


COLLEGE PLANNING TIMELINE


12TH GRADE

FALL




STAY ORGANIZED

Your senior year is going to be a busy one. Stay organized by marking your calendar in advance with important dates like financial-aid seminars, early- and regular-decision application deadlines, test dates and scholarship deadlines. Save your usernames and passwords for future reference.




TAKE SAT OR ACT

Register and take the ACT, SAT or SAT Subject Tests, depending on what's required by the schools to which you wish to apply. Whatever test it is, make sure to request that your results get sent to the schools of your choice.




COMPLETE YOUR ESSAYS

The college essay is an important part of the application process. Have a teacher or parent proofread your essay for mistakes and provide feedback.




GATHER LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

If you haven't requested them already, now's the time to start approaching teachers and counselors for recommendation letters or to follow up with those from whom you've made requests.



LOOK INTO FINANCIAL AID


If you would like to receive any federal financial aid, fill out your FAFSA and submit it as soon as possible after October 1.



FINALIZE COLLEGE LIST


Decide on at least 9 prospective college choices. It's OK to include schools that may be a challenge to get into, just make sure to also include schools you can get into easily. Don't forget about the fees associated with each application; this may alter the number you fill out.

Discuss your list with your school counselor.



CONSIDER APPLYING EARLY


Submitting Early Decision or Early Action to a college allows you to find out if you have been accepted to a school earlier than regular admission notifications. However, these applications are due earlier, so get started right away; most deadlines are in October and November.



SUBMIT ALL APPLICATIONS


Submit your applications online. Follow up with your school counselor to make sure they have sent everything that's required, such as transcripts and test scores. You want everything in before the beginning of winter.

WINTER



IF APPLICABLE: SUBMIT MIDYEAR GRADES


Some colleges request that you send your senior-year, first-semester grades as part of the application process. Have your counselor send these out to the schools that require them.



EVALUATE EARLY DECISION OR EARLY ACTION RESPONSES

If you have been accepted Early Decision, you will need to withdraw your applications from all other schools. If you have been accepted Early Action, you can either choose to accept now or wait to receive responses from the other schools to which you applied.


SPRING



REVIEW YOUR STUDENT AID REPORT

If you submitted a FAFSA, about three to five days after you filed online, you will receive your Student Aid Report or SAR. This document tells you how much your family is expected to pay for your education. Review the document for errors and discuss the contribution amount listed with your parents.

Keep in mind, you may to explain that we do not file federal taxes.



CHECK FOR ADMISSIONS DECISIONS

Admission decisions should start arriving between March and April, followed by financial-aid award letters. Make sure you thoroughly read each decision email, as sometimes they require action on your part.

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SPRING CONTINUED

COMPARE FINANCIAL AID PACKAGES

Financial aid may be a large part of your final decision, so go over each school's package thoroughly with your parents or guardian. Talk to a financial-aid officer at the college if you have questions or if you feel the package isn't enough and want to explore additional financing plans.

MAKE YOUR FINAL DECISION

Choose the college that's right for you by May 1. Send in the corresponding enrollment form, deposit check and signed financial-aid package.

INFORM SCHOOLS YOU WON'T BE ATTENDING

Once you've decided on the school you want to attend, make sure to inform the other schools that accepted you that you won't be attending. This frees up a spot for another student.

COMPLETE ENROLLMENT

Upon accepting a school's offer, you'll receive instructions for next steps like information on registering for classes, orientation, housing and more. Complete any forms required and submit them by the deadline.

SUMMER

SEND FINAL HS TRANSCRIPT

Many colleges require a final high school transcript. If this is the case for you, contact your high school counselor to make sure your transcript gets sent.

SAY THANK YOU

Thank anyone who was especially helpful during the college application process. Showing your appreciation in person or with a card will ensure your supporters' testimony for years to come.

PREPARE FOR YOUR FIRST YEAR

Sign up for orientation. Figure out where you'll be living. Purchase items you'll need for your first year. Make travel plans if applicable. And schedule your first-semester courses.

ENJOY FRIENDS & FAMILY

Make sure you stop and appreciate those around you. You want to make the most of the time you have before heading off to school.

Congratulations
YOU DID IT!