



HOW TO FIND SCHOLARSHIPS SCHOOL YEAR CHECKLIST

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August

- Review your career plans and decide which type of postsecondary school is best for you.(9-12)
- Save money from your summer job for college.(9-12)
- List your top college choices.(GRADE 11)
- Develop a SCHOLARSHIP application resume to highlight your activities, achievements, etc.(9-12)
- Request admissions information and school catalogs.(GRADE 11)
- Go on college visits.(9-12)
- Collect letters of recommendation from your teachers to include with your SCHOLARSHIPS (and college} applications.(9-12)
- Start brainstorming about ideas for your SCHOLARSHIP {and college} essays.(9-12)
- Continue to take increasingly challenging courses. (9-12)
- Stay focused on maintaining or increasing your GPA.(9-12)
- Obtain registration materials and test dates for the [Scholastic Aptitude Test \(SAT\)](#) and/or [ACT assessment](#).(GRADE 11)
- Compare costs of each school that interests you by contacting the colleges by phone, mail, or via their websites.(9-12)

September

- Mark your calendar with registration, admissions, and financial aid deadlines and fees.(GRADE 11)
- Determine if the schools that interest you have online admission applications. If not, request them by mail now.(GRADE 11)

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- Create separate folders for each of the schools that interest you and keep the materials organized.(**GRADE 11**)
- Begin writing drafts of your SCHOLARSHIP (and college).ESSAY. (**9-12**)
- Start completing early admission college applications.(**GRADE 11**)
- Meet with school representatives who visit your high school.(**SENIOR YEAR**)
- Look at virtual tours of college campuses online.(**9-12**)
- If you haven't already taken the [SAT](#) and/or [ACT](#), register for the test(s)..(**GRADE 11**)
- Attend college planning and/or financial aid information nights and college fairs.(**SENIOR YEAR**)
- Ask employers, teachers, and guidance counselors for letters of recommendation to accompany your admissions applications.(**SENIOR YEAR**)
- Set up your [FSA ID](#) (and your parent will need one, too) and start gathering information so you can complete the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid](#) (FAFSA) as early as **October 1**.(**SENIOR YEAR**)

October

- Take the [SAT](#) and/or [ACT](#).(**GRADE 11**)
- Continue working on your admissions essays.(**SENIOR YEAR**)
- If you haven't already done so, [sign up for an FSA ID](#), to complete your FAFSA online. (Also let your parents know that they will need an FSA ID.) Make sure to protect your FSA ID and keep it in a secure place so that you will have it later when you need it. Keep copies of all financial aid and enrollment documents in a file.(**SENIOR YEAR**)
- Contact the U.S. Department of Education at 1-800-4FED-AID or 1-800-433-3243 for assistance completing the FAFSA and/or plan to attend a FAFSA preparation event (free FAFSA advice) near you.(**SENIOR YEAR**)
- [Complete your FAFSA online](#) to determine your financial aid eligibility.(**SENIOR YEAR**)
- Watch for the e-mail notice indicating your [Student Aid Report \(SAR\)](#) is ready.(**SENIOR YEAR**)
- Review your SAR for errors and make any corrections as indicated.(**SENIOR YEAR**)
- Attend college planning and/or financial aid information nights and college fairs. If you cannot attend, ask if you and your parents can borrow a video of the presentation from your counselor.(**9-12**)

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- Visit your top school choices. If possible, make appointments with faculty, staff, and students.(**GRADE 11 &12**)
- Meet with your guidance counselor to develop a college admission and financial aid application plan.(**SENIOR YEAR**)
- Contact the schools' financial aid offices to determine which forms they require. Some schools may require special forms.(**SENIOR YEAR**)
- Finalize portfolios, audition tapes, writing samples, or other evidence of talent if required for admission.(**SENIOR YEAR**)

November

- Complete admissions applications by their deadlines.(**SENIOR YEAR**)
- If you have not already done so, attend college planning and/or financial aid information nights and college fairs.(**SENIOR YEAR**)
- If necessary, register to retake the [SAT](#) and/or [ACT](#).(**GRADE 11**)
- If you have not already completed the FAFSA, attend a FAFSA preparation event.(**SENIOR YEAR**)
- If it has been a few weeks since you completed your FAFSA and you have not received your [Student Aid Report \(SAR\)](#), call 1-800-4-FED-AID. If you have received your SAR, review it for errors and make any corrections.(**SENIOR YEAR**)
- Request financial aid forms and applications. Double check the deadlines for submission.(**SENIOR YEAR**)
- Complete applications for every COLLEGE scholarship for which you may be eligible.(**SENIOR YEAR**). Complete applications for every OUTSIDE scholarship for which you may be eligible (**9-12**)
- Follow up to ensure your employers, teachers, and guidance counselors send letters of recommendation.(**SENIOR YEAR**)
- Stay focused on maintaining and increasing your GPA.(**9-12**)

December

- Research and apply for other financial aid, including grants and scholarships.(**9-12**)

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- Watch for early admissions notices. **(SENIOR YEAR)**
- Research deadlines at the college you plan to attend, such as for housing applications, school-specific financial aid applications and deadlines. **(SENIOR YEAR)**
- Organize scholarships, certificates, articles, etc. to illustrate your achievements and create a portfolio to display them. **(9-12)**

January

- Keep a watch out for scholarship applications and make notes of the deadlines. Getting an early start completing them. **(9-12)**
- Do not let senioritis get a grip on you this semester, finish strong on your last semester of high school. **(SENIOR YEAR)**

February

- Be mindful of deadlines. Always submit information on time. **(9-12)**
- Research Advanced Placement (AP) or College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) exams. **(9-12)**
- Rank your top school choices. **(SENIOR YEAR)**
- Research local scholarships and apply as applications are available. **(9-12)**

March

- Check with the financial aid offices to ensure your paperwork is complete. Submit tax forms if they request them. **(SENIOR YEAR)**
- Narrow your school choices and make campus visits. **(SENIOR YEAR)**
- Be on the lookout for acceptance letters. **(SENIOR YEAR)**
- Start looking for summer jobs. **(SENIOR YEAR)**

April

- Compare financial aid award letters. **(SENIOR YEAR)**
- Make your final school decision and mail deposits, as required. **(SENIOR YEAR)**
- Check with the school you've chosen about returning financial aid award letters. **(SENIOR YEAR)**

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- Plan for registration, orientation, and housing, and mark your calendar with important dates. **(SENIOR YEAR)**

May

- Be aware of any summer orientation sessions that you must attend at the school in which you will enroll, and make plans accordingly. **(SENIOR YEAR)**
- Finalize your summer job plans, and make a plan for saving a portion of your summer earnings. **(SENIOR YEAR)**
- Prepare a realistic student budget. **(SENIOR YEAR)**
- Follow up with your high school to ensure the counselor forwards your final school transcripts to the college. **(SENIOR YEAR)**
- Request college transcripts for any dual credit courses you took in high school, a copy for you and a copy for the college you plan to attend. **(SENIOR YEAR)**

June

- Plan for college transportation. **(SENIOR YEAR)**
- Notify your high school guidance office of your college selection and any scholarships received. **(SENIOR YEAR)**
- Follow up with the financial aid office to ensure all paperwork is complete. **(SENIOR YEAR)**
- Attend or register to attend college orientation. **(SENIOR YEAR)**
- Make sure thank you notes for graduation gifts are written. **(SENIOR YEAR)**
- Work with your parents or guardians on things that you need to know how to do, or how to do better, while at college, like doing laundry, taking care of your car, balancing your bank account. **(SENIOR YEAR)**

July

- Save money from your summer job. **(SENIOR YEAR)**
- Send “thank you notes” to everyone who helped you plan and prepare for college. **(SENIOR YEAR)**



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- Make copies of your financial aid forms, health forms, etc. for your files to aid in resolving future issues. **(SENIOR YEAR)**
- Register for the fall semester. **(SENIOR YEAR)**
- Prepare a contact list with addresses of friends and family members and make labels with your new address, some for you and some to share with others. **(SENIOR YEAR)**
- Prepare for the new adventures that await you on campus! **(SENIOR YEAR)**

Congratulations! It's time to get ready to start college.

Advice for parents

Yes, there are things you can do to help your college bound teen prepare for continuing their education after high school and doing it DEBT FREE.

- It is important to attend financial aid presentations and career day functions WITH your student. Many of these events will be held in the evenings and on weekends. If you don't know when they're scheduled, contact your son or daughter's high school counselor. (Attend these events even if you did so last year or with a different student - there is new information all the time!)
- Help them gather these five items so they can apply for scholarships easily and often:
 1. Resume
 2. Recommendations
 3. Copy of SAT or ACT score
 4. A personal statement essay
 5. A copy of their most recent transcript
- Ask them monthly, "What are you working on and what scholarships have you applied for?"
- Sit down with your student and prepare a list of what he/she is looking for in a college and then help him/her sort through the information they receive from the different institutions to decide which ones offer what's on the list.
- Complete applications with the student.

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- In SEPTEMBER OF THEIR SENIOR YEAR, [register for an FSA ID](#) so you can assist your student with the FAFSA.
- In October, you will need to help your student complete the FAFSA. Your FSA ID will help speed up the process.
- In late winter or early spring OF THEIR SENIOR YEAR, the college financial aid award notices will start coming in. Look at the financing carefully and contact the schools with any questions. Make comparisons!
- Go on trips with your student to as many of his or her top school choices as possible. A visit to the campus is invaluable to making a decision.