

You Can Get There



Here's How

Not sure if college is for you? Think again. There's a program and school to fit everyone's needs—and you can get there. If you break your goals into smaller pieces, you can work toward building a better life and achieving your dreams. Follow this step-by-step guide (click on your grade level or scroll through the pdf), to learn what you can do to take control of your future.

7th Graders

8th Graders

9th/10th Graders

11th/12th Graders

Visit www.wvgearup.org for more info.



You Can Get There



7th Graders

Explore Your Options

You know yourself better than anyone, and only you can determine what you want your future to look like. It's never too early to decide where you want to go, and how you're going to get there. The CFWV.com web portal is a great tool to use to explore different programs and schools. You can also explore different types of career options. Visit CFWV.com and create a free account to save all the jobs that interest you in your [portfolio](#) so can come back and look at them later.

Establish Good Study Habits

Now is a good time to learn how to manage your time, organize and strengthen your study skills. Start by establishing a homework and study routine, chose a study space that works best for you, and make sure you have all materials you need to complete assignments. Working on establishing good study skills early will is so important especially as your schoolwork becomes more challenging. Click here to learn more about [successful study skills](#).

Make a Plan

Good intentions are great, but hard work earns results. Decide how you'll work toward achieving the goals you've outlined. Do you need to improve your grades? Start participating in a tutoring program. Think you'd like to learn more about a career? Ask a teacher or counselor if you can job shadow a professional or about the classes you should take in high school to prepare for a job in that field. This is also a great time to talk to your family about your plans and your goals. They can help keep you on track, and they may suggest options you haven't considered. Don't forget to use the [college planning timeline](#) and follow the steps in the timeline throughout the school year to help you stay on track during the college planning process. If you're wondering how you're going to pay for college, consider starting a [savings plan](#) with your family or on your own.

Challenge Yourself

Getting to college and building a career you love can be challenging (but also incredibly rewarding). Get your grades up to par (if they aren't already), and plan to take the right classes in high school. If you feel like you can easily handle your schoolwork, participate in activities that can help you improve your skills even more. Your efforts will pay off when you earn your degree and land the job you want.

Visit www.wvgearup.org for more info.



You Can Get There



8th Graders

Set a Goal

You know yourself better than anyone, and only you can determine what you want your future to look like. And it's never too early to decide where you want to go, and how you're going to get there. The CFWV.com web portal is a great tool to use to explore different career options. Take a few moments to visualize the way you want to live. What sort of career do you want? What hobbies or other interests would you like to explore? How much money do you want to make? Where do you want to live? Do you want to have children some day? Once you know exactly what you want to achieve, it's much easier to make it happen.

Examine Your Life

Once you know where you want to go, think about the path you're on now. Is it likely to lead you in the right direction? How are your grades? Have you been working hard in English, math and science? Have you thought about taking a foreign language class, or joining an extra school organization? Think about the areas of your life you could improve, and the areas where you're doing well.

Make a Plan

Good intentions are great, but hard work earns results. Decide how you'll work toward achieving the goals you've outlined. Start participating in a tutoring program. Think you'd like to learn more about a career? Ask a teacher or counselor if you can job shadow a professional or about the classes you should take in high school to prepare for a job in that field. This is also a great time to talk to your family about your plans and your goals. They can help keep you on track, and they may suggest options you haven't considered.

Challenge Yourself

Now is a good time to think about the classes you will take in 9th grade. Get your grades up to par (if they aren't already), and plan to take the right classes in high school. If you feel like you can easily handle your school work, participate in activities that can help you improve your skills even more. Look into academic enrichment programs, including summer and weekend programs, available through your school or local colleges to help prepare you for the transition to high school and college. Your efforts will pay off when you earn your degree and land the job you want.

Visit www.wvgearup.org for more info.



You Can Get There



9th/10th Graders

Take the Right Classes

Advanced math, science, English and foreign language classes can be tough, but the work you put in now will pay off big time down the road. You may even be able to take some college classes later in high school that will help you earn credit toward a two or four-year degree. Talk to your guidance counselor or GEAR UP site coordinator to learn which high school courses will put you on the right track toward going to college and planning for a career, and to find out if college credit courses are available at your school. Then take those classes! Now is also a good time to really focus on your career and college research. Start thinking about the colleges you want to attend and look into the college entrance requirements for those schools.

Ask a Million Questions

Your guidance counselors, teachers and principals want you to succeed, so don't feel bad about demanding their attention. Schedule time with them so they can help you plan for college. Ask if they can recommend a tutor or provide extra resources if you're struggling in one of those tough classes. Even ask them to help you find ways to pay for your education beyond high school. They chose to be teachers because they want to help students. Don't be shy about asking them to help you.

Get the Whole Family Involved

You can go to college on your own, but it's way easier if you have the support of your family. Tell your parents (or another supportive adult) about your plans to attend college and pursue a career. As you research education and career options, share your discoveries with your family. Ask them to push you to do your best toward achieving your goals and tell them you need their support. If you can, attend college tours and open houses together. They may be able to help you make decisions about which school to attend, what program to enroll in, and how to [pay for your education](#).

Make a Plan to Pay for College

Work with a counselor or your family to [make a plan to pay for college](#). Find out how much you can really expect to pay, and then start exploring scholarship and other financial aid options. If you can, set aside a little money each week or month in a savings account to help you pay for your education and living expenses once you graduate high school.

Visit www.wvgearup.org for more info.



You Can Get There



11th/12th Graders

Keep Pushing Yourself

Make sure you continue challenging yourself academically; math, science and writing skills are critical for succeeding in college. Talk to your guidance counselor or GEAR UP site coordinator to find out if your school offers college credit classes to help you earn credits while still in high school. If you think you're not ready or you're struggling, ask for additional help.

Stay Focused On Your Goals

Your 11th grade year is the time to really focus on your career and college research. Narrow your list of colleges to include colleges with requirements above, below, and in-line with your current GPA. During your 12th grade year, you should sign up for CFVW's free [Txt 4 Success](#) program to receive college tips and reminders via text message. The Txt 4 Success program also allows students to send their questions via text to receive an answer from a professional college advisor!

Take the ACT/SAT

Your scores on these tests will help determine what scholarships you can receive, the classes you will take your first year of college and even which colleges you can attend. They're a big deal, but the good news is (a) you can practice for them, and (b) you can take them more than once to try to get a better score. Don't forget to use CFVW's free [test preparation tools](#) to help you study! If you need help paying to take the tests, ask your counselor or GEAR UP site coordinator about fee waivers.

Participate in College Application and Exploration Week & College Decision Day events

During your 12th grade year, be sure you participate in [College Application and Exploration Week](#) (CAEW)! CAEW is one of CFVW's three statewide college-planning events, along with [College Decision Day](#) and statewide financial aid completion events, that help guide 12th grade students and their families in planning, applying, paying for and enrolling in college.

Master the Financial Aid Process

Applying for [financial aid for college](#) can sometimes be confusing, but there are experts that can help you. Ask your counselor for help or attend a financial aid night at your school. You'll need to complete something called a [FAFSA](#), and you can get help with that too!

Visit www.wvgearup.org for more info.

