



EARLY IDENTIFICATION PROGRAM

College Application Action Plan - Rising Seniors

FALL

Pull Your Applications Together

- Narrow your list of colleges to approximately five to eight, and review it with your counselor. Get an application and financial aid info from each. Visit as many as possible.
- Make a master calendar and note:
 - Test dates, fees and deadlines
 - College application due dates
 - Required financial aid applications and their deadlines
 - Recommendations, transcripts and other necessary materials
 - Your high school's deadlines for application requests, such as your transcript
- Ask for recommendations. Give each person your resume, a stamped and addressed envelope, and any required forms.
- Write application essays and ask teachers, family members and friends to read first drafts.

Decide Whether to Apply Early Action or Early Decision

- November 1: For early admission, colleges may require test scores and applications in early November. Send your SAT® scores.
- Ask if your college offers an early estimate of financial aid eligibility.

Get Financial Aid Info

- Attend financial aid info events in your area.
- Talk to your counselor about CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE® and learn about completing the PROFILE.
- Use Scholarship Search, review scholarship books, and ask your counselor about local and state funding sources.

WINTER

Review Application Details

- Most regular applications are due between January 1 and February 15. Keep copies of everything you send to colleges.
- Have your high school send your transcript to colleges.
- Contact colleges to make sure they've received all application materials.

Apply for Financial Aid

- You and your family should save this year's pay stubs to estimate income on aid forms that you'll file early next year.
- Submit your FAFSA as soon after January 1 as possible. Men who are 18 years of age or older must register with Selective Service to receive federal financial aid.
- Many priority financial aid deadlines fall in February. To get the most attractive award package, apply by the priority date. Keep copies of everything you send.

SPRING

- You should get acceptance letters and financial aid offers by mid-April.
- Use Compare Your Aid Awards to compare awards from different colleges. Talk to financial aid officers at your college if you have questions about the award offered.
- If you haven't already, visit your final college before accepting.

Make Your Final Choice by May 1

- You must tell every college of your acceptance or rejection of offers of admission or financial aid by May 1. Send a deposit to the college you choose.
- Wait-listed? If you will enroll if accepted, tell the admission officer your intent and ask how to strengthen your application. Need financial aid? Ask if funds will be available if you're accepted.

SUMMER

- Ask your high school to send a final transcript to your college.
- Start preparing for the year ahead.

September

- Contact your school counselor — your counselor plays a big role in helping you get into college. Meet to talk about your college plans and review your transcript.
- Finalize your list of colleges. Be sure you list "safety" colleges, as well as "probable" and "reach" colleges. Review college applications and informational materials. Organize materials into separate files by college.
- If you plan to apply through an early decision or early action program, get started on your applications right away. Deadlines for early applications tend to be in November.
- Begin working on your college essays. Think of topics that focus on your experiences and make you stand out from the crowd.

October

- Ask your counselor, teachers or employers for letters of recommendation. Give them plenty of time to meet your deadlines and be sure to provide them with stamped and addressed envelopes.
- If you take the SAT or SAT Subject Tests this month, make sure your scores are sent to each of your colleges.

November

- Submit early decision and early action applications on time.
- Work hard at completing your college essays. Proofread them rigorously for mistakes.
- Follow up to ensure that letters of recommendation are sent on time to meet your deadlines.
- Send applications as early as possible for colleges with rolling deadlines (that is, admission decisions are made as applications are received).
- If you take the SAT or SAT Subject Tests this month, make sure your scores are sent to each of your colleges.

December

- Try to wrap up college applications before winter break. Make copies of each application before you send it.
- If you take the SAT or SAT Subject Tests this month, make sure your scores are sent to each of your colleges.
- Contact the financial aid office at the colleges on your list to see what financial aid forms they require.

January

- Have your counselor send your first-semester grades to colleges that require a midyear grade report.
- Submit the FAFSA (Financial Aid) application @ www.FAFSA.gov as soon as possible after January 1.

February

- Contact your colleges and confirm that all necessary application materials have been received.
- Continue to perform well in school and don't get senioritis; colleges want to see strong second-semester grades.
- Register for AP Exams you want to take in May.

March

- Read carefully any admission decisions that arrive this month; some may require action on your part.

April

- Read carefully any admission decisions and [compare the financial aid award letters](#) that arrive this month; some may require action on your part.
- Make a final decision, and mail the enrollment form and deposit check to the college you select before the May 1 enrollment deadline (for most colleges).
- Notify each of the colleges that accepted you but that you will not attend of your decision, so that your spot can be freed up for another student.
- If you're on a waiting list, contact the admission office and let them know of your continued interest in the college; update them on your spring semester grades and activities.

May

- If you take any AP Exams, make sure your AP score report is sent to your college.
- Study hard for final exams. Most admission offers are contingent on your final grades.
- Thank your counselor, teachers, employers and anyone else who wrote letters of recommendation for you or otherwise helped with your college applications.

June

- Have your counselor send your final transcript to your chosen college.
- If you plan on competing in Division I or Division II college sports, have your counselor send your final transcript to the NCAA Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse.

Summer

- Make travel plans; book early for the best prices.
- Shop for items you need for college.
- Make sure to sign up for first-year orientation.
- Plan your first-semester courses. Choose subjects that interest you and may become your college major.

Source: <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/>