



FIRST STAR ASU ACADEMY 2025 IMPACT REPORT




ABOUT FIRST STAR ASU ACADEMY





Arizona State University Educational Outreach and Student Services


Access ASU is dedicated to increasing access to higher education and preparing Arizona students for success through family engagement, strategic K-12 education and community partnerships. Access ASU's programs and initiatives are designed to ensure all Arizona students graduate high school ready to thrive in college and the 21st century workforce. The First Star – Arizona State University Academy is a free, comprehensive four-year college access program that aims to provide foster youth the academic support, enrichment, and resources needed to enroll and succeed in college.

Academy Director: Rachel Kist

 **Director Email:** rachel.kist@asu.edu

 **Academy Email:** firststar@asu.edu

 **Website:** <https://eoss.asu.edu/access/first-star-academy>

 **Instagram:** @firststarasu



FIRST STAR MISSION

First Star provides high school youth in foster care with the opportunity, tools, and support to successfully transition to self-sufficiency through higher education or other viable pathways



**HIGH SCHOOL
GRADUATION
COMPLETION**

COMPARED TO 50% NATIONALLY





FIRST STAR ASU ACADEMY IN THE SPOTLIGHT



From First Star to Future Doctor
Meet Peer Mentor Sam



First Star ASU Academy &
Bridging Success

THE ACADEMY MODEL

ACADEMY PROGRAMMING INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:



MONTHLY ACADEMIES

Monthly programming over four years for youth in foster care focused on academics and life skills while they are in high school.

SUMMER ACADEMY

Intensive 2-4 week residential enrichment program on a university campus.

CAREGIVER ENGAGEMENT

Seminars and workshops that provide tools to caregivers to become advocates for their youth.

VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT

Weekly mentoring and tutoring sessions, as well as an open environment to connect and build community through virtual hangouts.



STEAM ACADEMY

Virtual Tech Talks and access to labs that focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math.



SCHOLAR ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC)

Leadership opportunity for scholars focused on becoming civically engaged and enacting change in their local communities.



ALUMNI PROGRAM

Offered to scholars who graduate the Academy as a resource during their transition to adulthood.



BRIGHT FUTURES AHEAD

CELEBRATING SCHOLAR SUCCESS



FIRST STAR ALUMNI PROGRAM

The First Star Alumni Program's goal is to remain connected and ensure Alumni have access to resources and the First Star network as they transition into adulthood, career, and advanced education.



100% of the 2025 graduating class enrolled in the Alumni Program

79% of enrolled Alumni engage with the program via resources, newsletters and events

22% of peer mentors are First Star Alumni

FIRST STAR STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC)

First Star encourages advocacy and engagement in social justice through the Scholar Advisory Committee (SAC). SAC is composed of current scholars from across the First Star Academy network and from the Alumni Program. SAC allows scholars to build community, freely share their ideas and opinions, and dialogue about important issues!



80% of SAC scholars were returners from last year

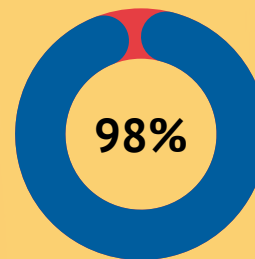
100% of SAC scholars stated they felt more confident taking on leadership roles

100% of SAC scholars stated they felt more confident in advocating for themselves

NATIONAL FIRST STAR CLASS OF 2025

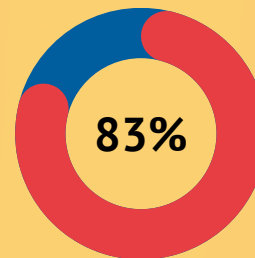


National Graduating Class



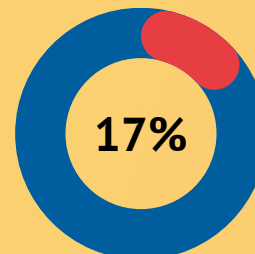
H.S Diploma: 98%
Credit Recovery: 2%

Post-Secondary Pathways



4-year: 46%
2-year CC: 29%
Vocation/Trade School: 8%

Workforce Pathways



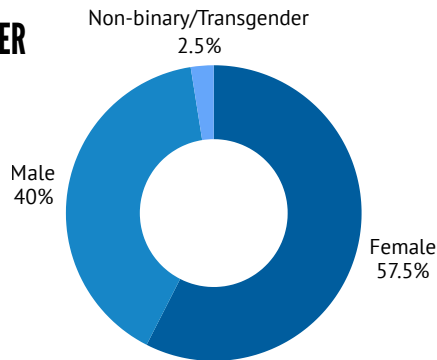
Apprenticeship/ Union: 0%
Full-Time Employment: 17%
Military: 0%



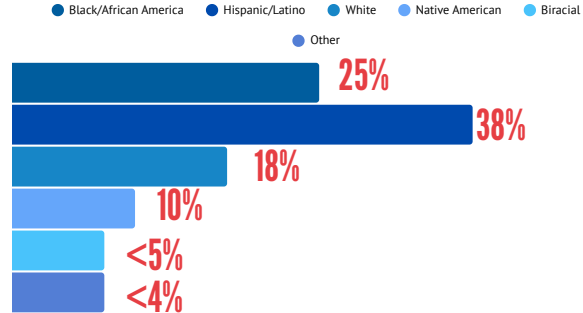
FIRST STAR ASU ACADEMY

SCHOLAR PROFILE

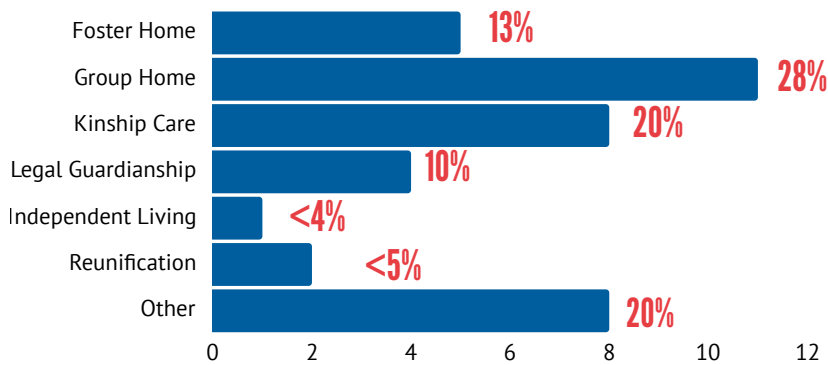
GENDER



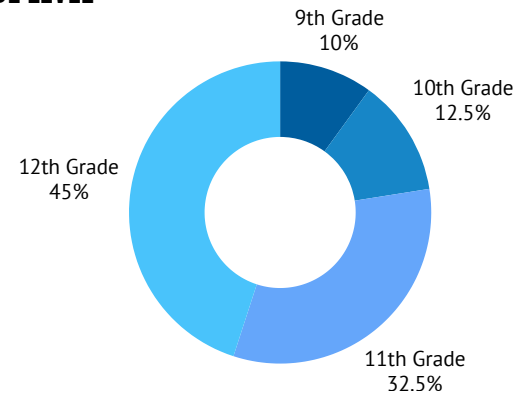
RACE AND ETHNICITY



PLACEMENT STATUS



GRADE LEVEL



Celebrating Class of 2025

100%

of First Star ASU scholars graduated High School on time!

88%

of First Star ASU graduates are pursuing post-secondary opportunities.

60%

of First Star ASU high school graduates will attend ASU in the fall!

FIRST STAR ASU IMPACT

2024-2025 ACADEMIC YEAR



LIFE SKILLS AND SELF DISCOVERY

Through a series of skill-building workshops, youth strengthened their personal and interpersonal development. The Budgeting and Financial Literacy course, provided by the Arizona Council on Economic Education (ACEE), equipped participants with essential money management skills, helping them create personal budgets and make informed financial decisions. The Boundaries: Creating and Communicating workshop supported youth in establishing healthy limits and communicating them effectively to promote self-respect and well-being. Additionally, the Conflict Resolution workshop enhanced participants' ability to navigate disagreements constructively, fostering stronger relationships and collaboration among peers.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The program's Health and Well-Being highlight emphasized the importance of both physical and mental wellness through engaging activities and interactive sessions. Scholars participated in fitness workshops such as yoga and skateboarding, practiced mindfulness, and took part in round-robin basketball and volleyball games, all designed to promote holistic health and balance.



CAREER EXPLORATION

Program highlights included the Me3 Career Quiz and Presentation, a field trip to ASU's Marston Theatre for a 3D Space Show and tour of the space museum and labs, and a visit to Cerreta's Candy Factory, where scholars learned about business, marketing, and food safety before creating their own candy bars. Additionally, Dress for Success hosted a session to support graduating seniors with résumé development and provided each student with a professional outfit for interviews.

LEADERSHIP AND SELF ADVOCACY

Scholars took part in the Resilience: How to Overcome workshop and a Foster Youth Rights and Self-Advocacy session led by DCS Peer Mentors, gaining valuable tools to navigate challenges and advocate for themselves. They also enjoyed a hands-on team-building experience through their very own escape room activity, designed to promote problem-solving and collaboration.



COLLEGE READINESS

Scholars toured ASU's Downtown Campus and Maricopa County Community College's South Mountain Campus, exploring diverse pathways to higher education. They participated in the "Sweet 16: Credits for College/GPA Matters" workshop, led by a school counselor from Mesa Unified School District and former foster parent, and engaged in a Personal Statement Development course facilitated by the ASU Nina Scholars Leadership team. Additionally, scholars utilized the Exact Path Diagnostic to develop personalized tutoring plans in Math, Reading, and Language Arts, supporting their individual academic growth.

FIRST STAR ASU ACADEMY

BRIGHT FUTURES AHEAD

The National Bright Futures Survey was developed in partnership with Dr. Philip Hong from the University of Georgia to better understand our scholars' hopes and aspirations as it relates to their academic and future goals. In creating this survey and collecting feedback from scholars, we are embracing the challenge young people face and how we can be better stewards of their emotions and feelings as we support their growth in our Academies!

80%

of First Star scholars are feeling hopeful about the future and expect to complete further education after high school!



70%

of scholars feel a sense of belonging and connection since joining First Star!

70%

of scholars are confident that they have the necessary skills to succeed in college since joining First Star!

SUMMER ACADEMY

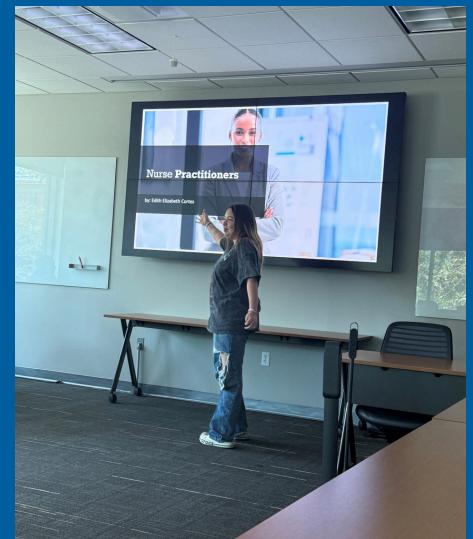
The Summer Residential Program, held June 8 to June 24, 2025, gave scholars a transformative weekend of growth, connection, and new experiences that built skills to support their future success.



Leadership Development



College & Career Readiness



Life Skills

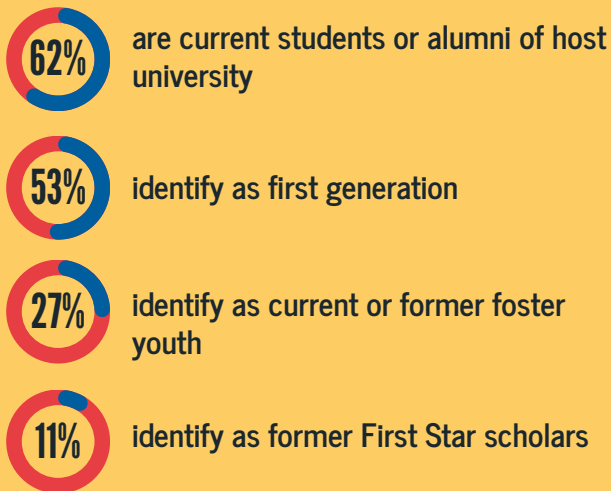
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COMMUNITY IMPACT



PEER MENTOR RECOGNITION

First Star recognizes the positive impact peer mentors have on our scholars. The First Star ASU Academy awarded two peer mentors this summer for their years of service and unwavering support of the academy.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The ASU Academy partners with Bridging Success on campus for peer mentor support and professional development opportunities for alumni.



CAREGIVER ENGAGEMENT

First Star ASUU Academy hosted Caregiver Orientations and other engagement events on campus during the school year.

Caregivers at ASU Academy receive monthly check-ins on their scholar's participation in the program and are involved in their student's academic case management meetings.



CREATION CONFERENCE

The Creation Conference was a one-day event for high school and young adult scholars with foster care experience, providing inspiration, resources, and connections. Hosted with all First Star Academies and live-streamed nationwide, the conference empowered youth to envision and pursue their futures while building community and access to opportunities.

FIRST STAR ASU ACADEMY

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS



ARIZONA
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

ARIZONA
DEPARTMENT OF
CHILD SAFETY



ASU
Arizona State
University

Community Stakeholder Acknowledgments

Academy Programming Partners

Maricopa Community Colleges' Bridge to Success Program

Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation

Access ASU

ASU Bridging Success Program

Arizona Council on Economic Education (ACEE)

Scholar Recruitment Partners

Tempe Union School District

Mesa Public School District

Arizona Department of Child Safety

Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community - Social
Services Department

CASA of Maricopa County

Catholic Charities

Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation's Keys to
Success Program

Funding Acknowledgements

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Arizona Community Foundation

Obrzut Ling Scholarship- Lee J. Obrzut and Dan T. Ling

*First Star ASU Academy was featured on
HOP SKIP DRIVE's blog post on their
transportation services!*



HOW TO GET INVOLVED



REFER A STUDENT.



VOLUNTEER.



DONATE.