

COLLEGE PLANNING TIMELINE FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS GETTING READY FOR COLLEGE

Getting ready for college doesn't have to be stressful. Follow our College Planning Timeline to stay on track throughout the year.



FALL SENIOR YEAR

- MEET WITH YOUR HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELOR**
Get their advice on staying on track during this all-important senior year.
- DO YOUR COLLEGE RESEARCH**
Visit in person and research online to learn more about schools you're interested in.
- COMPLETE THE FAFSA AND OTHER FINANCIAL AID FORMS**
The US Department of Education offers free resources to help you complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- WRITE YOUR ADMISSIONS ESSAY**
Ask your parents, teacher, or high school counselor to proofread it before you submit it.
- KNOW YOUR DEADLINES**
Check each college's admissions and financial aid deadlines.
- FINISH YOUR APPLICATIONS**
Pay attention to deadlines. Early decision and early action applications are usually due between October 1 and November 15.

[View 10 Common Fafsa Errors To Avoid on our blog.](#)

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WINTER SENIOR YEAR

- PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR GRADES**
Have your high school counselor send your midyear grades to the schools you applied to.
- HAVE YOUR TEST SCORES SENT TO THE SCHOOLS YOU'RE APPLYING TO**
Fill out a request form at the College Board or ACT if your college requires test scores.

When finalizing your list of colleges, make sure to consider all of these factors.

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SPRING SENIOR YEAR

- REVIEW YOUR STUDENT AID REPORT**
The Student Aid Report (SAR) summarizes the information you provided on the FAFSA and is important for getting financial aid. Check for accuracy.
- CONSIDER ACCEPTANCE LETTERS AND FINANCIAL AID AWARDS**
Use a comparison tool to keep track of your financial aid offers.
- RESEARCH STUDENT LOANS IF NEEDED**
Carefully review the terms, such as repayment lengths, repayment options, and interest rates. You can use College Ave Student Loans' calculator to see your loan options before applying.
- FORMALLY CHOOSE YOUR COLLEGE!**
Notify the school of your decision to enroll, and write to the other schools you were admitted to and let them know your plans.
- SEND IN YOUR DEPOSIT**
Be sure to have a letter of acceptance from the school in hand before you submit.

Find out how to make sense of your financial aid award letter.

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SUMMER SENIOR YEAR

- MAKE A COLLEGE BUDGET**
You'll find many free college budgeting templates online.
- APPLY FOR STUDENT LOANS IF NEEDED**
Once you apply, keep copies of your applications and use a spreadsheet to track responses.
- KEEP TABS ON COLLEGE BILLS**
Bills for tuition and other fees will start rolling in by mid-June and usually are due in July or August.
- ATTEND ORIENTATION**
Many universities offer in-person orientation sessions, as well as online sessions for those who can't visit campus before classes start.
- PICK YOUR FALL CLASSES**
Popular classes may fill up quickly. Register for classes as early as possible so you can get into your top choices.



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We've made it our business to reduce the stress of student loans by making the process smarter and more transparent. So we created a blog that lives by those same rules. From research tips to savings strategies to reminders of key dates, keep coming back for more helpful content.