

College:

HOW TO GET THERE FROM HERE



We know you're ready for college — your academic track record has proven that. **Now it's time to apply.** Here are some tips on how to get started.

Apply to four or more colleges.

At least **1** SAFETY

A college you're confident you can get into.

At least **2** GOOD FITS

Colleges you have a pretty good chance of getting into.

At least **1** REACH

A college that you have a chance of getting into, but it's a stretch.

Applying to two colleges instead of one makes it

40%
MORE LIKELY

that you'll enroll in a four-year college. **If you apply to more than two, then your chances of enrolling will be even better.**

Never rule out applying to a college because you think it's too expensive.

There are scholarships and financial aid packages available at almost all four-year colleges.

The average grant aid for four year colleges in 2012 13:

PUBLIC COLLEGES
MORE THAN **\$5,700**

PRIVATE COLLEGES
MORE THAN **\$15,600**

Many students receive much more than the average.

When looking at colleges, consider the following:

ACADEMICS

What are the average SAT® scores and GPA of students admitted to the school? Does it have any pre-requisites? Apply to colleges that are a good academic fit — whether they are a safe bet or a little out of reach.

GRADUATION RATE

Do most students graduate in four years? If not, why not?

LOCATION

Do you prefer a big city, suburb, or small town?

MAJORS

Does the college offer a variety of majors that interest you?

SIZE

Do you want a smaller campus with smaller class sizes, or a larger school with a wider variety of programs, such as a state university?

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

Does the college's library meet your needs? Does the campus use the latest technology? What about lab facilities?

CAMPUS LIFE AND SERVICES

What are the housing options? Are there social activities, cultural events, clubs, or athletics that interest you? What support services are available on campus to help with social, health, academic and financial challenges?

Take a college tour.

Set up campus visits. These visits are always free, but if you can't travel, take a virtual tour or visit a local college. Even if you don't tour your first-choice college, you will get an idea of what campus life is really like.

College Application Timeline

Want to know if you're on track in the college application process? This timeline shows you what you should be doing, and when.

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER — PREPARE

- ☐ **Sign up for updates at applyto4.org.**
- ☐ **Talk to your school counselor or adviser** about the college search and application process.
- ☐ **College requirements:** Make a list of the application, testing, and financial aid requirements for each college.
- ☐ **Letters of recommendation:** Decide who to ask and reach out to them early so they have time to write good letters. If you have a résumé or list of accomplishments, be sure to send it to them.
- ☐ **Application essays:** Look over essays you've already written for inspiration. Share your ideas with parents, teachers, or other trusted adults so they can help you craft the strongest essays possible.
- ☐ **Register for the SAT:** If you haven't taken it yet, or would like to take it again, it's not too late! Sign up now and be sure to send score reports to colleges.
- ☐ **Opt In to Student Search Service®:** More than 1,100 colleges use this service and are looking for students like you.

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER — APPLY TO COLLEGES

- ☐ **Work on your applications:** Some have deadlines as early as November.
- ☐ **Send your SAT and AP® scores:** This ensures that colleges have the most complete set of your information to review for admission as well as scholarship awards, course placement, or selection to a specific program or major.
- ☐ **Consider the Common Application:** Over 500 colleges use this one form. Check commonapp.org for the four (or more!) colleges you are considering.
- ☐ **Send transcripts:** Ask for your transcripts to be sent to your chosen colleges.

JANUARY/FEBRUARY — APPLY FOR FINANCIAL AID

- ☐ **Complete the FAFSA:** It is necessary if you are applying for federal and state grants and loans. Funds are limited, so make sure to file by the financial aid priority filing dates.
Tip: Families often find it easier to complete the FAFSA while filing their taxes.
- ☐ **Complete the CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE®:** Certain colleges use it to see if you qualify for additional grants and scholarships. (There is a fee for application.)
- ☐ **Compare award letters:** After examining the financial aid packages you are offered, some schools may be more affordable than you thought.

MARCH/APRIL — DECIDE!

- ☐ **Get information:** Dig a little deeper to help you make the best choice for you. Ask questions. Create a list of any questions you still have about the colleges you're considering.
- ☐ **Review acceptance letters:** Go over all offers of admission, consider the pros and cons of each school, and pick the college that fits you best.

SPECIAL NOTE: Your contact information is kept secure and confidential, and is only used for providing you with free information on college planning. School counselors may be informed of your receipt of this information in order to provide support throughout the college application process. However, your contact information is not shared with colleges or any other third parties without your permission.