

# Roadmap to College

Your senior year of high school is a transformation year, filled with significant moments and special memories. While it's an unforgettable chapter in your life, you also need to plan ahead for the next chapter to ensure your future is bright.



## FALL SENIOR YEAR

### Talk to your counselor about your college options and application fee waivers

Let your counselor know about the colleges that you are considering and ask for any additional suggestions. Most colleges charge a fee when you apply. If you're unable to pay these fees, ask your counselor how to apply for an application fee waiver.

### Speak with College Admission Counselors

Attend college fairs and campus tours to learn more about different institutions. Meet with representatives from a variety of colleges and ask them detailed questions about what their campus has to offer.

### Begin working on your application essays

Some colleges will require you to write an application essay. Draft your essays early – this is a chance to showcase your unique talents, abilities, and desire to succeed!

### Start working on the FAFSA

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the most important application to complete to find financial aid for college. Get started by visiting [fafsa.gov](http://fafsa.gov) and creating an account.

### Sign up to receive college reminders via text

Students in West Virginia can sign up to receive college reminders via text by going to [cfvv.com](http://cfvv.com). Students can also text questions and college access advisors will respond.

### Submit your college applications

Students who apply to more than one college or program are far more likely to attend college and succeed. Those who apply early are also more likely to qualify for scholarships.

## WINTER/SPRING SENIOR YEAR

### Consider the pros and cons

Begin narrowing your options by making a list of the pros and cons for each college or program to which you've been admitted. Rank your choices in order from first to last choice.

### Review your financial aid award package and accept/decline financial aid

Your college will send you information about your financial aid award package. You must review this information and then accept the aid you want to use and decline any available aid that you don't want or need.

### Make a decision and notify the admissions office of the school you've chosen

Ask them what you need to do to enroll. Call the financial aid office at the college and work with them to make sure that you are able to cover the costs of attending the school.

### Pay all required deposits

Make sure you've paid any required deposits by the deadline. Colleges vary in what types of deposits they require, but common types include enrollment or academic, housing, and orientation.

### Look for and read communication from your school or college

Your school will begin contacting you about important tasks and deadlines. Your school might also have a web portal where they post announcements. Check your email and/or log-in to your college's web portal weekly.

### Arrange housing and purchase meal plans

Some colleges require you to live on campus for a certain amount of time, unless you're commuting from home. If you plan to commute, make sure you read the requirements carefully and submit any documentation your college needs. If you plan to live on campus, complete your application for housing and submit any required deposits. Students also can purchase meal plans to eat in their college's cafeteria.

## SUMMER BEFORE COLLEGE

### Manage personal finances

If you do not have a checking account, you should open one. If this is the first time you are living on your own, you should also develop a budget.

### Make or schedule college payments

Most colleges require that students pay their tuition/fee and room/board bills prior to classes starting or within the first week of the semester. If you cannot pay your bill, call your college's financial aid office to discuss your options. Some colleges also allow students to set up payment plans.

### Attend New Student Orientation

Most traditional colleges and even career and technical education centers often require all first-year students to attend orientation.

### It is important to stay in contact with your advisor

Do you have contact information for your advisor? If you are unsure who your advisor is, reach out to the admissions office at your campus. Advisors are trained to connect you to the resources you need. If you discover yourself struggling with a course, seek out your advisor immediately.

### Review course catalog and degree/certification requirements

The course catalog is a general source of information about course offerings, academic programs and requirements, rules, and policies.

### Move in

If you are living on campus, your college will contact you to let you know the move-in date. If you plan to live on campus and have not received any information from your institution, please contact your institution's Residential Life/Housing Office for further assistance.