

# College Planning: 12th Grade

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

When you complete steps marked with \* you may be eligible for College Board Opportunity Scholarships. Learn more at: [cb.org/opportunity](https://collegeboard.org/opportunity).

## FALL

- ☐ **Strengthen Your College List\*:** Meet with a counselor about your college choices and, if you've not yet done so, download college applications and financial aid forms. Make sure you have a balanced list of academic safety, fit, and reach schools. Plan to visit as many of these colleges as possible.
- ☐ **Create a master list or calendar that includes:**
  - Tests you'll take and their fees, dates, and registration deadlines
  - College application due dates
  - Required financial aid application forms and their deadlines (aid applications may be due before college applications)
  - Other materials you'll need (recommendations, transcripts, etc.)
  - Your high school's application processing deadlines
- ☐ **Ask a counselor** to help you request a fee waiver if you can't afford application or test fees.
- ☐ **Improve Your Score\*:** Many seniors retake the SAT in the fall. Additional coursework and practice with Official SAT Practice on Khan Academy® since your last test could help you boost your performance. Plus you already know what to expect on test day.
- ☐ **Be sure** to have your SAT scores sent to the colleges to which you are applying.
- ☐ **Complete the FAFSA\*:** To apply for most financial aid, you'll need to complete the FAFSA. Oct. 1 is the first day you can file the FAFSA.
- ☐ **Complete the CSS Profile:** CSS Profile™ is an online application used by certain colleges and scholarship programs to determine eligibility for their aid dollars.
- ☐ **Prepare** early decision/early action or rolling admission applications as soon as possible. Nov. 1–15: Colleges may require test scores and applications between these dates for early decision admission.
- ☐ **Ask a counselor or teacher** for recommendations if you need them. Give each teacher or counselor an outline of your academic record and your extracurricular activities. For each recommendation, provide a stamped, addressed envelope and any college forms required.
- ☐ **Write first drafts** and ask teachers and others to read them if you're submitting essays. If you're applying for early decision, finish the essays for that application now.
- ☐ **Apply to College\*:** Submit your applications to the schools that you want to attend.
- ☐ **Ask counselors** to send your transcripts to colleges. Give counselors the proper forms at least two weeks before the colleges require them.

## WINTER

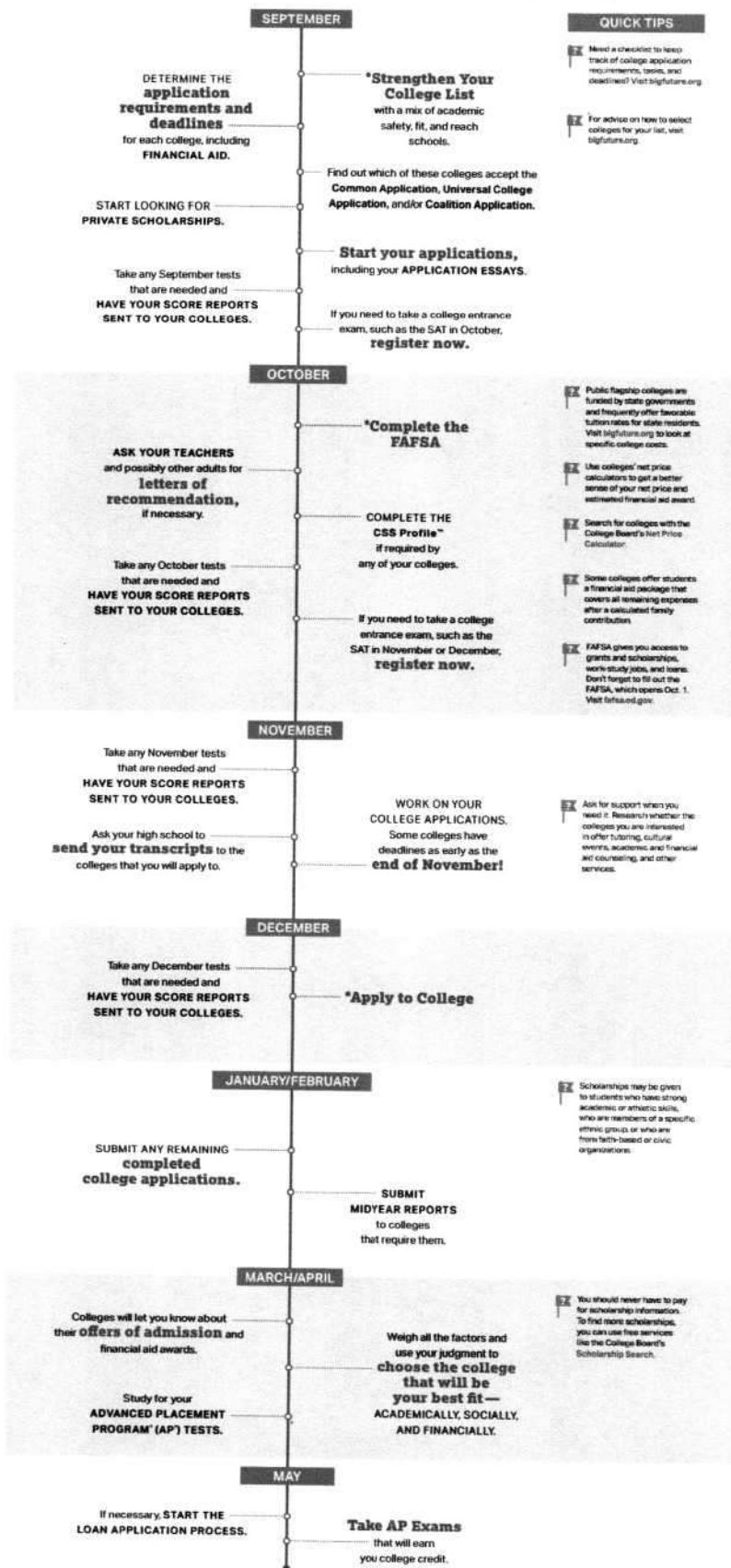
- ☐ **Keep photocopies** as you finish, and send your applications and essays.
- ☐ **Give the correct form** to your counselor if the college wants to see second-semester grades.
- ☐ **Have your high school send a transcript**—it is sent separately by mail to colleges if you apply online to colleges.

## SPRING

- ☐ **Keep active in school.** If you are waitlisted, the college will want to know what you have accomplished between the time you applied and the time you learned of its decision.
- ☐ **Visit your final college before accepting.** You should receive acceptance letters and financial aid offers by mid-April. Notify your counselor of your choice. If you have questions about housing offers, talk to your counselor or call the college.
- ☐ **Inform every college** of your acceptance or rejection of the offer of admission and/or financial aid by May 1. Colleges cannot require your deposit or your commitment to attend before May 1. Talk to your counselor or adviser if you have questions.
- ☐ **Send your deposit** to one college only.
- ☐ **Take any AP® Exams.** Show what you've learned in your AP classes. A successful score could even earn you credit, advanced placement, or both in college.
- ☐ **Waitlisted by a college?** If you intend to enroll if you are accepted, tell the admission director your intent and ask how to strengthen your application. Need financial aid? Ask whether funds will be available if you're accepted.
- ☐ **Work with a counselor** to resolve any admission or financial aid problems.
- ☐ **Ask your high school** to send a final transcript to your college.
- ☐ **Review your financial aid awards:** Not all financial aid awards are the same, so it's important to choose the aid package that's best for you and your family. Be sure to note what you have to do to continue receiving financial aid from year to year, and how your aid might change in future years.

Visit **bigfuture.org** for more information.

# The College Application Timeline



\*Complete this step and you may be eligible for a College Board Opportunity Scholarship. Learn more at [cb.org/opportunity](http://cb.org/opportunity).

Visit [bigfuture.collegeboard.org](http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org) for more information.

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Senior Year

# College Road Map



## August

**Sign up for text alerts.**

Sign up for free college-planning reminders at [cfwv.com](http://cfwv.com).

**Research and apply for scholarships.**

There are thousands of scholarships available – and often, few students apply! Don't leave money on the table. Apply for as many scholarships as possible. Get started at [cfwv.com](http://cfwv.com).

**Register and study for the ACT/SAT.**

You probably already took the SAT your junior year. But if your score wasn't as high as you'd like, you can take it again or try the ACT instead. Map out a plan and start studying.



## September

**Plan your college visits.**

It's crunch time – you need to decide on a college soon! Schedule visits to any campus you're still considering and reach out to their admissions offices for more info.

**Meet with your high school counselor.**

Let your counselor know about the colleges that you are considering and ask for advice. If you're unable to pay college application fees, ask how to apply for a fee waiver.



## October

**Submit at least two college applications.**

Students who apply to more than one school are more likely to attend college and succeed. Researchers recommend applying to at least four colleges. Students who apply early are also more likely to qualify for scholarships.

**Complete the FAFSA.**

The FAFSA is the most important financial aid form you will complete. By filling out this one form, you'll be considered for many different sources of financial aid. Complete it early to make sure you're at the top of the list!



## November through January

**Weigh the pros and cons.**

Once you've submitted your college applications and your FAFSA, you'll start getting lots of information about college and financial aid opportunities. Begin narrowing your options by making a list of the pros and cons for each college or program to which you've been admitted.



## February

**Make a decision.**

Work with the admissions office of your first-choice college to complete your enrollment paperwork. Call the financial aid office at the college and work with them to make sure you are able to cover the costs of attending this school. You should also find out the absolute latest date that you could enroll at your second- and third-choice colleges. If you change your mind about your first-choice, it's important to know what options remain.

**Read College 101.**

Ask your counselor for a copy of CFWV's College 101 guide or visit [cfwv.com](http://cfwv.com) and click on the "college student" link to download a copy. Begin following the steps outlined in the guide to enroll in college, register for housing, and prepare for life on campus.



## March

**Decide on housing.**

Are you going to live on campus, rent a place off-campus, or commute? Does your college have rules about where you can live your first year? Talk with your admissions counselor about your housing options. Find out how to register for housing if you're planning on staying on campus.

**Register for orientation.**

If you haven't already, register for a summer orientation session. During orientation, you'll learn all about your new school, register for classes, and take care of final details.



## April - August

**Stay on track – and in touch!**

Over the summer, your college will send you emails with important info. Be sure to check your email often and follow their instructions. If you need help, ask questions!