIBLE
- ★ BE A GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR
- ★ BE ACCEPTED TO AN ARIZONA COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY
- ★ BE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN ONE OF THE ARIZONA COLLEGE ACCESS NETWORK (AZCAN) MEMBER COLLEGE ACCESS PROGRAMS OR HIGH SCHOOLS.
- ★ UNDOCUMENTED APPLICANTS MUST BE ELIGIBLE FOR IN-STATE TUITION PER PROP 308

### WHAT IS THE EDUCATION FORWARD ARIZONA SCHOLARSHIP?

Each year, Education Forward Arizona provides current Arizona high school seniors with a private scholarship of up to \$6,000 per year as well as mentoring and success services that include:

- Quarterly coaching/mentoring from a Success Adviser
- Peer networking sessions, trainings and workshops
- Links to on-campus resource centers
- Internships and career support

The application deadline is April 1st, 2024 by midnight



[educationforwardarizona.org](https://educationforwardarizona.org)



Nicole Butler  
Navajo Nation Tribal Member  
and Scholarship Recipient

## NATIVE AMERICAN SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

2024



### ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Be an enrolled member of one of the following:
  - Ak-Chin Indian Community
  - Gila River Indian Community
  - Hopi Tribe
  - Hualapai Tribe
  - Navajo Nation
  - Pascua Yaqui Tribe
  - Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community
  - San Carlos Apache Tribe
  - Tohono O'odham Nation
  - Tonto Apache Tribe
  - White Mountain Apache Tribe
  - Yavapai Prescott Indian Tribe
  - Yavapai-Apache Nation
  - Zuni Pueblo
- Be accepted to a masters degree program (2 year program).
- Be enrolled in full time status (as deemed by your institution).
- Be in good standing with NASP scholarship program.
- By the application deadline be enrolled as a full-time student at a university or tribal college by the start of the Fall 2024 semester.

**APPLY NOW!**

Application window:  
February 1-May 1, 2024

PLEASE CONTACT YOUR SUCCESS ADVISER  
FOR ANY SCHOLARSHIP QUESTIONS



Scan QR code to  
access application

ASK BENJI CHATBOT



Student &  
Parent  
Resources!



# Student Opportunities

**Earn to Learn** is a matched-savings scholarship program for students seeking postsecondary education (college, trade school, or credential programs).

Students apply to be reviewed and admitted to the program. If accepted, it is a Senior year commitment, and it depends on the school's admissions.



## Education Partners:

- ASU
- NAU
- U of A
- Central Arizona College
- Yavapai College
- Cochise College
- Coconino Community College
- Mohave Community College
- Pima Community College
- Northland Pioneer College
- Western Colorado University
- Nevada State University



class of 2025  
now enrolling current juniors

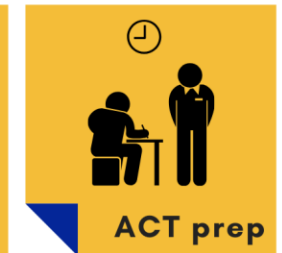
## SENIOR BOOT CAMP

become college bound - focused - prepared

 starts this summer

Program Duration: June 2024 - May 2025

**FREE**



apply to senior boot camp today: [bit.ly/SBC25IF](https://bit.ly/SBC25IF)

 Application Deadline: **May 10**

QUESTIONS? contact us at [success@bealeaderfoundation.org](mailto:success@bealeaderfoundation.org)

# Gear Up Launch Guide

Whether you're headed to a 4-year university, community college, technical school, the workforce, or the military, the Senior Launch Guide helps with every step.

Use the links below to download a PDF in English or Spanish from Arizona GEAR UP.

- [Senior Launch Guide \(Printable PDF\)](#)
- [Senior Launch Guide \(Fillable PDF\)](#)
- [Spanish Senior Launch Guide \(Printable PDF\)](#)
- [Spanish Senior Launch Guide \(Fillable PDF\)](#)



# Senior Terms

- **The FAFSA—Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA):** This is a free form for evaluating a student's college or trade school financial aid for state, federal, and *college* funding.
- **Financial Aid:** Encompass grants, loans, scholarships, and work-study
- **Admission Counselors:** As you begin your college research, talk to college admission counselors to help navigate the admission process for your program. They can assist in the process for their school.
- **Priority Deadlines:** Colleges and certain grant funding will have key deadlines in your senior year that you must meet to access merit or need-based aid. Ask about key dates.
- **College Applications:** Applications for college, university, trade, and vocational programs are for the specific school. The FAFSA form and application must be completed for the school to factor in scholarships and grants.



# AZ Student Services



## Text Benji

Benji is Arizona's free digital FAFSA assistant. Text "Hi Benji" to 602-786-8171 to wake Benji up and get your questions about FAFSA and financial aid answered.

Text Now



## Arizona FAFSA Hotline

Students and families can call the Arizona FAFSA Hotline between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday for free support with FAFSA completion, college applications and next steps for enrollment.

Call Now



## Schedule an Appointment

Students and families can schedule a one-on-one appointment with a local FAFSA expert. All appointments take place virtually via Zoom, Google Meet or Microsoft Teams.

Schedule



**College and Career**  
[collegeconnect@tempe.gov](mailto:collegeconnect@tempe.gov)



**@collegedepotphx**  
College prep & Career

Free resources for postsecondary completion for our AZ students



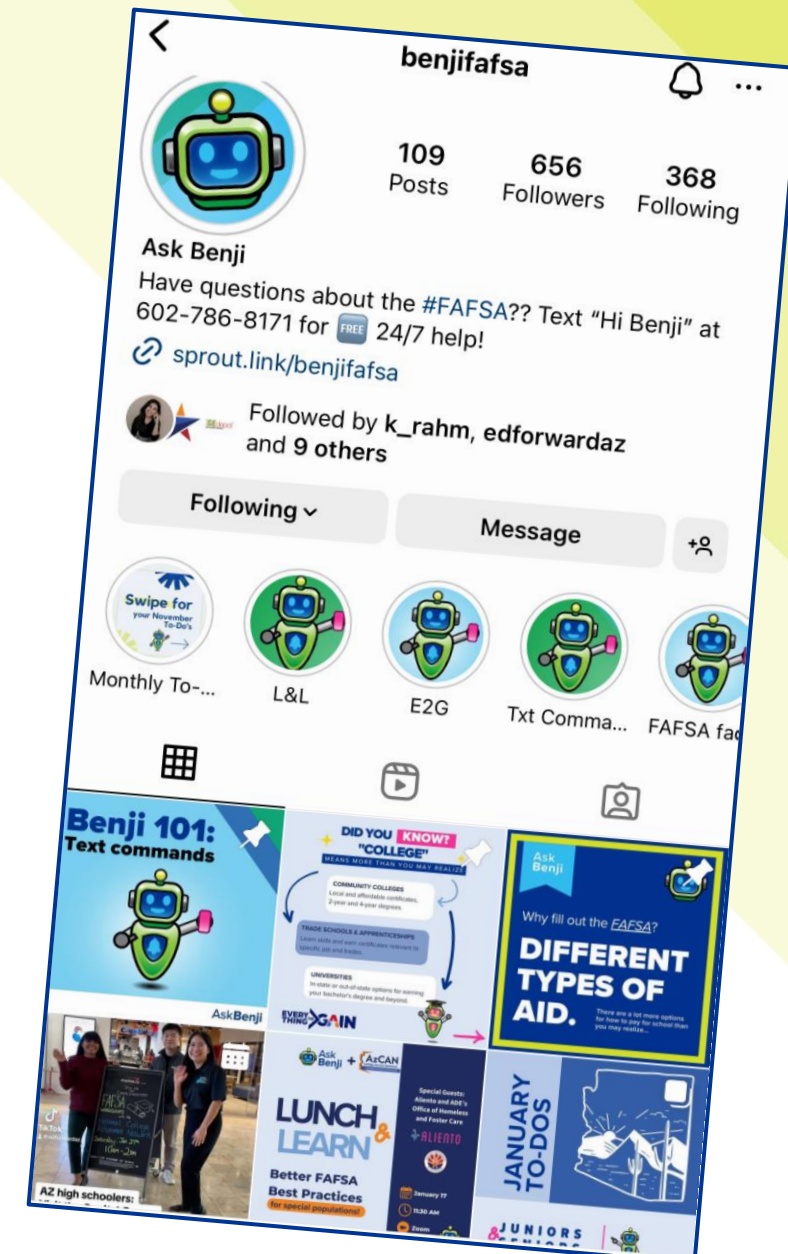
# More than a Chatbot

## AskBenji.org

- Spanish translation and promotional items
- Long form information for students

## @benjifafsa on Instagram

- Posts synced with Benji's text messages
- Regular stories and updates
- Quick and on-the-go information



# QUESTIONS?

Contact: Graciela Nobles

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   @BenjiFAFSA

[AskBenji.org](https://www.AskBenji.org)