

College Planning: 12th Grade

- **SUMMER**
 - Take part in activities that continue to enhance your college and scholarship applications
 - Narrow your list of colleges between five and 10
 - Gather application materials from colleges
 - Work on admission essays
 - Register for ACT/SAT
- **FALL**
 - Create a master list or calendar that includes:
 - Tests you need to take
 - College application due dates
 - Required financial aid application forms and their deadlines
 - Other materials you'll need
 - Sherwood's application processing deadlines
 - Ask for fee waivers if needed.
 - Take ACT/SAT one more time
 - Visit colleges
 - Be sure to have your test scores sent to the colleges to which you are applying.
 - Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and CSS/Financial Aid Profile (if needed).
 - Prepare early applications
 - Ask teachers for recommendations
 - Complete at least one application by Thanksgiving
 - Request your transcripts to be sent after you submit your application
- **WINTER**
 - Apply to any additional colleges if needed
 - Continue to keep up your grades
 - Put your scholarship search into full gear
 - Visit colleges if you still need help making decisions
 - Send your mid-year transcripts to colleges
- **SPRING**
 - Continue to keep up your grades
 - Inform every college of your acceptance or rejection of the offer of admission and/or financial aid by May 1.
 - Send your deposit to one college only
 - Take any AP Exams
 - Review your financial aid awards
 - Request your final transcript to be sent to your college.

After High School, What Next?

High school graduates have many choices to consider when deciding what to do for the next few years of their life. Five options after high school are to:

- Attend postsecondary school
- Apprentice
- Join the military
- Volunteer
- Work

Apprentice

An apprenticeship might be a great option for those interested in receiving supervised work experience, a classroom education, and a paycheck. An apprentice works with an experienced worker to learn a skilled trade like carpentry or plumbing. The apprentice receives training both on the job and in the classroom.

Joint employer and labor groups, individual employers, and employer associations sponsor apprenticeship programs. Apprenticeships generally last about four years, but range from one to six years. The pay that an apprentice receives increases progressively over time.

For more information, contact: www.dllr.state.md.us/labor/appr

Attend Post-secondary School

Many options exist for those who want to receive formal training or education past high school. Types of post-secondary schools include:

- Vocational schools
- Technical colleges
- Two-year colleges
- Four-year colleges and universities

Students can work toward earning:

- Certificates
- Diplomas
- Associates degrees
- Bachelor degrees
- Advanced degrees

Join the Military

The U.S. military has five separate services: Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and Navy. The military trains people in many occupations. Each of the military services actively recruits for both enlisted and officer positions. Every recruit signs a legal contract for eight years of duty. Usually, two to six years are spent on active duty. The rest are spent in the Reserve forces.

After basic training, enlistees will receive technical or job training. This training prepares the enlistee for a job in the military. Many military occupations involve skills that can be useful in civilian jobs. Service members receive basic pay, allowances, and benefits for serving in the military. Tuition assistance at colleges and university is also available.

Each of the military services recruits independently and sets its own enlistment standards. However, the following general enlistment qualifications are the minimum standards set by the Department of Defense. Each service may choose to have higher standards than are listed here. Sometimes services make exceptions to these qualifications.

- U.S. citizen or an immigrant legally admitted to the U.S. for permanent residence
- 18 years old or older (or age 17 with consent of parent or legal guardian)
- High school diploma or GED
- Achieve minimum scores on the ASVAB test
- Good health and pass medical exam (minimum height, weight, and vision requirements also exist)
- Good moral standards

After High School, What Next? Page 2

For more information about joining the military, contact:

Air Force

www.airforce.com

Army

www.goarmy.com

Coast Guard

www.uscg.mil

Marines

www.marines.com

Navy

www.navy.com

Gap Year / Volunteer

Volunteers gain valuable skills and meet new contacts that can help lead to future employment. Volunteer opportunities are endless but may include tutoring and mentoring kids, building homes, or responding to national disasters. A life-changing gap year experience can be the answer for a teen who asks, "What should I do after high school?" Learning a new language, volunteering in another country, earning college credit while studying abroad, and more—there are hundreds of gap year programs out there. <http://usagapyearfairs.org/programs/> or <https://thinkingbeyondborders.org/should-you-take-a-gap-year-after-high-school/>

AmeriCorps is an organization where people can participate in volunteer activities while receiving a modest living allowance, health insurance, and training. Some programs even provide housing. Members can choose the type of program and the locations where they want to serve. Full-time and part-time assignments are available. After completing one year of full-time service, AmeriCorps members receive an education voucher that can be used to cover future costs of college or vocational school and pay back student loans. For more information about AmeriCorps, visit their web site at: www.americorps.org

Projects Abroad is one of the largest volunteer abroad organizations in the world. Founded in 1992, we send 10,000 people abroad each year on a variety of service projects and internships overseas. All participants receive unparalleled in-country support from our full-time, professional staff to ensure that the experience is safe, worthwhile and fun. www.projects-abroad.net

Work

High school graduates may decide that they want to find full-time employment and start bringing home a regular paycheck. Certain things should be done before beginning the job hunt.

1. **Discover your interests.** Reflect on past part-time jobs, volunteer work, and everyday tasks that were enjoyable.
2. **Explore job options.** Find out what types of jobs are available to high school graduates who have little or no further training.
3. **Conduct informational interviews.** Sit down and talk to someone who is currently working in a job that might be of interest.
4. **Network.** Ask friends, family, and neighbors if they have any connections to help find a job. This may be the best way to find employment, because the majority of jobs are not advertised.

With some of the initial work out of the way, it is time to start getting organized.

1. **Write a resume.** Be sure to stress education, part-time and summer jobs, clubs, and awards.
2. **Locate job openings.** Use a combination of the following resources: Local newspaper, internet, local library, employment centers, family, friends, and neighbors.
3. **Apply for a job.** This usually means submitting a cover letter, resume, and job application.
4. **Prepare for the interview.** Research the company and job before going on the interview. Also, rehearse some answers to possible interview questions.
5. **Follow-up.** Write a thank you note. This helps remind employers who you are and lets them know that you are still interested in the job.

It Pays To Stay In School

Approximate annual salaries by education level

No
High School
Diploma

\$25,400



High School
Graduate

\$34,700



2-Year
College
Graduate

\$41,200



4-Year
College
Graduate

\$57,300



2014 Annual Averages
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

www.woodburnpress.com

SHERWOOD'S MOST POPULAR APPLICATIONS

Name of School	Average WGPA	Average SAT 1600/2400	Average ACT
University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP)	4.32	1293 / 1833	28
Towson University	3.8	1134 / 1609	24
Montgomery College	3.01	973 / 1378	20
University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC)	4.06	1230 / 1727	26
Salisbury University	3.69	1101 / 1550	23
Pennsylvania State University	4.05	1211 / 1673	26
University of Delaware	4.21	1242 / 1766	27
James Madison University	4.07	1179 / 1636	25
Virginia Tech.	4.24	1271 / 1773	27
West Virginia University	3.41	1048 / 1484	22
University of South Carolina	3.97	1198 / 1679	26
Frostburg State University	3.45	1040 / 1436	21
University of Virginia	4.55	1389 / 1982	30
University of Pittsburgh	4.28	1291 / 1818	28
Mount Saint Mary's University	3.6	1055 / 1501	21
Johns Hopkins University	4.39	1405 / 2103	32
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	4.36	1342 / 1938	30
George Mason University	4.0	1181 / 1652	25
St. Mary's College of Maryland	4.04	1198 / 1718	25
East Carolina University	3.56	1077 / 1545	23

GET THE MOST OUT OF A CAMPUS VISIT IN **6 STEPS**

1 DECIDE WHERE AND HOW

See if your school arranges group trips to colleges or if you could get a group of friends together and visit the campus. A family trip is another option and allows you to involve your family in the process.

2 PREPARE FOR YOUR VISIT

Before you set out, get a map of the college campus and pick out places of interest. Call the college's admission office to schedule a guided tour of the campus.

3 TAKE YOUR OWN TOUR

Just wandering around the campus on your own or with friends can be the best way to get a feel for what a college is like.

4 EXPLORE THE FACILITIES

Find the spots on campus where students gather or ask a student where the best place to eat is to get a feel for the character of the college. Visit the library and check out the gym or theater. Ask an admission officer if you can tour a dorm and a classroom.

5 MAKE CONNECTIONS

Talk to current students. Ask the students at the next table or sitting nearby what they like best about the college.

6 TAKE NOTES

During your visit, write down some notes about your experience. What did you see that excited you? Are there aspects of the college that you don't like? If so, what are they?

Questions to Ask During Your Visit:

ASK TOUR GUIDES/STUDENTS

- What are the best reasons to go to this college?
- What's it like to go from high school to college?
- What do you do in your free time? On the weekends?
- What do you love about this college?
- What do you wish you could change about this college?
- Why did you choose this college?
- What is it like to live here?
- What does the college do to promote student involvement in campus groups, extracurricular activities, or volunteerism?

ASK PROFESSORS

- What are the best reasons to go to this college?
- Can a student be mentored by professors, graduate students, or upperclassmen?
- How are professors rated by the college? Does the college think mentoring and meetings for project guidance are important?
- How does the college help students have access to professors outside class? Do professors join students for lunch, help with community service groups, or guide student organizations?
- How many students do research or other kinds of projects for a semester or more?

ASK THE FINANCIAL AID OFFICE

- How much has your total college cost for each student risen in the past year?
- How much do your students usually end up owing when they graduate?
- What is the average income of graduates who had the same major that interests me?
- Will my costs go up when your tuition goes up, or can we use the same tuition rate I started with so I'll know the costs for four years?
- How many students usually graduate in the major that interests me? How long do these students usually take to get their degree? In what ways does the college help students graduate in four years?

Campus Visit Checklist

Visiting a college campus helps you get a sense of what a college — and life at that college — is like. This can help you decide whether the college is right for you.

GATHER INFORMATION

Find out what you need to do to apply, and see if the college's class and major offerings are what you want:

- Take part in a group information session at the admission office.
- Interview with an admission officer.
- Pick up financial aid forms.
- Sit in on a class that interests you. If classes aren't in session, just see what the classrooms are like.
- Meet a professor who teaches a subject that interests you.
- Talk to students about what they think of their classes and professors.
- Get the names and business cards of the people you meet so you can contact them later if you have questions.

EXPLORE THE CAMPUS

Get a feel for student life, and see if this college is a place where you will do well:

- Take a campus tour.
- Talk to current students about the college and life on campus.
- Check out the freshman dorms, and stay overnight with a student, if possible.
- Visit the dining hall, fitness center, library, career center, bookstore, and other campus facilities.
- Talk to the coaches of sports that you may want to play.
- Walk or drive around the community surrounding the campus.

CHECK OUT CAMPUS MEDIA

Tune in to learn what's happening on campus and what's on students' minds:

- Listen to the college radio station.
- Read the student newspaper.
- Scan bulletin boards to see what daily student life is like.
- Go to the career center and learn what services it offers.
- Browse the school's website and any campus blogs.
- Read other student publications, such as department newsletters, alternative newspapers, and literary reviews.

Speak the Language: College Admissions

If you're not familiar with the college admissions process, it probably seems like it has a language all its own. To help you learn the lingo, here are definitions of some of the college admission terms you're likely to come across.

Acceptance Rate: The percentage of applicants a college accepts for admission.

Accreditation: Certification that a college meets the standards of a state, regional or national association.

Candidates Reply Date Agreement (CRDA): This agreement, sponsored by the National Association for College Admission Counseling, states that in order to allow students to consider all their college options, students have until May 1 to accept any college's offer of admission.

Common/Universal Application: Standardized application forms accepted by many colleges. After you fill out the Common or Universal Application, you can send it to any college that accepts it as the institution's own application.

Competitive College: A college with a rigorous, highly selective admissions process. Competitive colleges typically admit fewer than 25 percent of applicants.

Deferred Admission: A student's option to defer an offer of admission for up to two years.

Personal Statement: Sometimes referred to as a college application essay, personal statements are essays that give admissions officers insights into your character, personality and motivation.

Reach School: A college where admission might be a stretch for you, based on the average GPA and test scores of accepted students and the college's overall admission requirements.

Retention Rate: The percentage of students who return to a college for their sophomore year. An indicator of student satisfaction.

Safety School: A college where, based on the average GPA and test scores of accepted students, you have a high likelihood of being admitted.

Student-Faculty Ratio: The number of students at a college compared to the number of faculty. Some colleges see this as an indicator of class size and professor accessibility, but a lower ratio doesn't guarantee either. For a true indication of class size and professor accessibility, speak with students and professors at a college.

Supplemental Material: Items you include with your college application to provide more information about your talents, experiences and goals. Materials could include work samples, additional essays, newspaper clippings, music CDs or art slides. Verify if a college welcomes (or requests) these materials before sending.

Transcript: An official record of classes you have taken and the grades you received. Usually you must provide a high school transcript with your college application.

Waitlist: A list of students a college may eventually decide to admit if space becomes available.

Yield: The percentage of accepted students who go on to enroll at that college. Competitive colleges have high yield rates.

Cappex Fit Fact: More than half of all students enrolling said a "very important reason" for going to college was "to find my purpose in life." Go to Cappex.com today to see which colleges match your fit factors. It's free and easy!

2018-2019 Test Dates

Dates are subject to change

2018-2019 ACT Test Dates & Registration Deadlines www.actstudent.org

Test Dates	Registration Deadlines	Late Registration Deadlines
July 14, 2018	June 15, 2018	June 22, 2018
September 8, 2018	August 5, 2018	August 18, 2018
October 27, 2018	September 21, 2018	October 6, 2018
December 8, 2018	November 2, 2018	November 17, 2018
February 9, 2019	January 11, 2019	January 19, 2019
April 13, 2019	March 8, 2019	March 23, 2019
June 8, 2019	May 3, 2019	May 18, 2019

2018-2019 SAT Test Dates & Registration Deadlines www.collegeboard.org

Test Dates	Registration Deadline	Late Registration Deadlines
August 25, 2018	July 27, 2018	August 10, 2018
October 6, 2018	September 7, 2018	September 21, 2018
November 3, 2018	October 5, 2018	October 19, 2018
December 1, 2018	November 2, 2018	November 16, 2018
March 19, 2019	February 8, 2019	February 22, 2019
May 4, 2019	April 5, 2019	April 19, 2019
June 1, 2019	May 3, 2019	May 17, 2019

ACT vs SAT: Key differences between the ACT and SAT

SAT	vs.	ACT
content-based test	Type of Test	content-based test
Reading: 1, 65-min sections; Math: 1, 25-min section (no calculator) and 1, 55-min section (w/ calculator); Writing & Language: 1, 35-min section; Essay: 1, 50-min section (optional)	Test Format	English: 1, 45-min section; Math: 1, 60-min section; Reading: 1, 35-min section; Science: 1, 35-min section; Writing: 1, 40-min essay (optional)
reading, relevant words in context, math, grammar & usage, analytical writing (optional)	Content Covered	grammar & usage, math, reading, science reasoning, and writing (optional)
Questions are evidence and context-based in an effort to focus on real-world situations and multi-step problem-solving	Test Style	straightforward, questions may be long but are usually less difficult to decipher
Math and Evidence-Based Reading & Writing are each scored on a scale of 200-800. Composite SAT score is the sum of the two section scores and ranged for 400-1600.	Scoring	English, Math, Reading, and Science scores will each range between 1-36. Composite ACT score is the average of your scores on the four sections; ranges between 1-36
No – you do not lose points for incorrect answers	Penalty for Wrong Answers?	no – you do not lose points for incorrect answers
yes – you can choose which set(s) of SAT scores to submit to colleges	Score Choice?	yes – you can choose which set(s) of ACT scores to submit to colleges
questions increase in difficulty level as you move through that question type in a section (except reading passage questions, which progress chronologically through the passage)	Difficulty Levels	difficulty level of the questions is random
arithmetic, problem-solving & data analysis, heart of algebra I & II, geometry and trigonometry; formulas are provided	Math Levels	arithmetic, algebra I and II, functions, geometry, trigonometry; no formulas are provided
with private schools and schools on the east and west coasts; however, every four-year college in the US accepts SAT scores	Tends to be more popular?	with public schools and schools in the Midwest and south; however, every four-year college in the US accepts ACT scores
seven times per year: January, March or April, May, June, October, November, December	Offered when?	six times per year: February, April, June, September, October, December (note that some states offer the ACT as part of their state testing requirements; these tests are not administered on the national test dates)
typically about four weeks before the test date	Registration deadline?	typically about five to six weeks before the test date
www.collegeboard.com	More Information	www.act.org



College Entrance Factors

When colleges are evaluating a student's application, they take many factors into consideration. However, they weigh some factors more heavily than others.

According to NACAC (National Association of College Admissions Counseling), this is how colleges across the country rank the components of a college application:

These 4 components have consistently been the top admission decision factors:

- Grades in College Prep/Core Courses
- Strength of Curriculum
- Grades in all courses
- Test Scores (SAT/ACT)

Next, colleges focus on the following components, and these are considered moderately important and looked at very similarly:

- Student Essay
- Counselor Recommendation
- Teacher Recommendation
- Demonstrated interest in the college (ie: college visits, visits with admissions representatives in your area)
- Extracurricular Activities
- Class Rank

These components of the application are factored in, but only by the subset of colleges that require them:

- Subject Test Scores
- Portfolio
- Interview

What Are Your College Admissions Options?

Early Decision, Early Action, Priority, Rolling or Regular

Colleges generally offer prospective students a variety of ways to submit their applications. After you've narrowed down your college choices, find out what each school's admissions policy is. Understanding how these policies could impact whether you're accepted to the school will help you determine how to submit your college application.

Regardless of the option you choose, it's best to submit your application by Thanksgiving of your senior year. This gives you the best change for admission and the most opportunities for getting scholarships and other financial aid. In the worst-case scenario, if you don't get into the University of your Choice, you'll know by January, which means you still have time to implement a plan B option.

The Main Types of College Admissions Options

Different types of schools generally offer various types of college admissions options. Here are the primary admission options you will encounter:

Regular Admission

This is the most common option for 4-year colleges and universities. All students must submit their applications by a specific date, usually between November and January. The admissions board then reviews all the applications and sends out acceptances and rejection letters on the same date.

Rolling Admission

Common at large state universities, schools that provide this preference are allowing students to apply at any time during their admission period; typically, September through July. The school then evaluates each college application as it's received and sends acceptance letters to students who meet their requirements. Because admission is granted on a first-come, first-serve basis, you'll want to submit your application as early as possible.

Open Admission

Typically, community colleges, online schools and distance learning programs offer this type of enrollment. Open admission means that nearly all high school graduates are admitted, provided they have a diploma or a General Educational Development (GED) certificate. Students who have a lower than average GPA in their high school courses may want to find a college with this policy. If there is no community college in your area that matches your interests, online schools are a great alternative for furthering your education.

Early Admissions Options

Doing a quick college search, getting in to college early and enjoying your senior year without the typical acceptance stress may seem tempting, but you want to make sure you don't lock yourself in to a school and then change your mind. If you're sure you want to attend a specific university, consider applying early using one of the following options. Applying early lets universities know they're your number one choice, which could improve your chance of acceptance. You will generally have one or more of these early admission options:

Priority Application Deadline

Apply by this date for best consideration for admission to the university as well as consideration for merit-based scholarships and invitations to special programs. Priority Deadlines many times are connected to financial aid deadlines. If you apply by priority deadline your college may automatically screen applicants for merit scholarships. Priority can also be similar to early action which is the case with UMCP. MD reps often call their priority deadline early action. Your Family Connections account will show which terminology is used by different colleges. Students should always consult the individual college website for clarification of call the college's admission office.

Early Decision

Under this admissions program, you agree to attend this school if accepted, and you can't apply to any other college or university. If you receive an acceptance letter, you must withdraw any other applications to other schools. Because this option is binding, you need to be both sure about your choice and realistic about your application. Make sure you get your guidance counselor's opinion before you submit your application.

Early Action

Like early decision, you are applying only to your top-choice school. However, unlike early decision, you are not bound to attend if accepted and you can apply early action to more than one university. You can accept an offer as soon as you receive it or wait to make your final selection in the spring after you've found out where else you've been accepted.

Early Evaluation

Selecting this choice means you can apply early to find out whether your chances for acceptance are good, fair or poor. Your application usually needs to be submitted by November, and you'll be sent a determination by December or January.

Not every college student begins attending college the fall after they graduate high school. You may be ready to start college before your high school graduation, or your personal circumstances may make you want to postpone enrollment. If that describes you, find a college that offers these options:

Early Admission

Students with exceptional academic records can enroll in college courses while still attending high school. Students may utilize this to learn about which majors suit them best or to earn a degree in their major more quickly so they can continue their education with MBAs or other advanced degrees.

Deferred Admission

A student picking this option means they have been accepted to a particular college or university but want to defer their enrollment for a year. Consider taking a gap year if you want to travel abroad, obtain more financial aid, work or explore possible careers through internships.

College Admissions Options Tips & Tactics

- If you're relying on financial aid to pay for college, you may not want to apply early decision because you'll receive your acceptance before you know what financial aid package you'll receive. However, a college admission counselor can give you an estimate of the financial package you will receive before you apply.
- Don't assume that all colleges and universities have similar application deadlines. As you do your college search, keep track of each school's deadlines for applications and financial aid so you don't miss any opportunities.
- Some schools have begun to offer single-choice early action. Like the traditional early action, you are not bound to attend if admitted, but you are only able to apply early to one school.

5½ Steps to Writing a College Admissions Essay

1. Write in Your Own Voice

No matter what the essay question is, you can express who you are by answering in your voice. Avoid common tactics of trying to sound overly intellectual. Simply showing that you can use the English language, follow directions and articulate who you are will go far.

1½. Know What Your Voice Is

Your voice is distinctly yours. Recognize the qualities that distinguish you from others. **What are three qualities that make you stand out from others?**

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2. Don't Repeat Yourself: Don't Be Repetitive

Your essay should tell admission representatives something they haven't already read in your application. **What are three things the admission representatives won't know about you until they read your essay?**

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If any of these three things match any of the qualities in section 1½, that should tell you what you need to get across to the admission representative!

3. Give Yourself Enough Time to Write, Revise and Repeat

The writing process takes time, so give yourself enough of it. Before you even write, just brainstorm ideas. From there, craft an outline, and from there write a draft. Have someone like a parent, teacher or friend edit your essay. Take your editor's suggestions, make changes and rework the piece. Here's a checklist for writing your college admission essay:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brainstorm | <input type="checkbox"/> Edit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Outline | <input type="checkbox"/> Revise |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Draft | |

4. Are You Answering the Right Question?

With the stress of writing an essay, a lot of times the main point of the essay goes out the window. Remember, you need to answer the question the college asked. Even if you have the most beautifully written essay on your ability to talk to dogs, are you sure it answers the question? For every essay you write, re-read the question and double check that you have provided an appropriate response.

5. Get Some Mileage Out of It

Essay questions may be different for each school, but in many cases you can use what you already have toward another question. It's not as simple as copy and paste, but you can repurpose parts of your essay to make sense with a new question. Still, remember section 4! Make sure that your repurposed essay answers the question. Also, avoid at all costs accidentally leaving the wrong college's name in your essay.

All of these steps take time. Do yourself a favor and start your essays early!

FAFSA: Why You Need It & How to Start

A WORKSHEET YOU CAN SHARE WITH YOUR PARENTS

How do I know if I should fill out the FAFSA?

Most types of college financial aid require you to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and many colleges and states require your FAFSA information to award their own grants and scholarships. Check any of the college financial aid you're interested in qualifying for:

- Need-based financial aid, such as government-funded Federal, which you don't have to repay
- Merit aid, such as grants and scholarships from colleges, which you don't have to repay
- State-sponsored financial aid
- Student loans, such as Federal Perkins and Stafford Loans, and PLUS Loans for parent borrowers
- Federal and college work-study programs work-study programs (a job on campus while you attend)

If you placed a check mark next to any of these, you should definitely fill out the FAFSA.

Tip: Use the *FAFSA4caster* to estimate your eligibility for federal student aid. Simply go to fafsa4caster.ed.gov.

When should I fill out the FAFSA?

The FAFSA is available every year starting October 1st. You should start the application during your senior year as early as possible.

Why so early, you ask? The FAFSA takes time and students who file early tend to receive more grant aid. Many colleges and states have their own varying deadlines. So, don't forget to check your states deadline at fafsa.ed.gov.

What things do I need to get ready to file?

Make sure you have:

- Your Social Security number
 - If not a U.S. citizen, alien registration number or permanent residence card
- Your driver's license number
- Your parents' and your tax return(s) from two years before the academic year to which you are applying for financial aid. (e.g. students who apply for financial aid for the 2017-2018 academic year will base their FAFSA on 2015 Federal Income tax returns.
- Your parents' and your most recent bank statements
- Your parents' most recent business and investment records

Ready to start?

You and your parent(s) must create a FSA ID at fsaid.ed.gov. Once completed, you will visit fafsa.ed.gov and click the "Start a New FAFSA" button. **Tip:** Use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool to transfer income and tax data from you and your parent(s)' federal income returns into the FAFSA.

Once you enter all of your information, double-check your work and print out and keep a copy of the confirmation page for your records. After your FAFSA is filed, you can log on and check the status at any tie. **Note:** Some private colleges also require the CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE, found at collegeboard.com, which is a separate financial aid form.

Steps to prepare for FAFSA

1. Go to <https://fsaid.ed.gov/npas/index.htm> to get a FAFSA ID for parent and student
2. Go to www.fafsa.ed.gov
3. Start filling out the application, but do not submit until October 1ST or after
4. The absolute deadline is March 1st
5. Remember, the FAFSA financial aid contribution is distributed on a first come first serve basis. So do not procrastinate.

Federal Student Aid
An OFFICE of the U.S. DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION

PROUD SPONSOR of
the AMERICAN MIND*

FAFSA[®]
Free Application for Federal Student Aid



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FSA ID



StudentAid.gov



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English | Español

Get help paying for college

Submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)



New to the FAFSA?

**Start A New
FAFSA**

Returning User?

- Make a correction
- Add a school
- View your Student Aid Report (SAR), and more...

Login

Deadlines

Information about your deadlines.

School Code Search

Find your college's school code. Also find detailed information about your college.

Announcements

- The Federal Student Aid PIN was replaced with the [ESA ID](#) on May 10, 2015. The new FSA ID consists of a user-created username and password to electronically access personal information on Federal Student Aid Web sites, including *FAFSA on the Web*.



MARYLAND GRANTS & SCHOLARSHIPS

What is MDCAPS?

What is the Maryland College Aid Processing System (MDCAPS)?

MDCAPS is MHEC's comprehensive financial aid system that allows us to process State scholarship applications and allocate funds more efficiently using today's technology. To use MDCAPS, you must first create a student login profile. The profile creation process will request an email address. An activation link will be sent to the email address provided. To get started with a profile, click the MDCAPS logo or use this link, <https://mdcaps.mhec.state.md.us>. Next, click "Create a Student Login" located below the yellow [Login] button.

If you are having trouble creating an MDCAPS profile and logging in, please review our instructions here: [Help Creating a Student Login for MDCAPS](#).

What features does MDCAPS offer?

- Apply On-Line for certain scholarship programs
- Check your To Do List
- Check your Application Status
- See if MHEC has received your FAFSA
- Accept or Decline Awards
- Check Award and Payment Status
- Transfer and Add Schools
- Change Enrollment Status
- Change Housing Status
- Send Help Requests to MHEC staff
- Update Your Contact Information and more!

For questions about your financial aid application or award, please log into MD CAPS at <https://mdcaps.mhec.state.md.us> and send us an email through your secure account. On the homepage, click on the "Email Us" button at the top of the page. Check your "Inbox" on the homepage for a response from our staff.

For problems logging into your MDCAPS account, **first** review the MD CAPS Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page. It is also located on the MDCAPS homepage at <https://mdcaps.mhec.state.md.us>. If you still cannot log in to your account, please email OSFA at osfamail.mhec@maryland.gov.

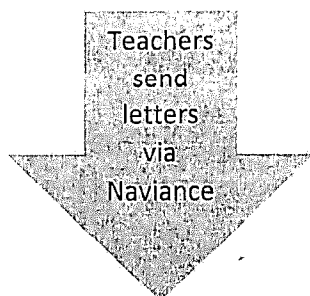
Things to do before you start your applications:

- Complete Student Brag Sheet, Parent Brag Sheet, and Resume in Naviance
- In Naviance: Under Colleges tab, Click on "Colleges I'm Thinking About" and +Add Colleges
 - Create an account with each college you plan on applying to
 - Check to see if colleges participate with Common App or the Coalition
 - Create Common App or Coalition Account if planning to use these to apply
- Speak with teachers and ask them if they would be willing to write a letter of rec.

Student Completes College Application

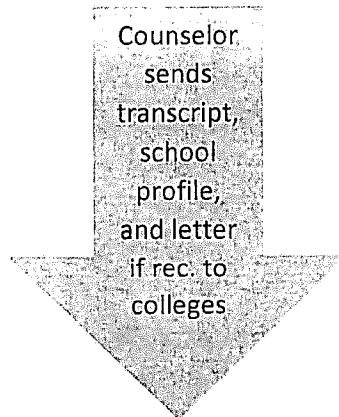
Requests for transcripts, letters of recommendations, and test scores must be done at least 3 WEEKS BEFORE the college deadline

Student Requests teacher recommendations in Naviance



Student Requests transcripts in Naviance

Student Completes the Transcript Request Form and takes to Registrar's Office
Before school, after school, or at Lunch



Student Requests test scores be sent from Collegeboard.com ACT.org to each college

Follow-up!
Call the Admissions Offices FOUR WEEKS after submitting your application to make sure all documentation has been received.

