

# TN Direct Admissions Pilot Study



## What is the type of admissions redesign?

**Direct Admissions:** High school students are proactively notified by a state postsecondary agency or system of their acceptance to at least one two- or four-year institution based on academic criteria (e.g., GPA) and can select the institution(s) of their choice by completing a simplified application without an application fee.

## In which state is it based?

Tennessee

## What state postsecondary agency or system sponsors the program?

Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC)

## When was the program first started?


2025

## Does the student or state agency/system initiate the admissions process?



System initiates by sending letters to the students who have completed the [Tennessee Promise application](#) by November 1, 2025.<sup>i</sup>

## What are the central characteristics of the program?

TN Direct Admissions is a pilot study for Tennessee high school graduates in the Class of 2026 offering automatic admission to participating Tennessee postsecondary institutions without requiring a traditional long-form application or application fee, and for seniors at randomly selected high schools, up-front information about grants and scholarships. Students will receive a TN Direct Admissions letter showing which Tennessee universities, colleges, and Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCATs) have already accepted them. The study will allow researchers to compare enrollment outcomes between groups of students that receive differing levels of information. Students will simply use the QR code on their letter to view their personalized list of institutions on [CollegeforTN.org](#). They will claim a spot at the school they want to attend and answer a few questions. The institution will then be in touch with confirmation of their Direct Admission and next steps.

 <p><b>Program Scope</b></p>	<p>Does the program include <b>all high school districts or only a portion</b>? Is <b>opt-in</b> required?</p>	<p>Over 230 participating high schools (randomly selected) are included in the pilot study for the 2025–26 school year.<sup>ii</sup> To participate in TN Direct Admissions, students will be required to consent to being contacted by THEC and partner institutions, and to data sharing between them.</p>
	<p>Does the program support admission to <b>four-year institutions, two-year institutions, or both</b>?</p>	<p>Both four-year and two-year institutions participate.</p>
	<p><b>Which institutions</b> are participating in the program?</p>	<p>57 in-state colleges and universities – including TCATs, community colleges, and four-year public and private universities</p>

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<b>Eligibility Criteria and Application</b>  	What are the <b>academic eligibility criteria</b> for students?	High school GPA as reported on Tennessee Promise application; thresholds vary by institution
	Are students <b>still required to apply</b> to postsecondary institutions?	No application is required
	Is the <b>application fee waived</b> ?	Yes
<b>Data and Policy</b>  	What is the <b>data source</b> for the program?	To be eligible, students need to have completed a Tennessee Promise application. THEC will share student information with entities with which it currently has an approved data sharing agreement; every public high school in the state should have a data sharing agreement.
	Did the state or system <b>adopt policy</b> related to the program, and if so what does the policy include?	No

Information above is up to date as of December 2025

<https://www.tbr.edu/news/tennessee-higher-education-commission-announces-tn-direct-admissions-pilot-simplify-path>

<https://www.collegefortn.org/direct-admissions/participating-institutions/>